

## II

### A NATIVE SETTLEMENT AT HARTBURN AND THE DEVIL'S CAUSEWAY, NORTHUMBERLAND (1971)

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#### SUMMARY

A rescue excavation on the twin-ditched enclosure at Hartburn, hitherto recorded as a Roman Fortlet on the Devil's Causeway, shows it to be a native settlement first established perhaps as early as the fifth or sixth century B.C. The site is noteworthy for its internal complex of house-replacements which suggests near continuous occupation until the final phase, represented by a Romano-British settlement of standard pattern in the area. The demise of this site as a Roman fortlet raises some additional problems concerning the garrisoning of the Devil's Causeway.

#### INTRODUCTION

This twin-ditched enclosure, situated approximately half a kilometre to the north-west of the Roman road known as the Devil's Causeway where it descends to its assumed crossing point over the Hart Burn, was first discovered from the air by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph<sup>1</sup> (fig. 1). For long it was regarded as the site of a Roman fortlet and appears as such on the third edition of the *Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain*. It is similarly described on the latest edition of sheet 78 of the one inch map, but here has been placed on Hall's Hill, some four hundred metres to the south of its true position which is at NZ:081867. This error is probably due to the fact that there remain only faint traces of the Hartburn site on the ground, whereas a bivallate work which is somewhat better preserved has been known to exist on the more prominent Hall's Hill for well over a century, having been recorded first by Hodgson and later MacLauchlan.<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Aitchison made two cuttings over the inner ditch at Hartburn in July 1949 without conclusive results other than establishing its width and depth. Records of this excavation were preserved until recently amongst his private papers at Coupland Castle.<sup>3</sup> A ground-survey of the remains was made by the present writer in 1960, since even then the site appeared to have some native rather than Roman military characteristics. In

<sup>1</sup> *J.R.S.*, XLI (1951), 56. Air-photograph  
*A.A.*, XLVI (1968), 58.

<sup>2</sup> H. MacLauchlan, *Eastern Branch of  
Watling Street* (1864), 10.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Mr. David Aitchison for  
allowing access to these papers.

addition, although genuine Roman fortlets are occasionally found some little distance from the line of the road, as for example at Burnswark in Dumfriesshire,<sup>4</sup> at Hartburn there seemed to be better locations more closely related to the line of the Devil's Causeway and the assumed crossing point over the burn. In more recent years it has also become evident, from air-photographs taken over the Northumberland plain, that there are a number of ploughed-out sites somewhat similar in plan to Hartburn which are either quite divorced from known Roman roads or, if in proximity to a road, are often most assuredly native settlements enclosing traces of round houses.<sup>5</sup>

The need for some immediate investigation at Hartburn was precipitated early in 1971 by the request of the farmer to allow certain land improvements, including the removal of some stone which was still interfering with deep ploughing over the site. Financial assistance was generously provided by the Department of the Environment, the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne. Gratitude for assistance with the excavation must also be expressed to students from the University, to a small but experienced band of extra-mural students<sup>6</sup> and to Mr. K. J. Fairless and students from the College of Education, Middleton St. George. Mr. T. Brewis, the present farmer, gave his most helpful co-operation at all times. A number of air-photographs of the site were taken by Dr. N. McCord and are held in the University's collection. Mr. G. Hodgson has kindly processed and reported upon the skeletal material.

#### *THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONS* (figs. 1 and 2)

Hereabouts the countryside has a good cover of boulder-clay overlying the carboniferous limestone but the topography is undulating and both this earthwork and others in the vicinity either take advantage of the better drained knolls and ridges or, a little further to the west, more prominent crag-and-tail formations.<sup>7</sup> Immediately to the east of the site, which lies at an altitude of 450' (137 m), the land falls quickly towards the crossing point of the Roman road over the Hart Burn. To the north and west the slope is more gentle, whilst to the south there is but a slight fall in contour before the gentle ascent to Hall's Hill.

The two ditches enclosing the site are now only just visible on the ground in some places and in others have been entirely obliterated. They are best seen running beneath the dyke and hedge-line which crosses the enclosure on the east. The course of the outer ditch, plotted mainly from soil-marks in the ploughed field and from the air-photographs, tends to follow the natural con-

<sup>4</sup> S. N. Miller (ed.), *The Roman Occupation of South-Western Scotland* (1952), 218 f.

<sup>5</sup> N. McCord and G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XLVI (1968), 51 ff; XLIX (1971), 119 ff.

<sup>6</sup> I am particularly indebted to Mrs. Charlton

and Mrs. Rolland, Misses Creighton, Clark, Mitchison and Weyman and Messrs. Charlton, Higgins, Newman and Preston.

<sup>7</sup> For a general but now dated distribution v. *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XXXVII (1959), 219.

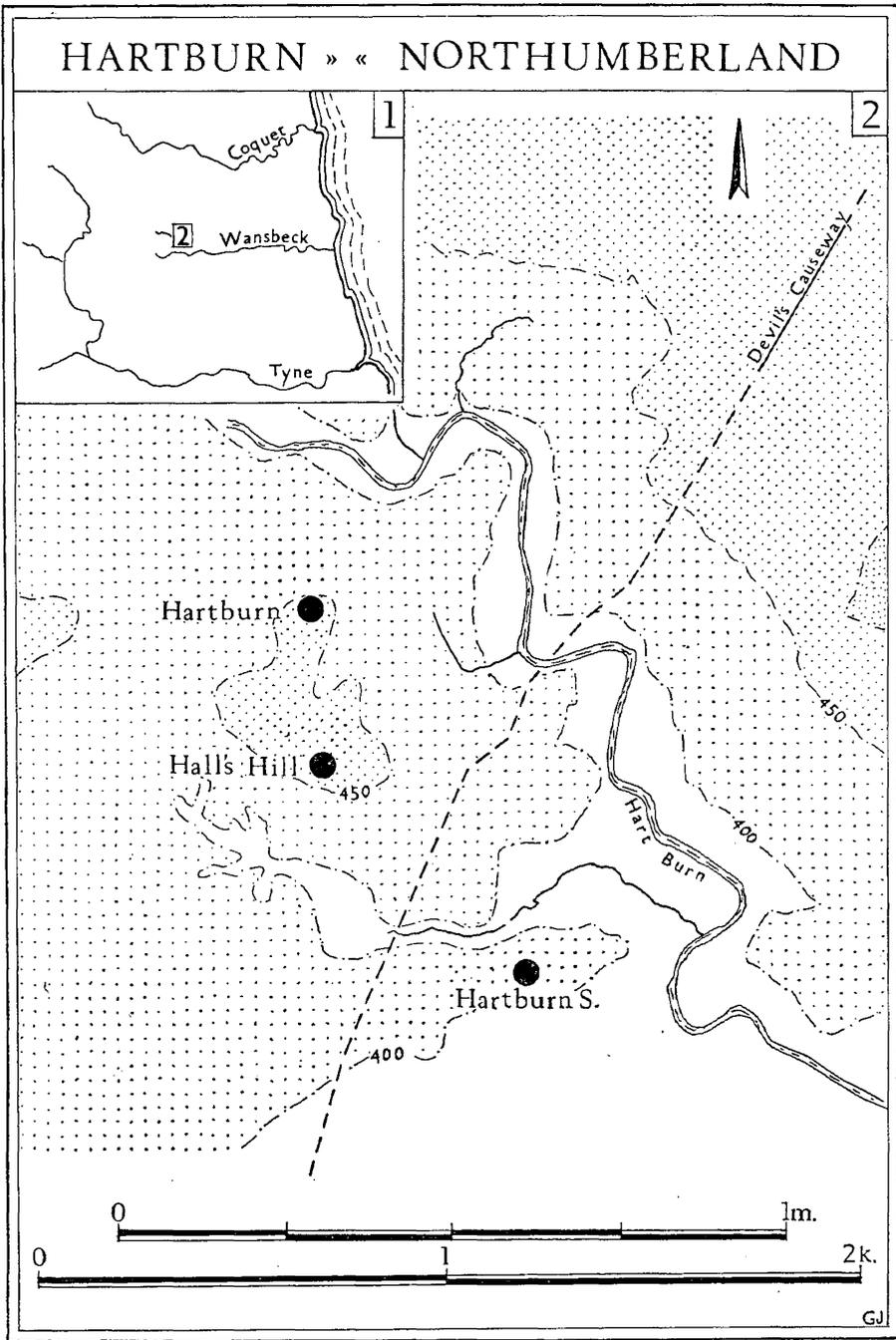


Fig. 1

tours and encloses an estimated area of *c.* 0.67 hectares. The inner enclosure, except for its rounded corners is almost square in form, measuring forty-eight by forty-four metres and having an area of *c.* 0.21 hectares. Although it would be difficult to argue that this form is dictated by the contours, it remains true that it is not greatly at variance with the general topography. On the air-photographs the two ditches can be seen to converge slightly towards the south-east and the two entrances do not seem to be strictly aligned with each other and the centre of the inner enclosure.

So far as one can now ascertain, the line of the Devil's Causeway must be as MacLauchlan indicated. On the north side of the burn, as the road ascends the slope, the first part of its course is marked by the hedge-line bordering the old Haporth Loaning until this bears away slightly to the west. Beyond this point the road was noted by Ian Richmond in 1937 as a "linear mound".<sup>8</sup>

Two further sites are known in the immediate area. The first, already mentioned, is the presumed pre-Roman defensive work on Hall's Hill. The second is a single ditched rectangular enclosure, Hartburn South,<sup>9</sup> visible on air-photographs but barely so on the ground, which protrudes from beneath the road and plantation at NZ:086857. Its estimated size and its shape make it a likely though not a certain candidate for inclusion in the category of rectilinear Romano-British settlements which abound in the southern parts of Northumberland.

More settlements no doubt remain to be found in the vicinity, especially on the cultivated ridges to the north of the Hart Burn, but at the moment detailed air-photography has proceeded little further than the south bank of the River Wansbeck into which the Hart Burn flows from the north.

#### THE EXCAVATION

Only the central part of the site and one long extension over both ditches on the north side were available for excavation. A major part of the tilth was removed by mechanical means and the remaining few centimetres trowelled off by hand over a total area of some one thousand five hundred square metres. Unfortunately, by the close of the excavations, the structural investigations were by no means as complete as one could have wished. In particular, a spell of drought delayed the finding of the full complement of internal post-holes which, when packing stones were not present, depended for their detection upon slight differences in the surface colouring of the clay sub-soil.

Generations of tillage had caused the usual damage so that there was little reliable stratification remaining over the whole of the interior. Even so, some patches of paving and spreads of stone had enforced shallower ploughing in

<sup>8</sup> Annotated O.S. 6" maps, University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

<sup>9</sup> *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XLVI (1968), 57 no. 1.

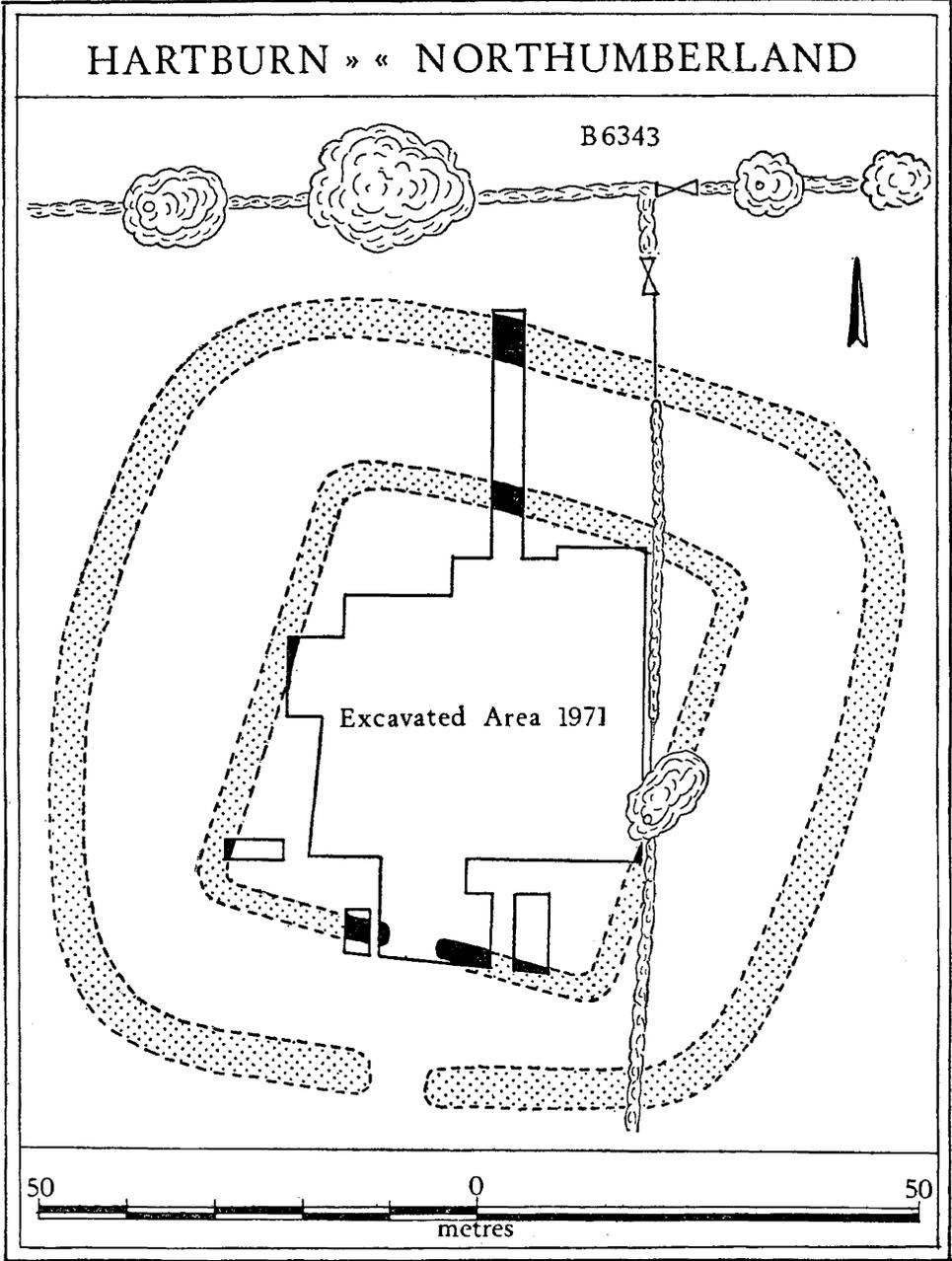


Fig. 2

places, thus contributing to the survival of some features which might otherwise have disappeared. Now that such obstructions to the plough have been removed it is certain that many of the less substantial features will disappear with the next ploughing.

*THE DITCHES* (fig. 2)

The outer ditch could be investigated only on the north side of the site in a cutting which was twenty eight and a half metres long and up to 4 metres wide. Both ditches were lying at a slight angle across this cutting. On our present knowledge of the distance between timber uprights in ramparts elsewhere, this width was considered to be sufficient to ensure that any post-holes associated with rampart construction would not be missed. As none were found it has been assumed that no timber-work was involved in any banks that might have been constructed from ditch-material. Moreover, it seems unlikely that an earlier palisaded enclosure had ever been present unless, by chance, it had been removed by the digging of one or other of the ditches.

