

ART. IV – *Excavations at St Nicholas Yard, Carlisle, 1996-7*

By CHRISTINE HOWARD-DAVIS AND MARK LEAH

**S**T Nicholas Yard lies to the west of Botchergate/London Road in the southern suburbs of Carlisle (NY 4065 5505 – Fig. 1). The area has long been known as the probable site of the leper hospital of St Nicholas (Nicolson and Burn 1777), although the precise location of the conventual buildings has been lost (Barnes 1906). A programme of archaeological investigation was thus commissioned and funded by Aldi Supermarkets Ltd in advance of the redevelopment of the site. An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Archaeological Practice, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Caruana 1995), which identified that part of the proposed development area requiring further archaeological investigation. Excavation of these areas was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit, for a total of eight weeks between January 1996 and April 1997, which is reported here.

Whilst today the site is within the southern suburbs of the City of Carlisle, it was, until at least the late eighteenth century, rather more rural, appearing as agricultural land as late as the 1848 tithe award (Botchergate tithe: CRO DRC/8/22). Prior to the urban spread, the land was relatively flat and low-lying, its soils deriving from underlying glacial deposits, mainly sands and gravels (Geol Survey England and Wales 1967).

The history of the Hospital of St Nicholas has recently been examined by Wiseman (1995, 1996) who has dealt with the documentary evidence in great detail. The date of the foundation of the Hospital is unknown, but in general, documentary evidence points to the later twelfth century, with the first indisputable reference dated 1201. By 1293 the rule of the house was reformed by Hugh de Cressingham, but in 1295 the Hospital buildings were destroyed by the Scots, and Hugh died in battle two years later (Wiseman 1995, 98). The disarray in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was marked and the Hospital fell into decline. By 1477 the Hospital was forced to seek protection from the Prior of St Mary's, Carlisle, and was made over to the Dean and Chapter on the Dissolution of the Priory in 1541. The Hospital continued to decline and the buildings were reported as severely damaged, if not completely destroyed, during the Parliamentary siege of Carlisle in 1645. Since then, the site has been more-or-less continuously occupied, with a succession of buildings standing in the same spot, including a range of cottages known to have been erected in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (Jefferson 1838) and thought to have been standing as late as 1913 (illustrated by Bushby, reproduced in Perriam 1992, 15). These were replaced in the mid-1920s by the Charles Cropper Hall, which was demolished as a precursor to the present development of the site.

### **The excavation**

Initially, three machine-cut trial trenches were excavated within the sensitive area defined by the original evaluation (Caruana 1995); this was sufficient to demonstrate that detailed excavation was necessary only within the area formerly

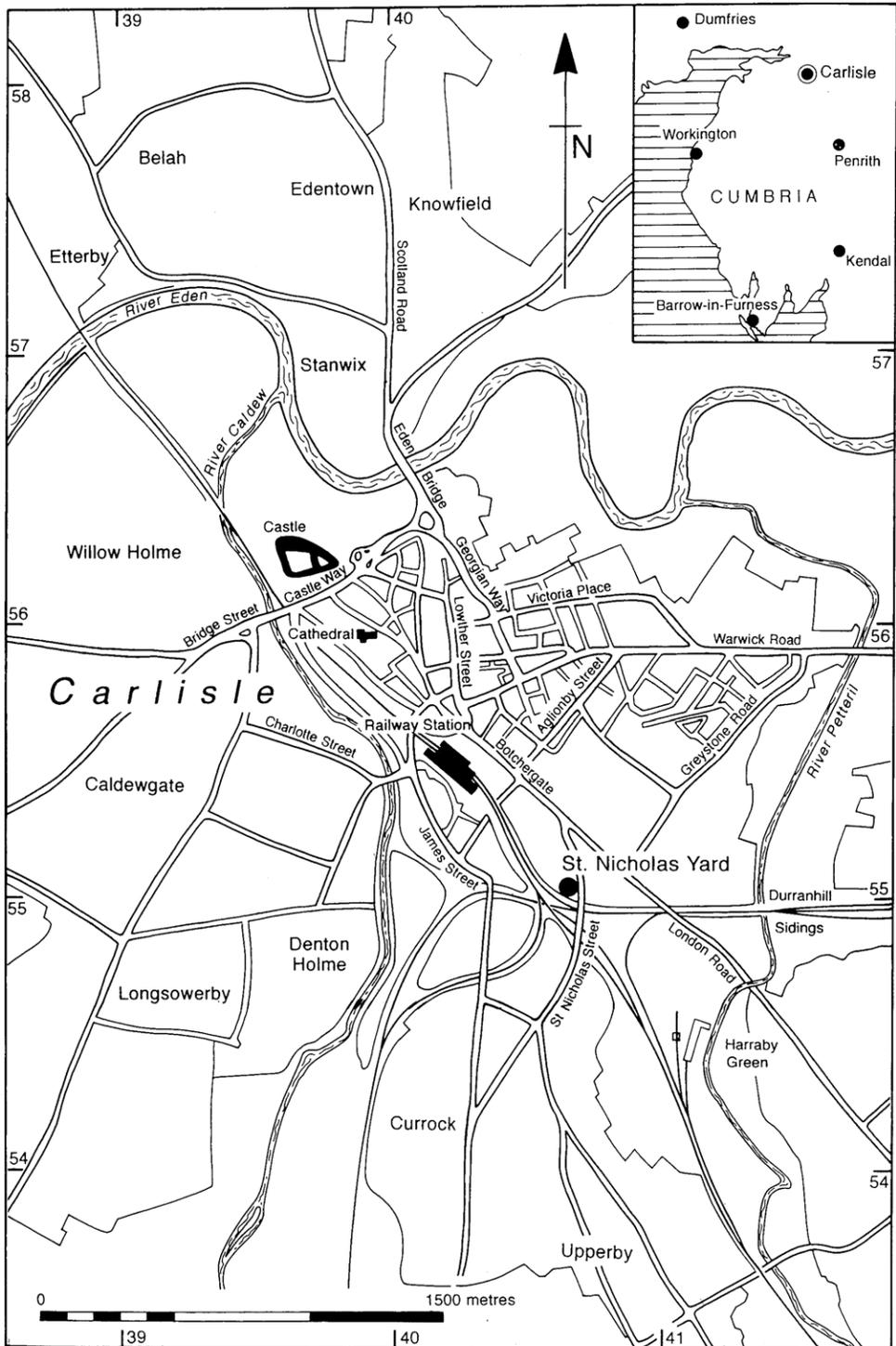


FIG. 1. Area Location Plan.

occupied by the Charles Cropper Hall, and to its immediate south (Fig. 2). A substantial part of this area was examined by open area excavation (Fig. 3); the overburden of modern deposits was removed by machine and then excavation proceeded by hand, with deposits removed in a controlled stratigraphic fashion.

A lengthy break between the first and second phases of excavation meant that the excavated surface of the site, left open during that period, weathered badly. On the resumption of excavation in April 1997, a mini-digger with a small, toothless ditching bucket was used, under strict archaeological supervision, to clean all badly weathered surfaces, with little loss to the stratigraphic record.

At the conclusion of the scheduled excavation programme some further investigation was permitted, in an attempt to resolve some of the questions raised by the site. Modern overburden at the extreme north-eastern corner of the site was removed by machine and a fourth, machine-cut trial trench was opened, running westwards from the then western edge of the excavation, to the western limit of the development area. Both areas were cleared in order to elucidate deposits and features noted during the open-area excavation.

As with many urban sites, most of the late artefact material from the site was not retained, especially as the latest deposits were removed by machine. Once stratified deposits were reached, however, a policy of total recovery was pursued, by which all finds were collected by stratigraphic unit. Sampling for environmental evidence was undertaken on a judgmental basis, and, in the case of the recognisably Roman cremations, soil, cremated bone, and any contemporary container were lifted as one. Badly disturbed contexts which may or may not have contained cremated bone were also sampled, retaining as much of the deposit as possible (often only a small amount remained) for subsequent sieving.

The stratigraphy recorded has been subdivided into four separate, successive phases of activity, each dated with reference to artefacts recovered, pottery providing the principal dating evidence. The full site archive has been deposited at Tullie House Museum, Carlisle.

