

ROMANO-BRITISH FINDS AROUND *NAVIO*

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During 1992, Severn Trent Water (STW) constructed a pipeline across the Peak District from Bamford to Buxton. Archaeological fieldwork on various sites along the proposed route was conducted by the Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust (T&PAT) in 1991 and 1992, some of which has been described in a previous volume of this journal (Guilbert and Challis, 1993: 45). The part of the pipeline which forms the subject of this note runs to the south-east of Bradwell Brook and Batham Gate Roman road, close to the extensive area around Brough-on-Noe which, over the years, has produced numerous finds of Romano-British material, relating to the civilian settlement, or *vicus*, alongside *Navio* Roman fort (Fig 1). The 1991-2 fieldwork here involved resistivity-survey (by KC), trial-trenching and test-pitting (both supervised by KC), and a watching-brief (by CA) during the pipeline-works. The results are described and discussed in this note (by GG) in sufficient detail to establish a single conclusion, arising out of the distribution of finds of Romano-British potsherds (identified by RL). Those who seek further details should consult T&PAT's archive of the Bamford-Buxton project (largely compiled by KC, incorporating information from each of the other authors), copies of which have been deposited in the Sites & Monuments Records (SMR) held by Derbyshire County Council and the Peak National Park. The potsherds have gone to Sheffield City Museum.

The resistivity-survey was undertaken in the fields labelled *f* and *g* in Fig 1, covering an area of approximately 340m x 50-100m, between SK17848198 and 18108220, and produced no useful results. The search was for evidence for a Roman road running south from *Navio* to cross the White Peak. A line for this road crossing field *f* has been proposed by Wroe (1982: 58, figs 7, 18) as 'probable', but is no better than surmised over a considerable stretch and could have followed a different course, taking it through Bradwell (Guilbert and Challis, forthcoming).

To the north of Brough Lane, an archaeological trench (NCR/01 in the archive), measuring 12m x 3m and excavated by hand in June-July 1991, was positioned at SK18428247 (Fig 1, field *a*). Here the pipeline was intended to cross (but eventually largely avoided) a terraced trackway (hachured in Fig 1), which has sometimes been mooted as the line of another Roman road, running east towards the forts at Templeborough and/or Chesterfield (Margary, 1957: 93-4; Preston, 1969: 242-4; Richardson, 1969: 245, 251 — in the first two of these Brough Lane is erroneously called Townfield Lane; but note that the road to Templeborough, though not that to Chesterfield, has since been claimed as 'proved' north of the River Noe by Wroe, 1982: 58-61, 64, 69, figs 8, 15, 18). It will suffice to report here that this apparent terrace-way was found to overlie a silt-filled hollow-way at least 0.5m deep, and that it produced no evidence of metallurgy, nor any for a Roman (or any other) date. Indeed, artefacts found in four of eleven test-pits excavated along the intended line of the pipe in the same field suggest that this trackway is not only post-Roman but post-medieval, much as a previous excavator was forced to conclude from cuttings across the same feature at about 80m and 130m east of the 1991 trench (Richardson, 1969: 250-1). The test-pits (NVE/01-11, each 1m square) were excavated by hand in June 1991, in a line, at irregular intervals varying from 10m to 30m, the westernmost at SK18408247, the two easternmost, at 18568250 and 18578250, beyond the east border of Fig 1.

