REVIEWS

1.—Lyall Wilkes and Gordon Dodds, *Tyneside Classical: The Newcastle of Grainger, Dobson and Clayton.* 159 pages. John Murray. 30s.

It is clearly no accident that this work has appeared just at the moment when for good or ill Newcastle is apparently on the threshold of another large-scale, indeed Babylonian, central redevelopment. Happy is the country that has no history and so happy have the people of Newcastle been that hitherto they have had no comprehensive history of the pioneer exercise in modern planning which transformed mid-nineteenth century Newcastle. To dispel this indifference Judge Wilkes and Mr. Dodds give us now their history of these events and we are in their debt.

The book gives a clear and readable narrative of the delayed Renaissance by which in the nineteenth century a planned complex of streets with buildings in a classical style was imposed on medieval Newcastle. In recent years it has been common to attribute wholly to John Dobson the felicitous character of the buildings then erected. There remains no doubt that his was a major influence, but the present book establishes that other architects had a substantial part in the work.

In the course of the narrative Richard Grainger is presented as the central figure. This restores the popular judgement of his contemporaries and justifiably corrects a recent tendency to give all the glory to the professional architect and to play down the vital part of the *entrepreneur* and planner.

This book provides a narrative framework for further specialised study of aspects of these great achievements. It

will be disappointing if it does not stimulate further work and publication. The illustrations are judiciously selected. As end-papers fore and aft it is suggested that in any subsequent edition there should be reproduced street plans of Newcastle before and after Grainger. In alluding to the Theatre Royal reference might be made to Richard Southern's book on the Georgian theatre. There is an index which is good but not faultless. The proof-reading will doubtless be bettered in the second edition which will surely be demanded.

J. Philipson

2.—Anthony Birley, *Life in Roman Britain.* 176 pages. Batsford/Putnam, 1964. 21s.

The task of compressing the increasing body of knowledge on life in Roman Britain into a volume of this size might well seem a daunting one, but Mr. Birley has carried out this difficult task very competently. Moreover, there is more in this book than the title might imply, for in addition to a wealth of information about towns, villas, villages and forts we are given a succinct history of the island in Roman times and Britain is set skilfully in its relation to the Empire as a whole.

Unfortunately the book begins inauspiciously with one notable error. In the first few lines of the text a passage is described as coming from the posthumous political testament of Augustus; it comes in fact from a description by Tacitus of what various people in Rome were saying about Augustus after his death. The unfortunate impression which this lapse creates, however, is speedily dispelled by what follows, and the general effect of the book must be to excite admiration for the breadth of knowledge and skill in exposition which are deployed. Although Mr. Birley casts his net wide, this is far from a hotch-potch of many scraps of information, but forms a coherent and integrated whole, and includes the

results of very recent work, some of it indeed not yet adequately published elsewhere.

Despite the formidable limitations of space which the author has faced it is difficult to fault the balance in the account between the different aspects involved. A minor criticism would be to say that perhaps Carausius is not entirely fairly treated when he is firmly dismissed as a renegade, and has his Imperial title as firmly relegated within inverted commas. Nevertheless the general impression conveyed is that the subject has been treated with good sense and a notable breadth of vision.

The book has been produced in a style of distinction characteristic of this publisher's products; paper, type and binding are all attractive, and the author's purpose is admirably served by a sumptuous array of relevant and well-reproduced illustrations. All in all, both Mr. Birley and his publisher are to be congratulated on the happy outcome of their co-operation, for this is a very good book which admirably fulfils its purpose.

N. McCord

3.—Anne S. Robertson, *The Roman Fort at Castledykes.* 288 pages, 12 plates and 48 figures. Oliver and Boyd, 1964. 30s.

