

## II

### GOWANBURN RIVER CAMP: AN IRON AGE, ROMANO-BRITISH AND MORE RECENT SETTLEMENT IN NORTH TYNE DALE, NORTHUMBERLAND

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THE EARTHWORK known as Gowanburn River Camp was the last of four early settlements to be investigated in advance of the creation of the Kielder reservoir in North Tynedale (fig. 1, 2 no. 3). Reports on the earlier excavations of the three settlements situated respectively on Tower Knowe, Belling Law and Kennel Hall Knowe have already appeared in previous volumes of *Archaeologia Aeliana*.<sup>1</sup> A fifth enclosure, recorded in 1867 on Halfpenny Rigg<sup>2</sup> (fig. 1, 2 no. 6), also lay within the area to be inundated, but a number of attempts over the last thirty years had failed to locate this site beneath the obscuring blanket of afforestation or, latterly, the debris from the final felling.

We are indebted to the Department of the Environment for financial assistance towards the cost of a small-scale excavation on the Gowanburn site in 1978, to the Northumbrian Water Authority for the use of a vacated farmhouse at Wellhaugh, and finally, but not least, to the small group of volunteer workers for their skilful co-operation in the relatively wet and sometimes frozen environment of the upper reaches of North Tynedale.

#### *The Site* (fig. 1: NY 661902)

The remains were noted by Henry MacLauchlan in 1867, following the earlier Alnwick MSS of Sir David Smith.<sup>3</sup> Almost a century later the site was resurveyed by the second named of the present writers, at a time when attention was being directed to the possible form and distribution of Romano-British settlements in the Border counties.<sup>4</sup> The earthwork was then listed simply as an unclassified enclosure, however, because of the poor state of its preservation and an absence of significant diagnostic features.

The site lay at an altitude of *c.* 175 m on a terrace immediately above the flood plain and the lowest of the haughlands bordering the River North Tyne. At the time of the excavation a caravan park for the construction workers on the reservoir also occupied the same terrace. The Iron Age and Romano-British settlement previously excavated on Kennel Hall Knowe was then some 600 m distant to the south-east (fig. 1, 2 no. 4), whilst the unexcavated rectilinear-shaped earthwork at Wellhaugh, which still survives amid afforestation, lay about the same distance to the south (fig. 1, 2 no. 5).

The ditch of the Gowanburn River Camp was still visible in rough pasture on the west and north sides but had been almost entirely obliterated on the east side. Even

so, the enclosure appeared to have been roughly rectangular in shape, bounded by a ditch on at least three sides with the fourth side probably resting on the river scarp. This being the case, the maximum measurements within the ditch would have been of the order of 75 m from east to west by 50 m from north to south. By analogy with

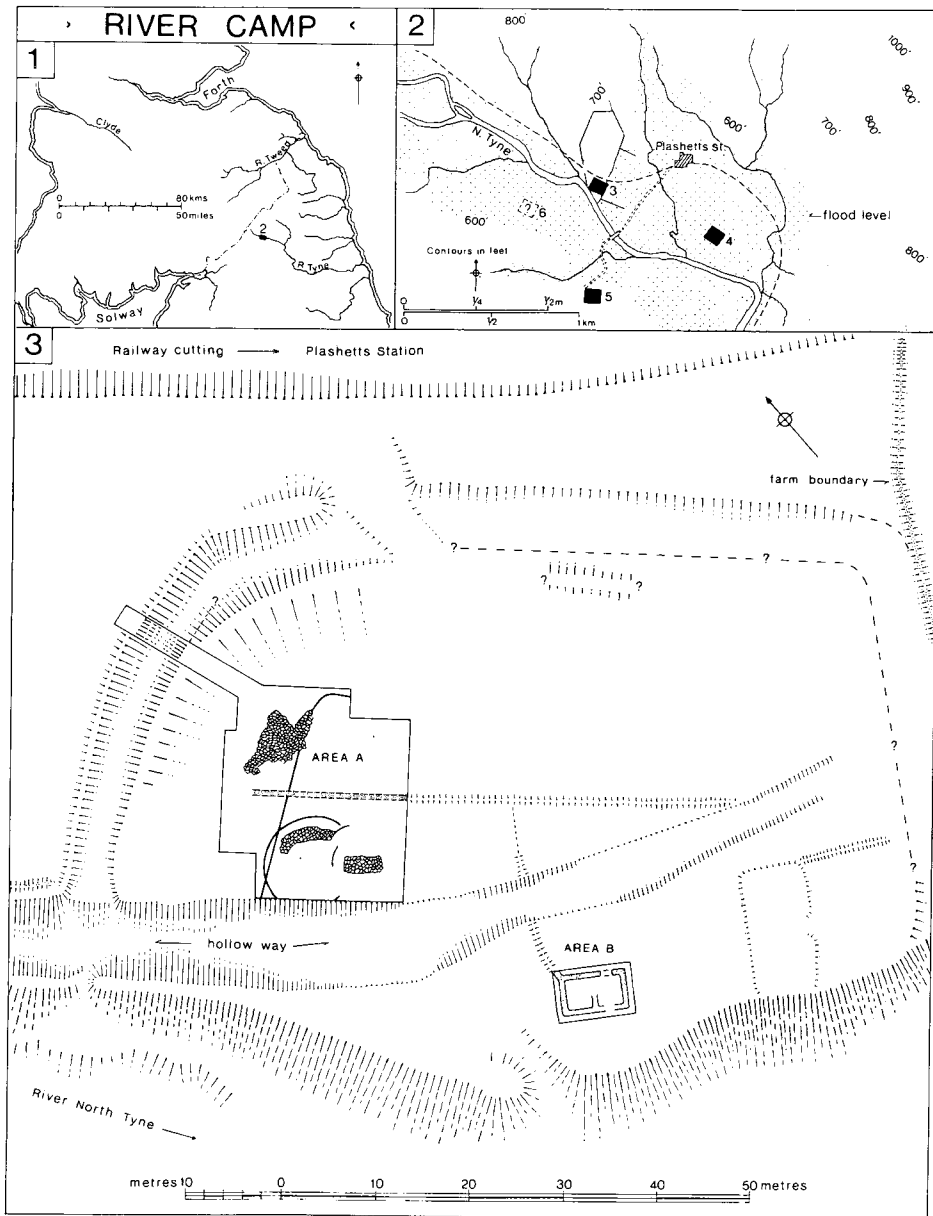


Fig. 1. Gowanburn River Camp.

other rectilinear enclosures in the area the entrance would have been through the east or south side and, in this instance, a break in the line of the ditch on the north side was almost certainly a later causeway. The site was crossed from east to west by a later hollow way and artificial cutting which increased in depth as it approached the river scarp and, conceivably, an earlier ford across the river. This feature was undoubtedly the so-called road which according to MacLauchlan was cut through when "the railway was made and the camp otherwise disturbed". The Border Counties Railway was constructed during the late 1850s and early 1860s and abandoned a century later; the railway cutting immediately to the north of the camp was part of the sector from Falstone through Plashetts Station to Kielder which was opened on 1 January 1862.<sup>5</sup>