### *Period 1: Roman*

Evidence for Period 1 activity is dominated by two broad (4 m wide), but shallow (only *c.* 0.5 m deep), ditches, oriented roughly north-to-south across the eastern half of the excavated area. Ditch 558 extended *c.* 18 m northwards from the southern edge of the excavation, whilst Ditch 594 extended *c.* 1.1 m southwards from the northern edge. Both followed the same alignment, but did not meet, leaving a gap of 3.5 m between their rounded terminals. The southern end of Ditch 594 appeared to curve gently to the west, giving the impression of an entrance, especially as the causeway between the ends of the ditches was cobbled (554). This metalling not only extended eastwards from this entrance (continuing beyond the limits of excavation), but also appeared to line the sides and bases of both ditches (380/421/564), being sealed by their primary silting layers. Whilst it must be later in date than the ditches themselves, pottery from their lowest fills, which built up over the cobbles, suggests that these accumulated during the Roman period, and thus the metalling can be regarded as effectively contemporary, perhaps representing a

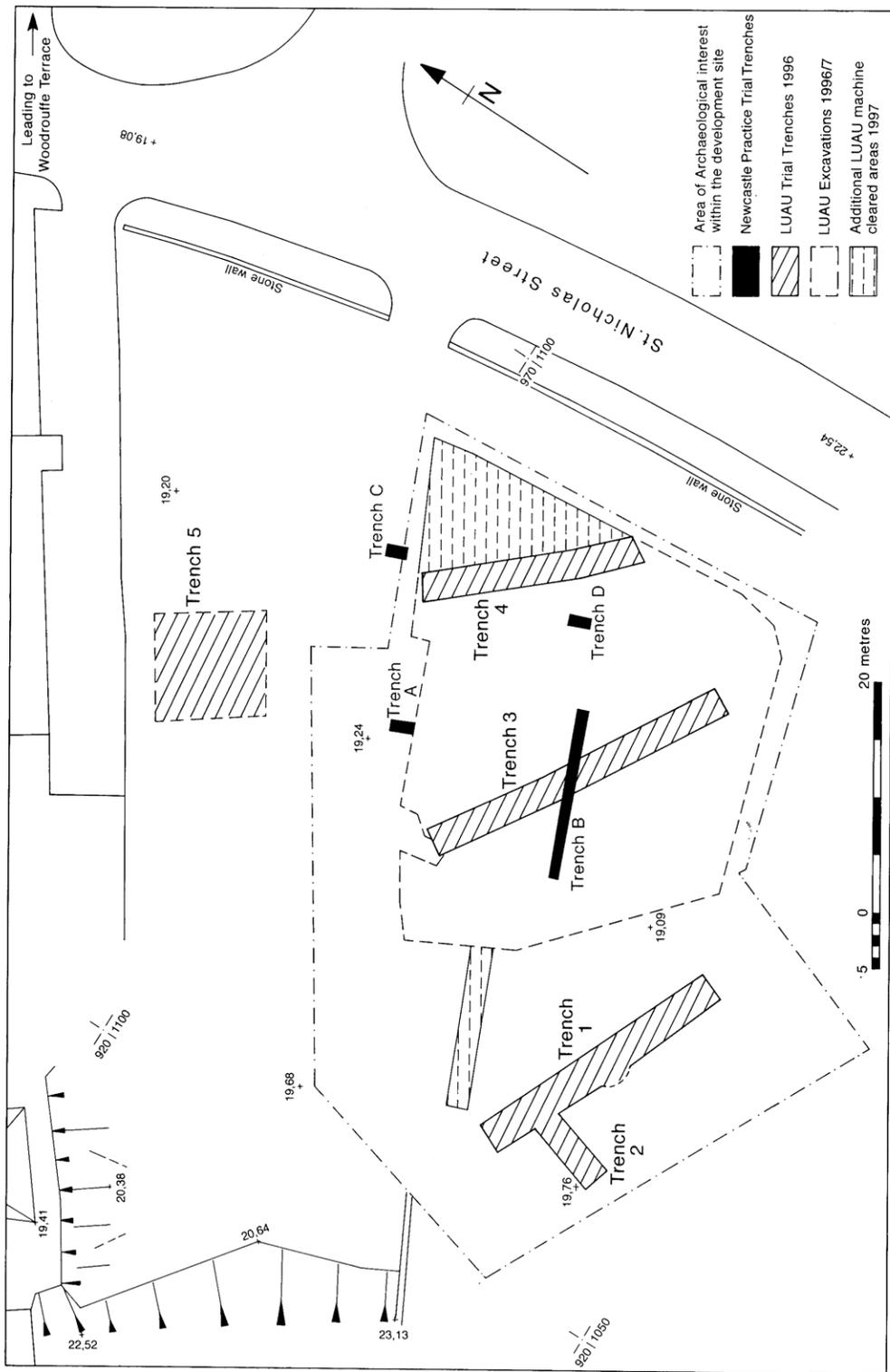


Fig. 2. Trench Location Plan.



relatively substantial trackway running up to, and through, the gap between the ditches.

The area to the west of the ditches was badly disturbed by later activity, but no evidence was found to suggest that the metalling continued westwards beyond the gap, perhaps allowing the inference that land to the west was effectively “inside” whatever boundary or enclosure was marked by the interrupted ditch or ditches. As, however, there was no significant curve within the site to suggest that they were turning to form an enclosure either to the east or the west, it might equally be argued that the metalling represents “inside” and that the unmetalled area represents fields or less intensively occupied ground beyond the boundary.

Despite severe post-medieval disturbance in the central and western parts of the site, several associated cut features were recorded to the west of the apparent boundary represented by Ditches 558 and 594. All were badly truncated, and only two, 108 and 208, can be interpreted with any confidence. The first (108, fill 109) was clearly an inurned cremation burial comprising a small, steep-sided circular pit containing a pottery vessel, partially removed by later activity, which in turn contained a quantity of heavily calcined bone. The cut was little larger than the vessel it contained, and the upright pot had been tightly wedged in place with stones. The second feature (208, fill 119) lay some 7 m to the north-west, and comprised a sub-rectangular pit, *c.* 2.5 m by 1 m, aligned roughly north-south. A number of L-shaped iron reinforcements (preserving wood impressions in their corrosion products) lying *in situ* at the corners, and towards the middle of the sides of the pit, are convincing evidence that it contained a substantial wooden box, in which at least two crushed pottery vessels of Roman date were found, as well as a small fragment of colourless Roman glass. Although no bone survived within the feature, it seems reasonable to interpret this as a coffined inhumation burial, the bone having been destroyed by inimical soil conditions.

Given the presence of a cremation and a probable inhumation, it is suggested that the ditches described above may have marked the boundary of a cemetery and, by extension, that several more of the shallow, heavily truncated cut features identified in this area (e.g. 230, 357, 335) may represent the last traces of other graves. However, though some provided Roman dating evidence, the high level of disturbance in this area has led to the incorporation of medieval pottery within the upper parts of the fills of some of these now very shallow features.

There was no evidence for domestic or other structures on the site during this period. There was, however, sufficient evidence, in the form of short stretches of ditch, to suggest some smaller enclosures in the south-eastern part of the site, perhaps representing activity entirely unassociated with the putative cemetery. These comprised smaller, shallower Ditch 637 (around 2.2 m wide and up to 0.3 m deep) merging with Ditch 558 from the west at an acute angle, and meeting it some 3 m south of its terminus; the end of Ditch 679 further to the west, which was traced for *c.* 3 m northwards from the southern edge of the excavation; feature 663, parallel to Ditches 558 and 594 at the extreme western edge of the site, which would appear to have been a substantial ditch (in excess of 1.8 m wide, and over 4 m long) and a similar feature, Ditch 651 (1.72 m wide and 0.18 m deep), which extended westwards from the eastern edge of the excavation for 2 m, effectively at right angles to all others on the site. The ditches on both sides of Ditch 558 cannot be

established as exactly contemporary, although they are likely to date to the Roman period. They may well represent field or paddock boundaries, although insufficient evidence remains to determine their original purpose. The fills of all of the ditches associated with this phase were essentially similar, clean silty sand likely to be derived largely from the natural subsoils, probably re-deposited in the course of slow natural silting of the open ditches.

### *Period 2: Medieval.*

Late disturbance rendered the evidence from this period fragmentary and difficult to interpret, although two successive sub-phases have been recognised (2A and 2B) which appear to cover the entire active life of St Nicholas Hospital.

### *Period 2A*

Some of the Period 1 ditches (594, 637) clearly continued to accumulate fills during the early part of Period 2, as several of their upper fills contained medieval pottery. This must suggest that they remained as extant features, with perceptible hollows marking their line, at least until the twelfth century, even though their relevance as boundaries was probably lost.

Several substantial medieval pits, heavily disturbed by later activity, must have been of significance. Pits 568 and 576, which lay towards the southern limits of the excavation, were oval, 1.8 m and 2.7 m long respectively, with near vertical sides, and both were cut into the latest (early Period 2A) fills of the Period 1 ditches. Although only 0.35 m deep, the base of Pit 568 appears to have been lined with large water-worn stones, perhaps an attempt at drainage, which were covered by a series of thin stony fills (569, 570, 571). Pit 576 was not only longer, but substantially deeper at 1.3 m, and its primary fill (660) was a layer of decayed organic material, sealed by three sandy fills with varying amounts of rounded pebbles (659, 658 and 577). The fills of both pits produced pottery of twelfth to early thirteenth century date.

