

III

Charles Francis Forster, Northumbrian Antiquary, and the Campville Collection of Roman Antiquities

Leslie W. Hepple

SUMMARY

Charles Francis Forster (1732–1807), of Low Buston and Campville (Holystone) in Northumberland, was a magistrate, landowner and agricultural improver, and also a notable collector of Roman antiquities from Redesdale, and especially High Rochester (*Bremenium*). His substantial collection at Campville later became part of the Alnwick Castle collection, and subsequently of the Newcastle Joint Museum of Antiquities. Forster's antiquarian contribution has been neglected, and this paper uses recently discovered letters and other sources to recover the details of his antiquarian activities; a later paper will consider his sporting interests and his enthusiastic commitment to agricultural improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Francis Forster (1732–1807), of Low Buston and Campville (Holystone) in Northumberland, does not appear in Eric Birley's comprehensive "In Memoriam: Register of Former Antiquaries" in *Research on Hadrian's Wall*.¹ Yet 14 inscribed Roman altars and tombstones from Forster's Campville collection appear in Collingwood and Wright's *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*.² These come mainly from the fort of *Bremenium* (High Rochester) in Redesdale, Northumberland, with three from *Habitancum* (Risingham), also in Redesdale. Some are very fine, and they form an important contribution to the archaeology and epigraphy of Roman Britain. This paper – and a future article which will deal with his

agricultural work – sets out to rescue Forster from unjustified neglect. The discovery of letters by Forster, describing his antiquarian activities as well as his agricultural improvements and his sporting life, helps reveal his outlook and character. The paper then examines the subsequent history of his classical collection, with its movement to the Alnwick Castle collection and more recently to the Joint Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle. The letters also allow us to redefine the history of one *RIB* entry (*RIB* 1289).

FORSTER'S LIFE AND SOCIETY

Charles Forster was born in 1732, the eldest of three sons and two daughters to Francis Forster of Low Buston. Forsters had farmed Low Buston, near Warkworth in Northumberland, since the early seventeenth century.³ The young Charles Francis matriculated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1752, graduating and then becoming BCL in 1761. He was to be 45 before he inherited the estate, and for much of this time he lived away from Low Buston. We know little of his relationships with his parents, but his father gave him £1,000 in 1762. Much of his time seems to have been spent at Felton Peth, in a house which still survives today on the south side of the river at Felton (and technically in Thirston).⁴ In 1767 he fathered a daughter, whom he acknowledged and brought up. His classical interests appear in the name he gave her: Julia Caesar Forster. A second illegitimate child was born 15 years later in 1782, and,

predictably, baptised as Augustus Caesar Forster. Nothing is known of their mother (or even mothers), or of the domestic arrangements.

Charles Francis became active in Northumbrian society. He was clearly an able, well-educated and sociable man. He became (as his memorial tablet in Warkworth church still records) a J.P. and eventually a Deputy Lieutenant of the County. His character was, as will become apparent from his letters, robust and outgoing, perhaps to the point of eccentricity. Certainly it was not the eccentricity of the shy, retiring antiquarian. At some point he seems to have acquired the sobriquet of 'General Forster', linking him to Thomas Forster, the Bamburgh squire who had become General of the English forces in the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. John Crawford Hodgson suggests that this was "gained by giving this as his name on arrival at the closed gates of Berwick late one evening, and hailing the porter for admittance".⁵ Whatever the origin, it seems to have stuck in local folklore. Forster was a very keen sportsman, hunting and shooting regularly, with an enthusiasm redolent of Squire Weston. But he was also very firm on combining physical exercise with temperance towards alcohol, also devoting extensive time to both classical study and to agricultural business.