Faint traces of two rectangular shaped buildings, neither of which were specifically mentioned by MacLauchlan, lay to the south of the hollow way and were seemingly both associated with equally weak vestiges of turf-covered field or enclosure walls. As the wall which ran up to the north-west corner of the western building had been cut by the hollow way it seemed reasonable to infer that at least this building, if not both, had probably ceased to be of any significance by the mid-nineteenth century, except maybe as a ready source of stone for other purposes. Turf-covered remains of other walls or dykes also existed to the west and east of the ditched enclosure, that on the west running up to and possibly onto the remains of the counterscarp bank of the earthwork, whilst that to the east had almost certainly followed the line of the earlier counterscarp bank. This eastern bounder was undoubtedly MacLauchlan's "fence" which in 1867 had divided the farms of Plashetts and Gowanburn, "placed on the rampart (of the camp) so as to claim part of it". Whether or not these bounders were associated at some stage with the rectangular buildings they too must have predated the construction of the railway, as the latter bisected the relatively large area which they had formerly enclosed (fig. 1, 2; O.S. 6" map 1866). Despite the predominantly pastoral nature of the farms in this part of North Tynedale, it was evident from air-photographs that at least some of this area to the north of the railway had been under broad-rig cultivation at some time in the past. The remains of two circular stack-stands, similar to those overlying the nearby early settlement on Kennel Hall Knowe, were also discernible against the eastern bounder on the north side of the railway; these too could have formed part of the same more recent farming complex on the river terrace. They are both shown on MacLauchlan's plan of the area, surveyed in 1863, but are incorrectly described as "dwellings".

#### THE EXCAVATIONS

From the outset it was evident that the earthwork had been subject to some form of later cultivation and that the site as a whole had also suffered grievously from stone robbing. Because of limited resources the excavations were directed primarily towards determining if the structural sequence on this earthwork was similar to those found on the more extensively investigated settlements further to the south in the same valley. Most unfortunately, the samples which were collected for later scientific identification and assay were subsequently destroyed by an act of vandalism.<sup>6</sup>

A. *The Palisaded Settlement* (Area A, figs. 1 and 2)

The earliest enclosure on the site had consisted of a so-called, free-standing palisade or stockade. Its vertical timbers had been closely set together in a support trench which survived in the clay subsoil to a width of 0.5 m and a depth of up to 0.6 m as found. It can be inferred that this enclosure had been rectangular in shape, its west side no doubt continuing beyond the hollow way towards the edge of the scarp to give a width of some 32 m. Although the east to west measurements must remain uncertain, the manner in which the later earthwork respected the line of the palisade trench in the west, if repeated in the east, would suggest a distance of perhaps 40 m. Such dimensions would certainly fall within the general range of those of the timber-built enclosures on the nearby settlements at Kennel Hall Knowe, Belling Law and Tower Knowe.<sup>7</sup> From the evidence available in Area A it also seemed that at least some of the timbers of the palisade had been withdrawn, thus dislodging the original stone packing, and that additional stones and earth had then been introduced to fill and level up the disused support trench. Whatever the reason for this action, it was reasonably evident that no more than the one timber-built enclosure had existed, unless by a most unlikely chance the digging of the ditch for the later earthwork had removed further construction trenches of this nature.

Construction trenches for the walls of three, timber-built, round houses were also uncovered in Area A, but only two of these could have been associated with the occupation of the timber-built enclosure (fig. 2, houses 1 and 2). The trenches of the latter survived only as short vestigial arcs, at best no more than 0.2 m deep as found with few packing stones still *in situ*. House 2 had been about 8.5 m in diameter, conceivably with a south-east facing doorway marked by post-holes 16 and 17 on the plan. Its stratigraphical relationship to house 3 could not be determined at the point of intersection of the two construction trenches, but the vestiges of its wall-trench were sealed by the remains of a paved pathway associated with house 3 and had also been removed by a pit of more recent date. House 1 had been of a diameter similar to that of house 2 and in all probability its doorway would have lain beyond the excavated area. Most certainly this house could not have been contemporary with house 2 and again it was seemingly earlier than a paved pathway leading up to the doorway of house 3.

A pathway of disturbed and light cobbling approached the doorway of house 2 and was possibly contemporary with an equally disturbed area of light cobbles which had extended northwards beyond the estimated perimeter of house 1. It is tempting to regard the latter as the beginning of a cobbled yard, similar, for example, to the surfaced, frontal farmyards in the palisaded phases of the neighbouring settlements on Kennel Hall Knowe and Belling Law.

Although sufficient space was available for further structures within the disturbed north-western corner of the palisaded enclosure, no traces of timber buildings could be detected. And to the south of the excavated Area A the later hollow way would undoubtedly have removed the vestiges of any timber buildings in that direction. Despite the fact that the palisade and construction trenches were completely emptied, and all superimposed features removed, there were no small finds that could be related directly and unequivocally to this structural phase on the settlement.

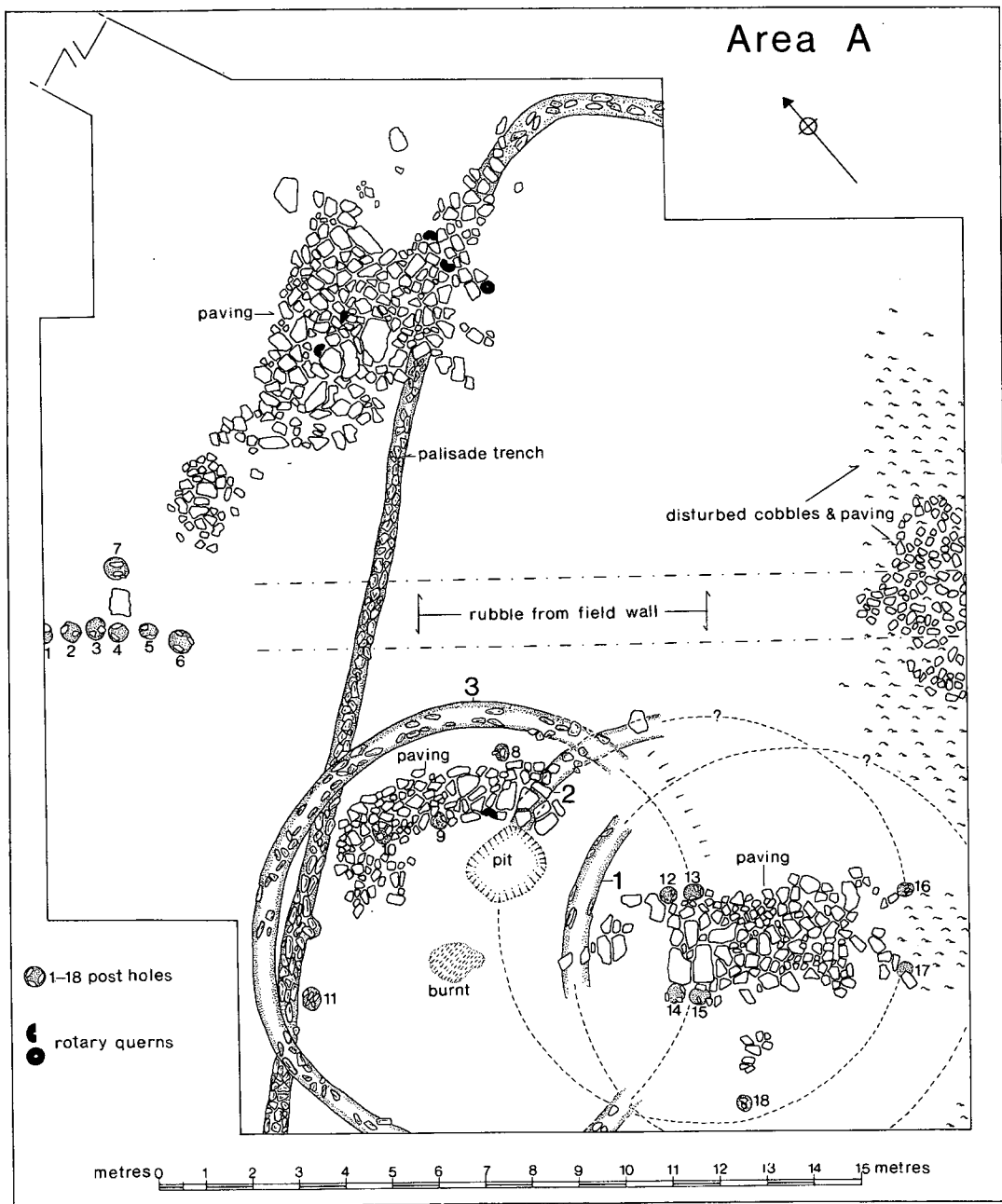


Fig. 2.