At the south-eastern extent of the site, was what appeared at first to be a third large pit (296) cut into the upper fills of Roman Ditch 558. The large oval cut, almost 2 m long and *c.* 0.5 m deep, contained up to 15 fills, thin layers of alternating clean or sandy silty soils, burnt red clay, and charcoal-rich soil. Above this lay a corbelled sandstone structure, which was only visible in the excavation baulk. It seems likely that the structure represents the last in a succession of ovens, perhaps built over a gradually filling rake-out pit. Again, pottery suggests a late twelfth to early thirteenth century date, but, as might be expected in the context, there was an appreciable element of residual Romano-British material.

In addition, there were several small, isolated pits (163, 179, 181, 212, 258 and 259) and shallow gullies (269 and 359), none of which could be further interpreted. There was also a number of relatively small post-holes (e.g. 122, 232, 234, 236, 597, 623, 628, 632, 668) appearing either as isolated individuals or in small groups. No sense could be made of their distribution and, whilst it is possible that they might represent the fragmentary remains of fences or other slight wooden structures and therefore cannot be dismissed, in no case could they be resolved into convincing structures.

Perhaps the most significant feature of medieval date investigated in the course of these excavations proved to be the construction pit (572) for a possible well, which was sealed by and/or cut by later post-medieval features. Much of the visible fill was clean sand (117), although the instability of the natural gravels meant that little of the shaft could be excavated: the top of the circular well-shaft contained a deposit of dark, silty sand (620). Material again suggested a twelfth to thirteenth century date range.

Immediately to the south there was a crude stone-lined oven (517, 675), again roughly oval in plan (c. 3.5 m by 1.2 m) and aligned north-south. The principal fill (518) contained material of marginally later date (thirteenth to fourteenth century), suggesting that it may have been in use later than the features described above. This had been bisected by a 1995 trial trench (Caruana 1995), but was demonstrably associated with deposits of raked-out ash (523, 527) and a mixed layer of redeposited gravels, stones and brown soil (648, 524, 525), which perhaps represents a sequence of occupation or floor levels to the east. Although undated, these deposits were sealed by the Period 2B structure (discussed below).

### *Period 2B*

Two badly damaged parallel sets of wall footings, aligned east-west, appear to represent the scant remains of a building(s) which are marked on eighteenth century maps and which were replaced in the early nineteenth century by the cottages that stood on the site until the construction of Charles Cropper Hall in the 1920s. Whilst not closely dated, it seems likely that they are later medieval in date, and thus probably associated with the Hospital.

The northern wall (329/512) lay immediately to the south of, and parallel with, the south wall of Charles Cropper Hall. The line of the wall was interrupted by late disturbance, leaving a gap some 8 m long between the two elements. To the west (329) it directly overlay Oven 517/675 and was represented only by footings comprising large, tightly-packed cobbles, with little trace of a foundation trench, whilst to the east (512) it appeared to have been of a more substantial build, now represented by a single course of sandstone blocks. A southern return (the east wall) was indicated by 291, a strip of cobbles marking an entrance, and there were also traces of an entrance at the western end of Wall 329/512, marked by a worn threshold. Also towards the western end of Wall 329/512 an insignificant clay and rubble wall (627) was seen running north for a short distance until cut by the southern wall (102) of Charles Cropper Hall. Wall 209/381 lay parallel, 5 m to the south. Whilst the appearance of the footings was very similar to those of 329, in this case they lay within a shallow foundation trench (590). Any floor levels associated with these walls appear to have been obliterated by later disturbance.

The change in construction part way along Wall 329/512 might mark a renewal or enlargement of the structure, but all significant relationships had been removed by the construction of Structure 368 (Period 4; an immediate precursor to the Charles Cropper Hall). A single fragment of eighteenth century pottery from the upper part of Wall 329 provides a date for the wall, but seems more likely to be intrusive from the layer above than contemporary with the wall's construction, perhaps marking the date of its demolition rather than its erection.

A cobble spread (610) lay to the west of this putative building; whilst its full extent to the west was obscured by later disturbance, its limits to north, east and south appeared to respect the layout of the surviving walls of the structure, suggesting contemporaneity.

Gully 263, which came to an end just south of the eastern end of the building suggested by Walls 329/512 and 209/381, did not appear to respect the orientation of this, or any other structure in the area, suggesting that the layout of the Hospital buildings was no longer significant to activity on the site. Pottery from its fill indicates a fifteenth or sixteenth century date, perhaps implying that by this time the building, though still standing, had probably fallen out of use.

### *Period 3: Post-medieval*

The Period 2B building seems to have remained standing, though not necessarily in use, into Period 3, which appears to represent in part a renewal and modification of that structure. This can be most obviously demonstrated by the addition of Wall 210, which butted against the south side of Wall 209/381. Constructed from roughly-dressed and mortared sandstone blocks, Wall 210 also incorporated lumps of hand-made brick, unlike the structural elements assigned to Period 2B. Although without an obvious foundation trench it rested upon a bed of rammed gravel (551), and thus a similar line of rammed gravel (673), running east-west across its southern end, has been interpreted as another, robbed, wall.

Subsequent to the decline or abandonment of the Period 2B building, a thick layer of garden soils (557/602) built up over Cobbles 610 at its west end. This contained a mixed group of pottery, largely medieval, but with some post-medieval material. Elsewhere, to the west of Charles Cropper Hall and north of Cobbles 610, earlier levels were also sealed by a thick deposit of garden soils (560) which, like 557/602 (above), incorporated mostly later medieval pottery, with some intrusive nineteenth century material. Deposit 560 was cut by a small post-medieval structure (279) *c.* 4 m square, with a cobbled entrance (534) in its west wall. Only the foundations remained, comprising a mix of large boulders, roughly-dressed blocks, and broken brick, set in deep foundation trenches. A single fragment of eighteenth century pottery was recovered from the fill (537) of the northern foundation trench (538), suggesting a *terminus post quem* for its construction. This presumably formed a part of the range of buildings shown on later maps of the site.

In the south-eastern part of the site a series of narrow, parallel, ridged garden beds (194/293: Lazy beds?) was excavated. They contained a mixed group of pottery, suggesting that their origins may lie in the earlier part of Period 2, but they also contained an appreciable amount of seventeenth to eighteenth century material, suggesting continuing, or renewed horticultural activity at this date.

### *Period 4: Modern*

The latest phase of activity on the site was dominated by the Charles Cropper Hall, constructed between 1924 and 1926, and demolished immediately prior to the present redevelopment. The east-west aligned, rectangular hall, *c.* 29 m by 10 m, was built of brick on concrete raft foundations (Walls 102-105, Concrete 192). In

addition the numerous post pits identified around the hall (332, 545, 565, 578, 582, 606, 612) may represent evidence of some external structure(s) which, it seems, may have gone through at least two phases, as one of the post pits (582) was sealed by a sandstone flag (397), which may have supported a replacement post.

Although construction of the shell of the building had not caused much damage to underlying deposits, the extensive complex of drains and soakaways associated with it had destroyed a large number of earlier deposits. The extent of the disturbance is clearly shown by Fig. 3, where it can be seen that only the south-eastern portion of the site was relatively undisturbed. Similarly, although disturbance appeared less severe within the bounds of the hall, the ground level had been lowered considerably during its construction, severely truncating many of the earlier features, including the Roman cremations.

## The Finds

*The Roman pottery* by M. L. Hird and C. M. Brooks

Some 356 Roman sherds were recovered from the LUAU excavations at St Nicholas' Yard. Of these, 13% occurred residually in Periods 2 to 4 and unstratified contexts, but the bulk was from Period 1 contexts. The pottery has been allocated to fabrics in the Carlisle type-series (Hird and Brooks forthcoming); the fabrics represented are listed below. The most common fabrics have a long period of currency and are of little use for dating purposes, particularly where the sherds are small and undiagnostic, as is the case for many of the sherds apart from the vessels associated with burials.

The most commonly occurring fabrics are local grey and oxidized wares and Black Burnished Ware 1, which together account for 94% of the assemblage. There is a little Central Gaulish samian (10 sherds), and a handful of sherds of Nene Valley Colour-coated ware, Black Burnished ware 2, amphorae and mortaria.

### *Coarsely fine wares*

*Black Burnished Ware 1 (BB1): Fabric 1*  
(Williams 1977)

BB1 occurs in Carlisle from the early Hadrianic period on. Third most common fabric from the site (100 sherds; 28.1% of the total assemblage). Date range: early/mid-second-fourth century.

*Black Burnished Ware 2 (BB2): Fabric 2*  
(Williams 1977)

BB2 occurs only in small quantities in Carlisle. Only two sherds, of late second/early third century date, from the lower fill of Ditch 594. Date range: mid-second-mid third century.