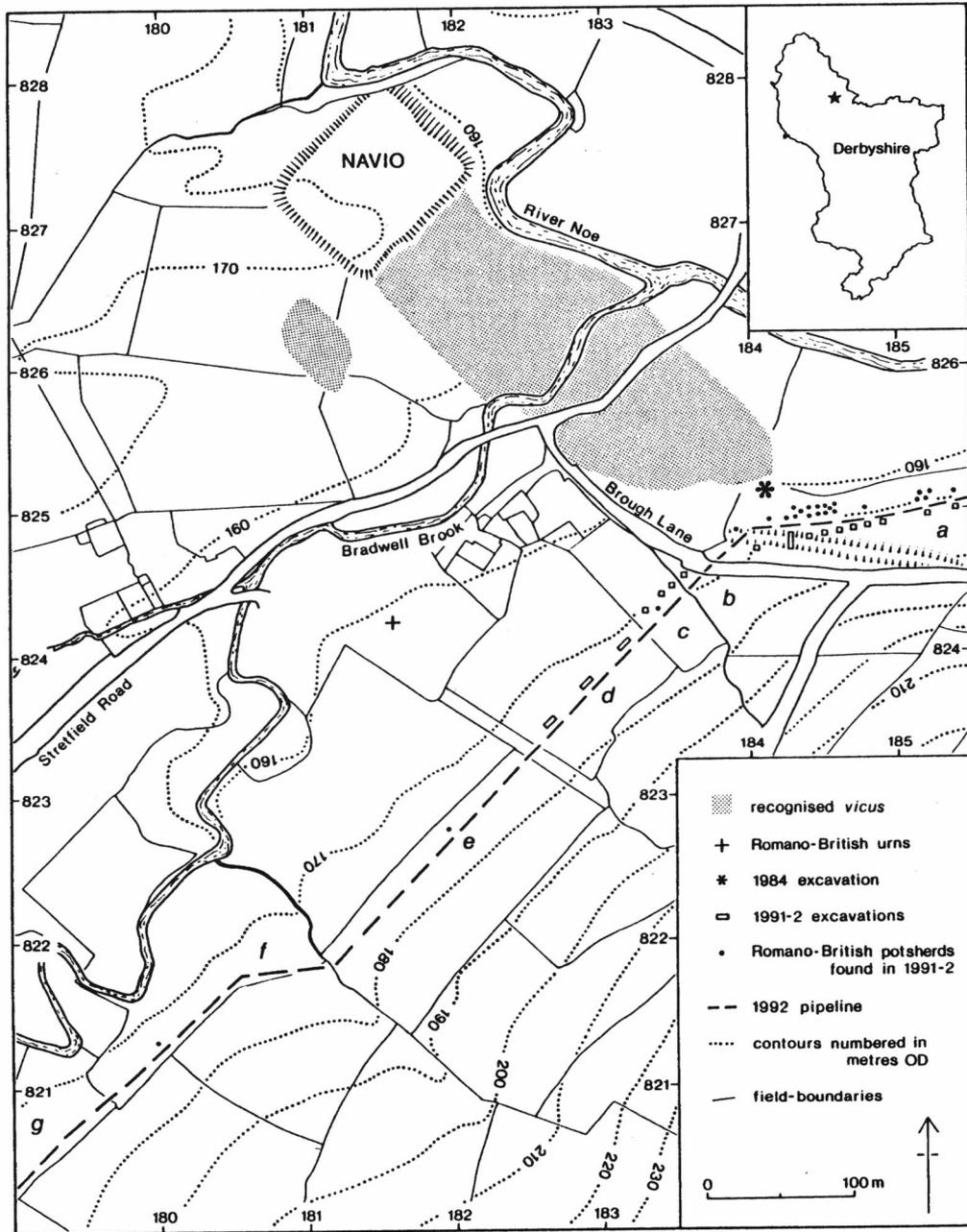


Fig 1 *Navio*: the approximate extent of Romano-British occupation to the south and east of the fort, as recognised hitherto, is stippled (after Dearne, 1991: fig. 6.3); the approximate find-spot of Romano-British urns, probably found in the 18th century, is marked by a cross, the locations of the 1991-2 trenches and test-pits by rectangles and squares respectively, and the distribution of Romano-British potsherds recorded in 1991-2 by dots moved to one side of the pipeline. The National Grid is numbered around the border. Scale 1:5000. A star marks the site on the inset map.