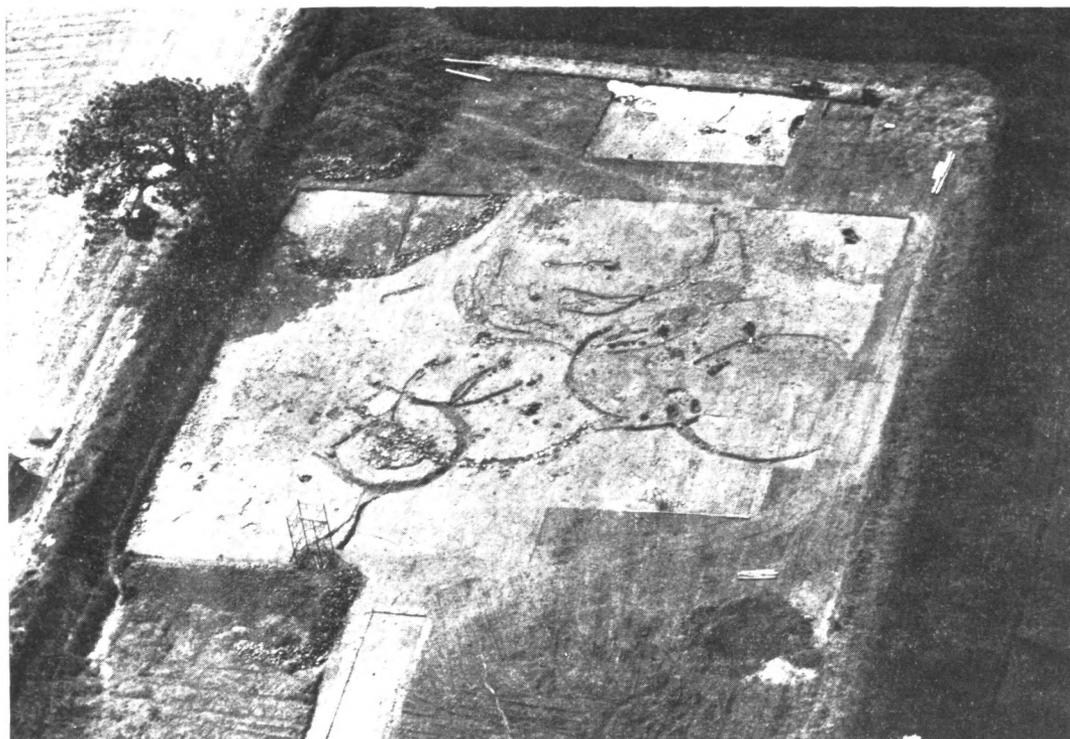
(a) *THE OUTER DITCH* (fig. 3)

This was 5.0 metres wide at the existing clay level but appears somewhat wider in illustration because of the slightly oblique nature of the section. The clay sides sloped gently down to a depth of 1.6 metres below the present top-soil. The lowest fill consisted of a band of compact blue-grey silt (4), overlaid by a narrow silty deposit (3) which may have been caused by further quick silting after a partial cleaning out of the ditch. Above this a band of mixed clay (2), together with a spread of stones at its toe, had entered from the inner side and was presumably derived from an inner rampart. On the inner lip of the ditch a few patches of clay, resting upon a thin, grey, turf-like band, overlay the natural clay sub-soil and may have been the last vestiges of an upcast bank. One may assume that this internal bank had been revetted at least on the outside with some stone. There was no positive indication of a counterscarp bank having existed. At this point the distance between the inner and outer ditch, lip to lip, was fourteen metres.

(b) *THE INNER DITCH* (fig. 3)

This was emptied in the long northern cutting and again on the east side of the entrance. Elsewhere its course was traced at specific points in order to establish its relationship to various internal structures.

In the northern cutting this ditch was 3.0 metres wide and 1.3 metres deep, measurements which agreed with those given by Sir Walter Aitchison for his



1. Site during excavation

*Air photo. N. McCord*



2. Houses in course of excavation



Intersection of houses 17, 18, 19, 20



1. Packing stones, house 12



2. Pit-hearth N.



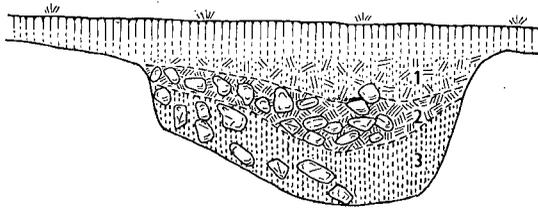
1. Gateway, inner enclosure



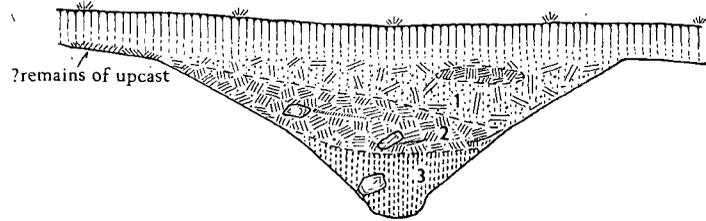
2. Cobbled yard

# HARTBURN

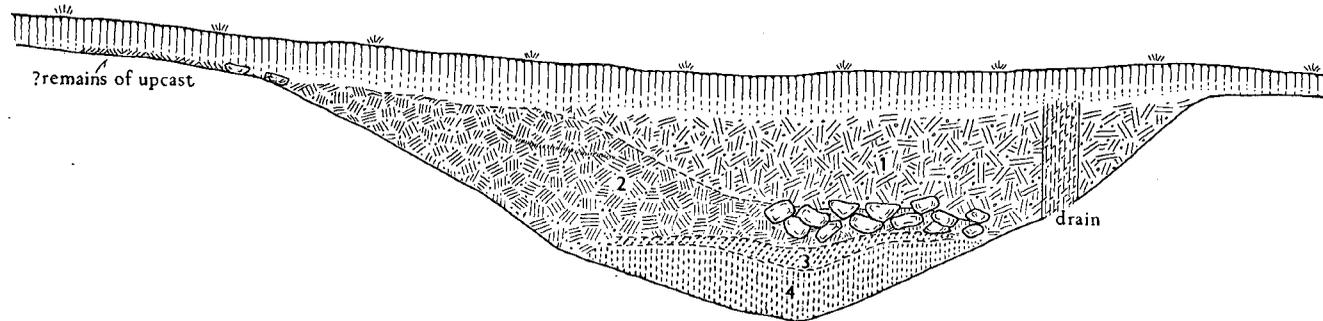
INNER DITCH: ENTRANCE X-Y



INNER DITCH: WEST FACE



OUTER DITCH: WEST FACE



GJ

Fig. 3

earlier section made near to the south-west corner of the inner enclosure. The sides sloped gently with only slight changes of angle, possibly due to differential weathering above the silt line. A distinct working trench had been formed in the bottom, either by the original excavators or in subsequent cleaning out. This is a feature not confined to Roman military sites and has been found, for example, on the native settlement at Burradon,<sup>10</sup> Northumberland, which is also situated on boulder clay. Compact blue-grey silt formed the lowest level (3), above which a laminated band of mixed clay containing a few large stones (2) ran in from the inside lip and was again almost certainly derived from an interior bank.

At the entrance to the enclosure the form of the inner ditch was more irregular in the upper reaches, suggestive of recent interference. It is just possible that this was caused by the first of Sir Walter Aitchison's trenches. Although from his notes he was clearly of the opinion that he had hit the inner entrance and a "roadway which had unusually large penning", his bearings and measurements taken from a large tree in the hedge-line indicate a location over the ditch-terminal rather than the entrance-way itself. This apart, the chief difference in the fill when compared with that of the previous section was the amount of stone found amongst the lower clayey silt (3) and the mixed clay band above this (2) (fig. 3 and plate IV). The amount of tumbled stone was here quite sufficient to have provided a stone-facing to an interior bank and if the gateway-passage had been similarly faced then this might account for the greater accumulation.

There were no finds amongst the fill of the outer ditch and, therefore, no direct means of establishing a precise context as to when it had been open. Some animal skeletal remains and one sherd of hand-built pottery, not closely datable, were recovered from the lowest silt of the inner ditch in the gateway section. As the period at which this inner ditch was open had an important bearing on the assessment of the nature of the latest phase on the site, a sample of soft, uncarbonized twigs of less than 10 mm diameter, recovered from the bottom silt of the northern section (fig. 3, 3), was submitted for radiocarbon assay. This yielded a date in conventional radiocarbon years of  $35 \pm 175$  B.C. (I-6300;  $1985 \pm 175$  B.P.; half-life 5568 years). Unfortunately the treatment for the removal of humic acids had to be less rigorous than usual because of the soluble nature of some of the sample. On the dendrochronological calibration curve, as at present available,<sup>11</sup> this reading falls within a short-term fluctuation and the central dates would be c. 40 B.C. or c. 60 A.D.

#### THE INNER GATEWAY (fig. 4 and plate IV)

The gateway was marked on either side by a group of three post-holes with

<sup>10</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.A.*, XLVIII (1970), 65.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. W. F. Libby, *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.*, 269A (1970), 1 ff.

one additional outlier. All contained packing stones, but these had been caught by the plough and a shallow groove, which extended into the entrance for about 1 metre from the east side, was in all probability the result of stone-drag rather than the remains of a drop-trench for a gate. The post-holes were on average 0.4 metres in diameter whilst, with packing stones in position, the girth of the timber uprights could have been no more than half of this. Their depth from the clay surface did not exceed 0.5 metres. Large stones completely blocked one post-hole in both of the two groups of three, as if these holes had been deliberately abandoned. Clay had also been rammed into the two outlying holes. It seems, therefore, that at least one replacement of timbers or reconstruction had been necessary. Assuming the very simplest of gateway

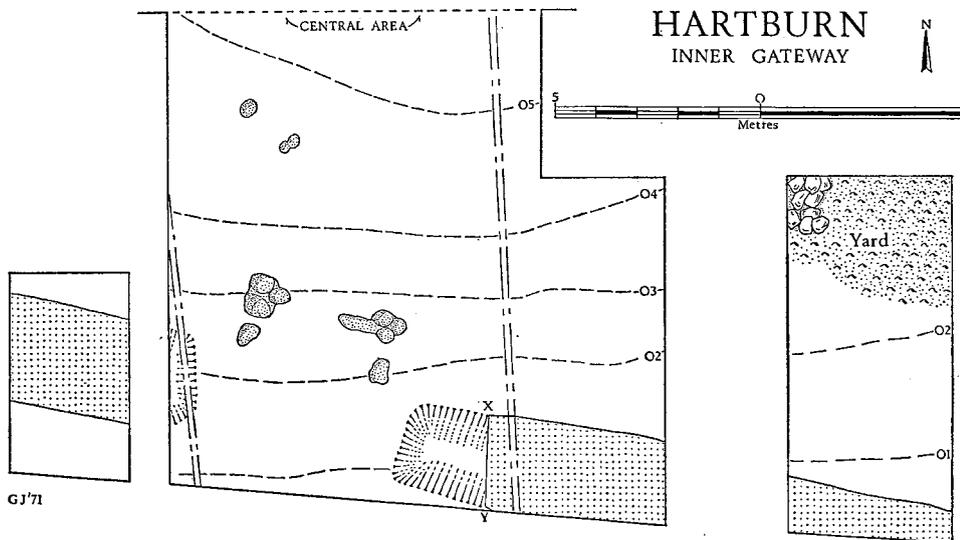


Fig. 4

structures, consisting of only two opposing gate-posts and no replacements being made in pre-existing post-holes, then there could have been a *maximum* of four phases represented.

The position of the gateway structure in itself demands the assumption of an interior bank to the inner enclosure of at least 2.0 to 2.5 metres in width. No post-holes were found on the line of such a bank either here or in other parts of the interior. The only finds from the entrance-passage were two fragments of a Roman bowl of second century date, recovered from the clay surface and therefore unstratified.

It will be apparent that from the cuttings over the two ditches and the excavation at the entrance there was no evidence to establish any relationship between the two lines. Unfortunately it was not possible to extend the excavations southwards over the outer entrance because of standing crops. Points

that could be of some importance in future discussion would be the greater stature of the outer ditch as compared with the inner, the fact that they were not closely set together, and the slight lack of symmetry between the two enclosures. The radiocarbon date for the material from the inner ditch is of doubtful value, except perhaps to indicate the possibility of this feature having been open sometime in the first century B.C. to first century A.D. rather than at a very much earlier date.

#### *THE INTERIOR OF THE INNER ENCLOSURE*

##### (a) THE YARD (figs. 4, 5 and 6, plate IV)

On the removal of the remaining plough-soil this feature showed itself immediately as an area of spongy grey earth occupying the south-east corner of the interior. Further clearance of the fill disclosed a yard hollowed out to a depth of 0.3 and 0.4 metres on the north and west and surfaced with small stones rammed into the underlying clay. A thin band of blue-grey silt or mud, only 20 to 30 mm thick, covered the cobbles and together with them extended beneath a mass of tumbled stone on the northern and western periphery up to the very edge of the depression (fig. 6). On the east the cobbles terminated on a line some 3 metres from the edge of the inner ditch and southwards they faded out at about 4.75 metres from the same ditch. Although the whole area covered by this yard could not be excavated, an additional cutting made to the east of the entrance to the inner enclosure confirmed that its full extent must have measured at least eighteen metres in length by 9 metres in breadth.

The tumbled stone created some difficulties in interpretation which could not be resolved with certainty. It formed a band up to 3 metres broad which was generally conterminous with the extremities of the cobbled area in the north-east and south-west. The stones appeared to have tumbled or to have been tipped into the yard whilst this was still open and before much silt had accumulated over the cobbles. There was no indication of them having been the result of later field-clearance. In the circumstances, one solution commends itself, which is to envisage them as tumble from a wall which had originally closed off the cobbled area on two sides and, at least in the north-east, had terminated against the bank of the inner enclosure situated between the edge of the cobbles and the lip of the ditch. This being the case some provision for an entry into the yard would have been necessary, possibly in the extreme south-west corner to the east of the gateway into the inner enclosure. Unfortunately this area could not be completely cleared before the end of the excavation.

Whether this yard was enclosed or not, it will be evident that it must have been contemporary at some stage with the bank of the inner enclosure since, even if a later insertion, the abrupt edge of the cobbles at least demanded the

presence of the latter as an upstanding feature. Attention was inevitably focused on other patches of small stone impressed into the clay surface in the vicinity of house-trench 27 southwards to trench 32, as shown on the plan of the interior (fig. 5). These, as will be shown, were later than the construction-trenches for timber-built houses, but if they were indeed the remains of a second yard there was no pronounced depression such as obtained in the south-east.

The only small finds which could be considered as having any bearing on the function and date of the hollowed yard consisted of some fragments of animal-bone and a number of sherds from a Romano-British cooking pot of second century date. The latter were lying directly on top of the cobbles and were sealed by the band of tumbled stone, thereby suggesting that the yard was open in the second century A.D. One of the distinctive features of rectilinear Romano-British settlements in the area is the presence of a pair of yards, sometimes hollowed, one lying on either side of and immediately within the entrance to the enclosure. At some stage in the Roman period stone-built round houses also appear to replace the traditional timber-built houses, at least in parts of the Tyne-Forth Province.<sup>12</sup> In view of the presence of one certain yard of possible Roman context at Hartburn, the problem is at once raised as to whether or not there had ever been stone-built houses on the site, later than the timber-built houses yet to be discussed.

#### (b) STONE-BUILT HOUSES (fig. 5)

At the outset it must be admitted that in excavation no unequivocal evidence could be found to substantiate a development from timber to stone buildings. However, it is in any event a matter for conjecture as to how much evidence for stone buildings would remain on a well robbed and intensively ploughed site. Such stone houses invariably lack foundation-trenches so that apart from a scatter of broken stone little might remain of the walls themselves. The excavated settlement at Huckhoe, a few kilometres to the south of Hartburn, provides a provocative example in this context.<sup>13</sup> Here the only traces of one robbed-out stone-built house, albeit on rock, were primarily the small stake-holes for the partition-walls and the more substantial post-holes at the doorway.<sup>14</sup> Almost certainly similar diminutive stake-holes would not have survived at Hartburn where, perhaps, only the more substantial door post-holes, a sunken hearth, a patch of paving or an inset stone threshold could have escaped the ploughing. It seems essential, therefore, to make note of certain features at Hartburn which cannot be or are difficult to relate to the numerous timber-built houses in the interior. In the first place there were some rather formless spreads of broken stone at the bottom of the plough and

<sup>12</sup> *v. e.g.* Tower Knowe, this volume.

<sup>13</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XXXVII (1959), 217 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

on the clay surface, the most extensive being in the area of a small isolated patch of paving lying to the east of timber-built house no. 4 (fig. 5). In this same area there were also some items recovered which are generally datable to the Roman period, though not securely stratified (v. small finds). It may be of significance too that the more recent field-dyke contains a fair amount of stone in its make-up, more than one would anticipate in this particular area. Again, as we shall see, there are difficulties in associating hearths *O* and *N* with any of the timber-buildings as found. It is always possible that these were outside cooking-places but at least the sunken hearth *N* could have had a Roman context according to a radiocarbon assay of small twigs from within it ( $I=6301$ ;  $1885 \pm 90$  B.P.; half-life 5568 years =  $65 \pm 90$  A.D. in conventional radiocarbon years). Lastly, it just so happens that pairs of substantial post-holes, not readily relatable to other structures, were found to the south-east of hearth *N* and to the south of the paving to the east of timber-built house 4 (fig. 5). But to do more than merely draw attention to these as possible doorways of destroyed stone-built houses would be to carry inference too far. In any event, at least one of the timber-built houses was almost certainly of Roman date and it is to these that we must now turn.

