

VII

Excavations in Tynemouth, 1995

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SUMMARY

EXCAVATIONS in advance of redevelopment took place off East Street, Tynemouth during June and August 1995. The work was carried out by Tyne & Wear Museums Archaeology Department and was funded by the developer, Northern Rock Homes Ltd. Initial stripping revealed that the area was heavily truncated by 19th- and 20th-century buildings, and service trenches. The post-War clearance of the area had been very thorough in stripping away by levelling any late or post-medieval horizons. However, a considerable number of posthole structures of 13th- and 14th-century date were recorded along with traces of early ploughing of the demesne lands. Both of these features were seen to be aligned north-west to south-east. The delineation of the posthole structures provides a window to the understanding of Tynemouth's "early row plan"; and, in the context of medieval settlements in the region, this is important as there has been little or no investigation of the smaller towns.

INTRODUCTION

Little is known of early Tynemouth "town" (Heighway, 1972). It has long been accepted that the Anglo-Saxon monastery, and the later Benedictine priory and castle were major determinants in the village plan (Harbottle, 1978). The headland on which the priory sat contains one of the largest fortifications in Britain. This was manned and maintained by local soldiers from the surrounding region, and chiefly from the village of Tynemouth which was spawned at the castle gates (figs 1 & 2).

The eastern edge of Tynemouth, namely the areas between Lovaine Row, Percy Street, Middle Street, Front Street, and East Street, was cleared of slums after World War II, and levelled to form three car parking areas. There were surface irregularities in these car parking areas mirroring former tenements, and at least one stone-lined well in the northern car park between Percy Street, Lovaine Row and East Street (*pers. comm.* Mr. Sinclair).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early documentary references make it known that there was an Anglo Saxon monastery at Tynemouth (Colgrave & Mynors, 1992; Hart, 1975). However, there is no mention of any village associated with the core of the monastic estate (Craster, 1907). It is not until A.D. 1189 with Richard I's confirmation of their lands to the Priory of Tynemouth that the vill of Tynemouth is listed within the priory's estates.

The Lay Subsidy Roll for 1296 names 15 residents paying the subsidy. A late 12th-century or early 13th-century rental names 13 people holding a toft and 2 bovates of land each, and 7 other land holdings with 66 tenants' names are noted.

The Tynemouth Priory Chartulary of 1336 informs us of 117 properties set out in four rows; South Rawe, South Middle Raw, North Middle Raw, North Raw, and a further road called the Cause. The orientation of the latter is not obvious from this survey. A splendid series of cartographic evidence comes down to us from the 1580s through to this century, confirming this row development along with phases of expansion, infill, shrinkage, and total realignment, and widening of streets (fig. 2).

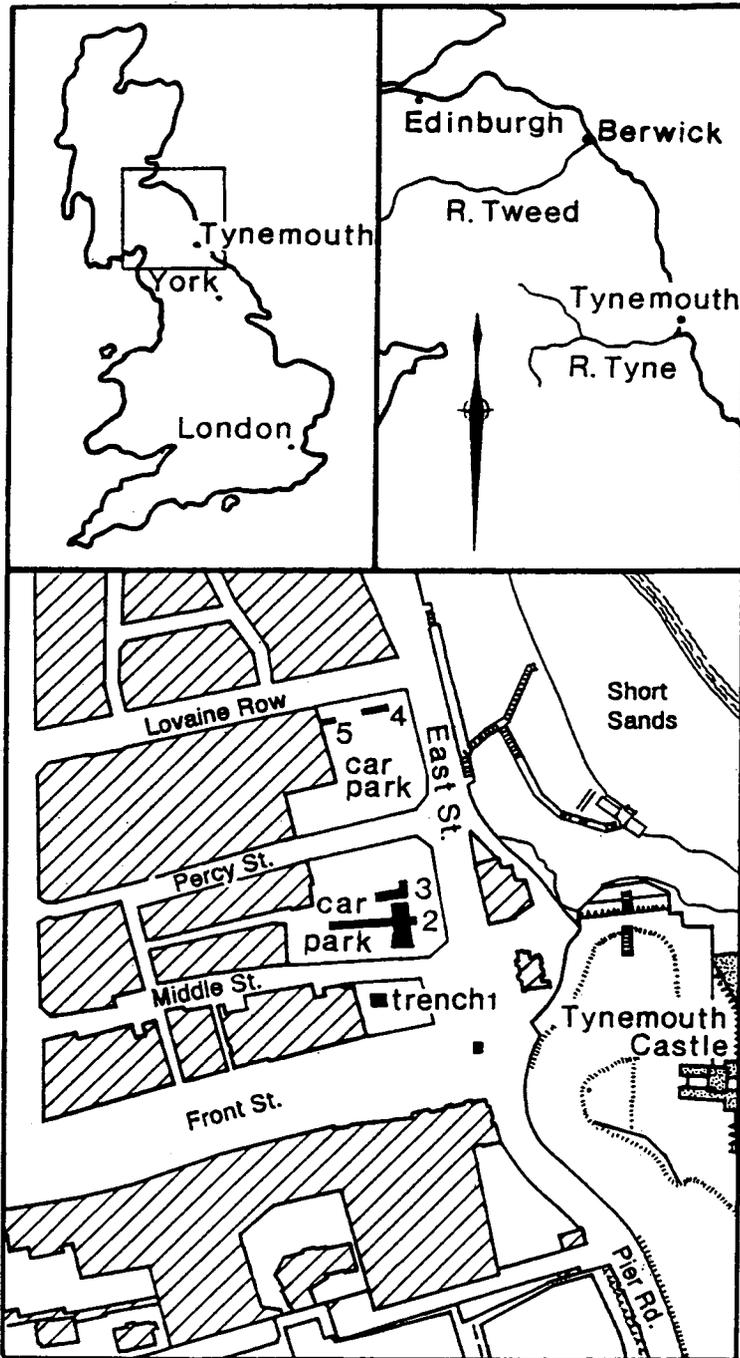


Fig. 1 Tynemouth Location Plans.

GEOLOGY

Tynemouth's solid geology comprises the undulating plateau formed by Magnesian Limestone of Permian origin. The limestone is penetrated by Dykes connected by Yellow Sands and some Boulder Clays. Excavations, especially in the northern extension of Trench 2, exposed significant ice wedges.

THE EXCAVATIONS (FIG. 1)

Some five trenches were dug initially in June 1995 following a research design and Archaeological Assessment by Mrs. Grace McCombie (1995). A further period of excavation was granted by Northern Rock Homes Ltd. in August 1995, and an area of some 100 square metres was excavated to the north and south of Trench 2 (National Grid Reference NZ 3706 6945). This gave a welcome chance to look at the built-up areas and the open areas of Tynemouth. The aim of these excavations was to determine the state of preservation, the plan and delineation, and (if possible) historic developments of structures as related to the medieval "row plan" of Tynemouth.

It was quickly recognized that due to the shallow nature of the Tynemouth soils, and heavy disturbance and levelling of the area in the 19th and 20th centuries, only thin historic lenses of buried soils had survived. However, features cut into the subsoils or bedrock did remain with some debris of early occupation evident.

Trench 1 (figs 1 & 3)

Trench 1 positioned 5 m to the east of the Turk's Head Hotel, near the junction of Front Street, East Street and Middle Street, was 5 m by 5 m, reducing to 4 m by 2.5 m, due to a substantial late 19th century brick wall running east-west, and loose brick rubble (1001). This wall was carried over a rough sandstone drain (1004), which runs north-south, thus severely truncating the area available. The remaining areas to the east (1002) and west (1003) con-

tained inverted medieval soils with deposits of medieval pottery spanning the 13th to 16th centuries.

In the north-west corner of the trench, below the brick wall, was a reddish brown clay fill (1005) overlying a hard carbon lens, which in turn sat on a brick floor (1006). There was a fine brown sandy loam lens (1007), much reduced by paring down of the land, but where it survived it overlay fine natural yellow sands.

There were no traces of any medieval buildings found in this trench. However, the size of the trench, limited by the area available, may be the determining factor.

FINDS

From the stone-lined drain (1004): 1 Handmade iron nail 3.5 cms long and pottery (C 14-15).

From brown sandy lens (1007) over natural sand: 2 pieces of lead sheet and an iron nail and pottery (C 14-15) were recovered.

From brown-magnesian limestone soil (1002) to the east of stone lined drain (1004): ?cinder, bone and pottery (C 13-16).

From brown-magnesian limestone soil (1003) to the west of drain (1004): pottery (C 14-15).

From brown clay (1005) on blacksoot overlying clay tile floor (1006): pottery (C 13-14).