*B. The Ditched Enclosure (figs. 1 and 2)*

The available resources did not allow more than a single cutting to be made across the perimeter of this enclosure. A ditch with a slightly rounded bottom had been cut into the natural drift material to a depth of c. 1.75 m below the original ground level; before weathering it had probably been about 3.5 m wide at the lips. An interior mound, containing some turves, survived to a maximum height of only 0.15 m and was now spread over a width of about 2.75 m. As the surface indications had suggested, the purely earthen counterscarp bank was a little better preserved at a maximum height of 0.3 m. The only artefact recovered from this cutting was part of a bun-shaped rotary quern (fig. 3, 3), which had entered the ditch only after some 0.5 m of silt had accumulated. Little more can be inferred from this in datable terms than that the ditch was probably still an open feature in the late Iron Age or Roman period.

Of the three timber-built houses in Area A only house 3 was unequivocally later than the palisaded enclosure, and therefore, if not certainly, at least more than likely to have been associated with the occupation of the ditched enclosure. Its wall-trench survived to a maximum depth of 0.4 m as found and was demonstrably later than the palisade support trench at the two points of intersection. Although the trench faded away in the eastern, down-sloping sector, the diameter of the house had certainly been about 8.5 m with a doorway in the south-east marked by post-holes numbered 12 to 15 on the plan. In this instance the doorway had been approached by a well paved pathway, now somewhat disturbed. The only indisputable post-holes found in the interior of this house by the close of the excavations, numbered 8 to 11 on the plan, proved difficult to relate structurally to the building. Post-hole 10 was almost certainly earlier than the fragmentary arc of paving which at some stage appeared to have formed part of the floor of the house. As already noted, this paving also extended over the remains of the wall-trench of house 2. Elsewhere in the interior of house 3, however, the only surviving indications of a possible floor level consisted of small, very thin patches of occupation earth, lying immediately below the top soil, together with a reddened area on the surface of the clay subsoil as if marking the site of a former hearth. A pit which had removed part of the wall-trench of house 2 and probably some of the paving within house 3 was of comparatively recent date, testified by part of an iron horse-shoe and a lead cylinder of no great antiquity amongst the fill.

Half of the top stone from a bun-shaped rotary quern (fig. 3, 3) had been incorporated into the paving in the interior of house 3. Two fragments most probably from the same opaque white glass bangle (fig. 5, 2) and half of a large melon bead of cobalt blue glass (fig. 5, 1) were also recovered from the floor area of this house, though again both were sealed by no more than the top soil. They are objects which probably date to the Roman period in the north, generally having contexts in the first and second centuries A.D. where these can be demonstrated.<sup>8</sup>

Two additional stretches of paving survived in Area A, both undoubtedly fragmentary in nature but again best related to the occupation of the ditched enclosure. The least disturbed and more extensive paving, to the north of house 3, overlay the filled palisade trench of the primary enclosure. Fragments from four different bun-shaped

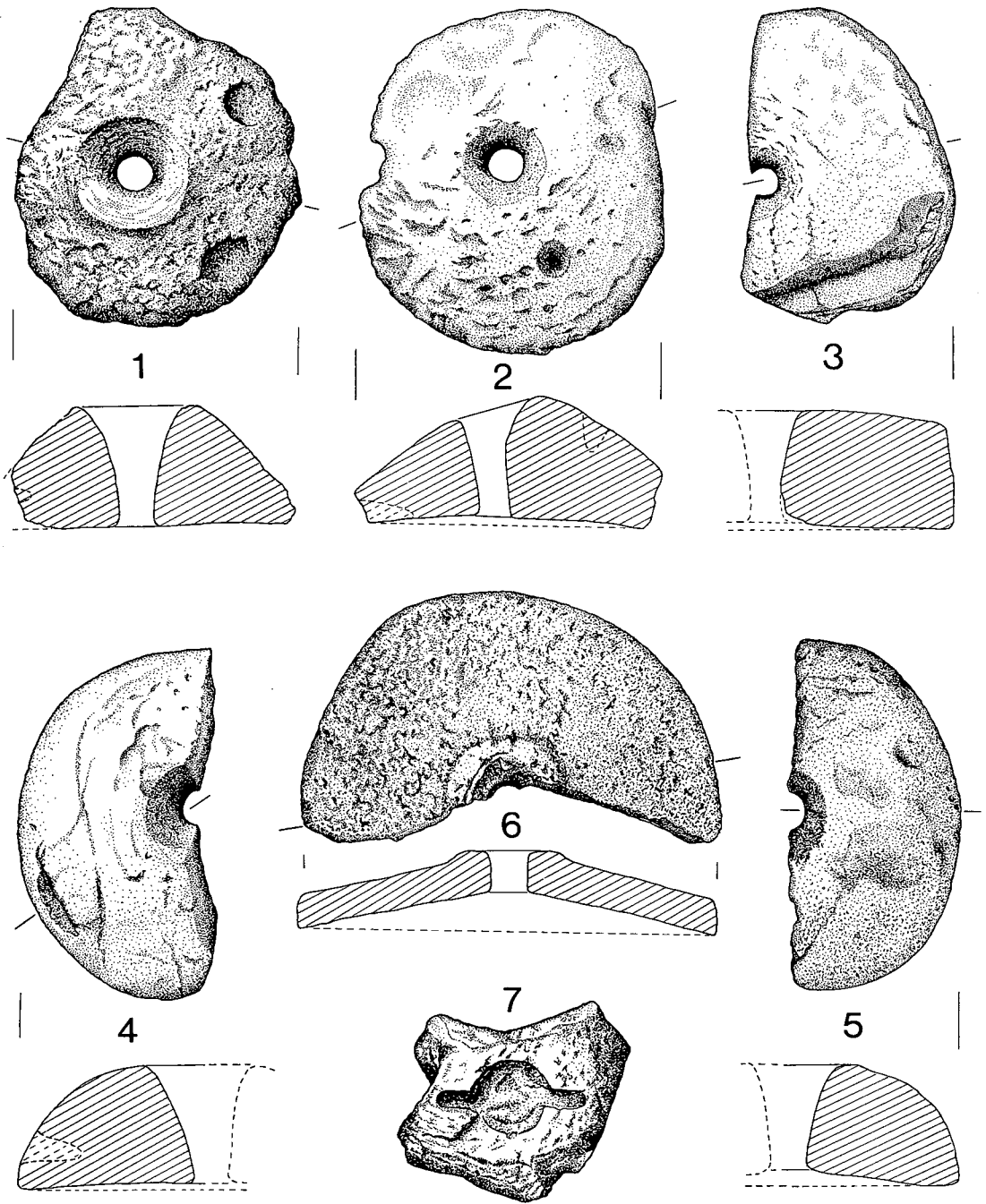


Fig. 3. 1-6 Quernstones (1/6); 7 Mould (1/3).

querns, one of Cheviot igneous stone and the remainder of sandstone, together with an almost complete top stone of sandstone (fig. 3, 1) had been re-used in the paving. In addition, there had been incorporated a discarded sandstone mould of a type similar to a number which have now been recovered from Iron Age and Romano-British settlements in the area (fig. 3, 7).<sup>9</sup> That this stretch of paving had been open during the Roman period was placed almost beyond doubt by the presence of a Roman intaglio (fig. 5, 3), lodged in the top of an interstice between two of the paving slabs.