(c) HOUSE-TRENCHES (figs. 5, 6 and 7; plates I, II and III)

With one exception these features are referred to throughout as trenches; the inference being that they were the remains of construction-trenches for the timber-built walls of houses and not drip or drainage gullies surrounding house-sites. Obviously where the damage from ploughing has been extensive it may be difficult sometimes to distinguish between one and the other. The general assumption in this instance has been based upon three attributes of the better preserved trenches; first, the square-cut form and general narrowness of most of them; secondly, the presence of packing stones still *in situ* in some trenches; and lastly the bottoms of some trenches still carried shallow impressions, as from the stub-ends of posts, or expanded into rounded and slightly deeper post-holes at the doorways where these could be located. Although the site was on clay the natural drainage was reasonably good, even after rainfall, and certainly superior to that at Burradon, a comparable site on clay where drainage ditches were found to be necessary.

In some instances the incomplete survival of the circumferences of the construction-trenches can be explained by reference to the form-lines as shown in fig. 5. These represent the general contours of the undisturbed clay surface beneath the plough-soil except for some minor, isolated variations of less than 0.1 metres. As an example, house-trench 20 reduces in depth from c. 400 mm at the doorway which lies on form-line 0.7 m to 200 mm in the region of form-line 0.5 m. In like manner, house-trenches fade out as the contours fall towards the gateway or in the slight depression which now runs along

the east side of the interior. This latter feature is difficult to account for, but may have been caused by more recent interference related to the building of the field-dyke. Whilst the gradual fading of some trenches, such as 13, 19, 20 and 21 to 23, could have been caused by the deeper ploughing which seemed to have taken place towards the peripheries of the excavated area, one additional consideration should possibly be taken into account. If timbers cut to fairly regular length had been used in the construction of the house-walls, then an overall constant level for the tops of those walls would have been achieved only by reducing the depth of the construction-trenches to correspond with the slight changes in contour. The variation which was found in the depth of trench 12, where the circumference of the structure was complete, might give some support to such a supposition. It will be evident, however, that not all instances of the phenomenon can be explained in such terms; and some trenches as found were extremely shallow, so that erosion by various means may well have started in antiquity once specific houses were abandoned and new ones built.

Unless otherwise stated in the following summary, the fill of the trenches consisted of a fairly compact blue-grey earth and clay silt. Where a relative sequence between trenches could be observed in excavation this is given but the main implications of horizontal stratigraphy are reserved for separate discussion. The enumeration used here, which corresponds to that in figs. 5 and 6, carries no chronological implications and is according to the excavation record, generally in ascending order from north to south. The estimated diameters of full circles based upon the remaining arcs are given for most houses but it will be understood that some of these can only be approximate.

*Trench 1.* This was less than 100 mm deep in places and contained no packing stones *in situ*. It was demonstrably earlier than 4b but no sequence could be established with 2. Its estimated diameter was 12 metres.

*Trench 2.* The maximum depth was 150 mm and a few small packing stones were still in position. It was earlier in sequence than 4 and 4a, from the evidence at the intersections, and must have had a diameter of c. 9 metres.

Two hearths, A and B, lay within its circumference but clearly were not necessarily associated in the strictest sense. Both consisted of reddened sandstone slabs sunken slightly into the clay, the first still containing a number of cracked and reddened "pot-boilers".

*Trench 3.* Only a small arc remained which was at most 100 mm deep and there were no packing stones present.

*Trench 4.* This was the best preserved house-site of all. The trench was deepest in the north-west at 400 mm and decreased in stature towards the south-east where the doorway was marked by two terminal post-holes of slightly greater depth and containing packing stones. There were also some packing stones *in situ* in the bottom of the trench together with some post impressions from a solid timber-built wall. The diameters were 7×7·5 metres.

One aspect of this trench could not be resolved satisfactorily. There appeared to have been a widening of the outer edge of the top of the trench in the north-west, probably connected with the digging of *4b*. The latter was more V-shaped in section, as if intended for a drainage gully. No series of post-holes could be found between the interior area of paving and the construction-trench so that it is most unlikely that the drainage gully *4b* and the widening of *4* had anything to do with an earlier or later hut of individual post-hole construction (v. below). Unfortunately the full course of *4b* could not be followed beyond the edge of the excavation where it was decreasing in depth.

The circular area of paving within house *4* has been assumed to be associated. Although it had been disturbed by ploughing its original circumference could be traced by the remains of a series of thin edging stones set well down into a prepared groove in the clay. Two hearths, *C* and *D*, lay within the area of this paving. Hearth *D* was sunken below the level of the paving and edged with small slabs. Hearth *C* had rested upon a large reddened paving slab and in the adjacent crevices were some small fragments of coal and cinder.

At the points of intersection house *4* was demonstrably later in context than *2*, *5*, *6*, *9*, and *12*. One broken saddle-quern had been incorporated into the paving and a second was recovered from the construction-trench where it could have seen secondary use as a packing stone. One Roman sherd of second century date came from between the paving stones and must give a context to this house. There were also a number of Roman sherds recovered from the immediate vicinity, including two in the top fill of the wall-trench which could have been ploughed off the interior (v. small finds).

*Trench 5.* This was little more than 150 mm deep but contained one or two displaced packing stones. Its estimated diameter was 11 metres. It appeared to be earlier than *4* and *12* but the sequence with *2* could not be established satisfactorily.

*Trench 6.* Again this was only a short arc but was well defined for most of its course and up to 150 mm deep. A possible diameter was c. 12.5 metres. Although it was established as being earlier than *4*, the precise sequence with *5* and *7* could not be determined.

*Trench 7.* A very short arc which was nowhere deeper than 50 mm and, understandably, contained no packing stones. Its diameter would have been c. 8.5 metres. The sequence with *6* and *12* could not be established.

*Trench 8.* But for the overlying scatter of broken stones this groove would not have survived. It was little more than 50 mm deep at any point but substantial enough not to be confused with plough-marks. An estimated diameter was 12 metres.

*Trenches 9 and 10.* Both were no more than some 140 mm deep at those points where they had been preserved from further erosion by a scatter of small stones on the surface of the clay. Full diameters were in the region of 8 and 9 metres respectively. Their relationship with each other and with *11* was uncertain but the progress of *9* was terminated by packing stones in *4*, which presumably it had preceded. Both trenches appeared to be earlier than a group of three post-holes and hearth *G*.

*Trench 11.* This was a well defined arc with a maximum depth of 250 mm and some packing stones still *in situ*. The diameter was estimated to be 10 metres. It was clearly earlier in sequence than *4* and *12*, a packing stone in the latter closing off the point of intersection near to the doorway of *4*. Its relationship with *7* remained doubtful. A series of shallow post-holes now no deeper than 100 mm and lying on the west side of *11* did not seem to be supports for eave-posts. By completion of the full circles from the arcs of *11* and *6* it also appeared to be unlikely that, if taken together, they could

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## CENTRAL AREA



-  House-trenches
-  Post-holes
-  Hearths
-  Field-drains
-  Form-lines 0.1 metre interval

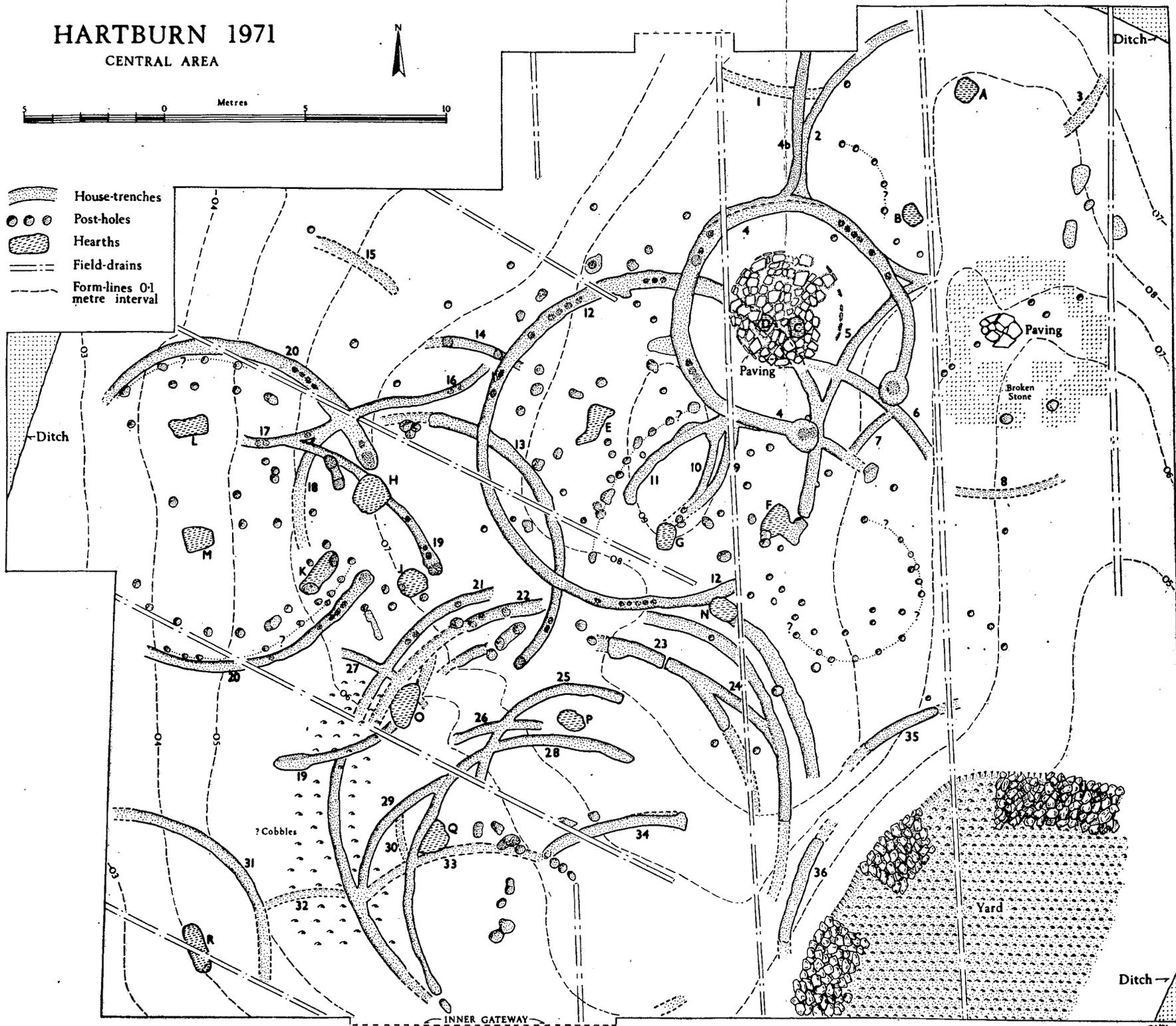
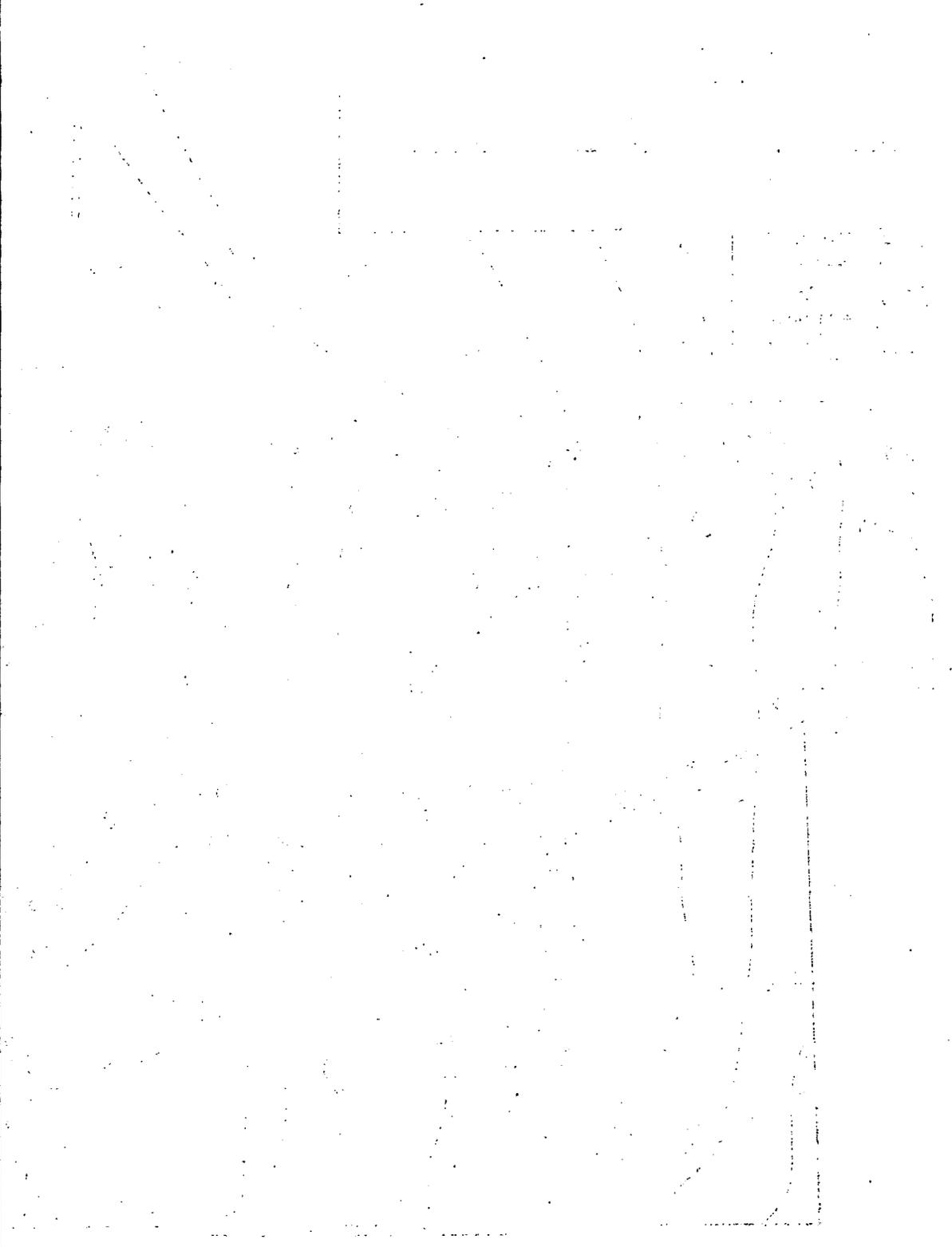
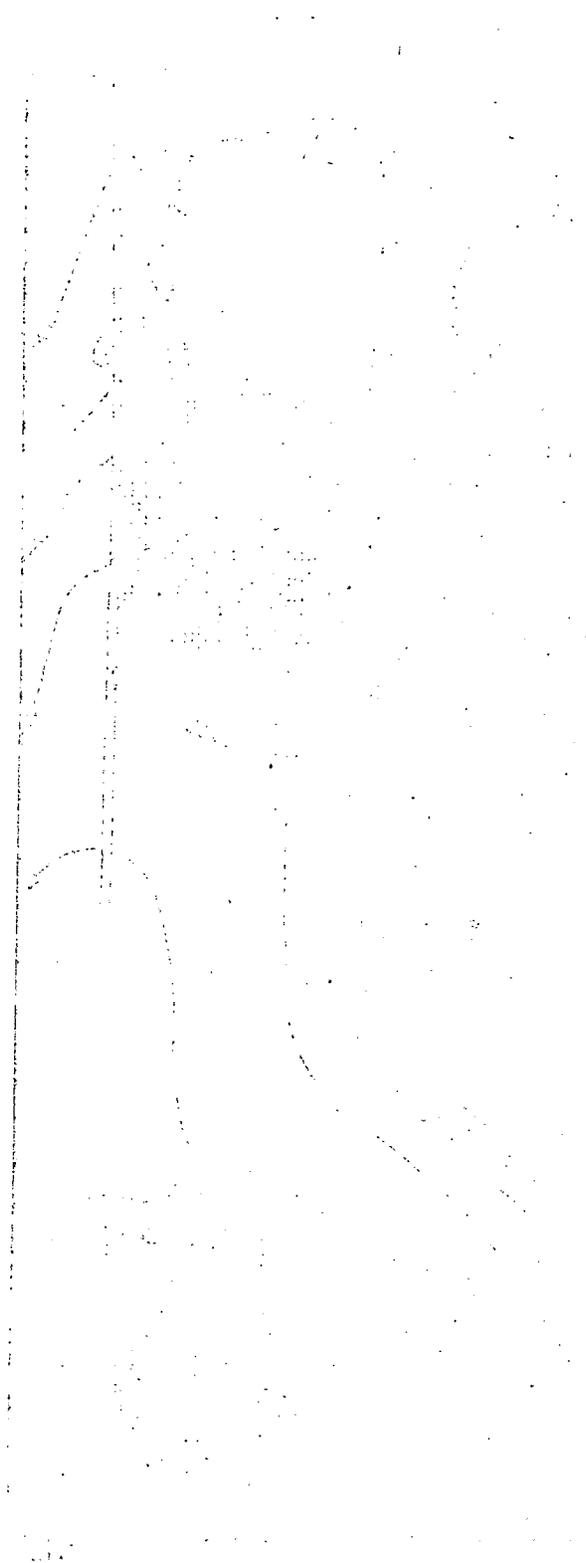


Fig. 5



have been the remains of a double ring-groove house.<sup>15</sup> Consequently they have been treated as representing two separate house-sites.