Trench 2 (figs 1, 4 & 5)

Trench 2 situated to the north of Middle Street was the largest of the evaluation trenches, being 30 m by 2 m and aligned east-west. The eastern end of this trench was redug and expanded in August 1995, with further areas to the north and south being opened up to try to recover the medieval toft and croft plans.

The underlying geology was found to be of Magnesian Limestone, much of which was reduced to a crumbly consistency, along with patches of fine sand. Large expanses of this had been cut into and disturbed by late 19th-century and early 20th-century use of the area by farmers, and tenement holders. A complete cow skeleton, having the appearance of a small

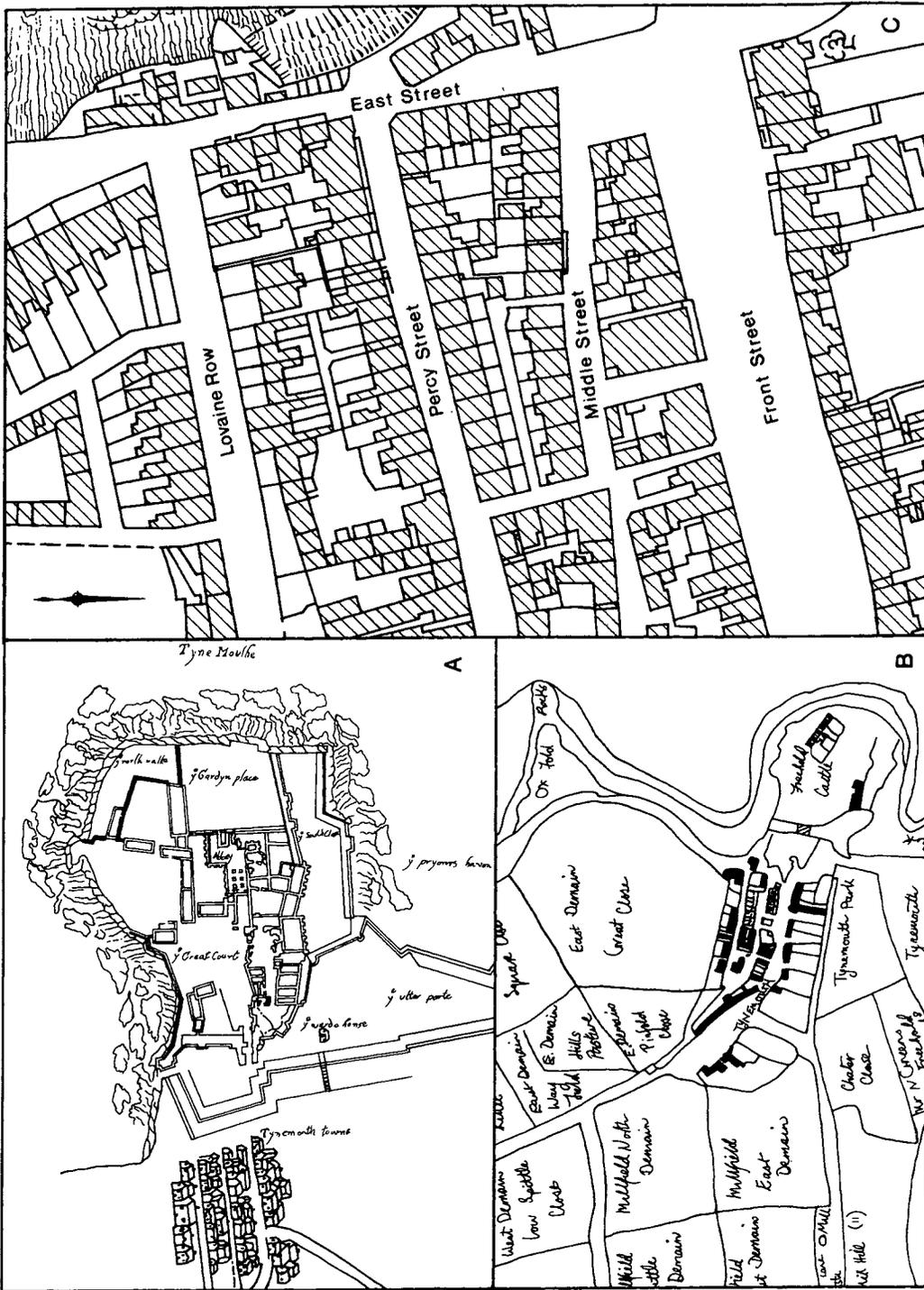


Fig. 2 Historic Maps
 (a) 1580s BL Cotton MS, Augustus, I, ii, 6.
 (b) 1757 Survey (N. R. O. Watson Collection, shelf 21, No. 27).
 (c) 1894 Ordnance Survey.

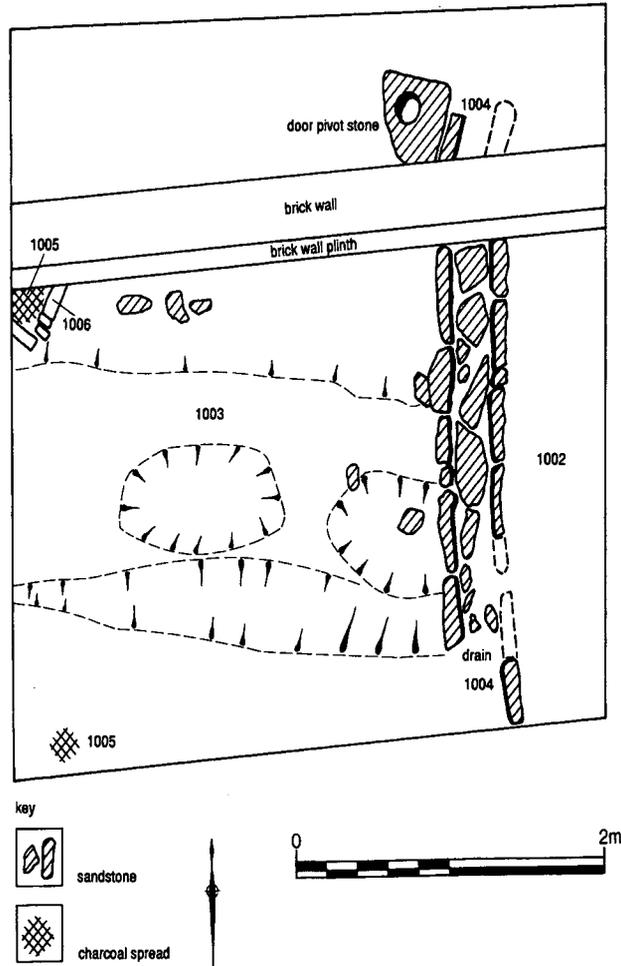


Fig. 3 Trench 1 Plan

dexter-like beast, was recovered from a shallow scooped grave found at the western end of the main east-west trench (2002). A report by P. Stokes of Durham University is here included.

At the eastern end of Trench 2, there survived a layer of brown loam (2002), which overlay a sandy loam lens with clear indications of worm and root activity (2003). Through this lens were slight traces of early

post-pipes, but generally, traces of postholes were only clearly definable when they cut into the natural. One cannot over-estimate the importance of the good state of preservation of most of these postholes, suggesting that timber posts were driven into the natural. Post-hole 16 had a silver half cross penny of King Richard I or John c. 1190–1204, and posthole 32 contained a long cross penny of King Edward I issued after A.D. 1280. These coins

were clearly lost after the posts had been removed and were in the upper fill of the post-pipes.

The overall distribution of these postholes is shown in Fig. 4, from which it can be observed that many occur in lines NW–SE, and may represent plans of small buildings. It is also clear that some posts may have been removed by later activities in the area, with some posts being replaced due to rot, or due to rebuilding on parallel alignments (fig. 6). The postholes appear to be in rows and lines, although their diameters, depths and fills are variable. Analysis of diameters, depths and fills of the postholes has been attempted, and a scheme is here presented with groupings of fills (figs 7 & 8). The relatively small diameter of the majority of the postholes shows that poles were used in the construction of these Tynemouth buildings. This compares well with such sites as Goltho, Lincolnshire where the excavator goes as far as to say that unsawn timber was used in the construction of the peasants' houses (Beresford, 1975).

The postholes recorded present a series of timber structures with earth-fast foundations aligned north-west to south-east, which had probably been rebuilt, or had extensive repairs, and replacement of timbers within a relatively short span of time in the 13th and 14th centuries. From this alignment and orientation towards the sun, it is tempting to conclude that the short end would be south-facing, perhaps on to a yard or garden.