Forster was also active in the highly contested parliamentary election for Northumberland in 1774. The poll book records his residence at Felton Peth Foot, but he voted as a freeholder out of an annuity of lands on the Low Buston estate.⁶ Like his father, he voted for the freeholder candidates of Sir William Middleton and William Fenwick, and not for the 'Castle candidates' of Lord Algernon Percy and Sir John Delaval.⁷ The key issue was anger against Delaval, and defeating him was the main object of the freeholder party. In the outcome, Percy and Middleton won the two seats, and afterwards George Grieve of Swansfield (leader of the freeholder grouping) thanked Fenwick on behalf of the independent freeholders:

He was seconded by Charles Francis Forster, Esq; who made a short, but pertinent speech –

Every hand was up, and not a tongue was silent where the heart spoke approbation.⁸

The small farm of Lanternside lies to the south-west of Holystone village in Upper Coquetdale. At some date between 1760 and 1787 Charles Francis bought the farm, which was only some 41 acres of farmland plus more extensive moorland. It is not possible to be more specific about his date of purchase. Clearly his inheritance of the Low Buston estate in 1778 would have given him more resources to make the purchase, but a poem dated 1787 (to be printed in my later paper) suggests he removed from Felton to Lanternside around that time. A date in the early 1780s seems most likely, though Forster obviously had Upper Coquetdale connections as early as 1767, for his daughter Julia was baptised in Rothbury that May. Forster undoubtedly had two objectives in his purchase of this estate. The first was to have a sporting estate, a moorland retreat, contrasting with the lowland arable farmland of Low Buston. The second was to provide an inheritance for his two children, Julia and Augustus. His father had entailed the Low Buston estate to Charles Francis' legitimate offspring and then to his youngest brother William and his family;⁹ Augustus and Julia could therefore not inherit that property.

Forster renamed Lanternside 'Campville', after the prehistoric camp within which it lies, with earthen ramparts protecting the site. The farmhouse lay just to the north of a deep ravine, with fields to the north of it, and moorland beyond leading to Harbottle Common. Importantly, in the present context, Forster also seems to have acquired "a farm at High Rochester", and this may well have come with the Lanternside property. The pre-dissolution nunnery at Holystone had numerous holdings to the south-west in Redesdale, and a 1540 rent account lists "rent from the manor of Rochester: one quarter of wheat or 8 shillings",¹⁰ so small interests in the area may have continued into the Lanternside estate. However he acquired this farm, it was to prove central to his antiquarian interests, for it lay in, or adjacent to, the Roman fort of High Rochester.

Forster's classical interests were clearly long-standing, as is evidenced by the names given to his daughter in 1767, but it seems likely that his enthusiasm for collecting Roman antiquities blossomed through his acquisition of High Rochester and his friendship with Humphrey Senhouse of Netherhall in Cumberland. The Senhouses were an old gentry family, who established Maryport in the eighteenth century. Their estate at Netherhall, just to the north of Maryport, enclosed a Roman fort, and there many altars and other Roman artefacts had been found and collected. Camden and Cotton had visited Netherhall in 1599, and it continued to be an important site for antiquarians.¹¹ Humphrey Senhouse III (1732–1814) was excavating there in the 1770s and 1780s, and although he did not publish himself, Hayman Rooke sent a report to *Archaeologia*.¹²

How Forster and Senhouse came to meet is not known, but it was probably in Northumberland society, for Humphrey met and married Catherine Wood of Beadnell. Whatever the initial occasion, the two men became friends and Forster visited Netherhall, probably after 1785, and he may have seen the excavations of 1787 and 1788 in progress. It is Forster's correspondence to Humphrey Senhouse that provides information about his antiquarian and agricultural activities, and about his character and outlook on life. The surviving letters date from 1788 to 1793 and are part of the very voluminous Senhouse archive, now in Cumberland Record Office (Carlisle). The archive was first used by Edward Hughes in his 1965 study of north country life in the eighteenth century,¹³ but much of the collection remains uncatalogued even today. Search of the Senhouse archive has so far unearthed five Forster letters, but there may be more to be found. Some of the letters are affected by damp, with text lost or illegible at the edges.¹⁴

The first letter is dated October 22 1788, and seems to follow after Forster had paid a visit to Netherhall. The letters are a mixture of antiquarian information, agricultural and sporting activities, all described with Charles Forster's ebullient and self-confident outlook on life. They also concern personal matters, and some

background on this is necessary if one is to make sense of some of the references in the letters. Forster had apparently become enamoured with a young lady living near Netherhall, an 'Emily' of Brayton, to the north of Aspatria. All the letters, through to the last surviving one from July 1793, contain enquiries about Emily, and hopes for his suit, for Forster still hoped to marry and produce an heir to his Buston estates. Not surprisingly, when he encounters 'Aemilius' amongst the names on his collection of Roman inscriptions, he draws links and connections.