*Trench 12.* Apart from 4 this was the only trench of which the full course was preserved, to give a house 11.0 to 11.25 metres in diameter. The trench was deepest on the north and west at c. 300 mm. Even so, many large packing stones had been broken or laid at by ploughing (plate III). However, beneath the paving of 4 there was less disturbance and a number of stones were still in position. These had been placed against both faces of the trench, rather than against one face only as is sometimes found where construction-trenches have been cut into rock. Post impressions appeared only intermittently but three widely spaced groups were sufficient in themselves to demonstrate the use of closely set timber uprights. A number of stub-ends of post-holes, lying to the outside of the trench on the north-west, were considered to be too close to the house-wall and too irregular in spacing to have served as eave-supports. There was no time available to make an exhaustive search for post-holes in the interior, and as any reconstruction on the basis of those which were investigated would be misleading this had not been attempted. Three hearths, *E*, *F*, and *G*, lay within the perimeter of the house. Hearth *F* was a shallow "pit-hearth", marked by a slight hollow in the burnt clay surface and filled with compact darker earth containing smears of charcoal and occasional flecks of bone. Its position suggested a possible association with 6 or 11 rather than 12. Hearth *G* had a stone flagged base sunk into the clay to a depth of 150 mm and some edging stones still in position. Hearth *E* was another "pit-hearth" up to 300 mm deep, but the darker fill flecked with charcoal had been disturbed by an animal burrow and two later post-holes with stone packing. Either one or both of these hearths, perhaps serving different functions, could have been associated with this house.

This house was clearly earlier than 4, as we have seen, and was later than 5, 11 and 13 by virtue of the positions of packing stones at the points of intersection. Less certainly it could have been later than 14, 21 and 22 if one assumes that these had been partly erased by its construction and occupation. It could well have been an immediate precursor of house 4, since beneath the paving of 4 it contained only a small amount of the usual silt-like filling, over which earth had been packed presumably as a preparatory measure to laying the paving-stones (fig. 6).

*Trench 13.* At its deepest points in the east it measured c. 150 mm and decreased with the falling contours towards the west. There were a number of disturbed stones in the fill as if displaced packing. The northern terminal of the doorway survived but a slight hollow in the clay beyond this was sufficiently deep to have removed further traces where there were also additional complications created by 21, 22, 27 and hearth *O*. Twin post-holes, joined by a slot, were located within and on the north side of the doorway and bore some resemblance to the more complete arrangement found within the doorway of house 20.

The full diameter was c. 9.5 metres. As already noted this trench was earlier than 12 but no precise sequence could be determined with 21, 22 or 23. Three shallow "pit-hearths", *H*, *J* and *K*, lay within the circumference, yet once again whilst *H* and *J* were reasonably well placed for association this could not be proved.

*Trench 14.* This was a shallow arc, at deepest only 120 mm but containing two slightly deeper post-holes. No packing stones remained in the trench although the post-holes each retained one. The full circle was in the region of 9.5 metres in diameter. This trench was earlier than 12, having been cut through by the latter.

<sup>15</sup> *i.e.*: a house in which the internal roof-supports are set in a continuous trench placed

concentrically within the wall-trench, rather than in individual post-holes.

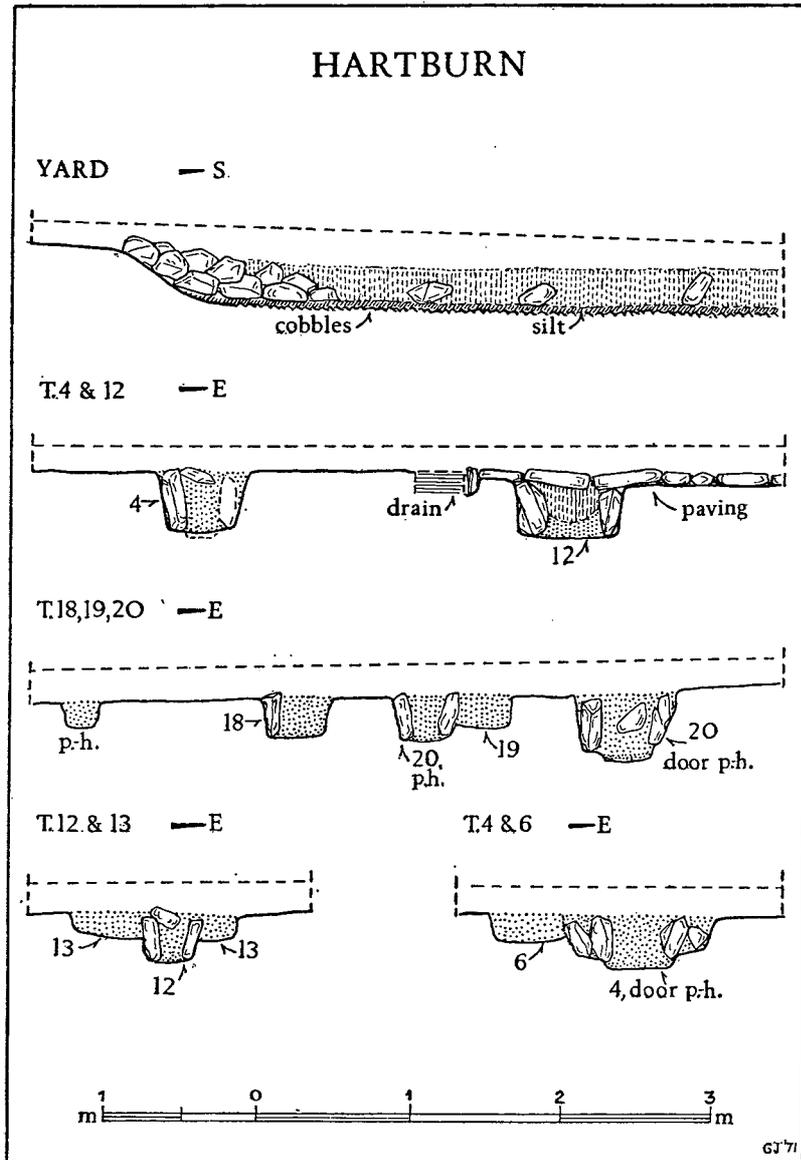


Fig. 6

*Trench 15.* This curved slot, no deeper than 100 mm, provided the least certain example of a construction-trench on the site. No packing stones were present. The arc if projected gave a circle of a very approximate diameter of 11.5 metres.

*Trenches 16, 17 and 18.* This sinuous complex of trenches has been interpreted as probably being the remains of three houses. Trench 18, up to 200 mm deep, still

contained the odd packing stone and almost certainly marked a house some 7 metres in diameter. Trenches 16 and 17, where they did not impinge upon 18, were no more than 120 mm deep. Although neither had packing stones both contained post impressions within them. Their respective diameters were estimated at c. 9 and 10 metres. The relationship of these trenches with each other and with 19 and 20 could not be established.

*Trench 19.* Almost half of a full circle survived, giving a diameter of c. 10.5 metres for this house. It was broken in the east, where presumably the doorway had been, and faded with the falling contours in the west. The trench did not exceed 200 mm in depth except on the north side of the doorway where there was a post-hole c. 250 mm deep. A few broken stones remained in the trench and the bottom showed a number of isolated impressions either from timber uprights or packing stones.

Hearths *H* and *O* post-dated the trench, and hearth *J* could hardly have been associated with the house. Hearth *K*, a shallow "pit-hearth" disturbed by two later post-holes, and hearth *M*, consisting of a sunken and reddened sandstone slab, both lay within the estimated floor area but obviously no direct association could be proved.

No certain sequence could be established with other trenches except 20. If the slot with two post-holes, lying on the inside of the north side of the doorway of 20 was indeed part of the structure of this house, as it appeared to be in plan, then clearly 19 had preceded 20 since these post-holes were assuredly later than 19 (fig. 6).

*Trench 20.* This well defined construction-trench formed an almost complete circle of 10.5 metres diameter. Its depths in relationship to the form-lines have already been given. Some packing stones lined either side of the trench in the deeper parts and there were some irregularities in the bottom most probably from closely-set timber uprights. Single, deeper post-holes lay on either side of the east facing doorway and both contained substantial packing stones. Two hearths, *M* and *L*, represented by fire-cracked base stones set into the clay, lay within its perimeter.

Towards the close of the excavations a determined effort was made to locate and test the post-hole system within this house. There would appear to have been at least one inner ring of post-holes for roof-supports, lying c. 1.5 metres within the estimated portion of the wall-timbers. These were up to 200 mm deep but the majority did not have any packing stones. Apart from these, other post-holes made no sensible pattern and no really substantial holes could be found to form a central arrangement for roof-supports. Presumably the latter, if present, ought to have shown themselves despite the tendency of minor features to become obscured by clay when it is in a plastic state and has been subjected to ploughing.

A series of small post-holes close to and in places almost impinging upon the wall-trench were considered not to be associated with this structure and, in any event, appeared to lie on a slightly different circumference (see p. 33 below).

For reasons already explained, 20 was probably later than 19, but it proved quite impossible to observe any sequence with 17 and 18. One factor of note, reserved for later discussion, is that the estimated circumference of this house approached to within 1.5 metres of the edge of the ditch of the inner enclosure.

Some sherds of hand-built pottery, including rim-fragments with finger-tip impressions, were recovered from the clay surface within the area of the house but, because of the obvious structural complications and lack of stratification, were not necessarily associated with this particular building. The form of the pottery is not closely datable but the finger-tip decoration could denote a context at least as early as the sixth century B.C. (v. small finds).

*Trench 21.* Although no deeper than 200 mm this trench formed the greater part of a

circle with a diameter of *c.* 16 metres. A few packing stones were apparently still in position and had been scored by the plough-blade. This was the largest house on the site and, as such, a double ring-groove plan would not have been unexpected. Of the other trenches lying within its periphery only 25 would have allowed a more or less concentric setting for internal uprights but this relationship was by no means assured. Failing this it must be assumed that settings of post-holes would have been required for roof-supports. No extended search was made for these because of shortage of time and the additional difficulties caused by patches of later cobbles set down into the clay, particularly in the western segment (*v.* Yard, above). In any event, it seemed doubtful if an unequivocal structural pattern would have emerged in an area where so many superimposed house-sites existed.

As already recorded, 21 was probably earlier than 12 and was demonstrably earlier than 19 at the point of intersection. It had also preceded the construction of hearth *N* which was itself later than 12 and, as we have seen, was probably of first or second century date A.D. This hearth was the best preserved on the site. A well cut hole some 200 mm deep had been made in the clay and the bottom and sides lined with thin sandstone slabs. As the base-stones were coloured by firing and carbonized twigs and some cooking-stones were amongst the fill it has been recorded as a hearth rather than a storage-place—although similarly lined “keeping-places” are known in houses of many different periods and occur locally in some Romano-British stone-built houses.

*Trench 22.* The maximum depth of this trench was only 150 mm and few packing stones remained. Its estimated diameter was 14 metres. It lay so close to 21, particularly in the north-west, that it seemed most unlikely that the two had been in contemporary use. No direct sequences could be established with other trenches except that, as in the case of 21, it was most probably earlier than 12.

*Trenches 23 and 24.* These merging arcs, at deepest 150 mm, both formed parts of circles some 14 metres in diameter. There were a few broken packing stones on the inside edge of 23 but no structural sequence could be established in excavation.

*Trench 25.* A well defined trench, *c.* 180 mm in maximum depth, formed the arc of a circle some 7 metres in diameter. No sequence could be established with 26 or 28 but, as already stated, it could have been an inner support-trench associated with 21 or, for that matter, 22.

*Trench 26.* Again this was only a short but nevertheless quite decided arc, giving an estimated full circle of some 10 to 11 metres. For most of its run it was little more than 100 mm in depth and no sequence could be established with 25.

*Trench 27.* A carpet of small broken stones was impressed into the clay surface in this area, including some fire-cracked cooking stones and flecks of charcoal, possibly from the shallow “pit-hearth” *O*. Therefore, some 100 mm of the surface had to be removed before the pattern of the trenches became clear. As a result 27 was very shallow and, being traceable only for a short distance, no relative sequence could be observed with 19, 21 or 22. It was, however, earlier than hearth *O*. Its estimated diameter was 9.5 metres.

*Trench 28.* This trench formed almost half a circle with a diameter of *c.* 10 metres. It was only 150 mm deep for most of its course and somewhat misshapen in places due to stone-drag by the plough. So far as could be established from observation of the fill it was later than 33 and a shallow “pit-hearth” *Q*.

*Trench 29.* This trench was the only one not emptied completely because of shortage

of time, but in parts it was less than 100 mm deep. It merged with 21 and 28 where no relative sequence could be observed. The full diameter must have been between 10 and 11 metres.

*Trench 30.* Here there remained only the barest traces of a trench, not more than 50 mm deep but with some curvature to it. Conceivably it could have been an internal support trench for 21 but of this there was no certainty.

*Trench 31.* In places this trench was up to 200 mm deep and then faded out with the fall in contours to the west and south. Some slab-like packing stones were still in position, a number broken at the top by the plough. No prolonged search was made for post-holes in the interior and those shown on the plan were only the most obvious ones containing packing stones. Within the perimeter an oval shaped cooking-pit or hearth, R, was 350 mm deep and possibly associated with the house.

The chief interest of this house-trench, which had a diameter of c. 12 metres, lay in the fact that its perimeter would have been about 2.5 to 3 metres from the lip of the inner enclosure ditch in the west and within 0.5 metres of the same ditch on the south.

*Trench 32.* This formed a shallow arc on a circumference having a diameter of 10 to 10.5 metres. Initially its presence was obscured, as in the case of 27, by patches of small stones in the clay surface. No relative sequence could be established with 21 or 31 but once again the full circumference would have approached to within a metre or so of the edge of the inner ditch.

*Trench 33.* This was not more than 150 mm deep but still contained a few packing stones. On the east side its course appeared to be continued in a series of three post-holes to give a possible diameter of c. 11 metres. As such it would have extended to within uncomfortable proximity of the gateway structure had the two been contemporary. It was demonstrably earlier than 28 at the point of intersection.

*Trench 34.* Stone-drag by the plough had partly obscured the true arc of this trench so that the estimated diameter of a full circle was only very approximate at 11 metres. Even so, it seemed improbable that a house based on this trench could have existed whilst the sunken yard to the east was operational. For reasons which will be apparent it has been assumed that the house preceded the yard which was probably open in the second century A.D.

*Trenches 35 and 36.* Although these were only short arcs, 150 mm deep at the most, both trenches were well formed and clearly lying on different circumferences. It seemed most unlikely that they had served to support fences enclosing the area of the hollowed yard and were better understood as construction-trenches for two separate houses of 10 to 10.5 metres in diameter. As such, they too must have preceded the making of the yard.