It has not been possible to determine any detail relating to the superstructure of these buildings, because of the superimposition of so many buildings in this relatively small area. However, it is possible that they were single storey structures, with some sort of wall panelling set in-between the vertical timber posts, which were, on average, 0.25 m to 0.35 m apart. The absence of evidence for hearths and partitions does not mean that these structures were outbuildings. After desertion, the raised floors would have been destroyed by later developments and land usage. There were no thresholds, or worn paths recorded, and no evidence to indicate the character of the walls,

or roofing. Clearly these buildings, from their relationship to the castle and roads, were on the edge of the built-up area of Tynemouth, but probably mirrored the alignments set out by the central part of the village.

It has not been possible to interpret fully the building plans or to determine the order in which the structures were built. However, the coinage and sealing soils containing pottery provide an axial dating with several phases of timbers being erected and then replaced in the 13th and 14th centuries. A tentative reconstruction of the posthole structures has been attempted showing lines and possible linkages (fig. 6). From this it may be possible to extract at least two structures (A) 3.5 m × 2 m and (B) 2.5 m × 1.4 m.

To the south of these posthole structures lay an open area—possibly a yard, or garden—with three oval purpose-cut pits to receive storage vessels (2011, 2012 and 2013). Pit 1 (2011) had a flat bottom with a large complete two-handled storage jar carefully and deliberately placed in the pit; this is probably late 13th-early 14th-century in date (fig. 14). This pottery storage vessel and its pit contained a fine silty loam along with two silver pennies of King Edward I (A.D. 1280–1310). Pit 2 (2012) was filled by a black loamy fill with no artifactual debris. The third pit 3 (2013) had a complete profile of a large cooking pot of the 13th–14th century in its upper fill and below this a brown loam containing flecks of sea coal (fig. 14). There was no evidence of burning in this feature (coal appears naturally in the sea cliff section some 200 m north of the site).

Beyond this south-facing open area there appeared to be a line of slight postholes, and a possible sill-beam trench aligned east–west. This was probably a southern boundary or fence alignment fronting or mirroring an early Middle Street.

The only stone structure pre-dating the 19th- and 20th-century buildings to be located lay on the north-west edge of Trench 2. This was a well built stone-lined garderobe pit (2007), rectangular in plan and constructed from roughly dressed, and water worn, sandstone cobbles which were firmly bonded with

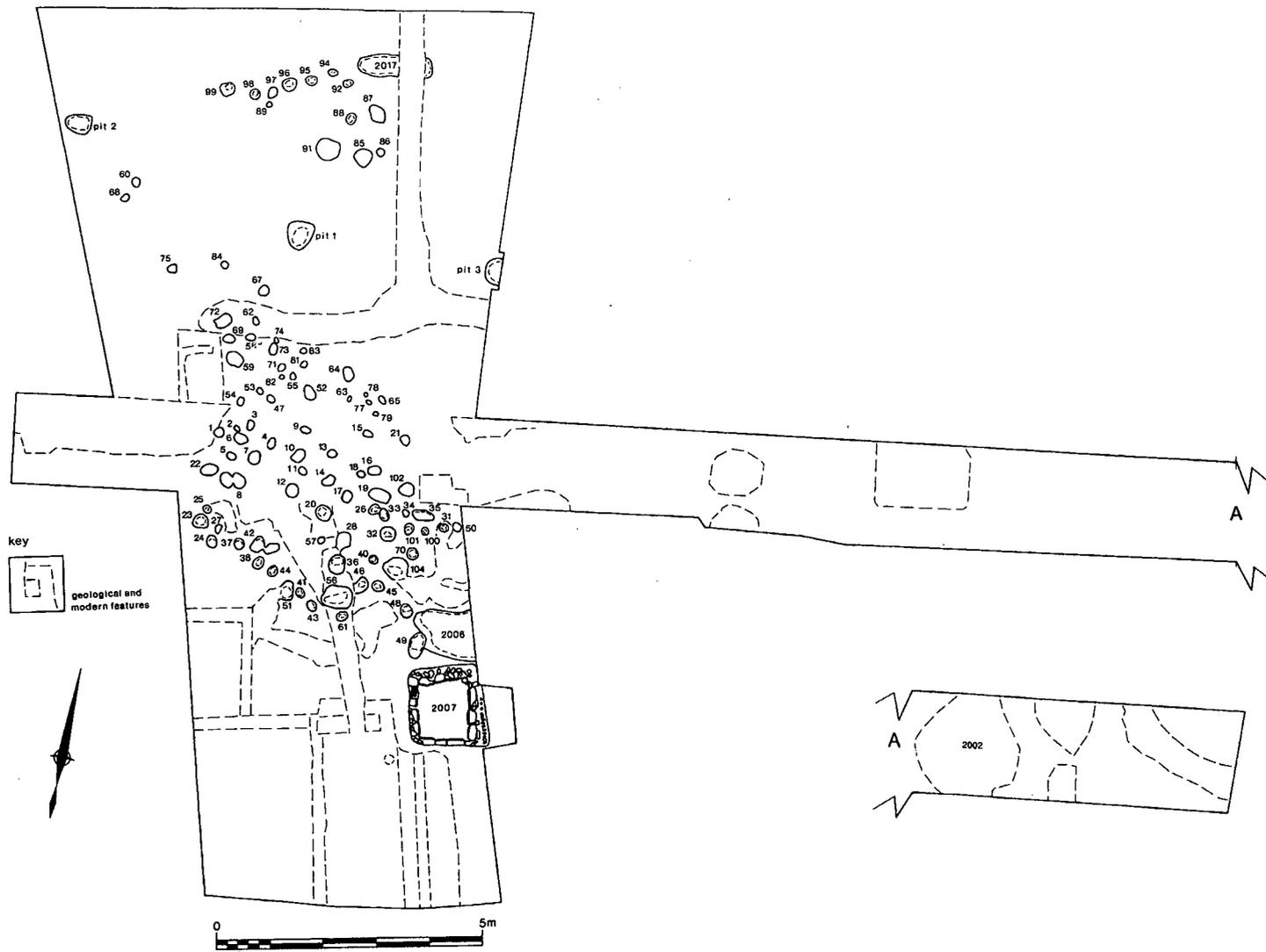


Fig. 4 Trench 2 Plan.

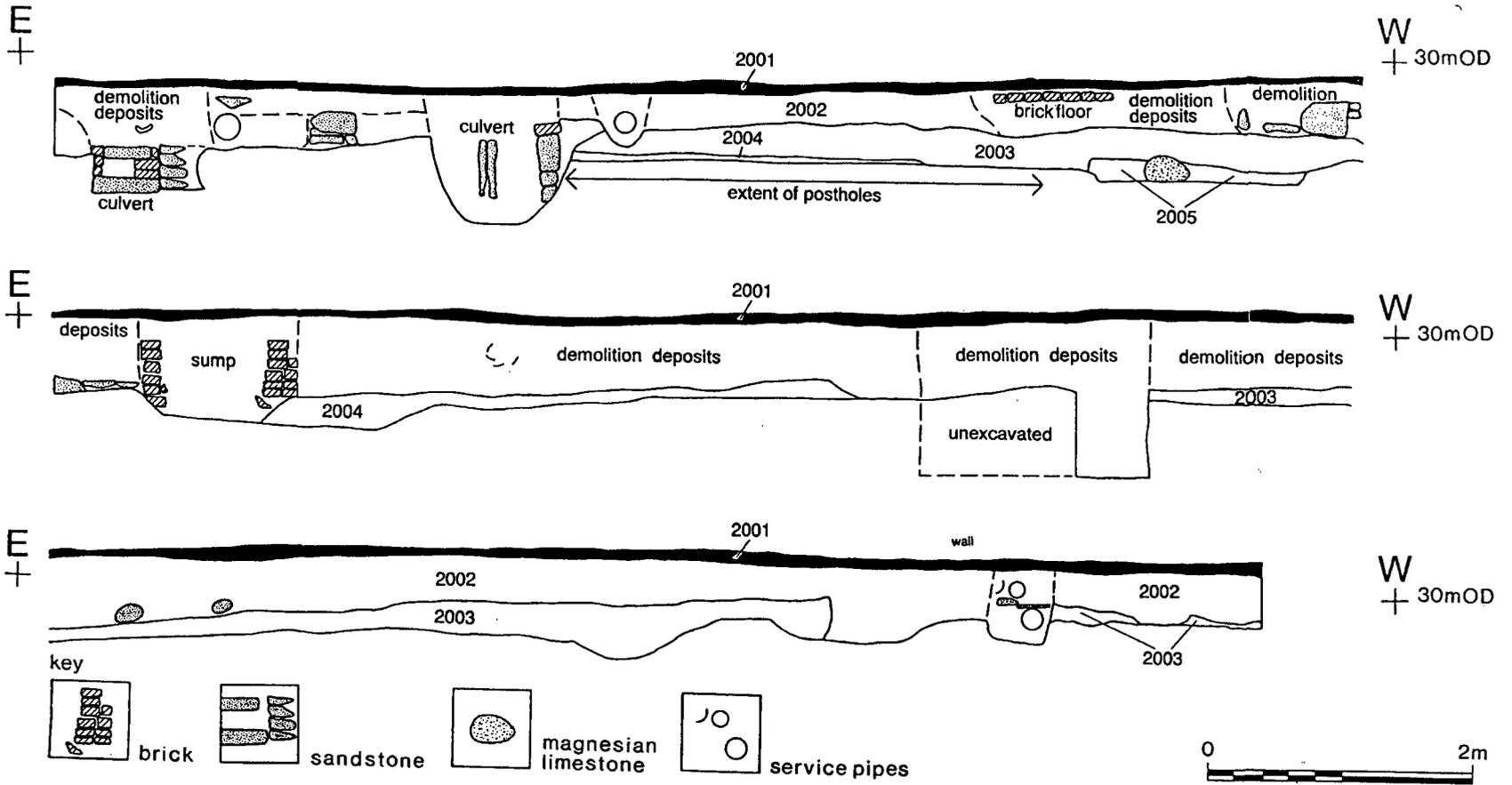


Fig. 5 Trench 2 Section along South baulk.

