

No. XXIV.—*Notices respecting the Roman Station of Habitancum (now Risingham), in various Communications to JOHN ADAMSON, Esq., Secretary to the Society, by SIR J. E. SWINBURNE, Bart., President, ARTHUR TREVELYAN, Esq., MR. JOHN BELL, and MR. RICHARD SHANKS, Son of Mr. Shanks, the Owner of the Station.*

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM SIR J. E. SWINBURNE, BART., ADDRESSED TO
THE SECRETARY, IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1840.

I HAVE just heard of a very recent discovery, which, if my information be correct, and not exaggerated, appears to be highly interesting; and I shall request Mr. Sopwith to go and examine. On the property of Mr. Shanks, at Risingham, near Woodburn, in digging for some purpose, at a considerable depth, the workmen came to the walls of a building above 10 feet long, and during the excavation a quantity of coins, said to be silver and copper, and several Roman altars were found. If so, it is well worth investigating, and might be worth the attention of the Society of Antiquaries.

Mr. Walker has been at Risingham, and sent me some very interesting details, which I will forward you as soon as I have seen Mr. Sopwith after his visit.

I send you the epitome of Mr. Walker's observations on his visit to Risingham, and what I gather from Mr. Sopwith's notes. One altar, or part of one, has been brought to his brother's near here; and I will go and see it. The two accounts corroborate each other in most points. Before any regular account is drawn up for either publication in our Transactions, or to lay before the Society in London, it will be better to wait for both these gentlemen's second visit; but they may be shown to the Society in the mean time.

The area of the station is about 133 yards square, comprising what

appears to have been buildings. The excavation is not carried on over a tenth part, of where the recently discovered buildings are visible, about 18 yards square. The walls are covered with a kind of plaster, which appears to have been exposed to fire, and there is so much burned substances amongst the rubbish, it is probable the whole has been set fire to when the Romans abandoned the station. What Mr. Walker noticed were the altars and other articles.

1. An altar, handsome in form and finish, the inscription not very clear.

2. Another altar, not so handsome in form, but the letters more perfect, and the following inscription both on the altar and pedestal or base.

FORTVNAE SACRVM. C. VALERIVS LONGINVS TRIB.

There is channelled on one side a flat-shaped figure, on the other an ampulla or jug and a hatchet. Dimension of both altars 3 feet by 1 foot 8 inches; pedestal 3 feet by 1 foot 10 inches; both seem to have undergone the action of fire.

One silver coin very perfect, Geta. Two not so perfect, copper or alloy.

Seven smaller brass and copper coins—Augustus and Antoninus on some of them.

Two brass medals of some of the emperors.

Two brass ornaments as if for belts or caps, an iron scraper, a knife, and a writing stile.

Amongst other fragments were various pieces of urns, and the bottom of a small lachrymatory with the word *Victoria* upon it.

Nails, clamps, &c., a piece of opaque, and a piece of coloured glass.

The small apartment, hastily explored, may probably, have been part of a bath establishment. The Hypocaustia or Sudatoria.

MR. ARTHUR TREVELYAN'S LETTER ADDRESSED TO MR. ADAMSON.

Wallington, 17th March, 1840.

DEAR SIR,

On the 11th inst. I went to Risingham and found that an excavation, of

no great extent, had been made (by Mr. Shanks, the son of the owner), in one of the angles of the station. Several different articles were found, of which the following account will take notice :—A wall of 9 feet in height, built in regular courses of masonry, but not its full height ; as much must have fallen down. A large water tank, lined with a mixture of lime, pounded bricks, and charcoal ; the lining is at least 2 inches thick at the bottom. Two altars, very perfect, with large inscriptions (only slightly damaged), a good deal of ornament on the upper part of them, and on the sides are sculptured utensils used at sacrifices, such as an axe to fell the victim, a cleaver, and incense holders. One of the altars had formerly stood on a large flat stone, raised on a square hollow pedestal of masonry, the flat stone projected beyond the altar, and had an incense holder cut out on its top in front, and a single line of well-cut letters. On its front edge a much shattered small free stone figure dressed in armour. A drain was opened close to the tank which was nearly filled with sand. One of the altars has a wreath of leaves round its top. Four silver and six copper coins, which Mr. Shanks said were concealed in shells and built into the masonry below the flat stone. The shells were a cockle, and oyster, a sea muscle, and two river muscles. Of iron, a spear head, a hooked knife like a small sickle, and other articles too corroded to make out the use of. Of copper, a clasp for a waist-band, a writing stile about 4 inches long, a thick small ferrule, like those used for watch chains. Also were found pieces of pottery, glass, and the tusk of a wild boar.