If all the above construction-trenches are taken to mark the sites of individual houses then there will have been a total of thirty-six of which traces still remained in the area which was excavated. It is always possible that other construction-trenches may have been ploughed away, particularly towards the limits of the excavation. The estimated spatial relationship between the houses of this type is shown in fig. 7 and both spatial and chronological considerations are summarized in diagrammatic form in fig. 8.

# HARTBURN HOUSE - POSITIONS

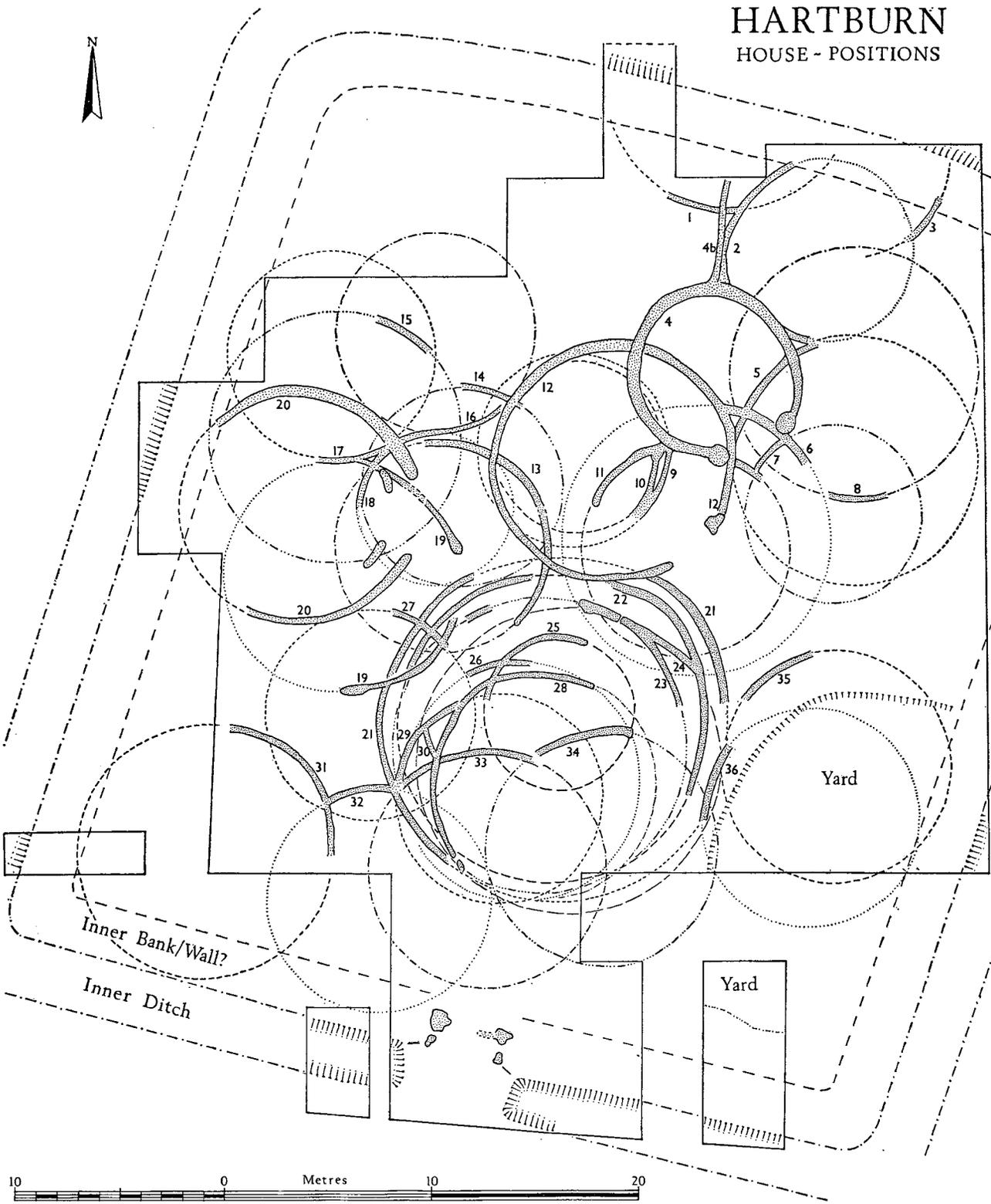
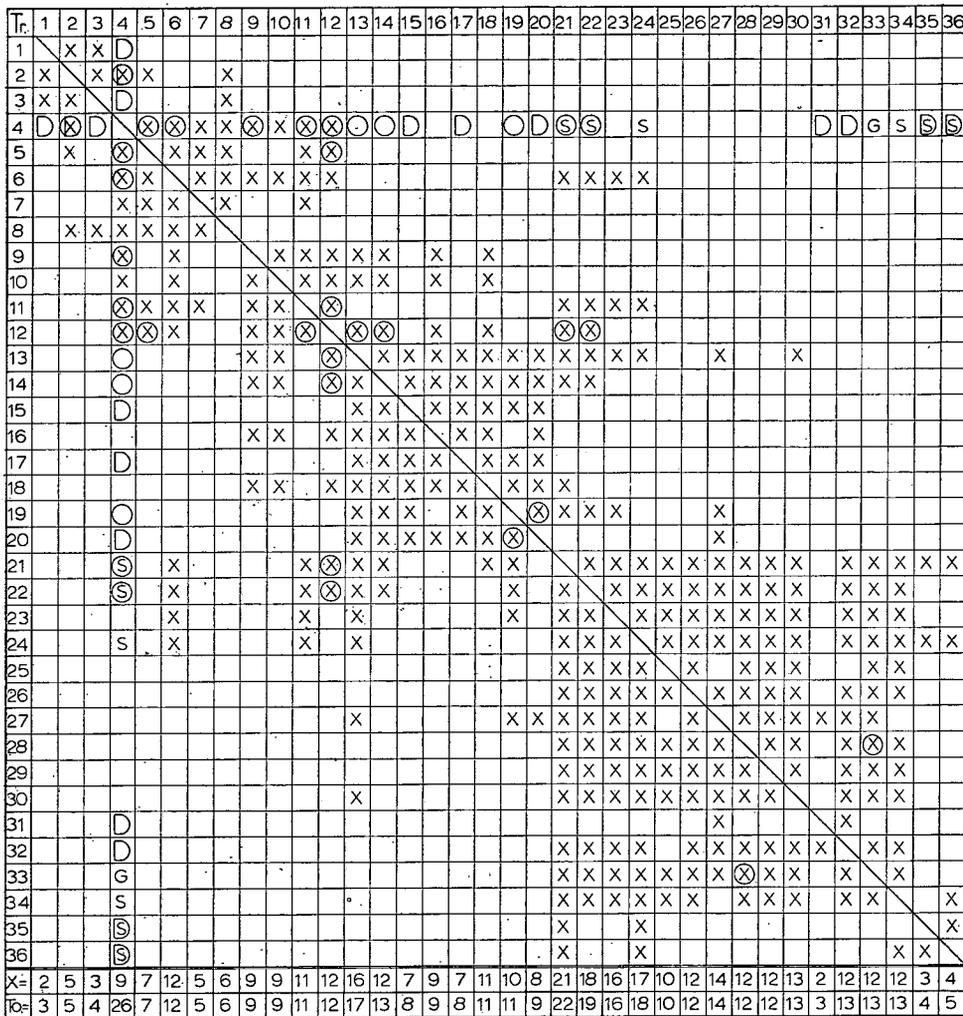


Fig. 7

The co-existence of many houses is obviously denied by the physical overlapping of construction-trenches, as already noted, even if a relative sequence could not always be established in excavation. Many more can also be assumed not to be contemporary with one another on the grounds that when full circles are inscribed from the remaining arcs (fig. 7) these too may be found to overlap (fig. 8, X). By way of illustration it will be seen that house 21 cannot be contemporary with twenty one other houses, whilst in the case of house 4 there are nine such physical overlaps (fig. 8, first totals, X). When a time factor or sequence is introduced, either on the basis of empirical observation in excavation or inference from other evidence, further additions can be made to the list of houses where co-existence is not possible (fig. 8, O). Particularly does this apply to house 4, which, as has been noted, already has nine physical overlaps. From amongst these, 4 was demonstrably later than 2, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12. As house 12 could also be shown in excavation to be later than 5, 11, 13, and probably 14, 21 and 22, it then follows that 13, 14, 21 and 22 can be added to the list of houses earlier than 4. This would then allow house 4 to be later than ten other houses. Moreover, as house 4 was associated with Roman sherds it might reasonably be expected to fall late in the overall sequence of houses on the site and to be at least contemporary with or later than the inner enclosure. It should, therefore, post-date any houses which can be shown to be earlier than the inner enclosure and perhaps the hollowed yard. If the presence of an internal mound within the line of the inner enclosure ditch is accepted, then structures 1, 2, 3, 15, 17, 20, 31, 32, 35 and 36 cannot or are most unlikely to have been contemporary with the inner enclosure and most probably will have been earlier (fig. 7 and 8, D). To these can also be added house 19, since it was shown to precede 20, and perhaps 33 on the grounds that its estimated circumference lies so close to the inner gateway that the presence of one denies that of the other (fig. 8, G). In like manner, houses 34, 35 and 36 cannot have been standing when the yard was operational and are best seen as being earlier, whilst 20, 22 and 24 may also fall into the same category (fig. 8, S). On the above hypotheses, house 4 is unlikely to have co-existed with at least twenty-six other houses which can be enumerated, and will have been later than twenty-three of these. Furthermore, at least twelve houses can be seen to have been earlier than the inner enclosure—a total which can be increased to eighteen if the yard is assumed to be of contemporary build with the inner enclosure.

In terms of horizontal stratigraphy alone it is not possible to proceed much further with profit, since the permitted combinations of houses which could have co-existed at any one time still remain very numerous. However, on the admittedly arbitrary assumption that separate phases of overall building are represented, rather than a progressive replacement of individual houses, then the permutations which have been attempted on acceptable groupings would suggest a *minimum* of twelve replacement phases to account for all houses in the excavated area. This minimum is not changed if a total of thirty-



Co-existence denied by:-  
 X =Physical overlap:    ⊗=Time factor:    D=Ditch:  
 G =Gateway:            S =Stockyard.

Fig. 8. Construction phases (see text)

four rather than thirty-six house-sites is taken and, thereby, allowance made for the possibility of two houses having been of double ring-trench construction.

The value of such an exercise in horizontal stratification may be limited, particularly in view of the incomplete nature of some construction-trenches and the paucity of firmly stratified and closely datable material. On the other hand, it is a necessary step towards any further consideration of the main phases on the site and, in particular, the length of occupation that may be represented by the palimpsest of internal structures (*v.* Conclusions, below).

#### (d) HOUSES OF INDIVIDUAL POST-HOLE CONSTRUCTION

On a number of northern sites it has been possible to demonstrate a structural sequence whereby houses of individual post-hole construction precede those having ring-trenches for solid timber-built walls.<sup>16</sup> Although it cannot be inferred from this that the individual post-hole type is in itself an indication of earliness, the sequence is clearly one that has to be taken into consideration on sites such as Hartburn.

So far as there was opportunity to pursue the matter, some series of post-holes merit particular mention in this respect. For ease of reference these have been linked by dotted lines in fig. 5. First is a circular setting of post-holes which lay immediately inside house-trench 20, but, as already noted, did not appear to be part of that structure. These holes were on average only 150 mm deep, at most contained only one packing stone, and would not have supported posts of greater girth than 150 mm. A house based upon this circle would have had a diameter of *c.* 10 metres. It is possible, but by no means certain, that the finger-impressed sherds from the post-holes associated with house 20 could have been associated with an earlier house of this order.

A second tentative circle was abstracted from amongst the numerous post-holes lying to the east of houses 12 and 21. Not all of these could be emptied because of shortage of time and, of those that were, none were more than 150 mm deep and only three contained a packing stone. If a round house is represented then the diameter would have been comparatively small at *c.* 4.5 metres.

Two additional arcs of post-holes, situated respectively on the west side of trench 11 and between hearth B and trench 2 could not be traced any further than shown on the plan and hardly bear consideration in this context.

Essentially, the problem of whether or not houses of individual post-hole construction were present on the site must remain unresolved. Such an observed structural sequence in a few instances elsewhere will need to be tested on better preserved settlements than Hartburn.

<sup>16</sup> *e.g.* West Brandon, Durham, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XL (1962), 16; Burnswark, Dumfriesshire (forthcoming).

## SMALL FINDS

I am indebted to Mr. T. Newman for drawing most of the small finds and to Mr. J. P. Gillam for his opinion on some of the abraded sherds of Roman coarse pottery.

## POTTERY

Although it is probable that some sherds will have been missed during the removal of the plough-soil by mechanical means, a total of only one hundred and eighty was recovered. In view of the comparatively large area that was exposed and the lengthy occupation suggested by the structural evidence, this would appear to be a small return were it not for the fact that such northern settlements seldom yield large quantities of sherds. On the assumption that the native pottery survives as well as the Roman, which it appears to do, two explanations can be invoked to account for the scarcity; either an excessive predilection for tidiness and systematic disposal by the inhabitants or a comparative lack of pottery vessels amongst such communities. It has always seemed that the latter is more likely. In this particular instance, there would have been no lack of catchment areas for broken sherds where so many trenches were present.

From the evidence of the pottery as a whole, occupation on the site in some form or other could have been from perhaps as early as the fifth to sixth century B.C. down to the third century A.D., the higher date being much less secure than the lower.

## A. Native Pottery (fig. 9)

One hundred and sixty-five sherds of hand-built pottery were recovered, amongst which only ten rim-sherds are present. The majority of the sherds are so crude or fragmentary as to deny even the initial processes of reconstruction and, by the same token, the angles of some of the rims must remain uncertain. Most of the vessels are probably from a home-based industry, as perhaps exemplified on other sites by occasional finds of lumps of unfired clay.

With the exception of one rim-sherd of calcite-gritted ware, four fabrics are represented.

*Fabric A.* Very coarse and thick sherds containing large grits, many of sandstone, which measure up to 10 mm in size and frequently break the surfaces. They all appear to come from large vessels built up in coil-technique and have oblique or concave and convex breaks at the junction of the coils. This is a common fabric throughout the Border country and, indeed, elsewhere in the north, with only minor differences that

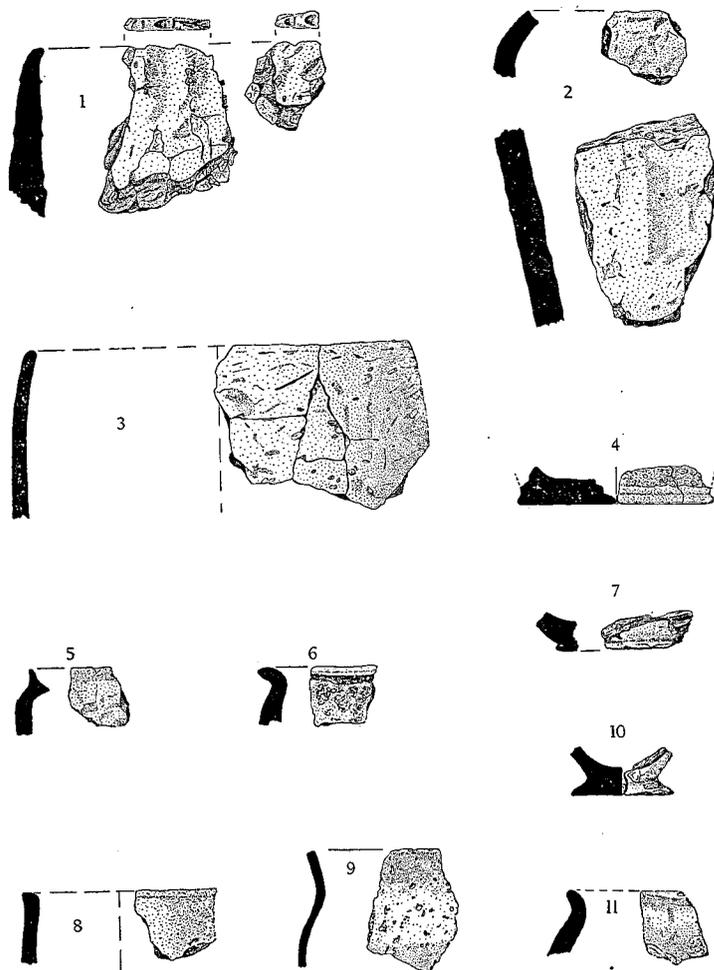


Fig. 9. Native pottery (1:4)

one might expect from a locally based industry. It occurs on a variety of sites from as early as the sixth, seventh centuries B.C. and, as a fabric, is in vogue over centuries.