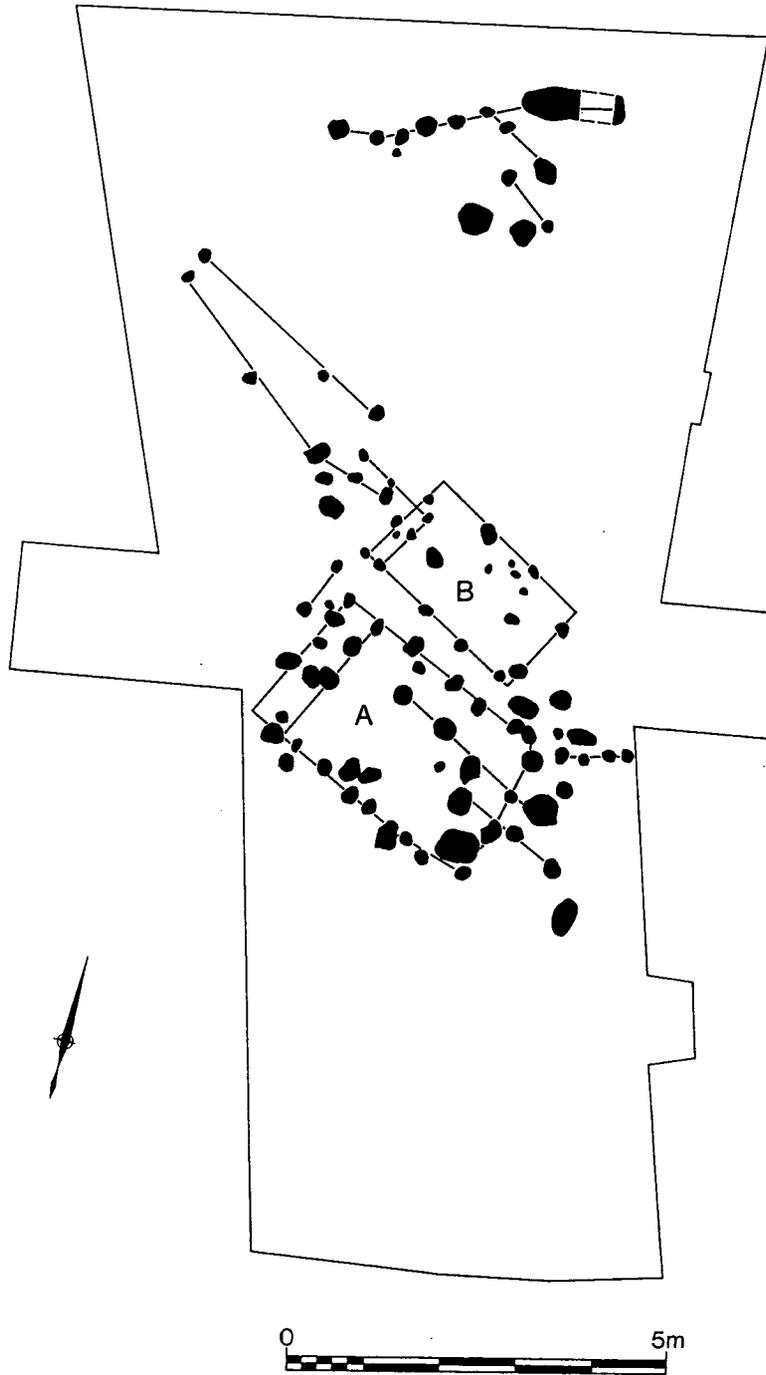


Fig. 6 Trench 2 Post hole alignments.

- 2001.3 Complete bowl, c. 1670–1700 (Parsons type 5)
 2001.4 Complete bowl, c. 1635–50 (Edwards type 1b)
 2001.5 6 stems fragments, all unremarkable and none inscribed.

Trench 3 (fig. 10)

Trench 3 lay to the north of Trench 2 and took the form of an L-shaped trench 12 m east–west, and 6 m north–south by 2 m wide. The whole trench was machined down through a modern infill to natural, with hand cleaning wherever necessary. All of the overburden was of made ground, with infill to the east of demolition rubble to an unknown depth cutting the reddish brown clay, which is atypical of this Magnesian Limestone region. Subsequent borings made by HJT Solmek geotechnical engineers confirmed the area as being part of an infilled quarry. No finds were recorded from Trench 3.

Trench 4 (fig. 11)

Trench 4 was 9 m by 2 m, aligned east–west, and parallel to Lovaine Row, an early 20th-century housing development. Prior to this, the area had been part of the “Great Close of the East Demesne” (1757 Survey of Tynemouth Watson Collection N. R.O. Shelf 21 No. 27) (fig. 2). The excavation revealed traces of a shallow U-shaped ditch aligned north–west to south–east. This was possibly a land division in the demesne land. There were at least two stake holes on the western lip of this ditch; these may have been the traces of a hurdle or hedge line.

FINDS

From 4001 plough soils.
 Sherd of glass bottle probably post-medieval.
 Sherd of red tile probably post-medieval.
 Pottery (C 13–14 and 17)

Trench 5 (fig. 12)

Trench 5 was the smallest cutting (4 m × 2 m), but it revealed confirmation of the documen-

tary evidence of the open nature of medieval land usage in this area of Tynemouth. The 1757 survey of Tynemouth calls this area the “East Demain Great Close”. This trench was hand-excavated and revealed three plough furrows cutting into the natural sands. These loam-filled U-shaped plough marks are aligned north-west to south-east, complementing the posthole alignments noted in Trench 2. No finds to aid dating of the furrows were recorded, nor were there any molluscs evident in the plough soils or furrows. It is suggested here that these furrows were formed with the initial land clearance and improvement of the area, rather than features belonging to a continuous ploughing regime. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the plough marks have been preserved, since constant deep ploughing would cause them to be self-cancelling. Further, deep ploughing would cause the sand-cum-limestone to be brought up and mixed thus improving the depth of the crop soils.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a slight hint of some Neolithic and/or Bronze Age activity in the area, supported by two flints from the excavations (2003 and 2004), and also a recent surface find of a flint end-scraper at Longsands (TWCMS 606). Two residual sherds of late 2nd-century Romano-British BB2 and Thameside pottery (2005) bridge the broad time gap through to the 13th century. The majority of finds included pottery relating to the 13th to 14th centuries with a tiny quantity of residual artifacts belonging to the 15th to 20th centuries.