The second patch of paving, which protruded from beneath the eastern edge of the excavation, had been very much disturbed, perhaps when a more recent field wall had been constructed if not before. Even so, it had evidently been laid down over the light cobbling already tentatively associated with house 2 and possibly house 1. Yet another fragment from a bun-shaped rotary quern and a simple bar-mould for casting ingots of copper or copper alloy were found amongst the rubble remains of the field wall. It is likely that both of these objects had been derived from the occupation of one or other of the earlier enclosures if not the paving itself.

The field wall had eventually been reduced to no more than a spread of rubble by stone robbing, conceivably carried out by the railway navvies or for improvements to neighbouring farms during the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Even so, it was evident that this wall had never continued across the whole of the excavated area, but had terminated in the west at a point where its line was continued by a row of post-holes, numbered 1 to 6 on the plan. In the absence of stratigraphical evidence to the contrary, it would appear that the wall and some form of timber barrier had been related. From surface observation it could also be inferred that the wall was earlier than the hollow way of the mid-nineteenth century and possibly associated with the building excavated in Area B (v. fig. 1).

### C. *The Later Farm Building* (Area B, figs. 1 and 4)

The whole of Area B had also been dug over on some more recent occasion, so that little remained of this building other than very low mounds of mixed rubble and earth and the occasional larger facing stone not always *in situ*. Overall measurements of this building, which appeared to have consisted of two rooms of approximately equal dimensions, had been in the region of 7.5 m by 3.75 m. The doorway, now completely robbed out on the west side, had been in the south facing wall. A small area of secondary paving in the entrance was no doubt associated with the building itself, but an underlying and somewhat larger area of paving ran beneath the remains of the south wall of the building and would be more suitably related to the earlier settlement. The interior floor level had barely survived the later disturbance and consisted of no more than thin, isolated patches of spread clay overlying a lightly cobbled surface similar to that encountered in Area A. Some reddened stones in the north-west corner of the interior could have marked the site of a hearth or oven, a seemingly unusual position but one for which there are some local parallels.<sup>11</sup> As already suspected from surface observation, the field wall which had been cut by the later hollow way had undoubtedly run up to the north-west corner of the building,



though as both were reduced to rubble no firm distinction could be made between them at their junction.

Yet another fragment from the top stone of a bun-shaped rotary quern, undoubtedly from the earlier occupation of the site, had been re-used in the north wall of the building. Finds related to the occupation of the building itself, however, were scarce and not of great use in determining a reliable context for its occupation. They consisted of a small segment from an iron horseshoe, a fragment from a glass bottle possibly of seventeenth century date, and a number of small pieces of coal of which there is no shortage in this part of North Tynedale. All were recovered from the thin patches of clay which had formed the floor. Other items conceivably associated with this occupation were part of a hand-mill (fig. 3, 6) of later type than the bun-shaped querns, this being recovered from the top soil, and the objects from the intrusive pit in house 3, Area A, to which attention has been already drawn.

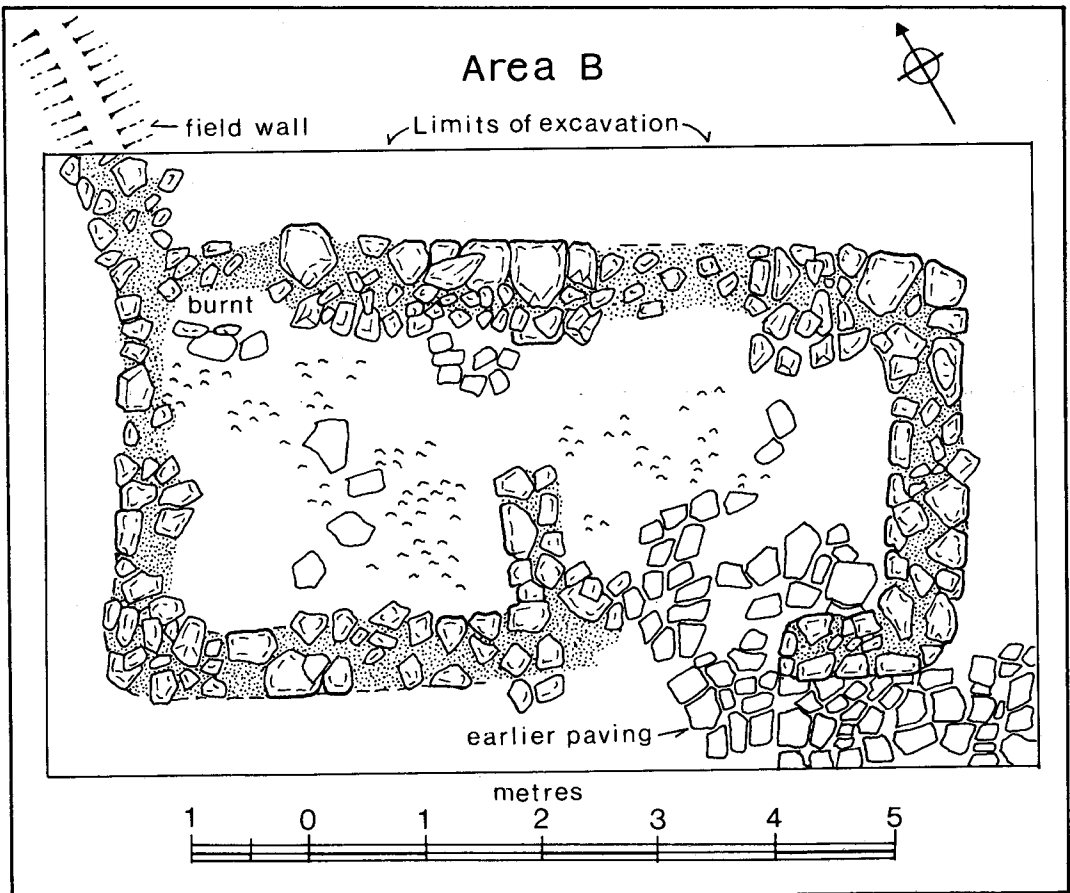


Fig. 4.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Whereas there was some limited evidence for Neolithic to early Bronze Age occupation on the sites of the neighbouring Iron Age and Romano-British settlements on Kennel Hall Knowe<sup>12</sup> and Belling Law,<sup>13</sup> no such early activity was attested in the area investigated at the Gowanburn River Camp. It has been suggested elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> on the evidence at present available, that although North Tynedale was settled in the Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age it was perhaps largely deserted thereafter until the later Iron Age. This could well prove to be the case, but for the present it is a model which would gain greater substance if, for example, the unenclosed settlements in the same valley could be shown convincingly not to belong either in total or in part to the intervening period.<sup>15</sup>