Mr. Shanks does not seem inclined to part with any of the antiquities. He has a taste for collecting, which induces him to look keenly out for the antiquities, and afterwards to take care of them. I would recommend your Society to send a Draughtsman and Antiquarian to view them, as their account and sketches would make an interesting paper in your transactions.

I am, DEAR SIR,

Yours very, &c.,

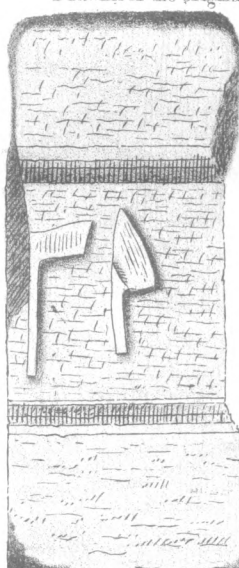
ARTHUR TREVELYAN.

RISINGHAM INSCRIPTIONS.

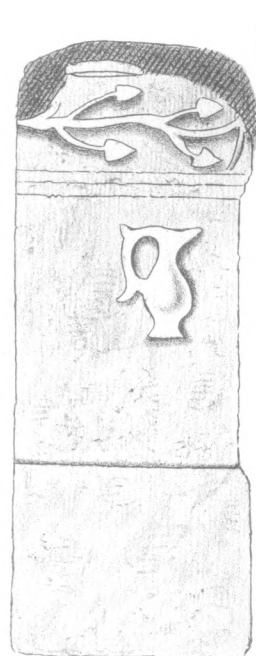
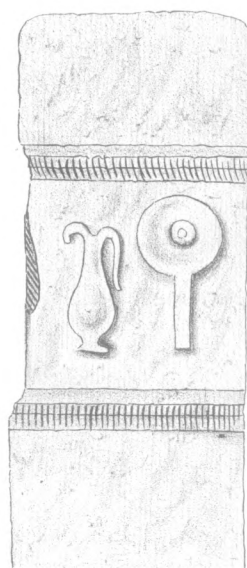
Drawn to the Original Size.



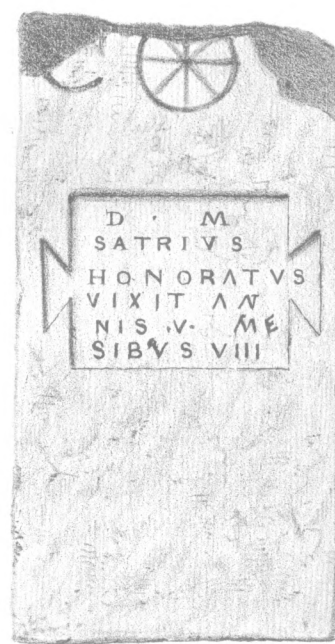
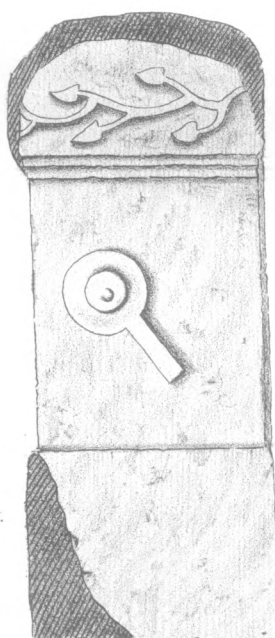
N°1.



N°2.



N°4.



N°5.



N°6.



N°7a



N°8.



N°9.



N°10.