BUILDING THE COLLECTION

High Rochester lies some seven and a half miles south-west of Campville, as the crow flies, across remote moorland. Although a Roman road (still traceable today) had been constructed along this route, and runs directly through grounds of Campville, it does not seem to have been a used track in Forster's day;¹⁵ he makes no reference to this road, and the earliest reference is Smart's of 1826.¹⁶ But he could have ridden across these moors. A more practicable route, certainly for his cart-loads of antiquities, was however the old track from Harbottle to Elsdon, and then to High Rochester through Otterburn, which is some 20 miles.

The Roman fort of *Bremenium* at High Rochester was remote, and for two hundred years it was the northernmost outpost of Roman Britain, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was certainly not as inaccessible and unknown as Forster likes to paint it in his letters to Humphrey Senhouse. After all, Reginald Bainbrigg had reached here in 1601¹⁷ and Robert Cotton had acquired the notable altar (*RIB* 1270) which identified High Rochester as the *Bremenium* named in both the Antonine Itinerary and by Ptolemy in his *Geography*, adding it to his Conington collection in the following years.¹⁸ Christopher Hunter came in 1702,¹⁹ followed by John Warburton, the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Harle, and John Horsley himself.²⁰ Late eighteenth century rectors of Elsdon and the Presbyterian ministers at

Rochester also took an interest in the antiquities there. In the 1770s William Hutchinson reported finds from Risingham and High Rochester in his *A View of Northumberland*.²¹ It was reading this book, and possibly the very section on the Redesdale antiquities, which provoked an acerbic outburst from the writer and critic Horace Walpole:

for . . . Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions, that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country – nor do I care for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter.²²

Fortunately, Forster and other antiquarians and later archaeologists did not share Walpole's jaundiced assessment and were inspired by these monuments "remote from the seat of empire."

The later hamlet of High Rochester lay largely inside the Roman site, with bastles, cottages, stack-yards and gardens built inside the walls; Roman building stones were extensively reused. John Hodgson included a sketch of the hamlet by the Duchess of Northumberland in his *History of Northumberland*, and noted:

. . . and, on account of the greater part of the area being enjoyed as common by the neighbouring landholders, many of the walls of its interior buildings have of late years been dug up and led away for fences, especially to the enclosures to the south and west of it. A poor man of the name of Partis, some time since, in making a garden, adjoining the north wall, is said to have found so many valuable articles, that he was never after in want.²³

Forster acquired both inscribed stones and smaller Roman artefacts. Some were new finds, but others were pieces previously discovered and reported, which he managed to buy or acquire. His first (surviving) letter to Humphrey Senhouse begins by thanking Senhouse for antiquarian gifts from Netherhall, and referring to Emily, before reporting on his own new collection at Campville:

My Dear Friend,

You have now hung a millstone about my neck. I wish you could hang my favourite Emily there too and wear me down with the weight of the obligation. I promise you I would wear my chains with happiness and pride.

Your favourite Granate and fine fragment of Roman antiquity arrived in a critical moment about 3 hours before me at Buston, as I was paying my weekly visit on the Saturday night from my shooting place at Campville.

I was at that instant in the highest spirits describing my acquisition a few days before of a horse-load and a cart-load of Roman inscriptions and other antiquities. Also that I had secured two more cart-loads to be brought the following week from my Roman camp (station) of Bremenium, and from Habitancum, another glorious stationary camp.

