

XIII

NOTES

1. THE LOCATING OF ROMAN STRUCTURES ALONG THE LINE OF HADRIAN'S WALL BETWEEN WALLSEND (SEGEDVNVM) AND MILECASTLE 2

IT MAY be helpful to place on record an analysis of the suggestions propounded since 1960¹ for locating the turrets and milecastles in the first two miles of Hadrian's Wall. In his work for the North of England Excavation Committee in 1929 F. G. Simpson demonstrated² that the Wall, built at the narrow gauge of eight Roman feet, had formed an extension eastwards from Newcastle (*Pons Aelius*), its original starting-point. Westwards from milecastle 5 the interval between the axis of the milecastles approximates to a Roman mile, 1,618 yards, and each of the pair of turrets comes at one-third of this distance. But the first three milecastle intervals³ from Wallsend are substantially shorter 1,443, 1,453 and "approximately 1,450 yds". The site of milecastle 1 (Stott's Pow) and milecastle 2 (Miller's Lane) were established by MacLauchlan,⁴ despite the failure in 1928 to find any walling stones still in position.

The site of turret Ob was revealed shortly before 1886 when a structure "like a cellar" was found in building The Grange, now the presbytery of St. Francis Roman Catholic church.⁵ E. Birley (*Durham Univ. Jour.* xxix, 1934, 27) claimed that J. T. Fowler had been the first person to observe turret Ob, because in 1877 he had "discerned traces of a turret" "near the [two] ponds" north of Stote's Houses. At this point Bruce in his *Wallet-Book* (1863) 42 records "some traces of the foundation of the Wall". Presumably there was some structure⁶ added to the Wall here, perhaps post-Roman, but it was not turret Ob, for that lay at The Grange, at least 400 feet further west.

Grace Simpson (*AA*⁵ iii, 1975, 105) in discussing the site of turret Ob quotes a newspaper report (*Evening Chronicle* of Newcastle, 15th August 1936) that a northward extension of Stotts Road, Walker, had "cut⁷ through the Roman Wall and one of its turrets near the Grange". It must however, be stated that this would have been at least forty feet west of turret Ob (The Grange), and does not seem to have been verified by any experienced archaeologist.

It may be conjectured that the supervisors of the road-widening in 1936 in Stotts Road, Walker, encountered ashlar that was larger than usual in the foundations of the Roman Wall and optimistically supposed that it had been a structure like a turret. For abnormally large stones⁸ consider the north face of the Wall immediately west of the south guardchamber of the west gate of Wallsend fort (*Segedunum*) (*NCH* xiii 493 and fig. 7 preceding p. 493 quotes "exceptionally massive masonry".)

In 1960 a new theory⁹ was put forward by E. Birley for the structure at The Grange. He abandoned his view that it indicated the site of turret Ob, and supposed that it marked the site of the north gateway of milecastle 1. The Ordnance Survey followed his lead and on the *Map of Hadrian's Wall* (1964 and later editions) placed milecastle 1, and *not* turret Ob, at The Grange. Richmond, in *Handbook* ed. 12 (1966) 43, accepted Birley's revised conclusion. C. M. Daniels, in *Handbook* ed. 13 (1978) 59, remains undecided between the views that The Grange marks the site of turret Ob or of milecastle 1. Grace Simpson¹⁰ has given details from her father's notes and detailed maps and advocates the restoration of turret Ob to The Grange, as in the interpretation of 1929-30.

R. P. WRIGHT

2. TWO ANGLO-SAXON BROOCHES. PROVENANCED TO NEAR CORBRIDGE, NORTHUMBERLAND

In June 1984 two Anglo-Saxon brooches were brought into the Museum of Antiquities for identification. The only provenance that could be obtained from the finder was that they had been discovered while metal detecting just to the south of Corbridge. As the brooches have now been returned to the finder this note is limited to recording the new material.

1. Small-Long brooch (Fig. 1) max. surviving length 62 mm, max. width of headplate 35.5 mm.

Incomplete small-long brooch in dark-green patinated bronze. The iron pin and foot of the brooch from immediately below the catch plate are missing, and the lower half of the brooch is pulled forward. The headplate is cruciform with flattened, expanded arms. These carry a single line of punched crescents framing a panel of double crescents on the headplate. Apart from a median rib the bow is otherwise undecorated.