All these pits lay between 170m and 173m O.D.; all but one lay a short distance to the north, and downslope, of the trackway. They revealed a humic topsoil up to 0.20m thick, overlying a clayey deposit up to 0.60m thick and best interpreted as colluvium, which in turn generally either overlay a sporadic deposit of head or sat directly upon decomposed shale bedrock. In two instances, however, the colluvium was separated from these lower deposits by an old topsoil, itself up to 0.22m thick. Eight Romano-British potsherds were recovered from four of the pits, five of them (plus one fragment of clay pipe and four of post-medieval pottery) incorporated in the colluvium and therefore probably derived from further upslope. The colluvium should have smothered the trackway if the latter originated in the Roman period, and this may be seen as some measure of support for the case made lately that the Roman road to Chesterfield passed just 30m to its north, where substantial metalling was recorded in an area excavated in 1984 (Drage, 1993: 73; Dearne, 1993: 153).

The Romano-British sherds from the test-pits include one of Samian, three of the so-called Pre-Derbyshire Ware (Brassington, 1971: 59-60), and four of Derbyshire Ware (Kay, 1962). All could be attributable to the second century, though the Derbyshire Ware could as easily belong in the third or fourth century. The test-pits came within 40m of the south-easterly extent of the *vicus*, in so far as this is known from the 1984 excavation (Fig 1; Drage, 1993). Not surprisingly, the Romano-British layers in that excavation were blanketed by colluvium over 1m in thickness, for they lay at around 160m O.D., at the foot of a steepening slope of northern aspect. With a gradient of up to 1 in 3, this hillside might be thought steep enough to have deterred occupation, but the presence of our potsherds at over 170m is suggestive of some form of contemporary activity some way upslope.

To the south of Brough Lane, four similar test-pits were excavated (NVE/12-15) in June 1991, one in field *b*, at SK18358245, and three in field *c*, between 18328243 and 18348244 (Fig 1). These pits lacked the colluvial layer and yielded only two sherds of post-medieval pottery. However, in field *c* and the next field to the south-west (Fig 1, *d*), a deeper mantle of head overlies the bedrock (notwithstanding the Geological Survey 1:25000 sheet SK18 [1975], head was seen to cover the Edale Shales throughout the 640m of the 1992 pipe-trench depicted in Fig 1 to the south of Brough Lane) and the ground slopes more gently (about 1 in 7), with the result that it appears more suitable for occupation. Given also the proximity of the recognised area of the *vicus*, together with the probability that early finds of Romano-British cremation urns include some at around SK18158242, about 130m from the route of the pipeline (Fig 1; see also Bray, 1783: 209, 211-12; Bateman, 1861: 251-2; Haverfield, 1905: 206; Kay, 1962: 39), it was felt that field *d* would merit archaeological evaluation in advance of the pipeline-works. Accordingly, three trenches were opened by machine within the swathe of the pipeline-easement, centred at SK18318240, 18288238 and 18268235 (NVE/16-18, each 10m x 3m), in March 1992 (Fig 1). These trenches revealed only two shallow gullies that remain undatable, and produced just one medieval potsherd from topsoil. Consequently, no acceptable case could be made for the expenditure of further STW funds on more archaeological excavation in this field, nor in those fields immediately to the south-west which were also to be crossed by the pipeline but where no evidence for Romano-British activity was yet on record.

Nevertheless, it was thought advisable to maintain a watching-brief when, in August 1992, the ground-disturbance stages of the construction-works were undertaken between SK17758190 and 18608251. Across field *a*, disturbance was largely restricted to a pipe-trench 1m wide. This resulted in the recovery of thirteen Romano-British potsherds, including large pieces of Samian (Dragendorff forms 31 and 18/31), Derbyshire Ware, Grey Ware, and Black-

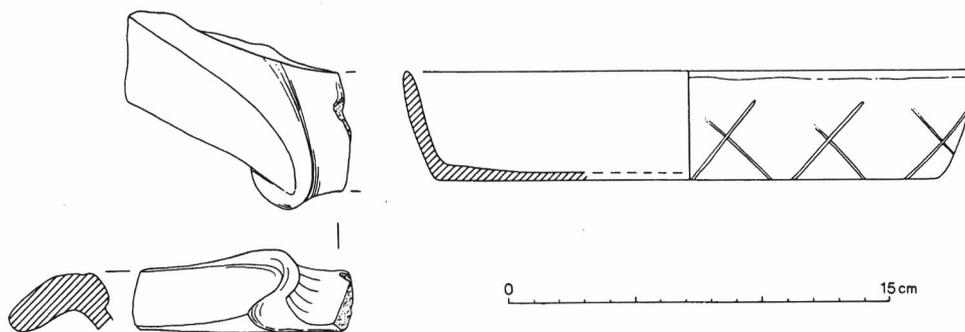


Fig 2 *Navio*: sherds of a Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium (late-second to mid-third century) and a Black-Burnished Ware dish (late-second to early-third century), from fields *c* and *a* respectively (Fig 1). Scale 1:3.