*Unidentified grey wares: Fabric 11*

Products of several sources, many or all of which are likely to be local. Largest component of the assemblage (122 sherds; 34.3%). Date range: first-fourth century.

*Unidentified oxidized wares: Fabric 12*

Products of several sources, many or all of which are likely to be local. Second commonest fabric (113 sherds; 31.7%). Date range: first-fourth century.

*Nene Valley Colour-coated ware: Fabric 21*  
(Howe *et al* 1980)

Fairly hard white or pink fabric with colour-coat of various colours. Four sherds were recovered, two of which were residual or unstratified. Date range: second-fourth century.

***Amphorae****South Spanish: Fabric 207*

(Peacock and Williams 1986, Class 25)

Rough, sandy, flaky buff-pink fabric with creamy outer surface; very common amphora fabric in Carlisle. Two sherds occurred residually in Period 4. Date range: first-third century.

***Mortaria****Carlisle/Scalesceugh area: Fabric 301*

Often very hard, dense dark red-brown to pink-brown fabric with some fine, mainly quartz, inclusions, varying in size and quantity. Usually a cream or buff slip but occasionally a raetian, red-brown slip on flange and bead. Trituration grit consists of white quartz, red-brown and occasionally blackish material. One sherd was recovered, from a medieval context in Period 2A. Date range: late first-second century.

*Mancetter-Hartshill: Fabric 324*

Usually fine-textured, creamy-white fabric, sometimes with pink core. The range of fabric is quite wide, from that with scarcely any inclusions to fabric with moderate smallish quartz, sparse red-brown and occasionally opaque white inclusions. Trituration grit consists largely of hard red-brown/blackish re-fired pottery fragments. The two sherds from the site were both residual, in contexts of Periods 3 and 4. Date range: second-fourth century.

Seven burials and possible burials yielded pottery, mostly of second- and third-century date, including the remains of vessels containing cremated bone. These obviously relate to the Roman cemetery flanking the road south from Carlisle (Botchergate/London Road), which has produced other simple cremation burials in pots, most recently two cremations in second-century vessels found in excavations between Botchergate and Collier Lane (McCarthy and Zant 1997).

Cremation burial 108 was placed in a large jar, possibly a storage jar, in local grey ware (Fabric 11), which survives as 62 joining sherds of the body and base, but lacks its rim. This vessel cannot be closely dated.

The other burial identified with reasonable certainty was probable inhumation 208, the fill of which (119) contained a near-complete local grey ware mug of second-century date (Fig. 4, 3). The fill also produced 17 sherds representing part

of the base and lower body of a local oxidized ware cooking pot/jar, sooted (Fabric 12), and a single sherd from a grey ware jar. Some disturbance to this burial is shown by the recovery of seven small intrusive medieval sherds.

Cremation 230 (fill: 231) produced 41 sherds from the base and lower body of a BB1 cooking pot (Fabric 1) of late second/third-century date, but again the rim was missing; a further six sherds of the same vessel were recovered from the fill (334) of feature 335, another possible cremation burial. That burial 230 was disturbed is shown by the fact that six intrusive medieval sherds, all small, were recovered from the fill.

One other possible cremation burial is 130 (fill: 121); this produced 16 sherds from three BB1 cooking pots, one of second- or third-century date (Fig. 4, 1), together with part of a grey ware mug of second-century date (Fig. 4, 2), and one intrusive medieval sherd. Two other possible cremations, 169 (fill: 170) and 357 (fill: 356), also produced fragments of BB1 cooking pots (represented by nine and 16 sherds respectively).

The other main Period 1 features, the ditches, produced 93 Roman sherds. In Ditch 594, there were 69 Roman sherds from the lower fill (135), with only two intrusive medieval sherds, both tiny. Fifty of these sherds belong to an oxidized ware flagon (Fig. 4, 4), abraded, of second-century date. Another oxidized vessel, also abraded, dates from the late first/early second century. Slightly later in date, there is a BB2 bowl/dish dated to the late second-early third century, and two sherds of Nene Valley Colour-coated ware beakers, probably dating to the third century.

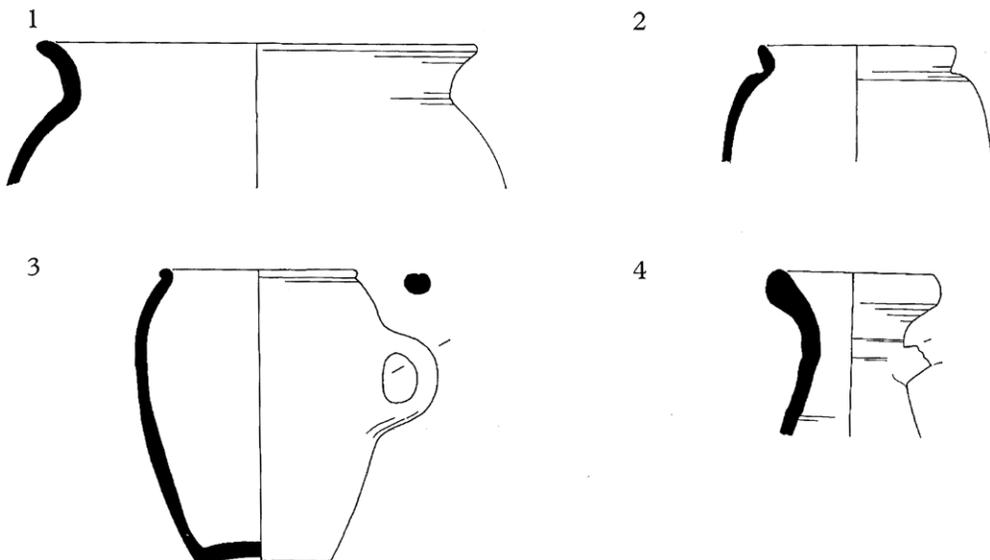


FIG 4. Roman Pottery quarter full size.

1. Fabric 1, BB1. Cooking pot. 2nd or 3rd century. SNY 96 130, cremation Period: 1. 2. Fabric 11, grey ware. Mug. 2nd century. 11 sherds. SNY 96 121, fill of cremation 130 Period: 1. 3. Fabric 11, grey ware. Mug. 2nd century. Near-complete; 21 sherds. SNY 96 119, fill of inhumation 208 Period: 1. 4. Fabric 12, oxidized ware. Flagon. 2nd century. 50 sherds, many small and abraded; profile not reconstructable. SNY 96 135, fill of ditch 594 Period: 1.

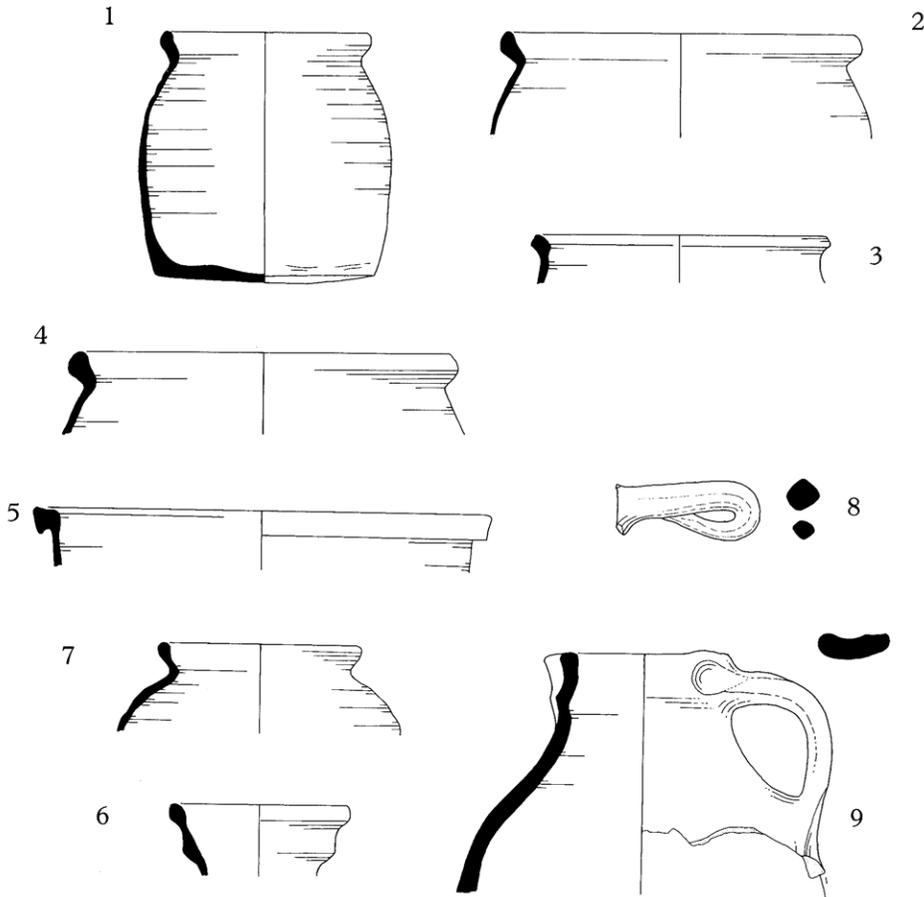


FIG 5. Medieval Pottery quarter full size.

1. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 1. Small cooking pot; exterior surface sooted and blackened. 19 sherds. SNY 96 577, fill of pit 576 Period: 2A. 2. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 2. Cooking pot; part of rim and internal surface blackened. 2 sherds. SNY 96 577, fill of pit 576 Period: 2A. 3. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 1. Cooking pot. 2 sherds. SNY 96 569, fill of pit 568 Period: 2A. 4. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 2. Cooking pot; part of rim slightly sooted. SNY 96 410, fill of oven 296 Period: 2A. 5. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 2. Bowl. SNY 96 410, fill of oven 296 Period: 2A. 6. Red Gritty ware, Fabric 1. Jug. Spot of olive green glaze on top of rim. SNY 96 390, fill of oven 296 Period: 2A. 7. Fabric 5, gritty orange/pink ware. Small cooking pot/?pipkin. Brown glaze externally and over top of rim. 6 sherds. Occurring residually. SNY 96 614, fill of foundation cut 613 Period: 4. 8. Partially Reduced Grey ware, Fabric 17. Pipkin handle. Olive glaze on upper surface, and glaze spots on underside. Occurring residually. SNY 96 284, pit Period: 3. 9. Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware, Fabric 41. Upper part of plain, strap-handled jug, with drab, pitted olive-green glaze, yellow in places, externally. 8 sherds. SNY 96 264, fill of gully 263 Period: 3.

There is a single sherd of Central Gaulish samian, and a few sherds of grey ware and BB1. The pottery represents quite a long time-span, with the earlier types being more abraded, as if they had perhaps been lying around for some time before deposition in the lower ditch fill. The upper fill (134, 567, 593), on the other hand, produced only 13 sherds, one being from a grey ware jar of possible fourth-century date (the latest datable Roman sherd from the site), suggesting that the ditch was filled over a considerable period of time. The other 12 sherds (oxidized ware, BB1 and Central Gaulish samian) were all tiny (averaging 3.3 g, compared to averages of 8.4 g from the lower fill of 594 and 12.6g from the cremations and other features), and probably residual. The upper fill also contained 34 medieval sherds and one post-medieval sherd, suggesting that the Roman ditches were perhaps still visible as depressions, with their upper fills being augmented, perhaps by slumping of later soils, well into the medieval period.

Ditch 558 (fills: 338, 563) produced only 11 small sherds, not closely datable, including two of Central Gaulish samian; the other sherds are BB1, grey ware and oxidized ware. There were no medieval sherds.

Other Period 1 features (133, fill: 113; 183, fill: 182; 607, fill: 608) yielded 15 sherds, one from a second-century BB1 cooking pot.

The Roman pottery occurring residually in later periods comprised mostly grey ware (19 sherds) and oxidized ware (12 sherds), and a little BB1 (five sherds). There were also five sherds of Central Gaulish samian, one of South Spanish amphora, two from third-century Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria, one from a second-century local mortarium (Fabric 301), and two sherds of Nene Valley Colour-coated ware beakers of late second/third-century date.

*The medieval and post-medieval pottery* by C. M. Brooks

The excavation produced a total of 1,221 identifiable medieval and post-medieval sherds; of these, 1,122 sherds are from phased contexts, the remaining sherds being from unstratified or uncertain contexts (150, 195, 265, 267, 294, 298, 307, 500, 553, 662). Most contexts yielded relatively small sherds, although there were a few exceptions. The sherds have been assigned to fabrics in the Carlisle type-series (McCarthy and Taylor 1990; McCarthy and Brooks 1992; Brooks forthcoming).

*Red Gritty ware: Fabrics 1 and 2*

Very hard, coarse gritty red ware with a very dense clay matrix, mostly quartz inclusions: Fabric 2 is slightly less gritty than Fabric 1. Glazes usually reddish-brown. Main forms: cooking pots, jugs, some bowls. Date range: twelfth-early thirteenth century; the dominant twelfth-century ware.

*White/buff gritty wares: Fabrics 3 and 4*

Hard, coarse gritty wares, off-white, buff or pale grey, with yellow to olive-green glaze. Main forms: jugs, cooking pots. Date range: c. twelfth-early thirteenth century.

*Other gritty wares: Fabrics 5, 6 and 9*

Coarse gritty wares, orange to reddish, buff, or reduced grey, with olive-green to brownish glazes. Main forms: jugs, cooking pots. Date range: c. twelfth-early thirteenth century.

*Partially Reduced Grey ware: Fabrics 15, 17 and 19*

A group of closely related sandy fabrics, usually with a dark grey core and surfaces oxidized externally and reduced internally. Glaze is usually olive-green, but occasionally has copper-green speckles. Main forms: jugs, sometimes decorated; occasional cooking pots, pipkins. Date range: *c.* late twelfth-fourteenth century; the dominant late thirteenth/fourteenth-century ware.

*Other lightly gritted wares: Fabrics: 11, 13, 14, 20 51, 52*

Less common sandy fabrics, usually completely oxidized, with yellow to olive-green glazes; main forms: jugs. Fabric 11: orange sandy fabric. Fabric 13: buff to reddish-buff sandy fabric; similar to predominant medieval fabric in Penrith, and may originate in that area. Fabric 14: orange fine sandy fabric. Fabric 20: smooth lightly gritted buff fabric. Fabric 51: white to pale pink sandy fabric; similar to pottery from west Cumbria, and presumably a regional import from that area. Fabric 52: buff sandy fabric. Date range: *c.* late twelfth-thirteenth century.

*Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware: Fabrics 41, 44*

Hard, smooth, fine sandy grey to dark grey fabric, often with a pale grey margin below the glaze; occasionally oxidized or partially oxidized to reddish-brown. Smooth, sometimes flaking, glaze, usually drab olive-green but sometimes brownish. Main forms: jugs, usually plain; also bung-hole cisterns, urinals, bowls. This fabric is part of a widespread northern "Reduced Greenware" tradition. Date range: *c.* fourteenth-sixteenth century, perhaps continuing into the seventeenth century; the dominant fifteenth/sixteenth-century ware.

***Imported wares****French green-glazed ware*

Smooth white fabric, with pitted mottled copper-green glaze. One tiny jug body sherd was recovered, from Well 572, Period 2. Probably early thirteenth century in date.

*Reversed Cistercian ware*

Smooth, hard off-white fabric with clear glaze appearing pale greenish, pitted in places. One tiny body sherd was recovered from Period 4. Probably from one of the sixteenth-century Cistercian ware production centres in Yorkshire.

***Post-medieval wares***

These are not listed separately here, but include coarse red earthenwares, English slipwares and stonewares, tin-glazed earthenware, white earthenwares and transfer-printed wares. They range in date from the seventeenth/eighteenth century to nineteenth century and modern.

The 600 sherds recovered from Period 2A are best considered in three groups; that from the soils or "old ground surfaces" (275 sherds), that from cut features (254 sherds) and that from the upper fills of the Roman ditches (71 sherds); the pottery "profiles" of the first two groups are very different, while the third appears to consist of a mixture of both.

The pottery from the Period 2A features is dominated by Red Gritty ware, the characteristic twelfth-century pottery in Carlisle (Fabrics 1 and 2), which amounts to about 83% of the group, with other gritty wares (Fabrics 3, 4, 5, 6, 9) contributing 10%. Partially Reduced Grey ware (Fabrics 15/17/19), which dates to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, forms only a minor component (7.5%), as do other lightly gritted wares (3.5%). It is not clear exactly when the lightly gritted wares were introduced, but they probably appeared before the end of the twelfth century, and were certainly being introduced in the early thirteenth century. Such a pottery profile is similar to that of a well-group at The Lanes (well 1237, Old Grapes Lane A; Brooks forthcoming), thought to date to the early thirteenth century.

Consideration of the few individual features which have produced a reasonable amount of pottery may help to refine their dating. Pit 568 (fill 569) yielded 21 sherds, 20 of which are Red Gritty ware (e.g. Fig. 5, 3), the other sherd being in Partially Reduced Grey ware; although this is not a large assemblage, it may suggest a later twelfth/early thirteenth-century date for the infill of the feature. The upper fill (577) of large deep Pit 576 produced more pottery (61 sherds), with all but two being Red Gritty ware (e.g. Fig. 5, 1-2) (96.7%), which would also indicate a late twelfth-century date. These two pits, therefore, probably relate to the earlier phases of the medieval hospital.