Significant 13–14th century earthfast post-hole buildings were traced, with yards or gardens extending in a north-west to south-east orientation. This alignment was also in evidence within the demesne lands, where plough furrows were clearly conspicuous. A late medieval stone-built garderobe was recorded (fig. 9); this took a bearing north–south, and may represent a secondary phase of Tynemouth’s development. Perhaps this is all

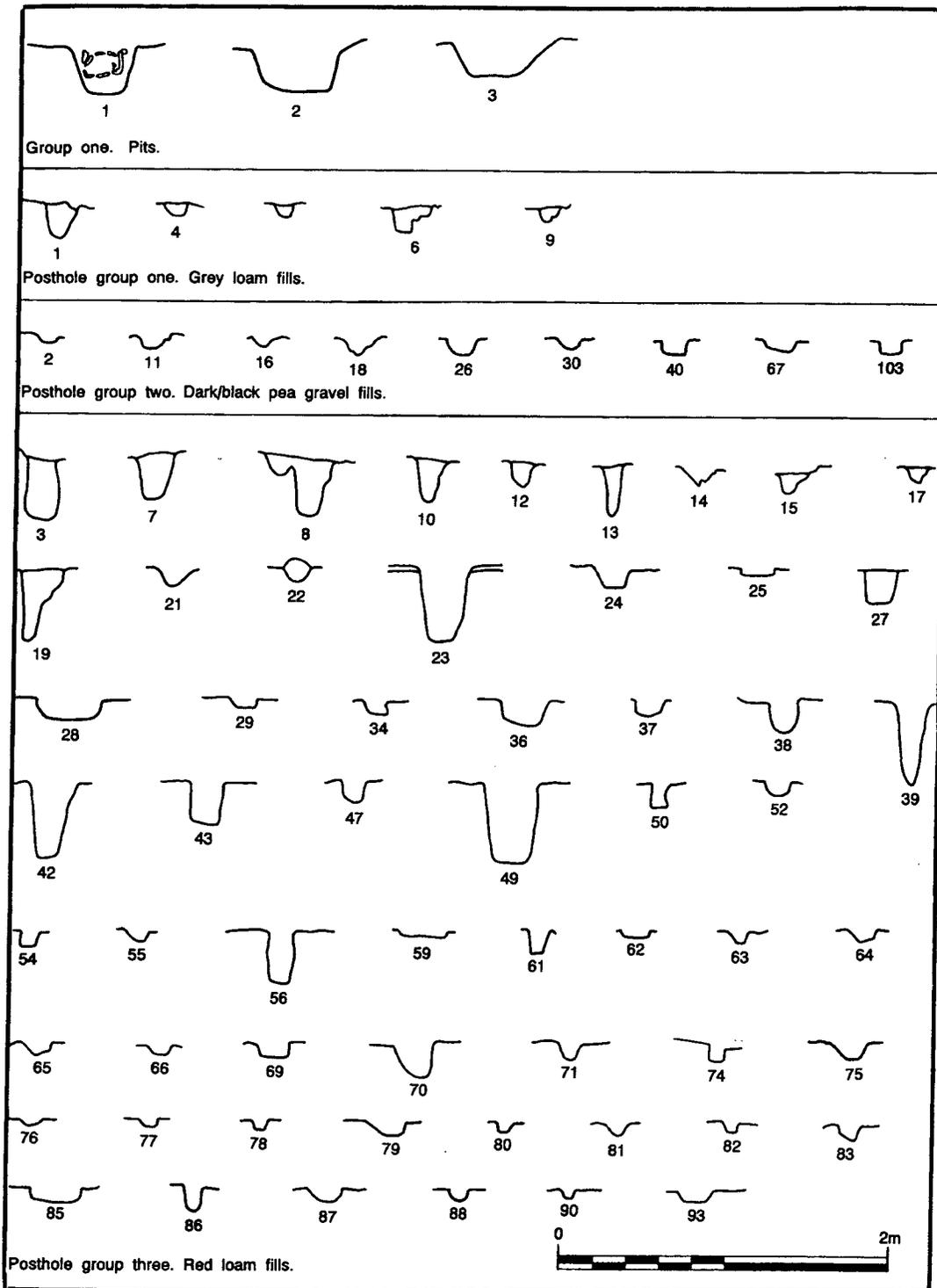


Fig. 7 Amalgamated groupings of Post holes, and Sections of Pits, Trench 2.

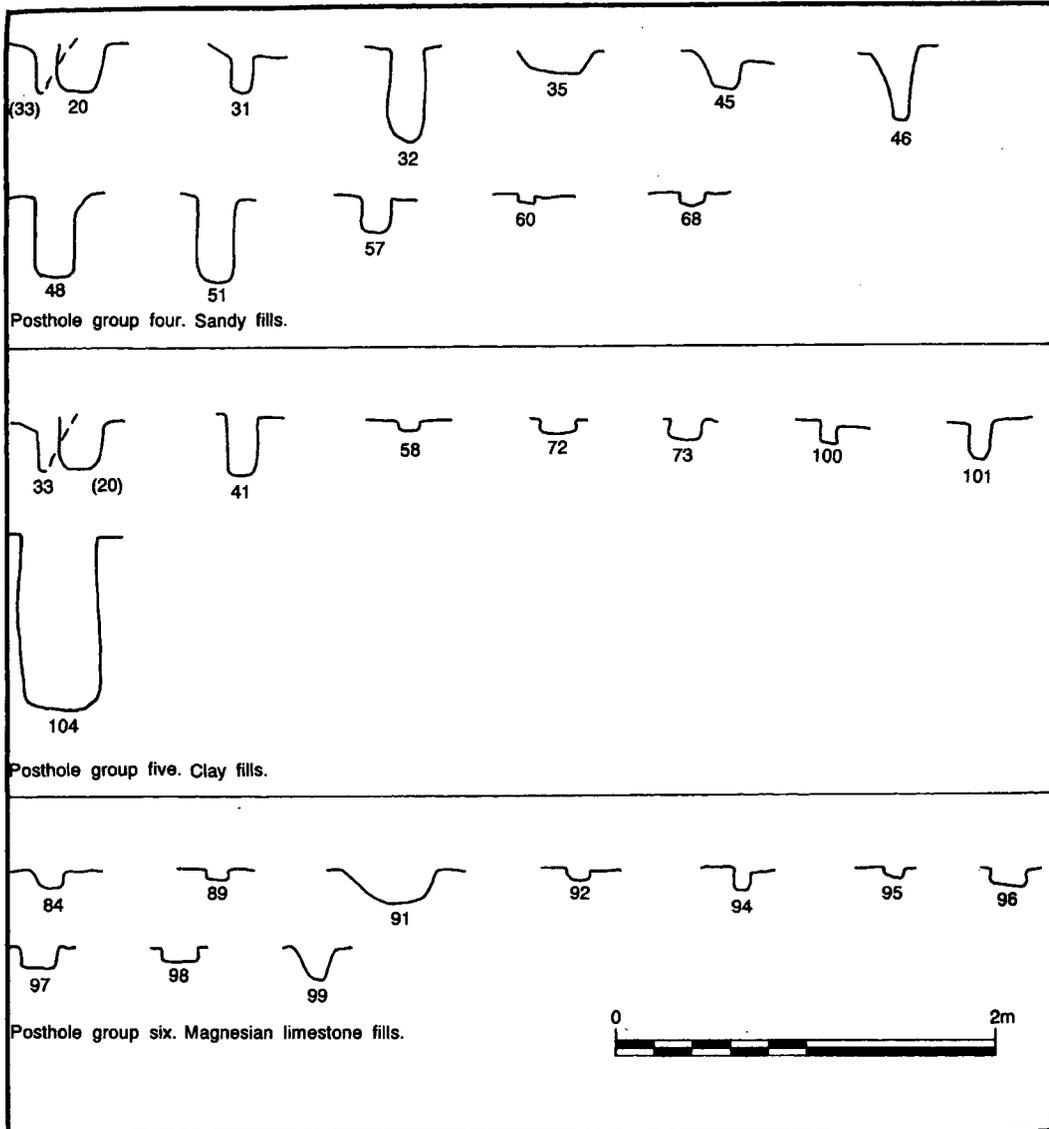


Fig. 8 Amalgamated groupings of Post holes, Trench 2.

part and parcel of W. G. Hoskin's rebuild of late medieval England, as witnessed by the changing vernacular architecture from timber to stone.