2. Small-long brooch (Fig. 1) max. length 63.5 mm, max. width of headplate 40.5 mm, max. width of foot 16 mm.

Small-long brooch in slightly pitted dark-green patinated bronze. The iron pin is missing but otherwise the brooch is complete.

Undecorated headplate with stepped upper corners, and a plain expanded crescentic foot beneath two raised horizontal bars.

Discussion

The first brooch is of cross-potent type and marks a stage in development at which the rounded angles between the crescents have evolved into a regular and pronounced step. It is unfortunate that the foot on this example has not survived, although that on the second brooch has progressed into the evolved crescentic form common in the later stages of the series. In the circumstances a date some time in the later half of the 6th century A.D. is indicated for these, the most northern

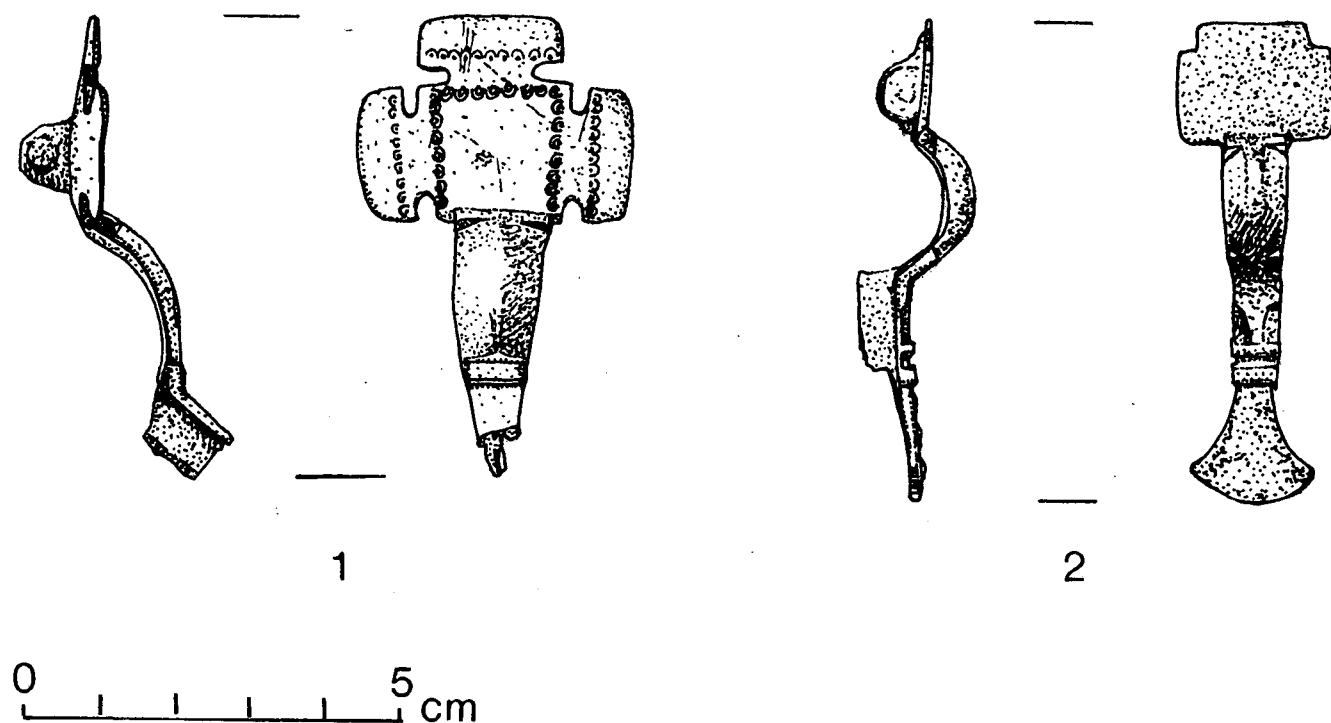


Fig. 1. Small-long brooches said to be from south of Corbridge.
 Drawn by Mary Hurrell.

examples of a type that is distributed throughout the areas of Anglian settlement with a particular focus on the Cambridgeshire region.

It is a pleasure to thank Lindsay Allason-Jones for passing these brooches on for identification and for albeit vain attempts to secure a more exact provenance.

Postscript. An associate of the finder thinks these brooches may perhaps have been found at Newton Kyme near Tadcaster. It is emphasized that no firm location can be given for their discovery.