Unfortunately, well 572 (contexts 117, 555), which could not be excavated to any great depth, produced only 13 sherds. Most were Red Gritty ware and other gritty fabrics, with one lightly gritted sherd (Fabric 13) and one small sherd of French green-glazed ware. This suggests, perhaps, an early thirteenth-century date for these deposits (although as the primary fills of the well shaft and construction pit were not excavated, the date of the well's construction remains unknown; it could be contemporary with the other features discussed above). The presence of a Continental import is noteworthy, as imports are very rare at other excavated sites in Carlisle, and may perhaps reflect the status of the master of the hospital (or possibly a visitor there).

Oven 296 (297, 390, 409, 410) produced 111 medieval sherds, an assemblage in which Red Gritty ware is again dominant (Fig. 5, 4-6) (91%), with small quantities of other gritty wares (6.3%) and lightly gritted wares (2.7%). Again, this suggests a date in the late twelfth century.

Ceramic evidence is of little use for dating stone-lined Oven 517 (fill 518), however, as only two sherds were recovered; one is a small sherd of buff gritty ware, Fabric 3, and the other is a much larger Partially Reduced Grey ware sherd; on this limited evidence, the fill can only be dated to somewhere in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

Of the remaining features, none has produced more than nine sherds at most, although a few contexts have produced only twelfth-century gritty wares; because of the small sherd numbers this cannot be taken as evidence of twelfth-century date, and they must be given a twelfth/early thirteenth-century date range.

The pottery assemblage from the soils (125, 127, 128, 137, 151, 166, 207, 601) differs from the pottery from cut features and, as might be expected, indicates a longer timespan for deposition. Again there is a large amount of Red Gritty ware (together with other twelfth-century gritty wares forming 39.3% of the group), but the largest component is Partially Reduced Grey ware (47.3%), and Late Medieval

Reduced Grey ware accounts for 6.5%. The date range is thus from the twelfth to the fourteenth/fifteenth centuries, spanning Periods 2A and 2B.

As noted above, the upper fills of the Roman ditches appear to have been augmented, perhaps by slumping of later soils, well into the medieval period. Deposit 134, the upper fill of Ditch 594, produced 35 post-Roman sherds; 311, part of Ditch 594, 25 sherds; and 653, the fill of recut 661 of Roman boundary Ditch 651, 11 sherds. The material consists of twelfth- and thirteenth-century gritty and lightly gritted wares, Partially Reduced Grey ware of thirteenth/fourteenth-century date, Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware of fourteenth/fifteenth/sixteenth-century date, and one context also has an intrusive eighteenth-century slipware sherd. In all, the relative proportions of various wares within this group bears a far closer resemblance to the pottery "profile" of the Period 2A soils ("old ground surfaces") than to that of the Period 2A cut features. However, the fact that three features of twelfth/early thirteenth-century date evidently cut the latest fills of the Roman ditches strongly suggests that the late medieval/early post-medieval material found in the upper ditch fills may relate to unrecognised later intrusions.

Period 2B contexts produced only 20 sherds. The wall footings for a late medieval building (256/329) produced one tiny sherd of eighteenth-century slipware, which is presumably intrusive here. The remaining 19 sherds are from garden soil 552/557, where as might be expected there appears to be a higher degree of residuality, with Partially Reduced Grey ware sherds outnumbering Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware, and a high proportion of twelfth-century gritty wares: there is also a sherd of modern drainpipe.

Some 167 sherds are associated with Period 3 contexts; over half (98 sherds) are from garden soils (194, 293, 505, 560), and contain a high proportion of residual material. Some 14.3% of this group is Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware, and 6.1% are in post-medieval fabrics ranging from seventeenth/eighteenth-century coarse ware to nineteenth-century transfer-printed ware. The bulk of this group (37.8%) is Partially Reduced Grey ware, presumably all residual; there is also a large quantity of residual Red Gritty ware and other gritty wares of twelfth-century date (36.7%), and thirteenth-century lightly gritted wares (5.1 %).

Gully 263 (fill 264) yielded 38 sherds; the dominant fabric in this group is Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware (e.g. Fig. 5, 9) (68.4%), with a few sherds of Partially Reduced Grey ware (13.2%) and some residual gritty and lightly gritted wares (18.4%). This is suggestive of a date range in the fifteenth century for the gully, unless all the pottery is residual (a possibility suggested by the retrieval of a pipeclay wig-curler from this context).

The remains of possible wall 673 produced only two sherds, of Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware, to suggest a fifteenth-century or later date for this structure.

The wall construction trenches for Building 279 produced six sherds (537, 541, 543); the latest in date is a sherd of eighteenth-century brown salt-glazed stoneware tankard of Midlands type. The remaining sherds comprise two in Partially Reduced Grey ware and three in Red Gritty ware, all presumably residual. The deposits within Building 279 produced 17 sherds (284, 351, 501); four are in Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware and five in Partially Reduced Grey ware (e.g. Fig. 5, 8), the remainder being gritty and lightly gritted wares of twelfth/thirteenth-century date; this pottery is likely to be entirely residual if the stoneware sherd can be taken as

dating the structure.

The remaining six sherds from contexts assigned to Period 3 derive from probable demolition layers (211, 408, 510, 513), and range from medieval to modern in date.

There are 303 sherds from Period 4 contexts. Just over half comprise residual medieval material, ranging from twelfth century (gritty wares still providing nearly 17% of the total assemblage from this period; Fig. 5, 7) to fourteenth/fifteenth/sixteenth century in date. One interesting residual find is a tiny sherd of reversed Cistercian ware of sixteenth-century date; Cistercian ware, the classic sixteenth-century type-fossil for much of northern England, is rare in Carlisle.

About 45% of the assemblage is composed of post-medieval wares of standard types recovered from elsewhere in Carlisle. Stoneware, fine wares and coarse red earthenwares of nineteenth/twentieth-century date predominate, but there are also a few seventeenth/eighteenth-century coarse wares and eighteenth-century slipware, tin-glazed earthenware and stoneware sherds, mostly small.

#### *The ironwork*

A total of 140 fragments of ironwork was recovered, most being easily recognisable as nails, hand-forged, cut, or drawn; all are otherwise undiagnostic types. Some of them, however, were associated with a set of fittings which appear to derive from a large box, chest or coffin (Period 1: fill 119) which may have formed part of a Roman burial (Period 1: 208). As with most simple ironwork, it is difficult to assign a date to these objects, but similar objects are known from a number of Roman burials, including examples from Skeleton Green (Partridge 1981), and the Roman cremation cemetery at Low Borrowbridge (Howard-Davis 1996, 115 and fig 5:12).

#### *Other metalwork*

Few other items of metalwork were recovered. A large fragment of modern aluminium sheet from fill 548 (Period 3: cut 549) suggests a twentieth century date for this context and may thus be intrusive, and the terminal of a spoon or fork handle in base metal must similarly indicate a late date (late nineteenth or twentieth century) for layer 219 (Period 4).

Only one of the coins and tokens can be identified, a late eighteenth or early nineteenth century trade token from surface 107 (Period 4). The remaining two, from 106 (Period 4, general cleaning layer) and fill 117 (Period 2A: construction for Well 572) may be Roman, but are in such poor condition that they cannot be more closely identified. The fragment of pierced sheet from Pit 504 (Period 4: fill 502) may be Roman, but is otherwise undiagnostic; the holes suggest either that it is part of a filigree fitting, or perhaps something like a wine-strainer. The fragment is, however, too small for anything but speculation.

Finally there are two small fragments of lead, both from Oven 296 (Period 2A: fill 409). One may have served as a gallet, intended to wedge or pack a second object in place, the other is a small cast tablet of lead with no obvious function.

#### *The glass*

Twenty-five fragments of vessel and window glass were recovered, along with two

almost identical turquoise glass beads. Apart from one very small fragment of thin, colourless Roman vessel glass from possible Burial 208 (Period 1: fill 119), neither the vessel, nor the window glass is of any great antiquity. Of the former, only the two fragments of dark olive green wine/beer bottle from 136 (Period 4), a late demolition layer, are as early as the late eighteenth century, the remainder dating to the late nineteenth century onwards. For example, the decorative vase or bowl from context 101 (Period 4: clearance) would not seem out of place in the 1960s.

Of the window glass, only two very small fragments (from layers 271 (Period 2A) and 502 (Period 4)) are of interest; both are badly weathered fragments of green "Forest" glass produced in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Their thinness (both *c.* 1 mm) suggests a date in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All of the remaining window glass is modern.

Whilst it is clear that the two beads from layer 151 (Period 2A) are hand-wound, they are of relatively undiagnostic form, and thus no date can be assigned to them. In view of their context, however, it is reasonable to assume that they are contemporary with other material from that layer, and therefore medieval in date.