They all arrived safe and I hope one day that my esteemed friend of Netherall will view them with the same pleasure that I have done his proud collection. The noble names of the Aemilij, of Valerij and of Victores; with the battalions of Varduli (the cohort of Navarre) the Vangiones (the cohort of Worms) are now (I liked your plan so well) in my Temple of Ease at Campville. Tis literally learned ease, where one can pursue such golden studies hand in hand.

I have engaged the produce of both camps forever. I have also added a fragment of a millstone of our Romans but from a very different, tho' very curious stratum, literally a lava, but a very hard one.²⁴

His *post scriptum* notes "A figure of Mars is grand, and of Hercules most noble, dedicated by the cavalry of the 20th Legion VV". This is *RIB* 1284, the dedication-slab found about 1776 near the east gate of High Rochester, and reported by Hutchinson. The earlier reference to Aemilii is probably to the Risingham tombstone of 10-year old Aemilianus (*RIB* 1246) found in or before 1776 at Chesterhope, whilst the Vardul[i] is *RIB* 1263 or 1285. His *post scriptum* also notes:

Also a fine Roman eagle with the lightning in his talons. The bird and the thunderbolt of Jove. The bottom of an . . . [illegible] and one of the pillars on which it stood. Two dolphins finely cut, and more grand reliques to come, that I can see to in the present busied state

(knowing exactly the place) next summer's campaign.

Only a month later Forster writes again about more acquisitions:²⁵

You would be astonished to see my rapid progress in the acquisition of Roman antiquities. Amongst other things, I brought two ornaments (perhaps to a Cornish), two comical fish, with immense heads, and most diminutive long bodies; I thought little of my two fish at first; but having since found them in the reverse of the coins of Vitellius and of Vespasian in a Lyons' Edition of Du Choil, I am delighted with having luckily preserved them.

The "two comical fish, with immense heads, and most diminutive long bodies" could possibly have been a missing piece from the relief of Neptune from Housesteads. This relief, in two pieces, was seen and illustrated by Horsley, but the fragment with the two fish is now lost.²⁶ Forster may have acquired items from further afield than Redesdale itself. Forster's letter continued:

In a little time I shall be in negotiation for two noble altars, that came from my own Roman camp of Bremenium (now Rochester), and I have some hopes of succeeding. The family of the Victors which I mentioned in my last to you; I now find was a family (not of Rome) but of the city and bishoprick of Worms, or Augusta Vangionum. And I find that my Julius Victor, who was Tribune of the First Cohort of the Vangiones, was of the same family which Victor, the First Bishop of Worms, in the year 349. And probably the later historian (Aurelius Victor) was one of the same family. Thus we find also that the 1st cohort of the Vangiones (stationed at my neighbouring camp of Habitanicum (Risingham) was officered (at least tribuned) by its own fellow-citizens. My Julius Victor dedicates a beautiful altar to the Deabus Tramarinis. Daylight now fails me. Make my respects to Mrs. Senhouse and believe there is much esteem, my dear friend, Ever your most obedient, Charles Francis Forster.

PS. Pray indulge me with a line when you receive the grouse. The candles are arrived: in an old magazine I found, and from thence have transplanted into my Noah's Ark (of which another day) a letter to Mr. Urban from

a Mr. Lionel Charlton who lived (originated from) near Risingham; he collected two inscriptions of two different tribunes of the IV cohort of the Angiones: which I find to be the 1 cohort of the Vangiones, or citizens of Worms, upon the left bank of the Rhine. Though he was not a correct antiquarian, yet his intelligence has been of infinite use to me, and I am much obliged to this Romish priest, for having traced out a most sequester'd scene indeed; a Roman camp hidden from almost every mortal eye of modern life. Tis too far out of the world for any one but myself or Perseus (mounted on Pegasus) to be ever able to get a sight of. Even I cannot get at it, but in the long days of summer. Then, such a cottage, such a bed am I obliged to pig into, as no other mortal, since the days of Fingal, Opian and Oscar would think of putting up with but myself. . . . For these two camps of Bremenium and Habitanicum are only two miles asunder: but well fortified against all rival antiquarians by impregnable mountains and morasses; In Angulo Mundi, in termino Romani imperii extrema, Temporibus Antoninii.