Some short time after these communications had been laid before the Society, Mr. John Bell applied to Mr. Shanks to be favoured with drawings of the Altars, or rubbings of the inscriptions upon them, describing the manner of doing so; and sent an account of the Roman remains already in the collection of the Society. To this Mr. Shanks immediately replied:—"With regard to the taking of the inscriptions on the stones in my possession, there is a much better way than that you speak of, and which I shall do: that is, to send them all down to you, to be deposited in the Society's collection." And soon afterwards the Council had the gratification of placing Mr. Shanks's donation of the whole of the inscribed Stones found by him at Risingham, in their Arcade. The most interesting of these are shewn on the accompanying Plate, and are here given, with their supposed readings:—

No. 1.—Inscribed Stone, 2ft. 7in. by 1ft. 10in.

D. M. S.

AVR. QVART¹
LA. VIX. AN
NIS. XIII. ME. V
D. XXII. AVR.
QVARTINVS
POSVIT FILI
AE. SVAE.

Diis Manibus sacrum Aurelia. Quartilla vixit
annis tredecim, mensibus quinque, diebus vigin-
tiduo, Aurelius Quartinus posuit Filiae suæ.

No. 2.—An Altar, 3 feet by 1ft. 7in. inscribed.

FORTVNAE. REDVC
IVIIVS SIVIRINVS
TRIB. EXPLICITO
BALINEO V. SLM.

Fortunae Reduci Julius Severinus Tribunus
explicito Balineo votum solvit libens merito.

No. 3.—Inscribed Stone, 2ft. 7in. by 1ft. 10in.

D. M. S.
AVR. LV.PV.
LF MATRI
PIISSIME
DIONYSIVS
FORTVNA
TVSFILIVS
S^T T
T

Diis Manibus sacrum. Aureliae Lupulæ Matri
piissime Dionysius Fortunatus Filius. Sit tibi
terra levis.

This Inscription is curious in shewing the
centre point holes in the letter O, in the 5th
and 6th lines, as if they had been made by a
pair of compasses.

No. 4.—An Altar, 3ft. 3in. by 1ft. 8in.

FORTVNAE
SACRVM. C.
VALERIVS
LONGINUS
TRIB.

Fortunæ sacrum, Caius Valerius Longinus
Tribunus.

This Altar had stood upon a base raised upon
sixteen or seventeen hewn stones built up in
the shape of a square pillar, on which lay the
base stone, No. 4 a ; and above which had stood
the Altar, making it about six feet in height.
Between the bottom side of the base and the
stones it stood upon, were deposited the shells
of an oyster, a cockle, a sea and a river muscle,
in which were found deposited fifteen coins.

No. 4 a.—The Base of the above Altar, 8in. by 3 ft., with the same in-
scription as the Altar in two lines on its front edge, and on the front part
of its top is the focus, or thuribulum, about seven and a half inches in dia-
meter, neatly cut, with a smaller and more rude one nearer to its right
hand corner.

No. 5.—Inscribed stone, 3ft. 3in. by 1ft. 10in.

D. M.

SATRIVS

HONORATVS

VIXIT AN

NIS. V. ME

SIBVS VIII

Diis Manibus. Satrius Honoratus vixit annis
quinque mensibus octo.

No. 6.—An altar, 2ft. 4in. by 1ft. 2in.

DIS. CVLTO

RIBVSHVIV

LOCI. IVL.

VICTORTRB

Dīs Cultoribus hujus Loci Julius Victor Tri-
bunus.

No. 7.—Fragment of an inscription 1ft. 9in. by 2ft. 2in.

IVL VICTOR

SIG. VIX. AN

LV

Julius Victor, Signifer, vixit annis quinquaginta quinque.

No. 8.—Fragment, 11in. by 1 foot.

IMPCAES. M Imperator Caesar Marcus *Aurelius*.

ANTONINVS. F Antoninus Pius

ADIABENICV Adiabenicus

The Emperor here named was Caracalla. Adiabenicus was a title of his father Severus, but is here applied to him.

No. 9.—Fragment, 7½in. by 11in.