### *The bone*

Little animal bone was recovered, most comprising a large part of the skeleton of a small piglet from a modern (Period 4) deposit (502). The general lack of bone is likely to be an artefact of inimical soils conditions. Heavily calcined bone was recovered in association with several of the putative Roman burials; it may or may not be human but, as both the amounts of bone and the fragments themselves were extremely small, further analysis was not warranted.

### **The Palaeoenvironmental Evidence** by Elizabeth Huckerby

Samples of varying volumes were collected from a number of contexts with potential for survival of palaeoenvironmental evidence. Most yielded some carbonised material, the majority of which was charred cereals grains, with little or no chaff, except a single oat awn, suggesting that processed grain was brought to the site rather than actively being processed. This is further suggested by the fact that only a limited number of weed taxa was recorded. The most common of these were *Chrysanthemum segetum* (corn marigold), *Polygonum* spp (Knot grasses), and legumes with seeds <4 mm, and therefore not from crops. The cereal taxa recorded are shown in Table 1. Because of the degree of burning and the state of preservation, it was not possible to differentiate a high proportion of the cereal grains in some samples, although the general shape of the undifferentiated grains implied either oats or rye. The only other food taxa recorded was a single carbonised damson-like stone (*Prunus domestica-insitita*) from the fill of medieval Pit 122 (sample 129-5103) and isolated carbonised seeds of elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) and blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg). Both of the latter types were also recorded uncarbonised.

### *Samples from the Roman Period*

Twelve samples from Period 1 contexts were analysed, including possible inhumation 208 (fill 119), cremations 108 (fill 109), 162 (fill 161), 169 (fill 170),

TABLE 1: Cereals from St Nicholas' Yard, Carlisle.

Context Number	Sample Number	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Oats	Undifferentiated Cereals	Fragment of Cereals
108/109	1023	15	4	2	30	14	+
108	1023	8	8	1	12	25	+
113	5101	6	12	1	7	15	+
119	5123	1	5	0	0	9	+
119	5144	0	0	0	4	0	-
119	5145	0	0	0	0	0	-
120	5108	13	18	2	9	34	+
120	5118	5	4	1	6	13	+
121	5102	3	2	0	2	11	+
129	5103	3	4	2	4	12	+
161	5109	2	4	0	2	14	+
164	5112	0	14	4	10	27	+
170	5114	0	0	0	0	1	+
213	5124	0	13	5	13	32	+
231	5125	0	0	0	0	0	-
231	5126	1	3	0	16	3	+
264	5127	3	1	0	1	3	+
321	5129	0	0	0	0	0	-
324	5123	0	0	0	3	0	-
343	5134	0	0	0	0	0	-
345	5136	0	0	0	1	0	-
346	5137	0	0	0	0	0	-
347	5138	2	1	0	0	6	+
356	5139	1	14	3	5	8	+
389	5140	19	8	6	1	165	+
390	5141	11	4	0	11	24	+
409	5142	1	4	0	0	0	+
410	5143	2	12	12	7	36	+

and 230 (fill 231), possible cremations 130 (fill 121) and 357 (fill 356), and possible Roman pit 133 (fill 113) (see Table 2). Very few plant macrofossils were recorded in the samples from possible inhumation 208. Those from the cremations and the possible Roman pit were richer, with some cereals and a limited number of weed taxa recorded. Of the cereals identified, wheat and oats are the more frequent, though some rye and barley were present. The lack of chaff and the scarcity of the weed flora suggest that food was probably not processed on the site at this time.

#### *Samples from the Medieval Period*

Sixteen samples from Medieval contexts were analysed, including Period 2A pits 179 (fill 120), 122 (fill 129), 163 (fill 164), and 212 (fill 213), Period 3 gully 263 (fill 264) (see Table 3), and Period 2A oven 296 (fills 321, 324, 343, 345-7, 389, 390, 409 and 410) (see Table 4). The quantities of charcoal recorded from the Period 2A oven serve to emphasise its role. The other samples from the pits are richer in taxa, including a damson-type stone, elderberry, and blackberry, and a consistent record of weed taxa along with cereals. Rye and oats are the major cereals recognised on the site, with some barley, except in two of the samples from Oven 296 (389-5140 and 390-5141) where more wheat was recorded. However, the number of unidentified grains, probably from oats and rye, was high in both these samples so the wheat

TABLE 2: Macrofossils from the Roman Period.

Context Number	108/109	109	113	119	119	119	121	161	170	231	231	356
Sample Number	1023	1023	5101	5123	5144	5145	5102	5109	5114	5125	5126	5139
Triticum	15	8	6	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	1
Secale	4	8	12	5	0	0	2	4	0	0	3	14
Hordeum	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Avena	30	12	7	0	4	0	2	2	0	0	16	5
Cereal undiff	14	25	15	9	0	0	11	14	1	0	3	8
Cereal fragments	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
Chrysanthemum segetum	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2
Legume <4 mm	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polygonum sp.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Chenopodium album	0	0	5	5 uc	0	0	0	2 c	12 uc	0	3	9
Carex trig	1	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rubus fruticosus agg	0	0	1 uc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urtica urens	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Urtica dioica	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25 uc	1
Labiatae sp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Umbelliferae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Sambucus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 uc	0
cf Vaccinium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4 uc	0
Calluna veg	-	-	1 fl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bone	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
Small mammal bone	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Insect remains	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+
Fish bone	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Mollusc	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	3

uc = uncarbonised, c = carbonised, and fl = flower

increase may be relative. As with the samples from the Roman period, the lack of chaff and the scarcity of the weed flora suggests that grain was again probably not processed on the site.

Although the site is known to have been a leper hospital no plants of obvious medicinal uses were recorded, although corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*) is mentioned in Culpepper's *Complete Herbal* as being used in all types of fever and "it promotes sweat and is frequently used to drive out smallpox and measles; it also helps jaundice . . . The juice is recommended for sore eyes and to take away warts" (Culpepper 1970, 227-8). It was, however, also a common arable weed.

## Discussion

Despite the fragmented nature of the archaeological evidence recovered from this site, four phases of activity have been defined. The earliest (Period 1) is clearly Roman in date, after which there appears to have been a substantial hiatus, until (apparently) the foundation of St Nicholas' Hospital in the twelfth century. Occupation of the site during the medieval period (Period 2) can be sub-divided on the basis of the stratigraphic evidence: the twelfth to thirteenth centuries (Period 2A) was represented by the latest fills of ditches originally cut in the Roman period, several pits, an oven, and a well. A small amount of structural evidence seems likely to reflect a later rebuild of the hospital buildings, perhaps in the early fourteenth

TABLE 3: Macrofossils from the Medieval Period excluding those from Oven 296

Context Number	120	120	129	164	213	264
Sample Number	5108	5118	5103	5112	5124	5127
Triticum	13	5	3	0	0	3
Secale	18	4	4	14	13	1
Hordeum	2	1	2	4	5	0
Avena	9	6	4	10	13	1
Cereal undiff	34	13	12	27	32	3
Cereal fragments	+	+	+	+	+	+
Prunus domestica insititia	0	0	1	0	0	0
Chrysanthemum segetum	4	10	3	1	2	1
Legume <4 mm	0	1	1	2	4	0
Polygonum sp.	16	3	0	2	2 uc	1
Chenopodium album	0	0	2	0	3 uc	0
Stellaria sp.	3	0	0	0	0	0
Caryophyllaceae	0	0	0	1 uc	0	0
Rubus fruticosus agg	0	0	0	1 uc	3 uc	0
Urtica dioica	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sambucus	0	0	1 c	0	1 uc	2 uc
cf Vaccinium	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calluna veg	-	-	-	-	-	1 fl+ 1 tw
Bone	-	-	+	+	-	+
Small mammal bone	+	-	-	-	-	-
Insect remains	+	+	+	-	-	+

uc = uncarbonised, c = carbonised, fl = flower, and tw = twig

TABLE 4: Macrofossils from the Medieval Oven 296

Context Number	321	324	343	345	346	347	389	390	(409)	410
Sample Number	5129	5132	5134	5136	5137	5138	5140	5141	5142	5143
Triticum	0	0	0	0	0	2	19	11	1	2
Secale	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	4	4	12
Hordeum	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	12
Avena	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	11	0	7
Cereal undiff	0	0	0	0	0	6	165	24	0	36
Cereal fragments	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
Avena awn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Chrysanthemum segetum	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	29	4	41
Lapsana communis	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Legume <4 mm	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	1
Legume >4mm	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Polygonum sp.	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	1	0	0
Chenopodium album	0	0	0	3	0	3	9	3	0	12
Stellaria sp.	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
Caryophyllaceae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Ranunculus sp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Carex bicon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
Rubus fruticosus agg	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 uc	0	0	0
Nupharlutea	0	0	0	1 frag	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moss stem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Bone	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
Small mammal bone	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+ plus claw
Insect remains	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-

uc = uncarbonised, frag = fragment

century (Period 2B), followed by a slow decay, with the Hospital falling out of use by the time of the Dissolution. After that, new structures were erected on the site (Period 3), perhaps using the ruined remains of the Hospital, but latterly replaced by cottages, and then, in the 1920s, by the Charles Cropper Hall (Period 4), which stood on the site until redevelopment began in the 1990s.