Two main structural phases were present on the Gowanburn settlement, in which round timber-built houses were enclosed first by a free-standing palisade or stockade and later by a bank and ditch enclosure, both perimeters being rectilinear in form. The manner in which the second enclosure respected the location of the first, combined with the apparent dismantling and deliberate infilling of at least part of the support trench for the palisade, would suggest continuous or near continuous occupation, most probably with a direct replacement of the first perimeter by the second. This could have occurred at the end of the useful life of either the original or of replacement timbers in the palisade, as there was no evidence for any destruction by fire. Some rebuilding of timber-built houses had been necessary, but in the limited area exposed in excavation the surviving structural pattern lacked the complexity in house replacement which would demand a very long as well as a continuous occupation. Nor was there any unequivocal indication of an eventual transition from timber-built to stone-built round houses, such as most certainly occurred on some neighbouring settlements and at Tower Knowe and Belling Law not before the mid-second century A.D. It is always possible, however, that subsequent stone robbing for more recent buildings and field walls could have erased earlier remains of this nature.

At least at some stage the ditched enclosure had been occupied in the Roman period. In this respect the Gowanburn River Camp was no different from the many other enclosed settlements of this physical form which have been excavated in the area. But in the absence of earlier material which is closely datable it can only be inferred that the initial timber-built enclosure was not established before the later Iron Age. This is an assumption which would not be altogether at variance with such radiocarbon dates as are available from the neighbouring settlements (*v.* below).

Whilst there are some similarities in form and structural development shared by many of the enclosed settlements of rectilinear shape which have been excavated in this valley and elsewhere in Northumberland, there are also some noteworthy differences. The first of these variants can probably be attributed to nothing more than geological determinism and has been illustrated adequately elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> It is simply that where the final and visible enclosures are situated on underlying drift material, as at Gowanburn River Camp, Kennel Hall Knowe and Belling Law, a ditch is always present, whereas those settlements situated on or near rock outcrop, such as Tower Knowe, Bridge House and Middle Gunnar Peak, have stone-built enclosure walls.

There is another distinction, however, which in the long run could have some useful if general chronological significance for local settlement patterns, particularly in this area where datable Iron Age material is scarce. In their final form all the excavated settlements which are mentioned hereafter were certainly occupied at some stage in

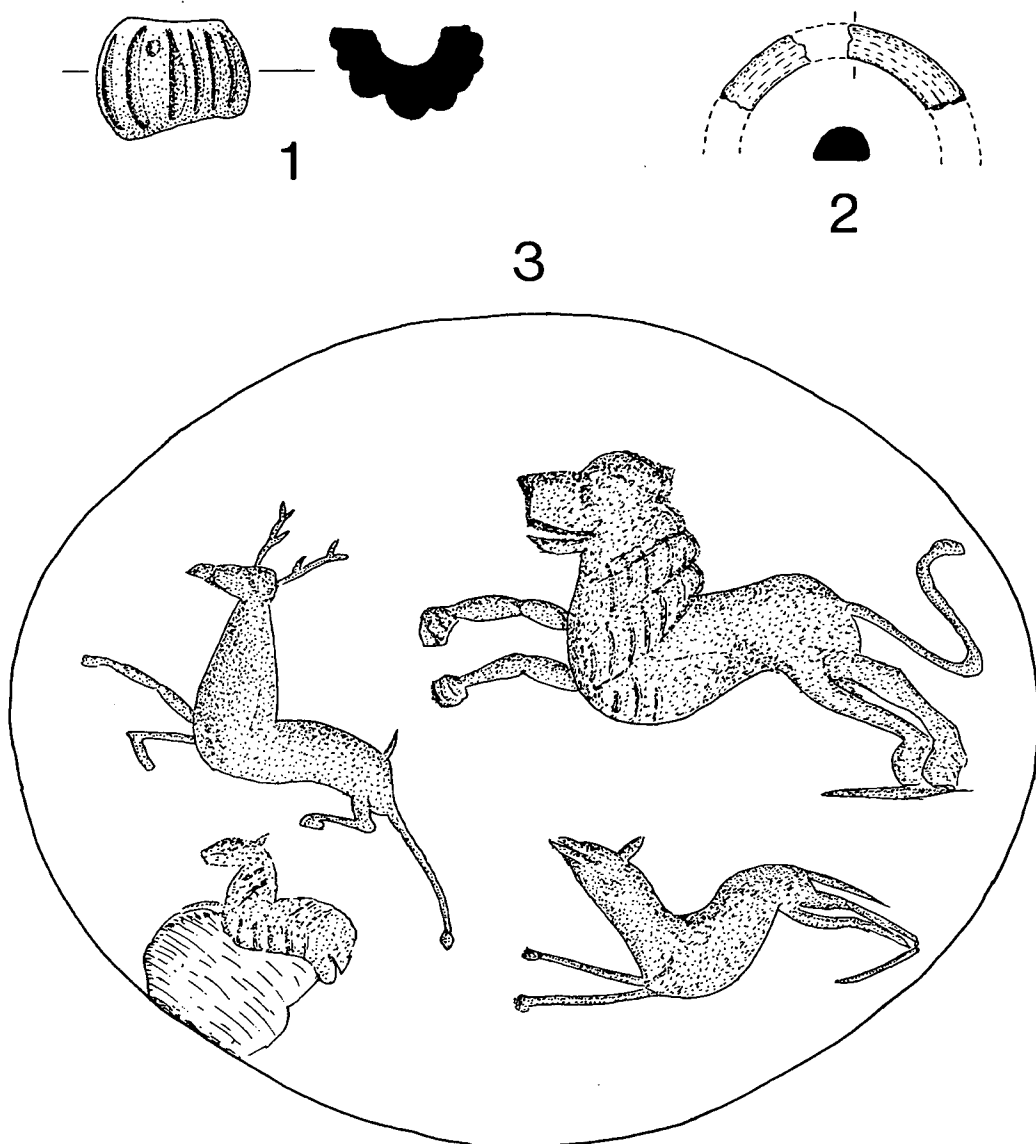


Fig. 5. 1 Glass melon bead (2/3); 2 Glass bangle, Kilbride-Jones, type 3A (2/3); Cornelian intaglio, convex oval c.  $20 \times 17 \times 4$  mm, lion pursuing red deer and hound pursuing another animal largely abraded but not a hare.