*Fabric B.* A somewhat finer ware, with fewer and smaller grits, which has buff to red surfaces more carefully smoothed and a dark grey core. Similar fabric seems to occur on both pre-Roman and Roman native sites in the area. At the moment it is not a useful chronological indicator and it could always be that the differences between A and B in some instances may be no more than functional.

*Fabric C.* A hard fabric containing small angular grits, no larger than 3 mm in size, which break the surface in numbers to make them very rough to touch. Oxidization has penetrated deeply for over one third of the depth from both surfaces to leave a comparatively thin, dark core. There are only six wall-sherds and one rim-sherd in this fabric, probably from not more than two vessels. The fabric is rare and the closest

parallel from the county is a single sherd from the Dunstanburgh collection<sup>17</sup> which is itself not closely datable, but possibly of Roman context.

*Fabric D.* A hard, well fired fabric superficially not unlike some medieval fabrics which have lost their glaze. It contains many small grits and glints of mica but is again hand-built. There are eight sherds only in this material, perhaps from two vessels, but only one rim. The material has not been met with so far on a wide range of pre-Roman and Roman native sites in the area but it is equally difficult to find close post-Roman parallels.

Much of this pottery was virtually unstratified and, though it may be useful as a cultural indicator, its chronological use is limited. Therefore, only the rim- and base-sherds are given specific mention below.

(1) *Fig. 9, no. 1.* A vessel in fabric A for which no complete reconstruction is possible although there are a number of sherds from the same pot. The two slightly incurving rim-sherds bear finger and nail-impressions deliberately applied. Oblique junctions between the coils of clay are visible in the core and the thickest wall-herd measures 20 mm across. Ten sherds were recovered from on the clay surface within the circles formed by trenches 19 and 20, whilst three sherds came from within the post-holes seen as an inner ring for the roof-supports of 20.

The closest local parallels to this form of vessel with a finger-impressed rim come from Burradon,<sup>18</sup> some twenty kilometres to the south-east, and are possibly related to the earliest, pre-Roman phase on that site. A somewhat similar sherd also came from an unstratified position on the multiphase pre-Roman and Roman settlement at Gubeon,<sup>19</sup> about ten kilometres to the east-south-east. As an attribute the decoration would not be out of place in Yorkshire to the south in the fifth to sixth century B.C. or even earlier.<sup>20</sup> But the chronological range is doubtful and the fabric and simple form of the vessel, such as it is, is long lasting over a wide area in North Britain. The problem has already been discussed briefly elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

(2) *Fig. 9, no. 2.* One rim- and one wall-herd in fabric A from a large vessel of which the rim-diameter is uncertain but measures not less than 270 mm. They were found on the clay surface just within the northern arc of trench 21. Vessels of various forms with an internal bevel on the rim such as this occur on the lower levels at Traprain Law,<sup>22</sup> but to infer any strict context from these for this vessel, or no. 5 below, would be misleading.

(3) *Fig. 9, no. 3.* A bowl-like vessel in fabric A which has a probable rim-diameter of 200 mm. It was found amongst the scattered broken stone on the clay surface between the entrance to the inner enclosure and the yard. A similar rim-herd from another vessel came from the top fill of house-trench 25 and a third from the clay surface by the side of 21.

(4) *Fig. 9, no. 4.* A base-herd possibly from no. 2 above or a similar vessel. Found near to no. 2 above.

<sup>17</sup> *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, L (1972), 287.

<sup>18</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 74 nos. 4 and 6.

<sup>19</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XXXV (1957), 175 no. 8.

<sup>20</sup> T. C. M. Brewster. *The Excavation at Staple Howe* (1963) also e.g. I. H. Longworth, *Y.A.J.*, XLII (1969), 283 ff.

<sup>21</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XLVIII (1970), 72 ff. D. Simpson, *Glasgow Arch. J.*, I (1970), 21 ff.

<sup>22</sup> e.g. A. H. A. Hogg in *Aspects of Archaeology in Britain and Beyond*, 214-219.

(5) *Fig. 9, no. 5.* A small rim-herd and two wall-sherds which belong to the same vessel in fabric B. Found in the bottom of the plough-soil near to the isolated paving to the east of house 4, together with some Roman sherds.

(6) *Fig. 9, no. 6.* A small rim-herd which is in fabric A and was found as nos. 2 and 4 above.

(7) *Fig. 9, no. 7.* A base-herd in fabric A found in the plough-soil.

(8) *Fig. 9, no. 8.* This, the only rim-herd in fabric D, was found together with wall-sherds in the same fabric on the clay surface near to the east side of the excavated area and north of the yard.

(9) *Fig. 9, no. 9.* A single hand-built rim-herd of calcite-gritted ware which is corky in surface appearance and somewhat waxy to touch. It has a dark brown outer surface and a buff-pink inner surface. It was found on the clay surface at the bottom of the plough-soil near to the isolated paving to the east of house 4. This is most assuredly not a local fabric and the material denotes a Yorkshire origin—potterywise a rare occurrence on native settlements north of the Tyne although there are a few fragments from Traprain Law. The herd is difficult to parallel exactly. It does not occur on Wall sites but bears some resemblance to Brewster's "subtre-Roman ware" of Yorkshire and jars from Langton (early site).<sup>23</sup> The fabric by direct comparison is very like that of the two vessels from the Vinotonus shrine near Bowes.<sup>24</sup> It is most probably Roman in general context.

(10) *Fig. 9, no. 10.* A small almost pedestal-like base in fabric A which is crudely formed and bears clear finger impressions from the pinching out of the base. Found at the bottom of the plough-soil on the clay surface near to the remains of the paving east of house 4. Compare Burradon no. 15.<sup>25</sup>

(11) *Fig. 9, no. 11.* A rim-herd in fabric C, encrusted with a carbon deposit. Found in the plough-soil.

(12) *Not illustrated.* Small undecorated wall-sherds in fabrics A, B and C came from unstratified positions at the bottom of the plough-soil and on the clay surface over a wide area of the site. In addition to these there were the following wall-sherds in A and B fabrics: one from beneath the stone-tumble in the yard; one from the bottom silt of the enclosure ditch east of the entrance; two from the bottom fill of trench 4; three from the fill of trench 6; three from the lower fill of trench 20; two from the fill of both trenches 24 and 25.

## B. Romano-British Coarse Pottery (fig. 10)

Fifteen sherds were found from various parts of the site, the majority coming from house 4 or its immediate vicinity. Most are probably datable to the late first to second century A.D. and one perhaps to the third century. Only eight or nine vessels are represented.

<sup>23</sup> Brewster, *op. cit.*, 147; also *Roman Malton District Report* no. 4, fig. 7.

<sup>24</sup> I. A. Richmond, *Y.A.J.*, XXXVII (1948), 107 ff.

<sup>25</sup> *op. cit.*, (21) 79.

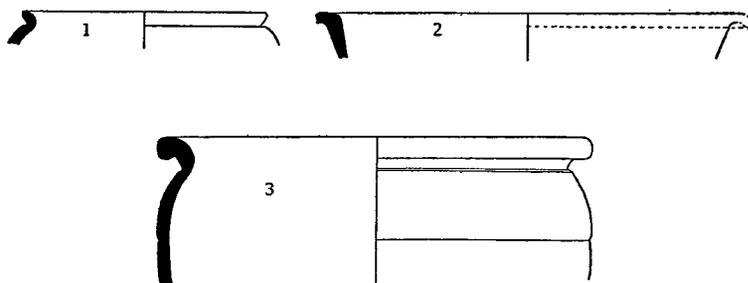


Fig. 10. Roman pottery (1:4)

(1) *Fig. 10, no. 1.* A rim-sherd of a short rimmed cooking pot in grey fabric, once burnished and subsequently burnt. Probably Roman B ware and Antonine in context. Found on the clay surface between the post-holes of the gateway to the inner enclosure.

(2) *Fig. 10, no. 2.* An abraded rim-sherd of a bowl in black fumed fabric, *Gillam type 306*, 125-160 A.D. Found at the bottom of the plough-soil on the clay surface to the north-east of the gateway.

(3) *Fig. 10, no. 3.* A wide mouthed jar with abraded surfaces, probably Roman A ware. The type is difficult to parallel exactly—? third century. Found in the top fill of gully *4b* near to its junction with trench *4*.

(4) A base-sherd of a flagon in red/orange self-coloured fabric. First to second century A.D. Found amongst the paving stones in house *4*.

(5) Two conjoining fragments of flagon similar to no. 4 above. Found in the top fill of the construction-trench for house *4*.

(6) One base-sherd from a flagon similar to but not the same as no. 4. Found on the clay surface in the immediate vicinity of the isolated paving to the east of house *4*.

(7) One wall-sherd of a flagon in red self-coloured fabric, similar to but not the same as no. 4 above. Found amongst a surface scatter of broken stone in the area of trench *31*.

(8) A base from a plain jar in grey self-coloured fabric, possibly pre-Hadrianic to Hadrianic in date. Found in the top fill on the inner edge of construction-trench *4*, and possibly ploughed off the interior of that house.

(9) Three small, abraded wall-sherds from a cooking pot which is probably not earlier than Antonine in date. Found beneath the tumbled stone and amongst the cobbles of the hollowed yard.

(10) A small wall-fragment from a jar or cooking pot in rustic ware with a self-coloured light grey fabric and a thick slip worked up with the fingers. Possibly *Gillam type 96*. First to second century A.D. Found in the plough-soil over the entrance to the inner enclosure.

## OBJECTS OF STONE

## A. Saddle-querns

Two of the following stones were still capable of performing their original function but had been re-used for another purpose, a possible indication of the obsolescence of the type. They are almost certainly pre-Roman in date.

(1) *Fig. 11, no. 1.* Part of a saddle-quern of sandstone, broken along its length, from the construction-trench of house 4 but not certainly re-used as a packing stone.

(2) *Fig. 11, no. 2.* Probably a small saddle-quern of sandstone rather than a large rubber, 300 mm long by 160 mm wide. There is a slope on the grinding surface and the stone rests comfortably on the ground. It is only very slightly damaged but was re-used as a packing stone in trench 12.

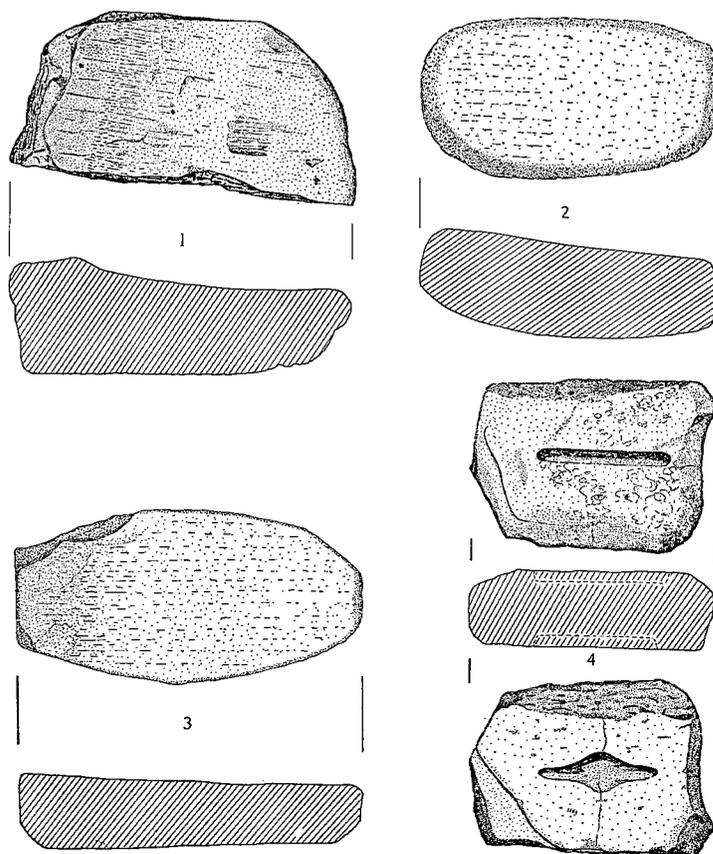


Fig. 11. Saddle querns, mould (1:8)

(3) *Fig. 11, no. 3.* A saddle-quern of fine grained sandstone 364 mm long. Again it is only slightly damaged along part of one edge but was re-used as a paving stone in house 4.

(4) *Not illustrated.* Part of a quern or rubber of sandstone from the clay surface within the area of house 31.

### B. Pounders

Six hand-pounders or pestles were found, consisting mainly of water-worn stones, but none came from securely stratified positions. Two examples are illustrated.

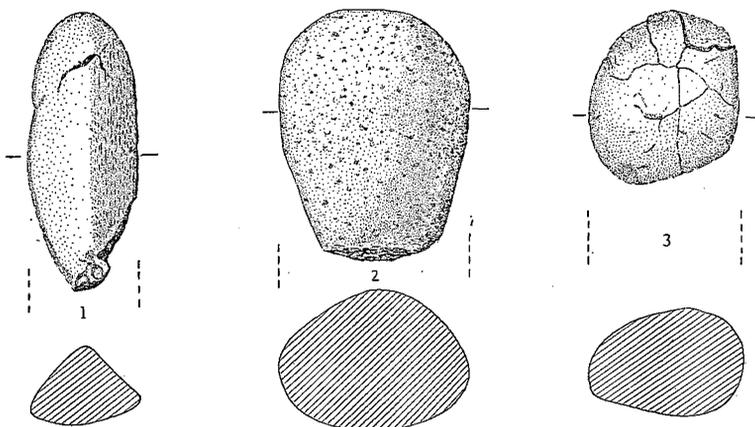


Fig. 12. Pounders, cooking stone (1:4)

(1) *Fig. 12, no. 1.* A water-worn stone bearing percussion marks on one end and also used on one surface as a hone. This combination of pounder with hone or whetstone is not unusual. Found on the clay surface within the circle of house 8.

(2) *Fig. 12, no. 2.* A water-worn stone of igneous rock abraded at one end by repeated percussion. Found amongst the scatter of broken stone on the clay surface in the area of house 31.

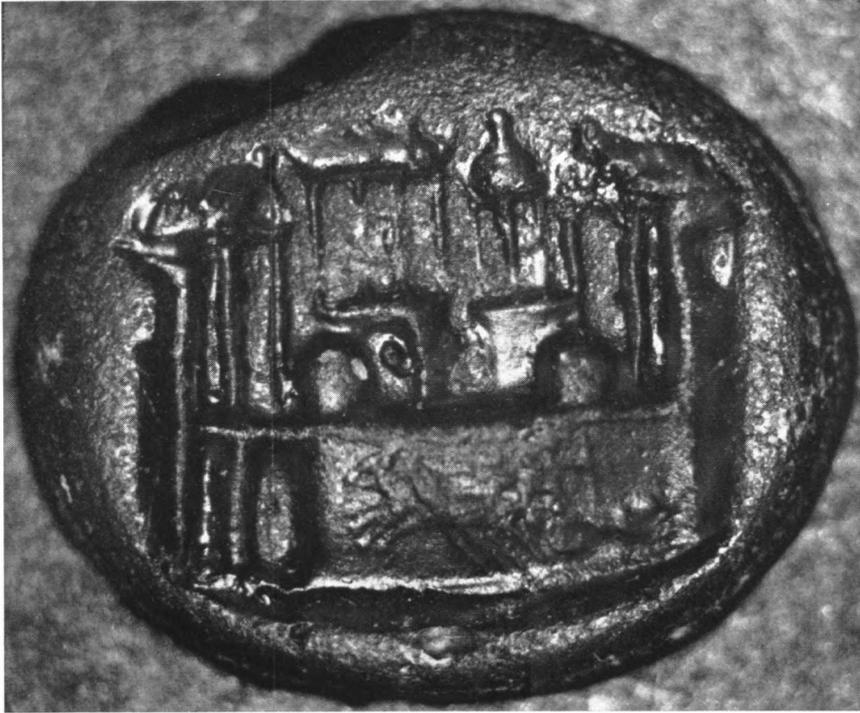
### C. Rotary querns

The only complete top stone to be found would not be out of place in a Roman context hereabouts, but it could also be somewhat earlier.<sup>26</sup>

(1) *Fig. 13, no. 1.* Top stone of a bun-shaped rotary quern of coarse sandstone, 330 mm in diameter. Part of the grinding surface has been broken off below the handle-socket

<sup>26</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.<sup>4</sup>*, XXXVIII (1959), 270. For recent discussion and comparative distribu-

tion in N. Britain with disc querns v. E. Mackie, *Glasgow Arch. J.*, 2 (1971), 53.