Burnished Ware I (including the dish illustrated in Fig 2; cf. Gillam, 1976: no. 77), each of which could have been manufactured in the second century, but again some could be later. Although several of these sherds are heavily weathered, their size alone suggests that they did not reach this location in the manure-cart to be scattered on to contemporary fields beyond the *vicus*. Rather, they would seem to suggest that settlement extended well upslope hereabouts. In fields *b-g*, an easement 10m wide was stripped of topsoil before the pipe-trench was excavated. This produced five potsherds, two medieval and three Romano-British. Of the latter, one came from field *c*, at SK18348243 (the sizable fragment of Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium illustrated in Fig 2; cf. Hartley, 1960: fig. 7, nos 41-43), one from field *e*, at SK18208227 (a small piece of Pre-Derbyshire Ware), and one from field *f*, at SK18008213 (a small piece of Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium); again, these could all be second century.

The main achievement of these pieces of fieldwork has been to record a small number of Romano-British potsherds along that part of the course of the 1992 pipeline which lies to the south-east of Bradwell Brook (Fig 1). The sherds were found up to 500m south-west of the recognised southern limit of the area of Romano-British occupation around *Navio* (as mapped by Dearne in 1991: fig. 6.3 and, rather differently, in 1993: fig. 9.5 - the stipple on Fig 1 here is derived from his, more easily copied, earlier version), though most, including all those of any size, lay within 120m of that area. It now seems possible that the area excavated in 1984 does not mark the south-eastern edge of the *vicus*, which may well have extended further south and east, partly on to steeper land (*pace* Dearne, 1993: 150). These comments must be ventured in spite of Branigan's feeling that the *vicus* at Brough 'looks surprisingly large' even at the then-recognised maximum of 'about 5 hectares' (1991: 59; but note that Dearne's 1991 map depicts the maximum occupied area as less than 4 hectares, even though he stated then that it was probably 'over 7 hectares' - 1991: 73 - and later conjectured that it could be as much as '8.5 hectares' - 1993: 152). Moreover, as noted above, 'urns' are believed to have been unearthed some 160m south of the occupied area indicated by Dearne (Fig 1), while the SMR reveals that a possible 'Roman' tile was found in 1976 at SK18028211, close to our southernmost potsherd.

Further south again, at 1.3km from *Navio*, several sherds of Romano-British pottery (mostly Derbyshire Ware, but also Pre-Derbyshire Ware and Grey Ware) were found in 1992 in an excavation by T&PAT where the same pipeline crossed the linear earthwork called Grey Ditch, at SK171817, north of Bradwell and not far to the west of Bradwell Brook and Batham Gate

(Guilbert and Challis, forthcoming). Other objects of suspected Romano-British date have been reported from Bradwell itself, including a pig of lead (Haverfield, 1905: 232) and a cist-burial accompanied by an iron spear-head, a lead spindle-whorl, a copper button or brooch with gold inlay, and a coin (Salt, 1898; Ward, 1899: 4; Haverfield, 1905: 254-5). Bearing in mind also antiquarian comments that various artefacts and remains of buildings have been 'turned up by the plough' in the general vicinity of Brough (Bray, 1783: 209; Pegge, 1790: 39-40), it would seem that much of the valley of the Bradwell Brook should be regarded as sensitive, and potentially productive, archaeologically. It will be evident, then, that this area may reward archaeological evaluation and monitoring whenever any form of land-disturbance is proposed on either side of Batham Gate and Bradwell Brook. In present circumstances, it is only thus that our knowledge of the Roman period around *Navio* is likely to be improved.

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