the Roman period, and to this extent they are similar to the Gowanburn site. To view no more than a twenty mile long stretch of the North Tyne valley there are now ten settlements in this category, running from Gowanburn River Camp in the north-west to West Gunnar Peak in the south-east (fig. 6, 4). It would also perhaps not be over ambitious to make a tentative addition of a further seventeen sites to this group, solely on morphological grounds,<sup>17</sup> to give a temporary and maybe no more than a minimal picture of settlement in that area in the Roman period. Amongst the ten excavated settlements, however, it would appear that those at Riding Wood,<sup>18</sup> West Longlee,<sup>19</sup> Middle Gunnar Peak,<sup>20</sup> and, only possibly, Carry House,<sup>21</sup> had no structural phases preceding the extant enclosures, whether the latter consisted of a ditch and bank or simply a stone wall. It could then be that these settlements were relatively late foundations in the settlement pattern as a whole. It is now established, however, that the sites at Gowanburn, Tower Knowe and Bridge House<sup>22</sup> each had one earlier timber-built perimeter and thus two enclosure phases in all. Tentative additions to this group might be the unexcavated site at Boggle Hill,<sup>23</sup> where there is seemingly one palisaded perimeter, and West Gunnar Peak,<sup>24</sup> though at the latter the promontory enclosure preceding the stone-built Romano-British settlement was of stone and not timber (fig. 6, 3). At Belling Law, on the other hand, there were certainly two earlier timber-built enclosures, giving a sequence of three enclosures in all with a radiocarbon date of  $160 \pm 80$  b.c. attributed to the earliest<sup>25</sup> (fig. 6, 2). Finally, and even if only for the present, the settlement on Kennel Hall Knowe has been shown to be the most complex of the sites, having had as many as three timber-built enclosures before the construction of the final, ditched, enclosure. Here a radiocarbon date of  $100 \pm 90$  b.c. was most probably to be related to the second timber-built enclosure<sup>26</sup> (fig. 6, 1). Now there are obvious shortcomings in any hypothesis based mainly upon the number of structural phases on these settlements, compounded by a shortage of meaningful dates prior to the Roman period and the substantial number of sites which remain unexcavated in this single valley. Nevertheless, it may yet be possible to anticipate a situation where there could have been a general increase over time in the number of settlements in the valley, commencing with settlements such as Kennel Hall Knowe and peaking eventually in the late Iron Age or early Roman period. It is recognized that on present evidence this is not a picture which can be said to have a general application, even in the restricted area of Northumberland. Yet there are some local valleys, such as the Breamish beyond its gorge, where the archaeological landscape is well preserved and in the crude terms of site morphology there would appear to be more settlements of Romano-British than Iron Age type, with the total number of houses eventually present in the former apparently being well in excess of what could be contained in the latter.<sup>27</sup>

The timber-built phases on the excavated settlements in North Tynedale, including Gowanburn River Camp, also serve as a reminder of the possible longevity of the palisaded enclosure as a structural form. Whilst some such settlements in the Tyne–Forth area are associated with radiocarbon dates at least as early as the sixth and seventh centuries b.c., it now seems likely that in some areas timber-built enclosures, whether free-standing or slightly embanked, could have continued to be constructed in the later Iron Age alongside more robustly defended forts and

settlements. Albeit on a limited number of radiocarbon dates this somewhat later context for timber-built enclosures could also be envisaged for the settlements at Ingram Hill<sup>28</sup> in the Breamish valley and at Murton High Crags<sup>29</sup> in north Northumberland.

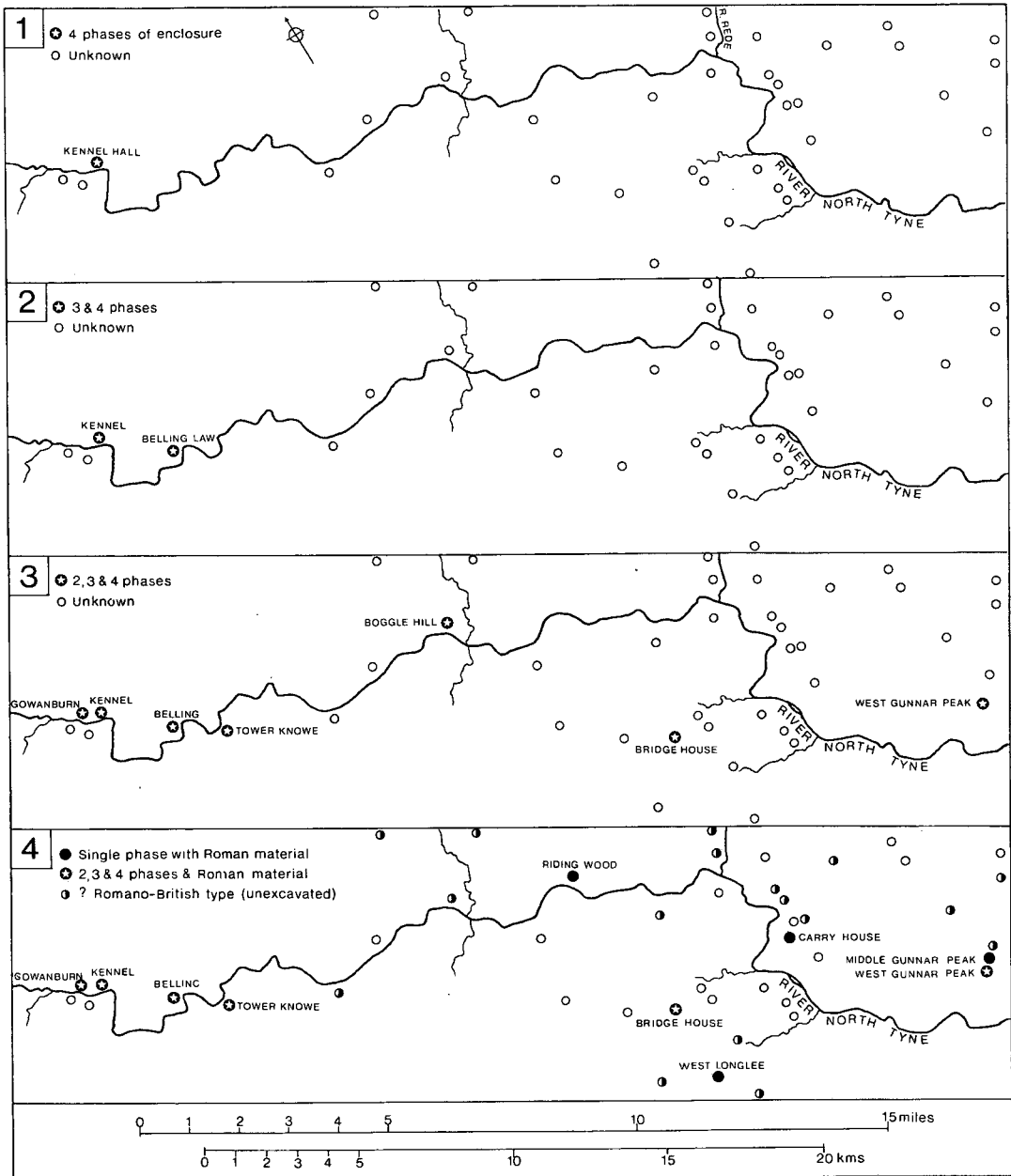


Fig. 6.

The reasons leading to the general replacement of timber-built perimeters by more durable and substantial forms of enclosure at Gowanburn River Camp and other neighbouring settlements, perhaps not before the late Iron Age, remain problematical. It is possible that the impetus was provided by nothing more than a growing shortage of stands of suitable timber, an explanation which finds some support in pollen analyses from elsewhere in the area, where notable clearance is attested in the late Iron Age to early Roman period.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, at nearby Kennel Hall Knowe it would appear that only open scrub woodland existed in the vicinity of the settlement when the final, ditched enclosure was constructed.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, if a shortage of suitable timber was the reason for the abandonment of timber-built perimeters it did not appear to lead immediately to a change from timber to stone in the construction of the traditional round houses, either at Gowanburn or necessarily elsewhere in the locality.