ROGER MIKET

3. A CANNON-BALL FROM THE TOWN WALL, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Towards the end of 1983, during conservation work upon a section of the town wall above the Close, a cast-iron cannon-ball was discovered lying upon the bank below the outer face of the wall and some 40 feet north of the site of the Close Gate.¹¹

The entire surface of the missile, which is evidently a relic of the siege of Newcastle in 1644, has been badly affected by rust but retains the semblance of its original spherical form. The metal has now assumed a uniformly black appearance as a result of recent conservation. In its present state the missile weighs 13 lbs, has an approximate circumference of 15¾ inches, and at most would fit a bore of 5 inches.

In attempting to identify the type of cannon from which the Close Gate missile was fired, the absence of any real standardisation in the ordnance of the period becomes apparent.¹² Even gunnery manuals published within a few years of the siege of Newcastle differ in technical detail.¹³ Despite this difficulty, it may be suggested that the Close Gate cannon-ball provided ammunition for an artillery piece of the class known as the "culverin", which according to William Eldred in 1646 had a bore of 5 inches and carried a 15 lb. shot. It may reasonably be objected that even severe corrosion is unlikely to have removed two pounds weight of metal from the Close Gate cannon-ball, but, from the considerable differences in technical data for all classes of mid-seventeenth century ordnance supplied by contemporary authorities,¹⁴ it seems reasonable to infer that such details cannot be taken as representing standard specifications.

On the evidence of contemporary accounts,¹⁵ the most likely source for the Close Gate missile would have been the battery believed to have been sited on a rise of ground at or near the Forth, and covering the walls from West Gate to Close Gate. This battery played an important role in the final bombardment of Newcastle's defences on the 19th October 1644, effecting a breach in the town wall between Close Gate and White Friar Tower through which the regiments under Lords Loudoun and Buccleuch entered the town.¹⁶

JOHN NOLAN

4. WILLIAM NEWTON AND LONG BENTON CHURCH

The medieval nave of Long Benton church was demolished in 1790 and replaced by a wider nave with a tower at the west end. Later alterations have removed most of this nave except for its north wall, but the tower is complete and preserves its original appearance, except for a window in the first stage west which is probably an insertion.

The building has sometimes been ascribed to John Dodds, a local architect credited with the design of St. Nicholas' church, Gosforth, in 1799,¹⁷ and also known to have planned alterations for Chipchase castle in 1784.¹⁸ The attribution of Long Benton to Dodds appears to be based upon an incidental reference in a paper by Honeyman,¹⁹ repeated by Colvin.²⁰

The original faculty for the rebuilding of Long Benton church is preserved at the Northumberland County Records Office.²¹ It is dated 10th July 1790 and states clearly that the architect employed was William Newton (1730–1798). After noting the existing church as “. . . a very ancient Edifice and hath long been in a very ruinous State and Condition . . .” the text then refers to “. . . the aforesaid plan and Estimate then taken into consideration, made by William Newton an eminent Architect in Newcastle upon Tyne who had been duly employed to inspect and examine the state of the said Church and to prepare a plan of a New Church and an Estimate of the Expenditure of building the same in case it should be found absolutely necessary to take down the Old Church . . .” Further on we find “. . . the said George Colpitts, George Lake, Joseph Forster, Thomas Charles Bigges . . . were appointed a Committee to contract and agree with the said William Newton for the Execution of his aforesaid plan”.

There is no definite statement that Newton actually completed the contracted work, but since the church was reopened on 2nd November 1791, it is unlikely that there had been any delays caused by the substitution of a different architect.

The body of Newton's considerable work in the district, including as it does the country houses of Howick Hall (1782) and Backworth Hall (1778) in Northumberland, together with the Assembly rooms (1774) and St. Ann's church (1768) in Newcastle, justifies the description “eminent” used in the faculty. Those buildings are entirely classical in style, and the extent of his practice in gothic is at present much less known. It did include work with his father on the aisles of Simonburn church,²² now altered except for some buttresses, and also some involvement with the gothic mansion of Castle Eden in Durham.^{23,24} The tower of Long Benton church is rather cautious in style, with broadly pointed belfry openings, an embattled parapet, and corner finials surmounting multi-stepped diagonal buttresses. There is a short, plain octagonal spire (Plate XIV), and these features may be taken as original since they are shown in a drawing by Richardson made about 1840,²⁵ before the major Victorian rebuilding.