Intaglio (9x)



but has been generally quite flat. Found inverted in the top of trench 28, clearly not in position and probably dragged by the plough.

(2) *Fig. 13, no. 2.* A bottom stone of sandstone, broken by the plough but perhaps originally some 440 mm in diameter. Found amongst the remains of the isolated paving to the east of house 4 into which it could have been set at some time in the Roman period (v. Roman pottery).

(3) *Fig. 13, no. 3.* A small fragment of a (?) top stone of sandstone, now bearing only part of the spindle-hole and grinding surface. It illustrates well the destructive effects of ploughing even on the more durable artifacts. Found amongst the scattered stone on the clay surface in the area of trench 30.

(4) *Fig. 13, no. 4.* A bottom stone of sandstone, 380 mm in diameter. Found, as no. 2 above, amongst the remains of the isolated patch of paving to the east of house 4 and again probably *in situ*. The bottom stones of rotary querns have been found occasionally set into the floors of Romano-British stone-built houses in the area.

(5) *Not illustrated.* A fragment of a base-stone of fine grained sandstone with part of the spindle-hole still showing on one of the broken edges. Found amongst scattered broken stone between trenches 28 and 33.

#### D. Pivot-stone

*Fig. 13, no. 5.* A fragment of a sandstone block bearing a peck-marked cup some 100 mm in diameter with some rotary striations within it. It does not appear to be a small mortar and is best seen as a pivot-stone for a door. Similar stones have been found *in situ* at the doorways of some stone-built Romano-British houses in the area. Found on the clay surface within the area of house 20 but not necessarily associated.

#### E. Bar-mould

*Fig. 11, no. 4.* A block of sandstone smoothed off on two opposed faces, each of which bears a mould presumably for making bars from a copper-based alloy. The mould on the upper face, as illustrated, is 134 mm long and 14 mm wide, but the sides and end have a slight incline to a rounded bottom so that the bar itself would have had a shape similar to a chocolate finger-biscuit. The lower mould has also been of similar shape at the outset, measuring 125 mm by some 12 mm, and the present central expansion does not seem to be intentional. A fault crosses the stone at this point and it could well be that the mould had been broken during use or at some time subsequently. The stone was found with this face uppermost on the clay surface amongst scattered broken stone just to the north of trench 31.

Simple bar-moulds range widely in reported context from the Bronze Age onwards. There are some ten examples from Traprain Law<sup>27</sup> where they would appear to be a late development in the Roman period, but it is clear that earlier examples may exist. Locally a similar stone was found at Wolsty Hall settlement,<sup>28</sup> Cumberland, in a round house of pre-Hadrianic context. This sandstone block again bears a mould on two faces, both of them slightly shorter but of approximately the same width and depth as the Hartburn

<sup>27</sup> e.g. E. Burley, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX (1955-6), 221.

<sup>28</sup> B. Blake, *Trans. C. & W. Soc.*, LIX (1959), 9.

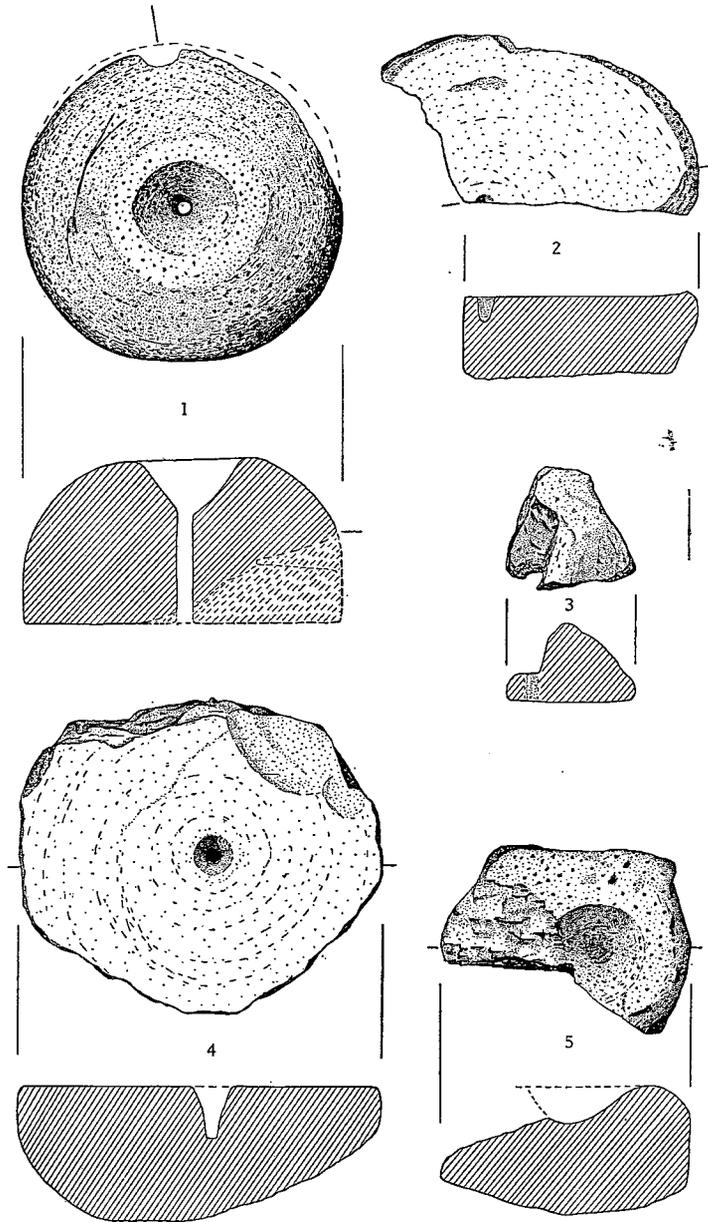


Fig. 13. Rotary querns, pivot-stone (1 : 8)

example. At Gubeon Cottage,<sup>29</sup> Northumberland, a few kilometres south-east of Hartburn a sandstone block with a single bar-mould on one face, the matrix measuring 130 mm by 14 mm, was found unstratified on this pre-Roman and Roman settlement. More recently a broken example was recovered from a Romano-British settlement at Tower Knowe in North Tynedale, Northumberland (v. this volume).

#### F. Pot-Boilers and cooking stones

A number of burnt and fire-cracked stones were found amongst the general scatter of broken stone on parts of the site and also came from various hearths or cooking pits as already mentioned. Many are small, seldom exceeding 20 mm in size, and may indeed be regarded as pot-boilers, but others are much larger at up to 90 mm in diameter and may have been used in some other way for cooking. One of these from hearth A is illustrated by way of example, fig. 12, no. 3.

#### G. Whetstones

Two whetstones of schist, in addition to fig. 12, no. 1, were found in unstratified positions to the west of the yard. Both are rectangular in section and measure c. 130 mm long by 40 mm broad and 25 mm deep. There are striations on the broader faces.

#### H. Miscellaneous

(1) *Fig. 14, no. 1.* One of two flint scrapers of honey coloured flint found in the bottom of the plough-soil.

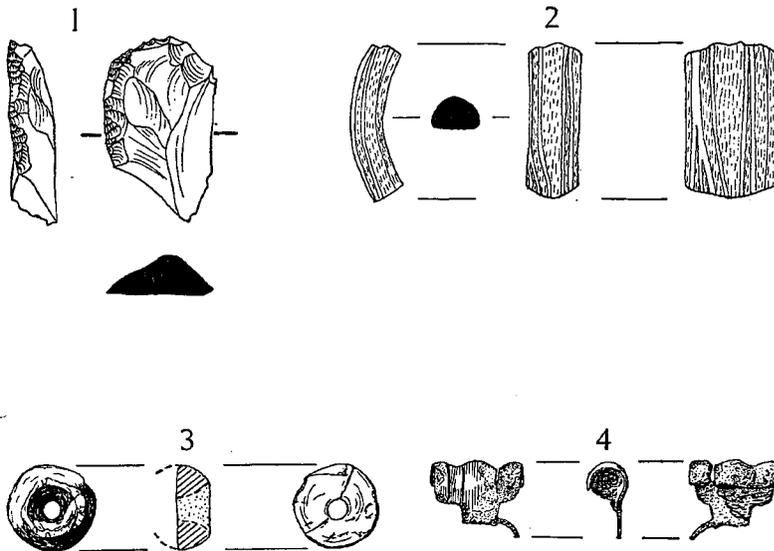


Fig. 14. Miscellaneous objects (2:3)

<sup>29</sup> *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XXXV (1957), 163.

(2) *Fig. 14, no. 3.* A bead of black shale, 17 mm in diameter, which has been broken and originally was probably spherical in form. Found close to the paving to the east of house 4, lying on the clay surface near to a glass pendant and a fragment of glass (below).

(3) *Not illustrated.* A fragmentary block of sandstone, broken by the plough, which has a bore-hole 12 mm in diameter running obliquely through it. Its function is uncertain but it is not part of a rotary quern and could perhaps have acted as a thatch-weight.

### GLASS

(1) *Not illustrated.* A very small fragment of almost colourless glass only 1 mm thick, showing little curvature. Two thin converging lines are engraved on the surface. It is possibly Roman. Found on the clay surface close to the glass pendant (below).

(2) *Fig. 14, no. 2.* A fragment of a glass pendant or bangle of opaque khaki-green glass with yellow trails. Its internal diameter is *c.* 50 mm. Glass pendants are one of the most consistent finds from native sites dated to the Roman period in the area. In this instance the body colour of the metal is unusual, although there are yellow-green examples from Traprain Law, and it may be that the opacity has been introduced by aeration.<sup>30</sup> A late first or second century A.D. context is possible in this instance. Provenance as no. 1 above.

(3) *Plate V.* An abraded intaglio measuring 13 by 10 mm. It is of glass, a few small air-bubbles being visible in the metal, and its yellow-orange colour is probably imitating sard. Found on the clay surface to the east of house 31 and to the west of the hollowed yard.

The scene shows Achilles in a two-horse chariot dragging Hector around the walls of Troy and is in low relief on the wall itself. A gateway is also shown in the wall and behind appear towers and buildings. It is just possible that a head is represented in one of the arches or windows above the wall, which would be in keeping with the legend. In the Imperial period representations of Greek mythology became popular, amongst them legends connected with the Trojan War. Achilles was one of the favourites to be depicted amongst the Greek heroes. Two fairly close parallels are cited by Richter.<sup>31</sup> His no. 290 is a sard intaglio in the British Museum and his no. 290 *bis* a glass intaglio in the Museo Nazionale of Aquileia.

### METAL

#### A. Lead

(1) A small fragment of sheet-lead, 1 mm thick, was found in hearth A.

(2) One runnel of lead, 50 mm long, came from the clay surface near to the isolated paving east of house 4.

A small number of native settlements of Roman date in the county have yielded drippings of lead, at least one spindle-whorl in lead and one Roman vessel with lead rivets. However it is probable that the material was derived from Roman sources rather

<sup>30</sup> H. E. Kilbride Jones, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXII (1937-8), 266 ff. R. B. K. Stevenson, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXVIII (1954-6), 208 ff.

<sup>31</sup> G. M. Richter, *Engraved Gems of Greeks, Etruscans and Romans, Part II* (London 1971).

than from the small veins of galena with low silver content which are said to have outcropped in the area some miles to the west of Hartburn.<sup>32</sup>

### B. Bronze

*Fig. 14, no. 4.* A very much corroded fragment of extremely thin bronze, not apparently part of a brooch but from a fastening of some sort since there are remains of a corroded iron pin within the curvature. Found near to the paving east of house 4 on the clay surface.

### COAL

Two small samples of coal and cinder came from contexts which might be Roman in date; the first from the interstices between the paving stones in house 4, and the second from the cobbles beneath the tumbled stone in the yard together with wallsherds of a Roman cooking pot (no. 9 above).

No report on the spore assemblage has been received to date but the use of local outcrop coal in at least small quantities is already attested on native settlements of the Roman period in this area,<sup>33</sup> the nearest being at Huckhoe only some 4 kilometres to the south.

### THE FAUNAL REMAINS

*G. W. I. Hodgson M.Sc., Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne*

The faunal remains were all fragmentary due to butchering. The bone chippings were eroded and some had been burnt. Most of the remains came from domestic cattle (*Bos taurus longifrons*) but three teeth from horse (*Equus caballus*), an eroded left metacarpal from sheep (*Ovis aries*) and three fragments of the skeleton of a small bird were also recovered. It was impossible to identify many of the fragments and in only three cases was it possible to obtain measurements. The material was similar to the faunal remains recovered from an Iron Age settlement at Burradon in that *bovine* teeth were often represented only by the outer cover or husk of enamel from one side or part of one side of the tooth. The teeth were all unworn and apparently from young animals.

1. *From the lower silt of the ditch of the inner enclosure at the entrance (fig. 3, 3), possibly open in the Roman period*

#### *Bos longifrons* (Cattle)

A single unworn molar plus one fragment from a bovine tooth.

Twelve butchered fragments from pelvic girdle and long bones.

Two highly eroded condyles from the distal end of a metapodial.

Portions of the proximal ends of a metatarsal and a metacarpal.

<sup>32</sup> *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XXXVII (1959), 267.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 278 and XLVIII (1970), 86.

## 1st phalange

1. l.=5.5 cm, b.=2.7 cm

2. l.=5.8 cm, b.=2.8 cm

Eight unidentified bone chippings and the anterior portion of an axis vertebra (max. width=7.6 cm).

Some fragments of horn.

*Ovis aries* (Sheep)

A single eroded left metacarpal.

*Equus caballus* (Horse)

Two unworn molars (lower jaw).

A single unworn pre-molar from the left lower jaw.

2. *From the narrow band of silt overlying cobbles and amongst the cobbles in the yard, probably open in the Roman period*

One hundred and twenty-five bone chippings from ribs and long bones (probably ox) and four fragments from young bovine teeth.

Three unworn bovine molars.

Six enamel husks from bovine teeth.

Three fragments of the pelvic girdle of a small bird (Species unknown).

Nine small fragments of calcined bone.

3. *From the fill of hearth/cooking pit E*

A calcined fragment of a right ulna from an ox.

Thirty-nine calcined bone chippings from the ribs and long bones, probably from ox.

Two fragments from long bones, probably ox.

4. *From the fill of house-trench 4*

One eroded bovine molar and two tooth fragments.

5. *From the fill of house-trench 19*

Two small incinerated bone chippings.

6. *From the fill of house-trench 25*

Seven eroded bovine premolars and twenty-three tooth fragments.

7. *Unstratified, clay surface S.W. corner of site*

Five enamel husks from the sides of young bovine teeth.

A fragment of a bovine metapodial plus twenty-nine bone chippings.

Six small incinerated chippings.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although, as we shall see, a number of different interpretations may be put upon the main structural phases at Hartburn one aspect at least is of particular interest and value. At the moment, few, if any early sites in North Britain have yielded such a palimpsest of interior structural remains and it is because of this that the settlement could have import beyond its own locality.

In recent years the lengthening chronologies afforded to some hill-forts and related settlements in North Britain, as elsewhere, have exacerbated certain problems which are equally relevant to smaller sites such as Hartburn. Not the least of these is the problem of deciding between long and long though not necessarily continuous occupation, where the structural sequences in the perimeters, radiocarbon dating or sometimes the artifacts themselves allow an extended use of the location. Such a question has been the more difficult to resolve in an area where the pottery is chronologically insensitive and where there is often a lack of knowledge about the overall structural picture in the interiors of many sites. Although it may be possible to see two or three replacement phases of internal structures on a type-site such as Hownam Rings,<sup>34</sup> Roxburghshire, the apparent lack of more extensive interior complications, albeit on limited excavation, could be used to argue against continuous occupation of a permanent nature even though the defensive phases may now be seen to cover a long period of time. However, on the small pre-Roman and Roman settlement at Burradon,<sup>35</sup> Northumberland, it already seemed that such an argument might indeed be too dependent upon limited interior excavation, since here there was a possible *minimum* of six house-replacement phases within the small social unit.