IOMI

IMPP

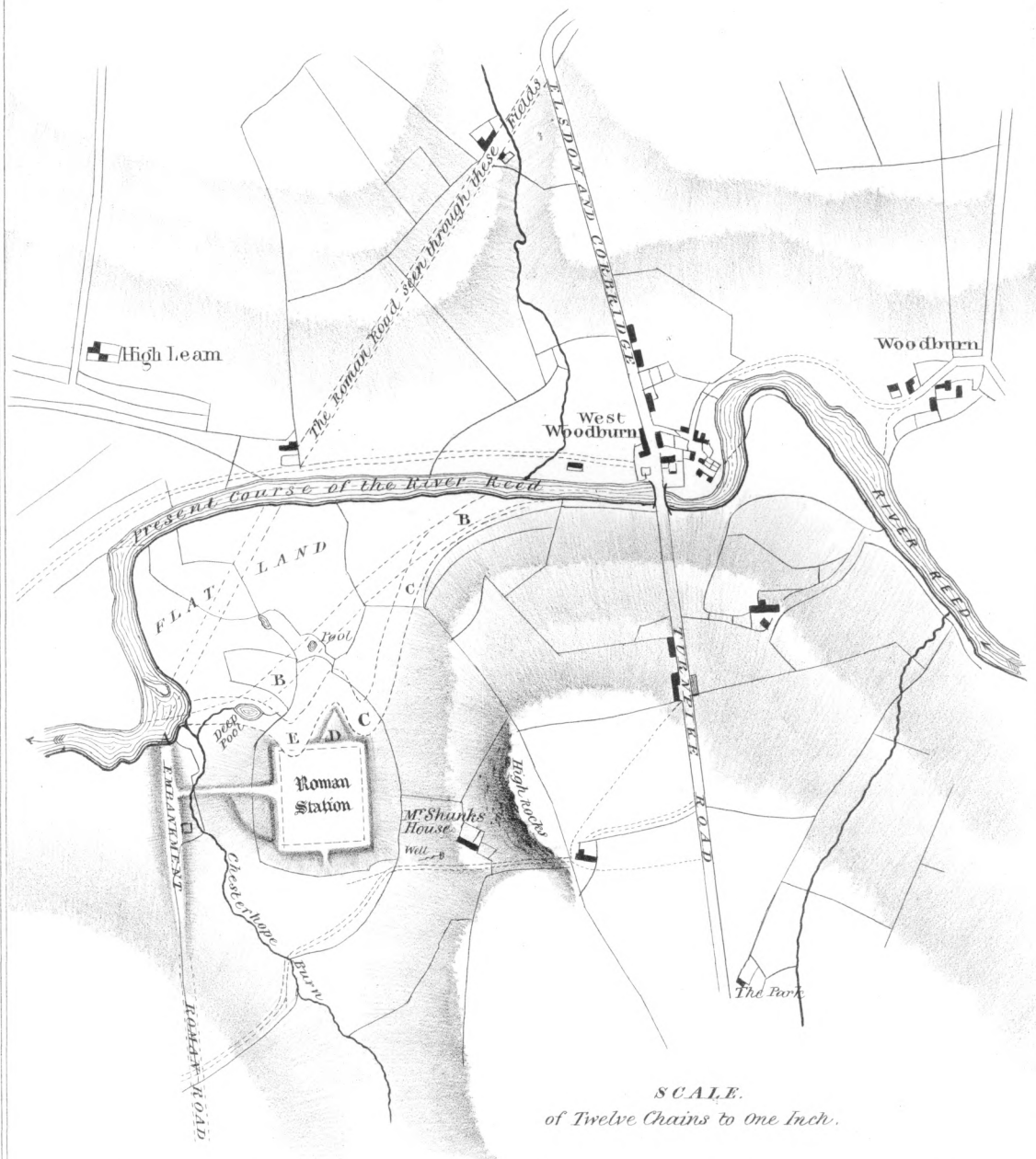
The following articles were also sent by Mr. Shanks:—A copper or plated coin of Geta; three third brass coins of Gallienus; a first brass coin of Hadrian; two third brass coins of Victorinus; a plated coin of Valerian; a first brass coin of Antoninus Pius; a silver coin of Ditto;

four silver or plated coins of Julia Domna ; two third brass coins of Claudius ; a first brass coin of Faustina ; a brass or bronze writing stile ; a large brass, and a blue glass bead ; two brass rings ; two brass ornaments, and part of the stand of some vessel ; some fragments of glass vessels ; and a most beautiful and perfect fibula.