THE CHANGING VILLAGE PLANS & PHASINGS

The castle and its priory are the dominant axiomatic components of Tynemouth. How-

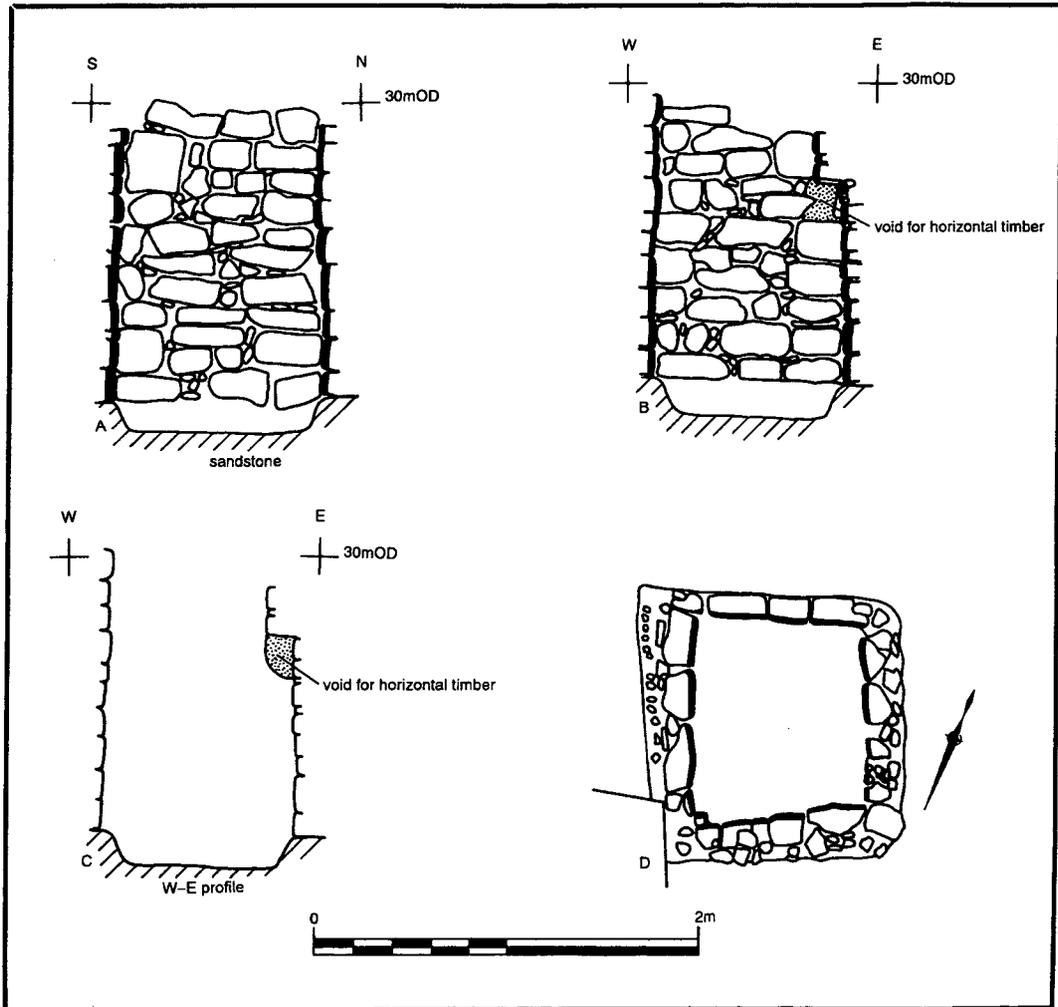


Fig. 9 Trench 2 Garderobe Pit.

ever, due to the undulating nature of the plateau, and the steep southerly slope cut through the Boulder Clays by the River Tyne, the village is not directly at the castle gates as can be observed from all of the historic cartographic evidence.

Throughout Britain over the last generation, there has been much analysis and discussion, within the discipline of historic geography, as

to the form and origins of village and town plans. An increasing amount of evidence points to the development of Anglo-Scandinavian town planning (Biddle in Barley 1975) whilst, after the Norman Conquest, there appears to be a re-planning and laying out of planned settlement, occurring before A.D. 1300 (Roberts 1987).

As has been pointed out earlier in this

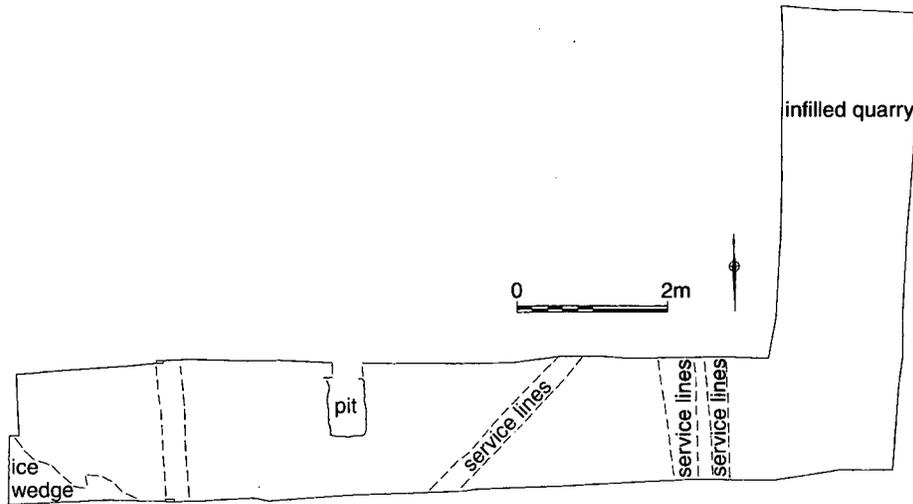


Fig. 10 Trench 3 Plan.

report (p. 87), the Tynemouth Priory Chartulary of 1336 informs us of 117 properties set out in four rows, evidence upon which it is possible to suggest a degree of general plan stability. However, it may now be possible through these excavations to observe earlier plans appearing, before the laying out of Front Street, and a radical re-organization of farms and tofts between the 13th and 14th centuries.

The excavations revealed a clear north-west to south-east orientation, not only for the timber earthfast buildings, but also for the furrows of the ploughlands in the desmesne lands. Although the dating evidence was very limited, it is supported by silver coinage centred on the late 13th century, and perhaps through the visual evidence of clipping and wear of the coins well into the first half of the 14th century. The pottery is also largely of the 13th and 14th centuries and helps dating of the earth-fast structures.

From the earliest surviving survey, that of the 1580s, we can see four rows of houses, a sharp north-west curvature to Front Street, and a road leading away to the riverside (fig. 2). The common medieval vernacular plan of gables on to the streets is not apparent from

the 1580s survey. Here, the houses are set longways, fronting the streets and having windows and doors opening out north and southwards. Thus, the gable ends reduced the impact of the north-east gales.

Based upon the position of the castle gatehouse and the street orientation, there appears to be a radical formalized change in a west-east alignment of the rows with the houses facing south-south-east. This means that the eastern end of Front Street was aligned on the stone gatehouse and its barbican, but not the drawbridge across the moat. It is noteworthy that the gatehouse is cut into the northern edge of the postulated early Norman motte of the post-conquest castle. (It is not certain if this earthwork is a motte or that it is part and parcel of a series of gun ramps, or even a sconce.)

The drawbridge lay to the south of this stone barbican and gatehouse, providing an entrance and exit from the castle and was aligned on the lane known locally as "The Monks Walk" and Windmill Lane. This runs today from Pier Road, along the boundary to the south of Our Lady and St. Oswin's church. This lane in medieval times provided access to the fish ponds, Tynemouth windmill, and to

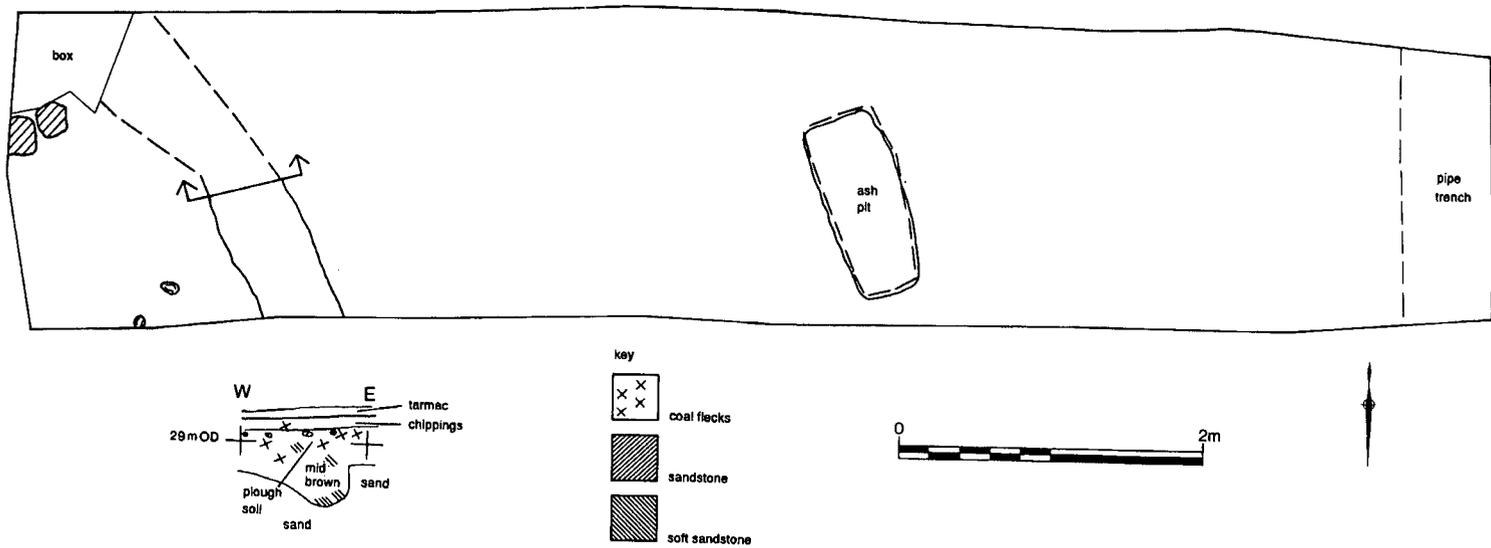


Fig. 11 Trench 4 Plan and section of ditch.