Renewed interest in the site in the late 1920s (Maclaren 1927) and early 1930s caused by the discovery of skeletons, in addition to those found in the 1830s in the course of the construction of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, raised the possibility that some of the burials found derived not from the medieval Hospital graveyard, but from the "Roman cemetery which extended along the present London road" (McIntyre 1931, 1936). M. R. McCarthy writes: "The presence of a cluster of burials at St Nicholas, some 180 m east of the line of the main Roman road into Carlisle from the south (Botchergate/A6), is of interest, and may imply the presence of another Roman road leading in the general direction of Blackwell and Upperby.

A number of features, including ditches and cobbling, some of which had clearly slumped into the ditches, are also tentatively attributed to the Roman period. The function of the ditches remains unclear, although the terminals of the two largest ditches (558, 594) may represent an entrance through an enclosure lying to the east of the main area of the excavation, and thus beyond the limits of the site. No traces of a bank or palisade slots were recovered, but Ditch 651 could be an internal feature.

Dating for the archaeological features in general is best provided by the pottery, of which some 356 sherds were Roman in date. Approximately half of these (49%) belong to vessels thought to be associated with burials. The remainder are typical of local Roman assemblages and with the ditches and other features provide a hint, but no more, of a possible 'native'-style enclosed farmstead with a floruit in the second and third centuries A.D. Recent work by Carlisle Archaeological Unit at the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle, revealed a farmstead of late first- to second-century date, in which ditches were identified within the occupied area. Within the general area of St Nicholas, Carlisle Archaeological Unit in 1997 excavated a site adjacent to the former Co-operative Society building, about 450 m to the north. Here was located a sequence of Roman activity in which a major embanked feature, currently attributed to the early second century, overlay earlier features representing timber buildings probably dating to the Flavian-Hadrianic period. The site was later abandoned and used for a combination of midden deposits and cremation burials in the third and fourth centuries A.D. (M. R. McCarthy, pers. comm.).

Beyond this to the south, it is likely that much of the land was given over to grazing, with arable plots in places. Within a pattern of fields surrounding the main Roman settlement, farmsteads, such as that at the Cumberland Infirmary, and which may perhaps be hinted at, with St Nicholas, would not be unexpected. Indeed it is quite likely that new farms all around Carlisle would have been established in response to the needs of Carlisle's growing population".

The earliest medieval activity on the site dates to the twelfth century, when it seems likely that the Hospital was founded. It must, however, be admitted that evidence for eleventh century activity in Carlisle in the form of ceramics is generally extremely sparse (Cathy Brooks pers comm) and therefore its apparent absence on

this site it not unexpected. Whilst some have suggested that the Hospital was a foundation of William II, archaeological evidence appears to indicate that the site was first occupied at some point towards the middle of the twelfth century and that, by the end of the century, the Hospital was well established. In archaeological terms this may be reflected by the sequence of deposits seen in the Roman boundary ditches, the upper fills of which contain twelfth/thirteenth century pottery, suggesting that material was still accumulating within the ditches during this period, probably as a result of casual disposal of rubbish rather than deliberate in-filling. Two pits (568 and 576) and an oven (296), however, which all contain late twelfth/thirteenth century pottery, cut the latest fills of these ditches, clearly showing that they must have been full by that time. Whilst it is not impossible that the line of the Roman ditches dictated the early layout of the Hospital, perhaps having survived as field boundaries, it seems obvious that they had been filled and levelled at a relatively early stage and that the life of the Hospital soon spread over them.

No obvious buildings survive from this period (Period 2A), and the nature of most of the features represented, a well, midden and other pits, ovens, and so on, suggest activities peripheral to the core of the Hospital, which must at this time have comprised at least one house for the brethren, a chapel and cloister, and accommodation for the master, as well as other domestic necessities, including a well. Oven 517/675 may represent the latest activity during this sub-phase, having produced pottery of thirteenth/fourteenth century date. It is thus, perhaps, possible to suggest that the area examined during these excavations lay without any claustral area, and would thus not have contained any buildings of significance.

The rules for the house set out by Hugh de Cressingham shortly after his appointment in 1293 (Wiseman 1995, 97-8) give some idea of the actual appearance or perhaps the idealised appearance of the Hospital, with both a cloister and secular areas (including separate lodging for men and women), a chapel, a well, and a boundary with barred entrances. No evidence for the latter was found, although it does seem to be a relatively common feature of even quite small religious establishments; for example St Stephens' leper hospital in Dublin (Hayden 1992), and St Giles' Hospital, Brough (Cardwell 1990), were both enclosed by a bank or bank and ditch. It seems likely that de Cressingham's rules expressed his intentions rather than summarising the actual state of the Hospital, and his plans were thwarted, first when the Hospital was burned and more or less destroyed by Scots raiding on 27 March 1295 (Wiseman 1995, 98), and shortly afterwards by the death of the master himself in 1297.

A short but perhaps drastic break in the life of the establishment may thus be expected within the archaeological record, as documentary evidence suggests that the Hospital remained in considerable disarray for some 35 years after the first Scottish attack, and was burnt again in 1337 (Barnes 1889, 104). Whilst in stratigraphic terms Period 2B is clearly subsequent to Period 2A, there is little to suggest that Period 2B activity began significantly later. The documentary record suggests that some attempts at rebuilding were under way by 1305 when the King granted ten oaks for enclosing and rebuilding the Hospital, and again in 1319, when a further three oaks were given towards rebuilding the chapel (Wiseman 1995, 101); there is, however, no evidence to confirm that the work was ever done, and it seems most unlikely, for a number of reasons, that the Hospital was ever completely

refurbished. The scant evidence of stone foundations for a relatively large rectangular building at this period does, however, suggest some restructuring, although the entrance in the east wall is reasonably conclusive proof that this was not the chapel. The well presumably remained in use at this time, and might have been reached from the cobbled (?)yard to the west of the building.

Like many other hospitals in England at this time, St Nicholas fell into a deep decline during the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Summerson 1993, 306), its surviving finances siphoned off by a succession of absentee masters, and the declining fortunes of Carlisle making charitable gifts from its citizens less frequent or generous. Little archaeological evidence suggests otherwise, and by the fifteenth century it seems likely that the area examined was effectively out of use, garden and other soils building up over the cobbled yard and other earlier features. In addition, a narrow gully, cut across the eastern part of the site in the fifteenth/sixteenth century, lay at a different orientation to all other features, suggesting that the layout of the Hospital buildings may have lost its significance. The Hospital, such as it was by then, was made over to the Prior and Convent of St Mary's, Carlisle in 1477, and passed to the Cathedral Dean and Chapter on the dissolution of the Priory in 1541. It would seem that, by that date, the possession of St Nicholas' Hospital was notional, represented in the main by its bequests and other properties rather than by the actual fabric.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the site remained vacant, except perhaps for agricultural or horticultural activity, including lazy beds, until the eighteenth century. Despite the fact that the Hospital buildings are thought to have been "altogether ruynated" (usually taken to mean destroyed) during the Siege of Carlisle in 1645 (CRO Dean and Chapter), it seems likely that they stood, at least in part, into the eighteenth century (Period 3), when insubstantial walls were tacked onto the south side of the Period 2B building. A later eighteenth century map of the area (1762, copied from an earlier map of 1716) shows an L-shaped range of buildings on the site, part of which may be represented by the refurbished Period 2B structure, and part by building 279, thought to have been erected in the eighteenth century. In 1777 the site was described by Nicolson and Burn as "now holden of the Dean and Chapter by Mr John Storey on an 21 year lease" (1777, 250), and later Jefferson (1838, 148), in discussing the Hospital, noted that "a modern dwelling-house has been erected near the site", presumably in the course of which the earlier buildings were demolished, and certainly a medieval stone coffin and funeral chalice were found. Whilst it remains similar, later maps imply a changed layout to buildings on the site around this time. By 1900 Barnes stated with confidence that nothing remained of the Hospital fabric (1906, 299) but interestingly mentioned the prior existence of a medicinal well in Old St Nicholas; the medieval well excavated on site was filled at a relatively late date, and was sealed by a layer of cobbles which may have related to the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century cottages mentioned by Jefferson. The cottages were demolished to make way for the Charles Cropper Hall, built between 1924 and 1926.

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