MR. JNO. BELL'S ACCOUNT OF RISINGHAM.

By an invitation from Mr. Richard Shanks to visit the remains of this Roman station, and under the expectation of examining the baths he had opened, where the altars, &c., were discovered, which he afterwards presented to our Society, Mr. Clayton and I went there in the third week of last October ; we were disappointed in finding that the remains of the baths were removed, and the excavations filled up,—Mr. Shanks informing us that he was obliged to do so, because that after the Redesdale Iron Works were laid in, and the workmen unemployed, they came in such numbers to the station, he was glad to get rid of them, which he accomplished at the cost of demolishing the object of their curiosity. To compensate, however, for our disappointment, he gave us leave to make whatever excavations we pleased ; and, at a place close adjoining to the site of the baths, we saw a quantity of coals ; Mr. Shanks informing us that he had led away and burnt above a cart load, and that it was near to where the coals were, he found the beautiful fibula, which he had presented to the Society. Mr. Clayton left me, and during my stay, I closely inspected the immediate vicinity of the station, and found that the river Reed must have run much nearer to it when the station was first built, and when the bridge was standing ; and that there had been an outbreak of the river, which threatened the destruction of the station, causing the occupiers of it to make a wear (the largest I ever saw) to defend it from the water. How long it had been done so can never be known ; but the river, in another outbreak, has come round the north end of the wear, and sometime

PLAN SHEWING THE SITUATION OF THE ROMAN STATION HABITANCUM, AT
RISINGHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND.



- A. Foundation of a Bridge seen here.
B.B. Supposed Course of the River Reed
when the Bridge and Station were built.
C.C. An outbreak of the River which threatened
the destruction of the Station

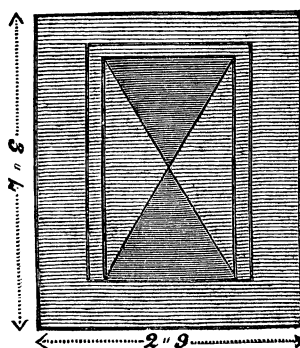
- D Large Wear made by the Romans to
protect the Station.
E A second Outbreak of the River round
the North end of the Wear and
breaking into the Station.

John Bell,
Gateshead.

or other broken into the north west corner of the station. I was kindly favoured with the use of the Tithe Plan of the parish, from which I made such an extract as has enabled me to state the irruptions and changes of the river more clearly to the Society. On this plan I have marked with the letters B B, the supposed first course of the river, when the station was fully occupied by the Roman Legions, and the bridge was standing. The site of the bridge is at A, where the foundations of it are still to be seen. The outbreak of the river, which threatened the destruction of the station, is shewn by the letters C C. The wear, extending almost 90 yards to the north of it, is shewn by the letter D: and, were it opened out, I have not the least doubt but it would be productive of vast quantities of stone; and, more than likely, many inscriptions, as two of the monumental stones sent by Mr. Shanks, in his second donation to the Society, were found near the south end of the wear, where they had been used as walling stones. The station has been excavated in its eastern and southern sides for the purpose, I believe, of covering the earth over the stones which compose the wear,—which excavation led Sir Walter Scott to term it “The Moated Mound of Risingham.