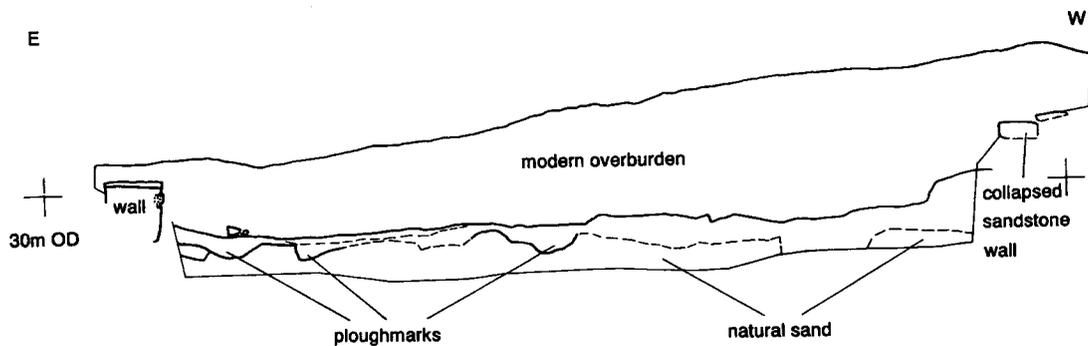
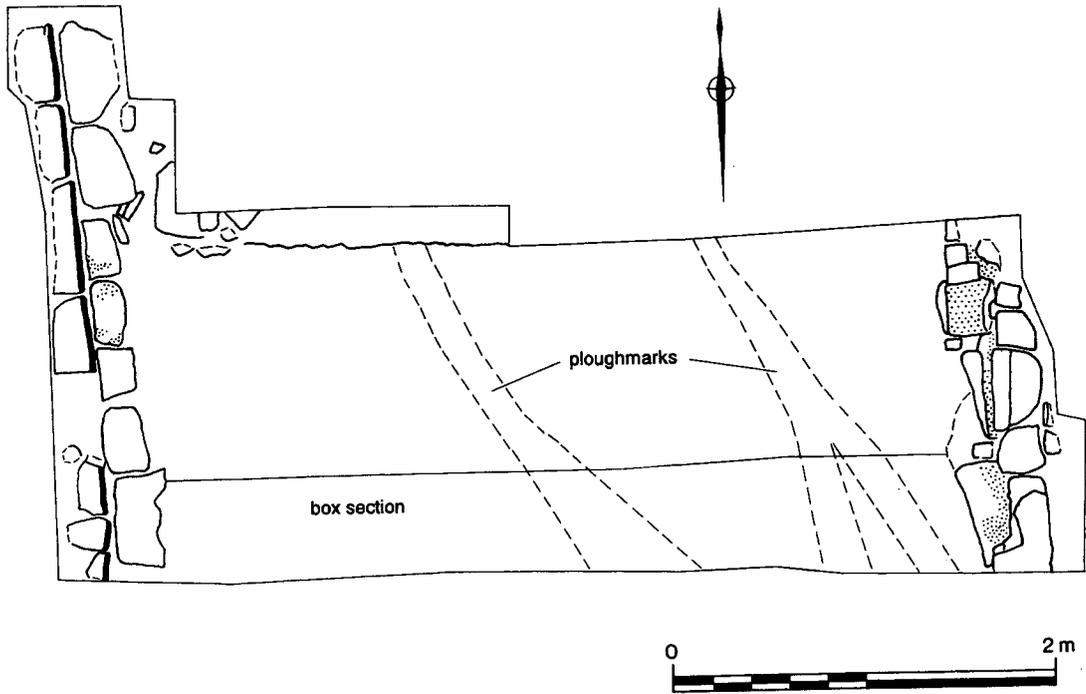


Fig. 12 Trench 5 Plan and section of South baulk showing plough marks.

Tynemouth's traditional landing point (now known as Low Lights). It also provided access to the medieval spital situated near to Spittle Dene.

From this evidence of major local links, the cartographic, and castle motte and drawbridge

alignments, it can be postulated that this "Monks Walk/Windmill Lane" was the primary road to the castle, which only later became the south back lane, when Front Street was laid out. Further supporting evidence for The Monks Walk cum Windmill Lane being

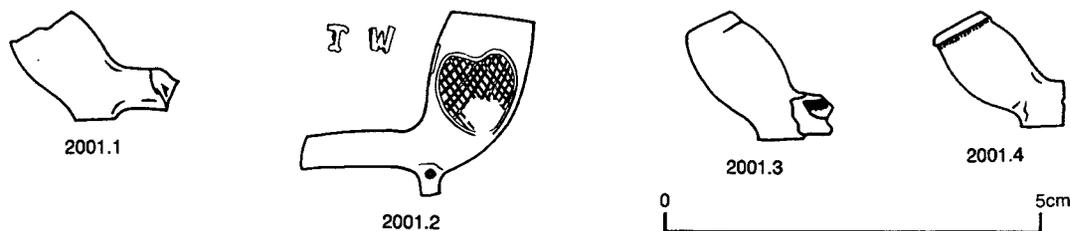


Fig. 13 Tobacco Pipes (2001.1; 2; 3; 4).

primary and that Front Street is secondary) comes in the form of the early cemetery finds from Front Street, with a single radio carbon date of $ad\ 1100 \pm 90$ (Harwell 1870; $850 \pm 90\ B.P.$) or, after calibration, *A.D.* 1170 (Harbottle, 1978).

To the north of Front Street is the narrow Middle Street, which clearly formed the north back lane prior to further expansion of the town north and westwards.

From this current evidence here presented, it is possible that there was an axial movement of building frontages from a south-east towards a more southerly orientation, with some spatial changes taking place, from at least the 14th century through to the 19th century. This swing in orientation would have been gradual, but also perhaps hastened by the dissolution of the Priory in 1539 with the release of buildings and lands which had formerly been under priory's control. Craster tells us that, in the 1330s, the majority of the houses were hereditary and capable of alienation, but also that some were the freehold of the prior and convent of Tynemouth (Craster, 1907, p. 255).

Sometime between the 1580s survey and the 1757 plot, there were major adjustments to the town plan with new frontages aligned south-west to north-east. The buildings are now shown fronting the streets, and there are many building plots empty in all three streets. There is very little change from this pattern observable in the 1773 survey made by John Fryer (*A Plan of the low part of the River Tyne*).

The town plan between 1773 and John

Wood's 1826 survey sees further change, with the easterly plots changing from trapeze forms, with some straightening of plots into rectangular configurations. There is also some evidence of infill, but there are still many empty plots especially in the area now at the eastern end of Middle Street and Percy Street (the area of Trenches 2 and 3). Many of these plots were to be built up at the end of the 19th century and the lands to the south of Front Street built up in depth and levelled to receive new housing and cellarage.

The author would recommend that any small or large developments in the core area of Tynemouth, especially the core area south of Middle Street, should be researched and recorded as a priority in unravelling the early history of this important village.

REPORT ON POTTERY FROM TYNEMOUTH EXCAVATIONS BY J. E. VAUGHAN (FIG. 14)

The catalogued assemblage consisted of 249 pot sherds from 15 contexts, although all but [1002] produced only a handful of sherds. This small quantity limits any sensible analysis as the relative proportions of different types in an assemblage are important factors in interpretation. Sherd size here was small, although there were some joins and only a few were particularly abraded. Most of the material falls into the 13th- and 14th-century date bracket, although a few sherds of reduced greenware type 4 suggests some later medieval activity, possibly disturbing earlier material. Two sherds of slip-