The object of the present note is to draw attention to what appears to be an interesting work of Newton's later career, since it is specifically documented and would deserve notice in any subsequent commentary on his work as a whole.

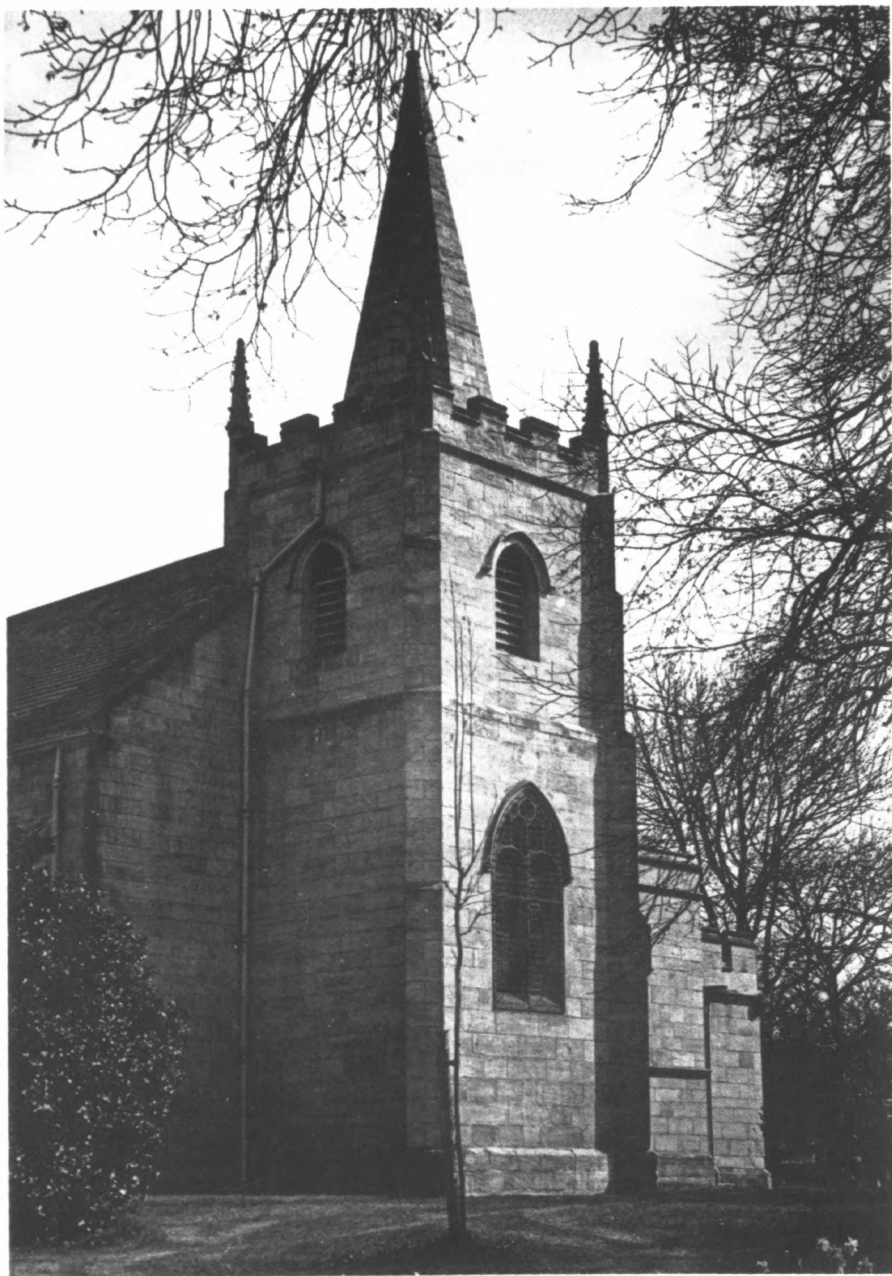


Plate XIV. Long Benton church. Photo by G. W. D. Briggs 1985.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks are due to the Northumberland County Archivist for making available the Newcastle Diocesan Records, deposited in the Northumberland Record Office and quoted by courtesy of the Diocesan Registrar.