The letter E shows the second outbreak of the river, which must have run very deep under the north-west corner of the station; near which it left a large and deep pool of water, now greatly filled up; and most likely this second outbreak caused the disappearance of the bridge. The principal entrance of the station has been on its western side, between which and Watling Street, here raised on a considerable embankment constructed for a level access on to the bridge, there must have been another bridge crossing Chesterhope Burn, of which there is not the least vestige. The road from this entrance to Watling Street has been paved with large stones, which are still to be seen amongst the grass; and on the southern side of this road is the dunghill of the station, which I have no doubt would also be productive of numerous Roman remains. From the land being designed for a crop of hay next summer, we could not examine it further. On the embanked part of Watling Street, near where the road to the station turns off, are the grass-grown lines of a square building, most likely a guard house to protect the road. I employed three labourers to open out some of the numerous grass-covered remains of buildings, the walls of which I

found standing very perfect to about 3 feet in height. During these excavations there were many indications of burnt stone and fine earth, which had been burnt. There were two silver coins of Julia Domna, wife of Antoninus Pius, and four or five first brass Roman coins found, but the latter were so much corroded as not to be made out. Many fragments of earthen ware were every where turned up, several of them appearing as if the vessels had been used on the fire for cooking; and two different pieces had been *cramed*; and, in the excavation made in the remains of a building in the centre of the station, a curious carved stone was discovered built into the wall. It is of the dimensions here shown.



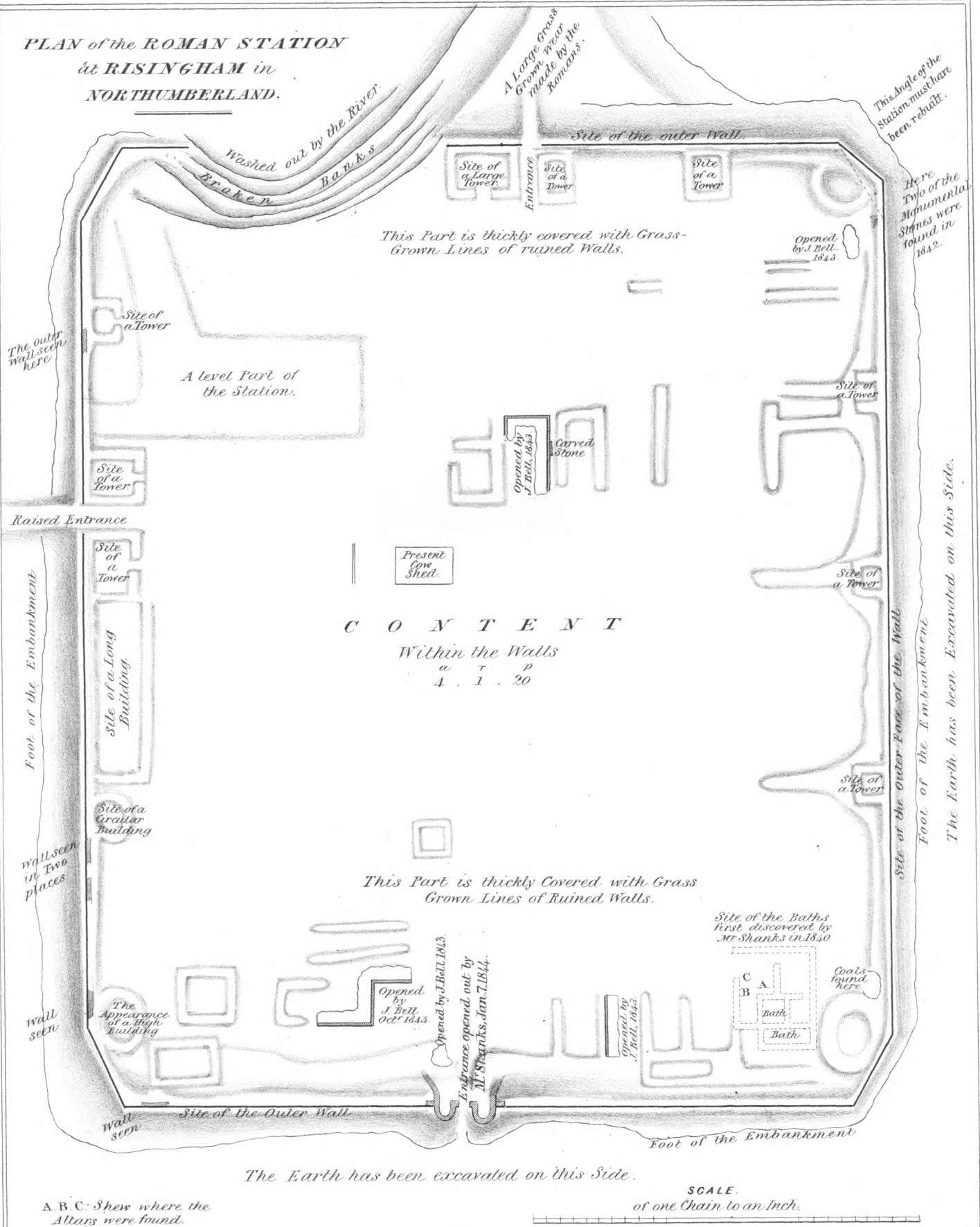
The two side pieces of what appears like the middle of an hour glass are raised about half an inch above the top and bottom parts; something like a step or raised part went round this stone. I made a correct survey of the station, shewing the most prominent of the grass-tufted indications of buildings, the site of the baths, and such parts of the outer wall as can be seen without excavation, and found the contents to be 4A. 1R. 20P. within, and including its outer wall (*see plate*). I understand that it has been the custom whenever stones were wanted for building or draining purposes, to set workmen on to tear out some of the standing walls until they got what was required; but from the quantity of stone got by the workmen I employed in excavating the rooms, without meddling with the walls, I have every reason to believe that they will be suffered to stand on the eastern side in future.