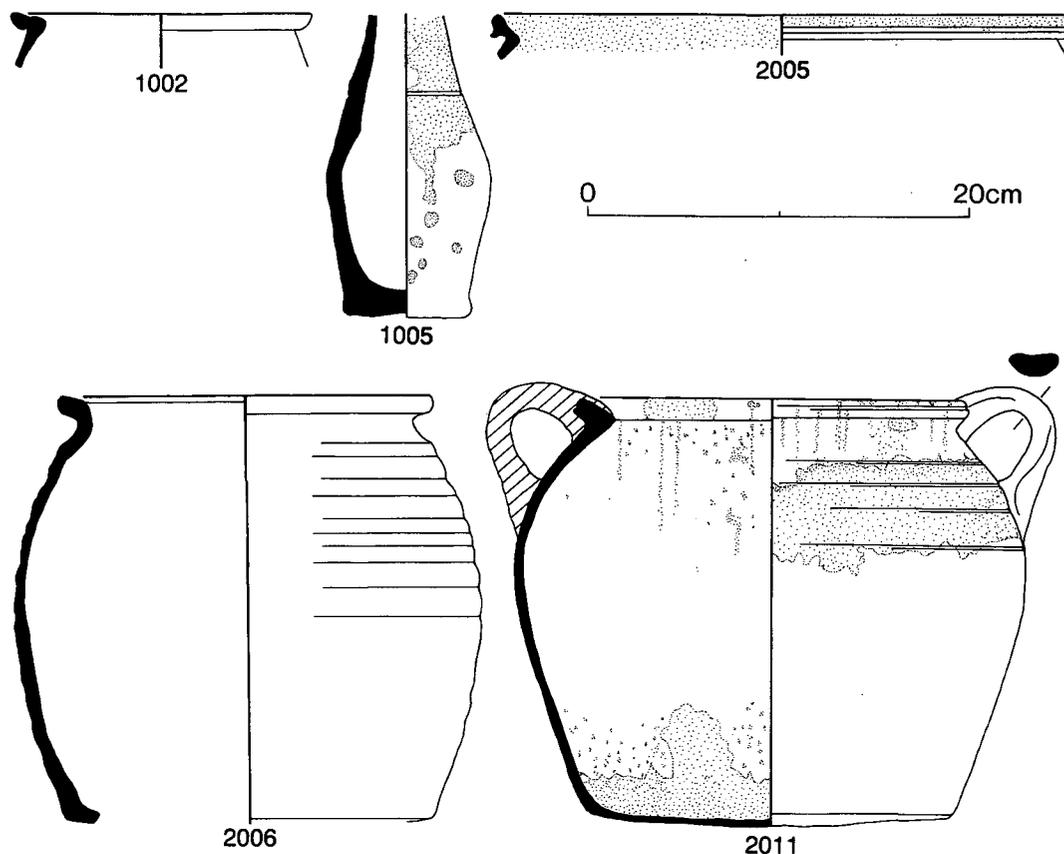


Fig. 14 Medieval Pottery (1002; 1005; 2005; 2006; 2011).

decorated redware (in 2001 and 4001) were the only post-medieval fragments.

As might be expected, the material can be paralleled in the medieval pottery assemblages found in Newcastle and I have used the simple fabric number series developed for cataloguing these. A fuller discussion of the types occurring can be found more appropriately elsewhere (see bibliography). Here I have given some brief notes about the types, together with a list of the occurrences at Tynemouth followed by a full context catalogue with comments.

FABRICS PRESENT (NUMBERS IN BOLD DO NOT APPEAR ON CHARTS)

1.0 ROMAN

Black burnished ware 2 and Thameside Ware.

3.0 COARSE GRITTED WARES—BUFFGR

Coarsely or abundantly gritted wares. This group includes coarser gritted varieties of types in group <4> and <6>.

4.0 BUFF WHITE WARES—BW, BWH

Wares made in buff or white firing clay. Date range broadly 13th to 14th century. "H" and "OF" distinguish particularly hard fired or over fired fabrics.

5.0 ORANGE BUFF—OBW

Orange buff. This category covers wares very similar in appearance and inclusions to buff wares but apparently using a more iron-rich clay. The type seem to come in later than the buff wares. Dating probably late C 13th–14th.

6.0 EARLY REDUCED GREENWARE AND OXIDIZED GRITTY—ERG/OXGR

Early gritty wares in iron rich fabrics e.g. early reduced greenwares. In Newcastle, these appear to be dominating in the C 13th, though appearing alongside buff wares in C 14th. By the later C 14th less gritty, more consistently glazed products are common, see <7>.

7.0 REDUCED GREENWARES AND OTHER IRON RICH FABRICS—RG, IR

Generally mid/late 14th to 15th century in date. Will include part oxidized wares with same characteristics.

8.0 RG4 (OR OXIDIZED) RG4/OG4

Reduced greenware type 4 (see Ellison, 1981). A hard dark grey clean fabric with good glaze cover. Occurs in large quantities in C 15th deposits in Newcastle.

10.0 OTHER MED—MED?

Unprovenanced but probably medieval wares.

15.0 LANGERWEHE STONEWARE—LST

Occurs from mid-14th century through to 16th. Later wares similar to earlier Raeren Stoneware.

27.0 ENGLISH REDWARES—ER

Light red-brown earthenware with lead glaze; this is the 17th-century type (e.g. metropolitan wares) and includes slipwares. In Newcastle, these redwares

appear (archaeologically) to arrive suddenly after the Civil War, although they are known to have been produced in the Metropolitan area from the early part of the century.

Redwares in pre-Civil War deposits are either Low Countries imports or not provenanced (Vaughan, 1993).

The vessels of interest are illustrated and commented upon below (fig. 14).

CONTEXT 1002—FABRIC 6 OXIDIZED GRITTY WARE

Everted cooking pot rim—see Mansion House 12 (buff white) and 17.

context 1005—fabric 5 orange buff ware
Almost complete small jug with dark brown glaze on shoulder and in patches. Similar small jugs appear in the Mansion House assemblage in the C 14th (fig. 14).

CONTEXT 2005—FABRIC 4 BUFF WHITE GRITTY WARE

Cooking pot rim with yellow glaze.

CONTEXT 2006—FABRIC 3 GRITTY IRON RICH WARE

Three sherds of large cooking pot similar to Castle Ditch no. 5. Fabric is quartz gritted with frequent medium sized grits. Surface colour varies from orange buff to buff with areas of sooting, core is mid grey. Probably 13th century vessel.

CONTEXT 2011—FABRIC 6 REDUCED GREENWARE

Two handled jar with everted rim, unsooted, so not a cooking vessel, but probably for liquid storage. The general form is common in 13th- and 14th-century wares but jars with two handles appear to be rare, one is illustrated in the Queen Street report no. 130 (Bown, 1988) (fig. 14). Fabric is finely gritted with quartz with occasional larger inclusions. It is mainly oxidized a light orange/buff colour with reduced grey core where the fabric is thicker, especially the rim and handle, but also round the middle of the pot where there is an uneven band of green glaze. In type, it seems closest to RG3 which is a less iron rich fabric in the reduced greenware tradition. The base is also glazed internally. Without the coin evidence, I might have suggested a slightly earlier date.

A BOVINE SKELETON FROM TYNEMOUTH BY PAUL STOKES

A complete cow skeleton was recovered from Trench 2. This was in brown loam (2002). It is comparable in size with a modern Dexter. All the bones were gracile and the metapodials and pelvis exhibit female rather than male characteristics. The animal was adult at death, with all epiphysial ends fused. Both mandibles had the permanent adult dentition present and exhibiting considerable wear. The Mandibular Wear Stage was calculated after Grant (1982) at MWS 49. This is comparable with specimens of known age at death of 14–17 years. The cause of death would appear to have been associated with advanced age. The complete limb bones gave an estimated withers height of 1.04 m. The lower leg bones (metapodials and phalanges) were found in articulation with the upper limb bones; this suggests that the hide had not been removed from the carcass as, even today, the feet are taken off with the hide. No cut or knife marks were seen on any post-cranial bones to suggest salvage of any of the meat. The horns had, however, been chopped off prior to burial. The skull has collapsed since excavation but the photographic record of the skeleton *in situ* clearly shows the absence of horn cores, which is not due to differential preservation. Examination of the left frontal bone showed clear chop marks associated with the removal of the horn and its bony core. Horn was a valuable commodity before plastics were available but the removal of the horns may also be evidence of sentiment. Particularly well shaped and matched horns were kept from favourite cows into this century and used for somewhat macabre ornaments, such as supports for a miniature table gong.

All the complete limb bones were measured and the measurements compared with reference skeletons of two Dexter cows in the possession of Miss L. Gidney of Durham University. There were sufficient differences in the proportions of the bones of this specimen and the Dexters to suggest that, although of similar stature, this animal was probably not a Dexter. Cattle of this general size have been found in the north-east on sites dating from the late Iron Age to medieval periods, so size alone cannot be used to suggest a date for the burial of this carcass. Baker and Maxwell (1987) have shown that there was an interest in small breeds of cattle as house-cows, kept largely by the middle and upper classes in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Initially, the Breton breed was popular for this

role but it was later eclipsed by the importation of Kerry and Dexter cattle. Breton cattle were exhibited at the 1864 Royal Show at Newcastle upon Tyne, so the breed was known in the north-east. It is possible that this skeleton represents the internment of a highly regarded family house-cow of this period.

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