Later land utilization did not favour the survival of any traces of arable cultivation associated with the early settlements at Gowanburn. Nevertheless, the bun-shaped rotary quern was the most frequent find; in all some twelve to thirteen different examples were recovered, mainly re-used in secondary contexts but some conceivably derived from the occupation of the earliest, timber-built enclosure. All but one of these stones were probably of local sandstone, which at least in a later period in history was being exploited for millstones on the not too distant Millstone Pike and Crag.<sup>32</sup> As a whole they add substance to the evidence for crop-growing in the valley in the later Iron Age and Roman period, already attested not only by similar lithic material from neighbouring settlements, but also by the plough-marks beneath the bank of the final enclosure at Belling Law and by the remains of field-clearance at Tower Knowe, to go no further afield than the area of the present reservoir. The small sample of skeletal material from neighbouring Kennel Hall Knowe, indicating the presence of cattle, sheep or goat, and pig, in a context associated with a radiocarbon date of  $20 \pm 70$  b.c.,<sup>33</sup> must suffice to demonstrate the presence of animal husbandry in a mixed farming economy. However, indirect evidence for the corralling of stock at Gowanburn River Camp might be seen in the limited disclosure of an area of cobbling which was possibly the beginning of a frontal yard or yards, analogous to those found on other early settlements in the area. Some years ago it was also argued that the distribution of similar early settlements further to the south in the North Tyne valley was such as to give a tentative indication of land holding by individual settlements: located at a spacing of one quarter to half a mile apart (0.4 to 0.8 km) these sites appeared to lie within natural boundaries provided by the tributary burns flowing into the main river.<sup>34</sup> This is a scenario which could also be inferred in the area of the more recent excavations, providing the Gowanburn settlement with a stretch of river frontage and a hinterland running back to the higher slopes still suitable for upland grazing (fig. 1).

Although smithing and in one instance smelting of iron ore has been attested on some of the neighbouring settlements in Roman contexts, the only evidence for industrial activity at Gowanburn occurred in the form of two sandstone moulds, generally seen to be used for the casting of ingots of copper or copper alloy. Whilst moulds similar to those from Gowanburn are not numerous from local Iron Age and

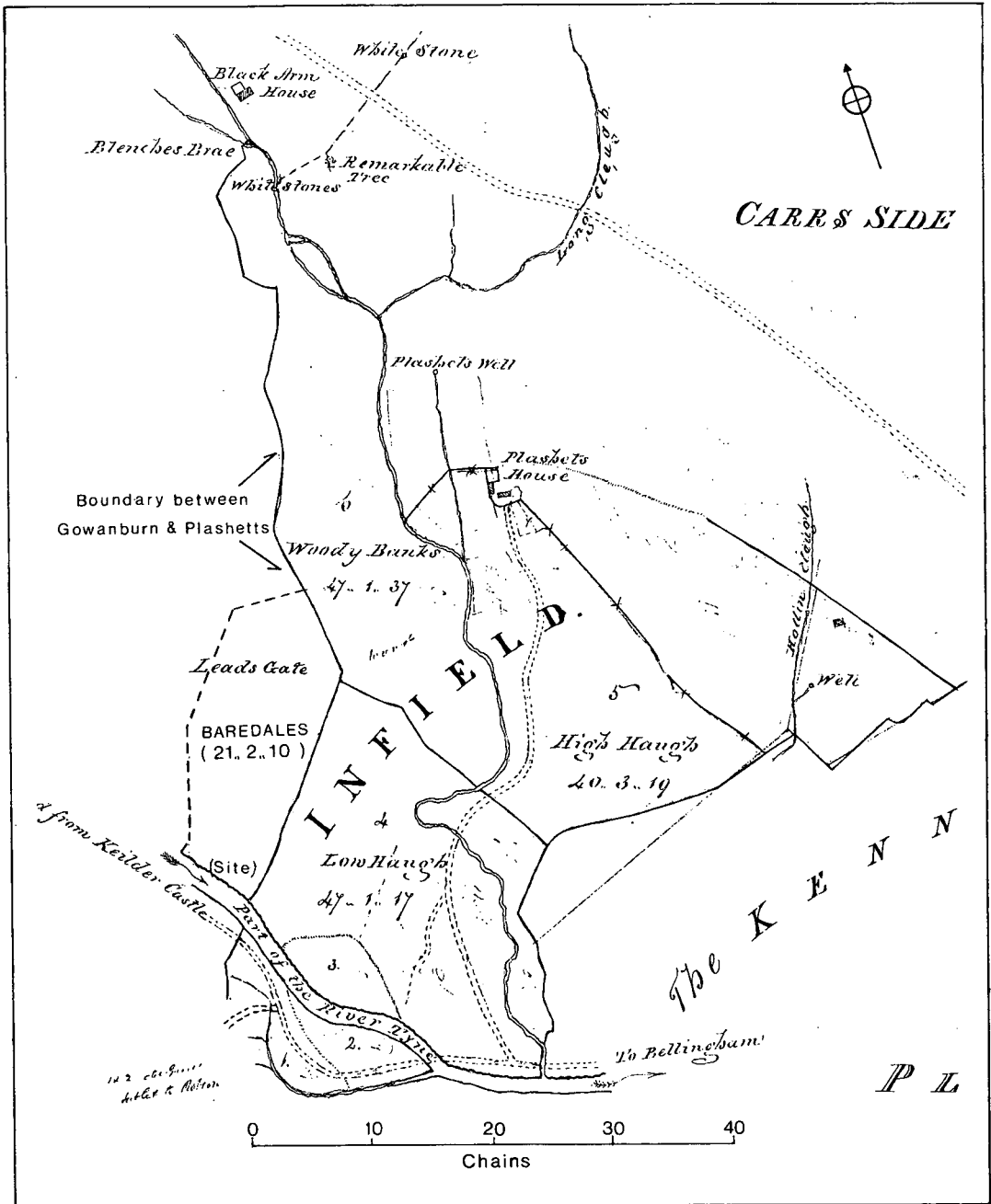


Fig. 7. Plan of Plashetts farm by Thomas Wilkin, 1796, with area of Baredales added from an early 19th century plan.

Romano-British settlements they are at least now achieving some persistency.<sup>35</sup>

In this instance it would be unwise to speculate on the possible impact of Rome on the economy of the inhabitants with no more than a single exotic intaglio as a basis. Nor would it be reasonable to attribute any significance to the absence of Roman sherds when sherds of native pottery were also wanting.