J. BELL.

October, 1843.

P. S.—I forgot to mention that there has not been an entrance on the eastern side.

PLAN of the ROMAN STATION
at RISINGHAM in
NORTHUMBERLAND.



LETTER FROM MR. RICHARD SHANKS TO MR. JOHN BELL.

Risingham, January 3, 1844.

SIR,

As you desire an account of Risingham, I shall, as far as I am able, furnish what I know of it. Risingham was the property of Charles Fenwick, Esq., of Woodburn Hill, near East Woodburn, in Redesdale, parish of Corsenside, and county of Northumberland; and had been the property of his ancestors time out of mind. It was used (Risingham) as a park by him for keeping entire horses in until it passed by sale from him to my father, Thomas Shanks, in July, 1822, who now holds it as his property. It was when he bought it, in a very desolate state, being partly covered with brushwood, and a renowned refuge for vermin, such as foulmarts, polecats, &c. These have, however, lost their place, as the brushwood is now all taken off, and remaining as you have seen it.

On my going to Risingham, which was on Mayday, 1839, there was little done in the way of discovery that year. In January, the beginning of the next year, from a sort of cement, which was in abundance on the south-east side, and from its greater height than any other part of Risingham, the thought struck me that this was the place to begin any labour in the way of discovery; and having stored myself with the Roman History and Antiquities, I set to work on the north side of the aforesaid hillock. We had not gone far on with the work until we discovered a large drain about 18 inches high and 1 foot in breadth. This we followed until we came to the altar FORTVNAE SACRUM, from thence to the bath in which were found the coins and other curiosities. From thence we went on till we found the other Altars, which are in the collection of your Society of Antiquaries. Going farther on, we discovered the large bath, which was cleaned out, and then gave over for that year. Next year we began a little further eastward, on the other side of the wall, running in a straight direction southward to the bath (which wall was left standing from the year before) and there found two rooms, which had been heated by flues (as sweating rooms) underneath. This closed our labours for 1841. Next year we discovered the other bath, with the place where the

furnace had been for the water. We still went on in a direction southward, but not finding anything, this part is left unexplored. Little was now done until the spring of the next year, when we opened the place where the coals had been deposited for the use of the furnace, and in this place was found the *Fibula*. Since then little has been doing until you came. We have now resumed our labours in the southern entrance into the station and have discovered the position the walls have stood on each side of that entrance, together with a tower as usual. Some things have been found which will be forwarded soon to the Society. A plan of our place of working is sent this week to let you know how we are going on.

I remain,

DEAR SIR,

Yours, &c.,

RICHARD SHANKS.