G. W. D. BRIGGS

NOTES

¹ On 11th November 1960 (not in 1964, as in the Preface) the writer completed his copy of *R.I.B.* for deposit with the Clarendon Press.

² Spain and Simpson *NCH* iii (1930) 501, 537–8. R. G. Collingwood *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (ed. 9, 1933) 41. The spacing between milecastles is clearly tabulated by Collingwood, *PSAN*⁴ iv (1930) 180, in his brilliant system of numerical references.

³ Grace Simpson, *AA*⁵ iii (1975) 114, shows that F. G. Simpson on his *O.S.* 25 in. to the mile maps measured from the outer face of the east gate of Wallsend fort and provided these three figures. As a correction in *RIB* p. 430 in the caption for Wallsend the east gate, and not the north-east angle, should be the point from which the measurements should start.

⁴ H. MacLauchlan, *The Roman Wall* (1857) plate I and *Memoir written during a survey of the Roman Wall*, 1852–4 (1858) 7–8.

⁵ Bruce *PSAN*² ii, 1886, 190, Bruce's *Handbook* ed. 4 by R. Blair, 1895, 41, ed 9 by R. G. Collingwood, 1933, 39; Spain and Simpson *NCH* xiii, 1930, 494. Grace Simpson *AA*⁵ iii (1975) 105–15. Collingwood marked this site on the set of *O.S.* 6-in. to the mile maps on which he compiled his "System of numerical references" throughout Hadrian's Wall.

⁶ Mr. C. M. Daniels explained to the writer (28th March 1984) that this structure lay a substantial distance east of The Grange, and could not have been one of the normal turrets.

⁷ Mr. C. M. Daniels emphasised to the present writer (22nd March 1984) that the feature recorded in 1936 lay a measurable distance west of The Grange, and did not invalidate the earlier evidence about The Grange.

⁸ For "exceptionally massive" blocks of ashlar in the footing course of milecastle 9 (Chapel House) see Birley *AA*⁴ vii (1930) 153, pl. XLV,

1, *NCH* xiii 563 no. 8 with figure. This was admittedly for a milecastle on the Broad Wall. The height of these large building-stones was not recorded, nor was any of them preserved despite the numbers inscribed on them (*RIB* 1370, 1371 and 1372).

⁹ *AA*⁴ xxxviii 9 (1960) 46. See also his *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (1961) 161.

¹⁰ *AA*⁵ iii (1975) 105–15.

¹¹ Information kindly supplied by Mr. I. Stretton of the Estates and Property Department, City of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is hoped that the cannon-ball will be displayed in the Keep at the Castle.

¹² P. Young, *Edgehill* (Kineton, 1967), p. 331. Speaking of the varied sizes and weights of cannon-balls found on the battlefield of Edgehill Brigadier Young says "It is evident that theory and practice did not go hand in hand. Yet this is not so surprising when we recall the charges of inefficiency levelled against the Parliamentary artillery . . ."

¹³ For example William Eldred, *The Gunner's Glasse*, (1646) and Nye's *Art of Gunnery*, 1648.

¹⁴ P. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁵ A number of eye-witness reports of the siege are quoted by C. S. Terry, "The Siege of Newcastle-upon-Tyne by the Scots in 1644", *Arch. Ael.* 2, XXI (1899), pp. 180–258. W. Lithgow, "A True Experimentall and Exact Relation Upon That Famous and Renowned Siege of Newcastle" (1645), quoted by Terry, provides much information regarding the disposition of the Scottish ordnance and its effectiveness.

¹⁶ *Arch. Ael.* 2, XXI (1899), pp. 213, 216, 230. *Arch. Ael.* 4, XLVII (1968), p. 82.

¹⁷ *NCH* XIII 336, citing Welford.

¹⁸ G. Nares, *Country Life* CXIX 1362 (1956).

¹⁹ H. L. Honeyman, *AA*⁴ ix 135 (1932).

²⁰ H. M. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of English Architects 1600–1840*, London, 2nd edition (1978).

²¹ NCRO No. 1875/A88 (1790).

²² *NCH* XV 179.

²³ N. Whittaker, *Old Halls and Manor Houses of Durham*. Newcastle 1975 p. 72.

²⁴ Tyne and Wear County Council Museums, *The Tyneside Classical Tradition*, Newcastle 1980 p. 8.

²⁵ *NCH* XIII 398.