If, as may have been the case, the inhabitants of the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement were fairly assiduous in the disposal of their domestic rubbish, either over the river scarp or even over their fields, then so too could have been the occupants of the two more recent farm buildings which occupied the same site. Should there ever have been a "wealth 'o gear i' Gowanburn", as poetic rumour would have it, then it was not present in the one building which was excavated, even to the limited extent of providing a reliable context for its occupation. A date prior to if not well before the construction of the railway was dictated by ground survey, whilst there is certainly no record of buildings thereabouts after that time, even as derelict structures.<sup>36</sup> Although the buildings were on Gowanburn land, the farm of Gowanburn lies some 2 km (1¼ miles) up-river to the north-west. From early nineteenth century surveys of the Gowanburn farm it is evident that the large, enclosed area within which both the earthwork and later buildings were located was known as Baredales (fig. 7).<sup>37</sup> This is the large enclosure or field which also appears on MacLauchlan's plan of 1863 and the first and subsequent editions of the O.S. maps (fig. 1, 2). No buildings are recorded, however, in this particular area in the earlier nineteenth century surveys. The name Baredales or its equivalent has been encountered in only one other context in the area, but the location in this instance is somewhat ambiguous and in any event there is no association with a farm or buildings.<sup>38</sup> For the present, eighteenth and seventeenth century documentary sources have also proved unfruitful in the attribution of a possible name and datable context for the remains. In brief, therefore, and with no more than a fragment from a glass bottle possibly of seventeenth century date as a guide, an occupation in the seventeenth century can only be tentatively envisaged, perhaps short in its duration but of a more permanent nature than that of a shieling. This would be in keeping with the general movement of permanent farms westwards into this part of the valley by the mid to later seventeenth century, as witnessed at nearby Plashetts, Kennel and Wellhaugh. The settlement patterns in the valley during medieval and more recent times have already been discussed and illustrated in some detail by Barbara Harbottle and T. G. Newman in the Society's transactions.<sup>39</sup> It remains merely to point to the frequency with which some of these later farms adopt the locations formerly occupied by Iron Age and Romano-British settlements, as is the case at Gowanburn River Camp.

#### *Acknowledgements*

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## REFERENCES

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- <sup>2</sup> MacLauchlan, H., *Notes not included in the Memoirs on Roman Roads in Northumberland* (London, 1867), 65. The site was described as being already “indistinct” at that time.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 66. The Duke of Northumberland’s library copy contains an interleaved pencil plan of the area, dated Aug. 1863, on which the site is shown at thumb-nail size. Smith, Sir David, *Camps and Castles*, vol. 3, Kielder District no. 11 & sketch.
- <sup>4</sup> Jobey, G., “Some rectilinear settlements of the Roman period in Northumberland”, AA<sup>4</sup> XXXVIII (1960), 1–38. The site was not plotted by the O.S. until 1970.
- <sup>5</sup> Slade, J. and M., “Railway structures near Falstone”, AA<sup>5</sup> III (1975), 196.
- <sup>6</sup> Additional plans, sections and photographs, together with the finds, will be deposited in the Joint Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne.
- <sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*
- <sup>8</sup> Stevenson, R. B. K., “Romano-British glass bangles”, *Glasgow Arch. J.* 4 (1976), 45–53. Guido, M., *The glass beads of the prehistoric and Roman periods in Britain and Ireland* (London, 1978), 228–30.
- <sup>9</sup> e.g. Jobey, G., “A native settlement at Hartburn”, AA<sup>5</sup> I (1973), 41.
- <sup>10</sup> e.g. N.R.O. ZAN BELL 65/3. Report on Plashetts and Black Arm farm in 1847, wherein the recommendations for improvements include the erection of good and sufficient walls, to make good the poor state of the boundary fences between the infield grounds of Plashetts and those of Gowanburn farm.
- <sup>11</sup> Harbottle, B. and Newman, T. G., “Excavation and survey on the Starsley Burn”, AA<sup>5</sup> I (1973), 163.
- <sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, 4–6.
- <sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, 4–7.
- <sup>14</sup> Burgess, C. B., “The prehistoric settlement of Northumberland: a speculative survey”, *Between and beyond the Walls* (ed. Miket and Burgess; Edinburgh, 1984), 165.
- <sup>15</sup> Jobey, G., “The unenclosed settlements of Tyne–Forth”, *Upland settlement in Britain*, B.A.R. Br. ser. 143 (1985), 177–93.
- <sup>16</sup> Jobey, G., “Iron Age and later farmsteads on Belling Law, Northumberland”, AA<sup>5</sup> V (1977), 35 and fig. 14.
- <sup>17</sup> According to the diagnostic traits employed in AA<sup>4</sup> XXXVIII (1960), 51–74, which have since been reinforced by further excavation.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, site no. 51 in summary form only.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, site no. 35.
- <sup>20</sup> Jobey, I., “Excavations at Middle Gunnar Peak, Barrasford”, AA<sup>5</sup> IX (1981), 51–74.
- <sup>21</sup> Hall, Rome G., *Archaeologia* XLV (1880), 335–74. An early excavation which may have missed any earlier timber-built enclosures.
- <sup>22</sup> Charlton, D. B. and Day, J. C., “Bridge House re-examined”, AA<sup>5</sup> II (1974), 33–40.
- <sup>23</sup> Jobey, G., “A settlement on Boggle Hill, Thorneyburn”, AA<sup>5</sup> XII (1984), 241–2.
- <sup>24</sup> Hogg, A. H. A., “The native settlement at Gunnar Peak”, AA<sup>4</sup> XX (1942), 155–73.
- <sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, 13.
- <sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, 11 and 24.
- <sup>27</sup> Jobey, G., “Excavations at Brough Law and Ingram Hill”, AA<sup>4</sup> XLIX (1971), 71–93. “Between Tyne and Forth: some problems”, *Rural Settlement in the Roman north* (ed. Clack, P. and Haselgrove, S.: C.B.A. 3, 1982), 12.
- <sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.* The radiocarbon date related to the first phase at Ingram Hill was 200 ± 90 b.c., not being significantly different from a date of 245 ± 90 b.c. from the nearby hillfort on Brough Law.
- <sup>29</sup> Jobey, I. and G., “Excavations at Murton High Crags, Northumberland”, AA<sup>5</sup> XV (1987), forthcoming. The radiocarbon date for the earliest timber-built perimeter was 180 ± 90 b.c.
- <sup>30</sup> Davies, G. and Turner, J., “Pollen diagrams for Northumberland”, *New Phytologist* 82, 783–804.
- <sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, 23.
- <sup>32</sup> Jobey, G., “Millstones and millstone quarries in Northumberland”, AA<sup>5</sup> XIV (1986), 77.
- <sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, 13 and 22.
- <sup>34</sup> Jobey, G., “Additional rectilinear settlements in Northumberland”, AA<sup>4</sup> XLI (1963), 211–15.
- <sup>35</sup> The bar mould with circular expansion from the settlement at Hartburn (AA<sup>5</sup> I (1973), 39) is similar to that which is illustrated from Gowanburn and must now be accepted as a type.
- <sup>36</sup> The nearby farm of Black Arm which was eventually incorporated into Plashetts farm, and part of which had been added to Gowanburn by 1796, was nonetheless still shown as abandoned and “derelict” on the first edition of the O.S. map in 1866.

<sup>37</sup>The report of Messrs. Tate and Bell on Gowanburn farm in 1847 (N.R.O. ZAN BELL 65/3) gives Bare Dales as being 21a 2r 10p of old grass. An undated but certainly early nineteenth century plan of Gowanburn farm delineates an area of the same extent, marked "Baredales", which is adjacent to the Gowanburn and Plashetts boundary as shown in this figure.

<sup>38</sup>Sir David Smith in his MSS identifies a "Bairdails" camp as "known by the country

people" lying to the west of Kennel house on the north side of the North Tyne but in a location different from the Gowanburn River Camp which he so names (info. Dr. C. Shrimpton). It is nonetheless possible that both references could be to the same earthwork.

<sup>39</sup>Harbottle, B. and Newman, T. G., "Excavation and survey on the Starsley Burn, North Tynedale, 1972", *AA<sup>5</sup> I* (1973), 137-54.

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