This book is an account of the excavations directed by the authoress at the Roman fort of Castledykes, near Lanark, between the years 1937 and 1955. It does not provide a comprehensive description of the fort, as the title might suggest, but consists for the most part of a detailed record of numerous sections which were cut through the rampart and complicated ditch system, the internal buildings being largely unexplored. As such, the book will be mainly of interest to specialists, who will appreciate the thoroughness with which the results have been presented. The text is generously illustrated with plans and drawn sections

(although a general plan relating the fort to the temporary camps discovered by Dr. St. Joseph would have been welcome), and the treatment of the finds is positively lavish, even the humblest unstratified fragment of cooking-pot being included in what virtually amounts to a museum catalogue.

Before excavation, the large size of the fort (6½ acres), and its situation at a nodal point on the westernmost of the two Roman trunk roads into Scotland, made it reasonable to suppose that the history of Castledykes ran broadly parallel to that of the great Dere Street fort at Newstead, especially since the two stations were directly linked by a cross-road. And so in fact it proves, the same four structural periods (Flavian I-II and Antonine I-II) found at Newstead being detected also at Castledykes. Nevertheless there is one significant difference, for whereas at Newstead the earliest (Agricolan) occupation was represented by a permanent fort, the only structure assigned to Flavian I at Castledykes is a temporary "enclosure" some 7 acres in extent. To the present reviewer, however, the evidence for this enclosure is unconvincing. Only the eastern half was actually identified, and in order to complete the circuit it has been assumed that the western half was extremely irregular on plan and that it was obliterated by later re-modelling of the defences. This, of course, is by no means impossible, but it is more difficult to accept the corollary that the entrance-gap on the south side of the enclosure was 115 feet in width and that on the west side close on 100 feet. Miss Robertson seeks to overcome the problem posed by these excessive widths by suggesting that the gaps may have been masked in some way, but the reader may well ask "How?", as there was apparently no indication of a *tutulus* in either case. Doubts about the enclosure are also increased by a study of the ditch that forms its sole component. Since it was as much as 8 to 9 feet in width in places, and full of silt, the ditch cannot possibly have been a palisade trench, and there is no justification for supposing that it was accompanied by an

internal palisade or by a rampart: if either of these features had ever existed, traces of them should have been preserved in cutting 16, for example, where the Roman level was 4 feet below the present surface. In spite of the additional entrances on the east, it seems preferable, therefore, to associate this ditch with the defences of the permanent fort, particularly in view of the fact that its lay-out corresponds fairly closely to that of the other ditches. In this case the comparatively large amount of early Flavian samian ware from the site could perhaps best be explained on the assumption that the fort rampart and the berm ditch at least were Agricolan in origin, the outer ditches, including the "enclosure" ditch, being added in the following period. For the re-furbishing of the site in late Domitianic times need not have involved the gateways, and any repair work on the rampart could have been obliterated in the course of the Antonine reconstruction. This hypothesis could most easily be tested by the determination of the number of periods present in the internal buildings, and it is unfortunate that the only such buildings examined to date are situated in the strip of plantation that crosses the fort, where the disturbance caused by tree-roots has inevitably led to inconclusive results.

One other question-mark concerning the early history of the site must be set against Miss Robertson's conclusion that Agricola's troops first penetrated into Scotland by the eastern route only, and reached Castledykes by way of Newstead and Easter Happrew. There is in fact no evidence to support this, and a pincer-movement directed against the Selgovae, in which both the east and west routes were used simultaneously, seems more likely, especially now that early Flavian pottery has been found at Crawford, the next station to the south of Castledykes. But by far the greater part of the book is concerned with the Antonine occupation of the site, and here the results achieved by patient application, often in most difficult circumstances, can be accepted without any reservations. Like the forts on the Antonine Wall, the

first Antonine fort at Castledykes was apparently built by legionaries, and was reconstructed, probably about A.D. 158, after a break in the occupation. This second Antonine fort, like its predecessor, was destroyed by fire, but whether by the garrison or by native hands is uncertain, and unhappily nothing was found which could shed any light on the vexed question of the date of the final evacuation.

K. A. Steer