At Hartburn, the Roman pottery, on face value, would point to occupation at least as late as the second or possibly third century A.D. The date of initial settlement is less easy to establish but, on the evidence of one vessel, could be as early as the fifth or sixth century B.C. Confronted with a possible span of seven or eight centuries we have a *minimum* of twelve replacement phases on the permissible groupings of timber-built houses as marked by construction trenches. To these might be added possible houses of individual post-hole construction on the one hand or possible stone-built houses on the other. Even so, this would still require a life-value for a house of fifty years or so in order to span such a period in terms of continuous or near continuous occupation. Although such a life-value in the case of somewhat different structures has been taken to present formidable evidence for the permanence of hill-fort societies in the Welsh Borders,<sup>36</sup> it might be regarded as too ambitious in this instance. It could also be argued that short spells of occupation at intervals would give the same interior structural complexity as found at Hartburn, except that here there is no corresponding indication of frequent re-occupation showing in the perimeters. In any event, the lesson must surely be that more extensive exploration of the interiors of those sites in the Border country which are known to have a long history, stretching from early palisaded perimeters through various pre-Roman defences to overlying Romano-British settlements, could reveal a similar palimpsest of internal structures in support of the idea of long and, moreover, continuous occupation.

<sup>34</sup> C. M. Piggott, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXII (1947-8), 193 ff.

<sup>35</sup> *op. cit.*, (21) 62-63.

<sup>36</sup> S. C. Stanford in *The Iron Age and its Hill-Forts* (ed. M. Jessen and D. Hill, 1971), 48.

At Hartburn itself it nevertheless remains difficult to relate the various internal structures to the perimeter in a precise and unequivocal manner, partly because of an inability to place the two enclosing ditches in an absolutely firm relationship one to the other. The following suggestions, therefore, must remain tentative.

#### LATEST PHASE: ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT

At least one timber-built house, no. 4, and perhaps an adjoining house to the east, of which only part of the paving remained, were probably occupied during the later first and the second century A.D. These can be seen as part of a small settlement which had at least one associated cobbled farmyard and more doubtfully a second lying within a square-shaped, ditched enclosure. It is a moot point as to whether or not this inner enclosure was initially constructed at this time or merely refurbished. A radiocarbon date for material from the open ditch whilst it does not confirm contemporary construction at least does not deny it. Stone-built houses may have developed on the site and the gateway structure had been replaced at least once but on not more than three occasions.

The value of envisaging such an *enclosed* settlement for the latest phase on the site lies in the fact that it meets the requirements demanded by the farmyard, may explain the slightly asymmetrical placing of the inner enclosure within the outer, and could account for the less substantial proportions of the inner ditch as compared with the outer. Moreover, there are numerous analogous Romano-British settlements of rectilinear form immediately to the north of the Hadrianic frontier.<sup>37</sup> These non-defensive settlements have a single ditched enclosure when on tractable sub-surfaces and less well drained areas, or a stone-built enclosure wall when on rock. Generally there are two interior yards, one on either side of an east to south facing entrance and the gateway provisions are fairly simple as at Hartburn. Stone-built houses are normally situated towards the middle or rear of the enclosure and in one case at least there is a known progression from timber-built to stone-built dwellings.<sup>38</sup> Seen in such a context, the Romano-British phase at Hartburn would go some way to enhance the chances that the pattern of Romano-British settlement in this immediate area is probably comparable in density with that proposed for other parts of the county, where rectilinear settlements can be shown to occur as frequently as one kilometre apart in riverine distribution. The number of rectilinear enclosures noted in the original survey, or added subsequently by air-photography over the upper reaches of the Rivers Wansbeck and Blyth, make this possible, although sufficient diagnostic traits do not always remain for a firm context to be given to individual sites. To this extent the density

<sup>37</sup> G. Jobey in *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (ed. C. Thomas, 1966), 1-13 and refs.

<sup>38</sup> v. Tower Knowe, this volume.

of distribution may eventually approach that of the curvilinear enclosed and stone-built Romano-British settlements of the northern uplands.<sup>39</sup>

On the evidence of bun-shaped rotary querns and skeletal material, mixed farming was pursued on this settlement, with cattle preponderant but sheep and horse also being present and some butchering taking place on the site. In common with some other Romano-British settlements in the area small quantities of outcrop coal were used on open hearths. Casting of copper alloy bars may have taken place at this stage, perhaps even utilizing lead from Roman sources, but there is no evidence here for the manufacture of those bronze trinkets and horse-trappings so frequently found on native and military centres in the northern area. A quantity of Roman wares had also filtered through to the site by whatever means. The ubiquitous glass pendant or bracelet, made either locally or at some northern centre such as Traprain Law, was represented by just one fragment, whilst the only exotic trinket of the Roman world was a glass intaglio, the nature of the legend it portrayed perhaps very doubtfully understood by the inhabitants. Although occupation is not well attested on the settlement after the second century A.D. the quantity of Roman pottery recovered is small, and it should be recalled that the pottery sequence on the native site at Huckhoe, only a few kilometres to the south, continued into the fourth century A.D.<sup>40</sup>

#### EARLIER PRE-ROMAN SETTLEMENT

From the information available, the context of the more substantial outer ditch cannot be established with certainty. The spacing between the two enclosure ditches is markedly less than on the Burradon homestead, where it is still possible that the two were used in conjunction, with the space between acting as a corral.<sup>41</sup> Were such a solution adopted at Hartburn it would require at least eighteen houses, and possibly many more, to be earlier than such a twin-ditched settlement, since these houses undoubtedly preceded the inner enclosure ditch and the yard. Presumably it would then be necessary to see them either as rebuilding phases on an *unenclosed* settlement or lying within some other enclosure, such as a palisade, all traces of which had been removed by the later perimeters. In the circumstances, it seems preferable at the moment to consider the majority of the remaining timber-built houses as forming successive house-replacements in a settlement contained within the more substantial outer ditch and bank, and overlaid by the Romano-British settlement as already envisaged. This early settlement could have had a *maximum* of four or five houses standing together at some stage in the excavated area of the interior, but at other times this number may well have been less. On the basis of house-dimensions it may be significant that the

<sup>39</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XLII (1964), 47.

<sup>41</sup> *op. cit.*, (21) 86 ff.

<sup>40</sup> *op. cit.*, (13) 251.

large diameters of houses 21 and 22 are of the order that one would normally anticipate on early pre-Roman homesteads rather than on settlements in the area. West Brandon,<sup>42</sup> Durham, or High Knowes I,<sup>43</sup> Northumberland, would provide comparable examples. Whatever the case may be, on allowable groupings within the proposed system, something of the order of eleven building phases would still be required to account for the remaining palimpsest of construction-trenches alone. The foundation of such a settlement, albeit on the evidence of only a few sherds of finger-impressed pottery, could have been as early as the fifth or sixth century B.C. as a tentative suggestion. The replacement phases of the houses would at least suggest long and possibly continuous occupation down towards the Roman period, even though other corroborative evidence is tenuous and those "exotic" pieces of metal-work, upon which one is so often dependent in the pre-Roman chronology of northern sites, are missing. If the opportunity for further excavation ever presents itself, confirmation of such a view might be sought by further sections of the outer ditch, or, more particularly, by excavation of the entrance to the outer enclosure. Neither of these alternatives was available during the present excavations. The agricultural economy of this settlement, on the evidence of saddle-querns and the few skeletal remains that could be associated with it, would seem not to have been very different from that of the later Romano-British settlement.

#### THE PROBLEM OF UNENCLOSED SETTLEMENTS

At Burradon and now Hartburn, which are both essentially lowland sites in local terms, one has been presented with a problem which to date has not been satisfactorily resolved in either case. This is the possibility of early *unenclosed* dwellings being present on the same site as later *enclosed* homesteads or settlements. This is a problem not just confined to the immediate area and is, indeed, not unrelated to the known pattern of early settlement of other forms in the uplands, to take only the somewhat limited distribution of unenclosed platform settlements on the one hand<sup>44</sup> or what may constitute the antecedents of the palisaded enclosures on the other.<sup>45</sup>

#### FORTLETS AND THE DEVIL'S CAUSEWAY (v. O.S. *Map of Roman Britain*)

Turning to what formed the immediate purpose of the rescue operations, this excavation at least conclusively disposes of Hartburn as a Roman fortlet. Thereby, the known military stations on the line of the Devil's Causeway are reduced to the two successive forts at Low Learchild,<sup>46</sup> situated near to the

<sup>42</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XL (1962), 1 ff.

<sup>43</sup> G. Jobey, *A.A.*<sup>4</sup>, XLIV (1966), 5 ff.

<sup>44</sup> v. R. W. Feachem, *P.S.A.S.*, XCIV (1960-1), 79 ff.

<sup>45</sup> e.g. A. Ritchie, *Scottish Archaeological Forum* (1970), 48 ff.

<sup>46</sup> I. A. Richmond, *J.R.S.*, XLVII (1957), 206.

Bridge of Aln. This station lies close to the junction of the Devil's Causeway and the lateral road which links it by way of Coquetdale with High Rochester (*Bremenium*) on Dere Street. If Learchild is the *Alauna* of the *Ravenna Cosmography*, as has been suggested,<sup>47</sup> then a further fort bearing the name *Coccuveda* may still remain to be found, perhaps on the branch road through Coquetdale to Dere Street. On the present ceramic evidence, albeit limited, the installations at Learchild may not have continued in occupation after the establishment of the Hadrianic frontier. Even so, at an early stage such a road system would have effectively encompassed the Cheviot massif and its foothills on the south, east and west, with Learchild suitably located on the eastern flank.

Over the years a number of other sites have been suggested as possible Roman forts or fortlets on the line of the Devil's Causeway, ultimately with little success in excavation or credibility from ground survey. These have included Brinkburn<sup>48</sup> on the Coquet, Hall Hill<sup>49</sup> near to Longframlington, Ferney Chesters<sup>50</sup> some six kilometres to the south-west of Hartburn, and Springhill<sup>51</sup> near Tweedsmouth and the presumed northern terminal of the road. An equal lack of success has also attended the discovery of putative branch roads from the Devil's Causeway across the Northumberland plain. The first of these was based on the tradition of a road eastwards to Warkworth, near to the mouth of the Coquet, which has been linked with the discovery of the *Campestres* altar from Gloster hill and place-names which in themselves have no more than doubtful validity as indicators of Roman military sites.<sup>52</sup> A second suggestion, which has received more attention in recent years, envisages a road running northwards from Newcastle to join the Devil's Causeway, perhaps in the region of Netherwitton or Learchild itself.<sup>53</sup> By way of support for such a hypothesis there was first produced the so-called Roman fortlet at Mitford, which at the time was compared with the Hartburn site on the Causeway itself.<sup>54</sup> Much of this deduction, however, ignored the confusion that might arise between Roman fortlets and the rash of rectangular shaped native settlements which extends across this part of Northumberland. With some doubt already thrown upon Mitford as a Roman fortlet on this hypothetical road, further contenders have now been advanced in the form of two rectangular enclosures at Longshaws on the River Font.<sup>55</sup> A small fort in this position, it is argued, could guard the crossing over the Font at Woodhouse "a quarter of a mile" to the west. Furthermore, it is maintained that if the line of the Devil's Causeway north of its "unexplained" change of direction on Whinney Hill, near Netherwitton, were produced southwards

<sup>47</sup> I. A. Richmond, *Archaeologia*, XCIII (1954), 14.

<sup>48</sup> Sir David Smith, *Alnwick Castle Mss.*, vol. 1.

<sup>49</sup> H. MacLauchlan, *Eastern Branch of Watling Street* (1864), 16.

<sup>50</sup> *N. of England Excavation Committee Report 1924-5*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> J. K. St. Joseph, *J.R.S.*, XLI (1951), 56; LIX (1969), 105.

<sup>52</sup> *Berwick. Nat. Club.*, IV (1856-62), 86.

<sup>53</sup> D. Hafemann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungsgeographie des römischen Britannien*, I (1956), 149 f.

<sup>54</sup> J. K. St. Joseph, *J.R.S.*, XLI (1951), 56.

<sup>55</sup> J. K. St. Joseph, *J.R.S.*, LIX (1969), 105-6.

it would lead "almost exactly" to this crossing of the Font. Given this, if the Devil's Causeway and this postulated road joined at Longshaws the reason for this strongly fortified post, to control a road junction and to guard a river crossing, would become doubly clear. Before such an attractive theory gains further currency and another red symbol appears on the Imperial map, it is as well to point out some relevant details. In the first place there is reasonably good evidence for the line of the Devil's Causeway as it is now shown on the maps to the south of Whinney Hill. Moreover, Whinney Hill is as good a place as any for a change of direction to the north, aimed at a crossing of the Coquet and so to the small gap in the Fell Sandstone cuesta at Framlington Gate which itself allows entry to the Till and the eastern flank of the Cheviots. As to the postulated line projected southwards from Whinney Hill, a deviation from the straight of at least eleven degrees to the east is required to achieve the crossing at Woodhouse, whilst the proposed fortlet at Longshaws is some seven hundred yards, rather than "a quarter of a mile", further to the east again. Beyond this point, on a southerly course towards Newcastle, there are a number of earthworks of rectangular form which could on similar grounds lay claim to consideration as fortlets but, at the moment, any road designed to take account of them would have to be as devious as the "wibbly-wobbly" line that is sometimes quite wrongly taken to be an attribute of the work of the barbarian. In this search for a road from Newcastle to the Devil's Causeway it may also be advisable to take into account the pottery record from Learchild itself,<sup>56</sup> and to ask if the Causeway as a garrisoned road was not a comparatively short-lived pre-Hadrianic venture aimed at flanking the hill-country. As such, an early or a later direct connection with Newcastle would have had little point.

Be that as it may, apart from the established forts along the lines of the two Roman roads traversing northwards across Northumberland, we are now left with only two fortlets, both of them on the line of Dere Street. These are the perhaps somewhat specialized station at Chew Green by Coquetdale Head, the Roman military nature of which is in no doubt, and the site at Apperley Dene<sup>57</sup> to the south of the Wall itself. The latter also has some features to commend it as a fortlet other than its form. It is situated hard by a bend in the line of Dere Street, has produced no native pottery, and has probably yielded more Roman pottery from limited excavation than one might expect from a native work even within the linear frontier. The bulk of this pottery was fourth century in character with some earlier pieces perhaps from Hadrianic or Antonine times. However, whilst not denying its attribution to the military, there would seem to be some features of this site which are in need of elucidation on the ground. In the first place, from the published plan and air-photographs it appears likely that more than one phase could be represented, in that the small inner enclosure is not altogether symmetrically

<sup>56</sup> E. Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (1961), 244.

<sup>57</sup> E. J. W. Hildyard, *A.A.*, XXX (1952), 223 ff.

placed with respect to the enclosure formed by the excavator's "main ditch". Secondly, the perimeter of the same inner enclosure, which was interpreted as a foundation-trench for a stone wall, is surely better understood as a third ditch. This feature, of which it was recorded that there was no surface indication before excavation, measured up to *eight feet wide by four feet deep* and was dug into clay. There was some tumbled stone in one section but this did not occur in others, so that it makes little sense either as a foundation-trench or even a robber-trench. Finally, although it may be no more than a quirk on some air-photographs of the site, there is the appearance of a circular feature, such as might be caused by a small ditch or construction-trench, in the centre of the same inner enclosure.<sup>58</sup> Even as a fortlet, Apperley Dene must still present problems of attribution which could only be resolved by further investigation.

Such excursions apart, the final demise of Hartburn as a fortlet in the east, coming at the time of the addition of an early Antonine fortlet, Barburgh Mill,<sup>59</sup> to the well-known series of fortlets in the west, only serves to emphasize differences already apparent in the military treatment of the two areas. But this is a question beyond the scope of the present report.

<sup>58</sup> N McCord, *Durham History from the Air* (1971), 11.

<sup>59</sup> D. Breeze, *Current Archaeology*, 28 (1971), 121 ff.