NB. One of Mr. Lionel Charlton's tribunes is my own Julius Victor; his other tribune, Aemilius Aemilianus, was the father (most probably of my Aemilianus, who died at 10 years of age: M. ILLIANVS NORVM X. The X (or decem) is in a separate line below Aemilia

Forster's altar dedicated by Julius Victor is the altar to the Mother Goddesses (*RIB* 1224) discovered in 1788 and reported in Brand's *History of Newcastle*: "Found lately at Risingham in the parish of Elsdon . . . of which I received a drawing from Mr. Saint of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, June 3rd 1788".²⁷ Forster's knowledge of Lionel Charlton was in error: Charlton was not "a Romish priest", but a native of Tynedale who had become a schoolteacher and topographer at Whitby, though there were, of course, many Catholic Charltons in Tynedale; Forster's assumption is therefore understandable.²⁸

In September 1790, he replies to a note from Senhouse, and comments:²⁹

I have been very fortunate in my acquisitions of Roman antiquities. What I had acquired when I last had the pleasure of writing to you, I do not immediately recollect. I think I was

then in quest of an altar dedicated to their Genius and Standards by Titus Licinius Valerianus, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of the Spaniards of Navarre. I have got it now placed in my museum here, a temple like your's, but more nobly situated in one of the most bewitching spots in Europe. I do apprehend that the proudest potentate in Christendom might feel himself happy in performing the august ceremony there.

This altar to the *Genio et Signis* of the Vardulli is *RIB* 1263, found in 1773 in a bathhouse at High Rochester and recorded by Hutchinson in 1776. It had been taken to Elsdon church and the distinguished international scholar, diplomatist and rector of Elsdon, Louis Dutens, had published a monograph including it.³⁰ Forster continued:

I recollect in Camden that the Third Cohort of Dalmations were garrison'd in your camp. One inscription from my camp (got, I am sure, since I wrote to you) gives me, and will give you, infinite pleasure.

D. M.

AVRELI EX >

IM > C.H.I. DA

(Dis Manibus Aurelii Exili Imperatoris Cohors Prima Dalmatarum)

So that the First and Third Cohorts of the Dalmatians garrison'd your's and my camps; most probably at the same time.

This inscription is undoubtedly the High Rochester tombstone *RIB* 1289. This was not catalogued by Bruce as originating in the Campville collection, and the current *RIB* note records it as "found in 1852"; it is discussed further below.

Also at the same time probably, whilst the 20th Legion, Valerius et Victrix, or a part of it garrison'd your camp; the cavalry of the 20th Legion, Valeriae et Victrix, garrison'd my camp; and their altar (in my museum) to Hercules and Mars presents us with two very fine figures, of the former with his lion's skin (the head of it upon his left shoulder, with a face as handsome as his own;) his quiver of chasing arrows over his right shoulder; his tremendous and handsome club in his right hand; and in his left hand (I am told, for 'tis now lost) his bow: and of the latter god in full

armour, with even greater on his legs; with a hunting spear in his right hand; and in his left the remains of a shield.

One more you will be pleased with from another Roman camp, Habitancum; My camp, Rochester, was Bremeium.

D. M.

AEMILIANVS

ANNORVM

X

{NB: I must give this to Aemily. But she may as well preside over the whole museum.}

This youth, cut off at ten years of age, was most probably the son of our Aemilius Aemilianus, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of the Vangiones (or people of Worms, upon the Rhine) communicated by a Mr. Lionel Charlton to the Gentleman's Magazine, tho' given by him incorrectly; viz Cohors IV. ANGIIONVM.

From the same camp of Habitancum Mr. Charlton (in the same magazine) gives us another inscription of Julius Victor, Tribune of the 1st Cohort of the Vangiones (or as he gives it the Fourth Cohort of the Angiones, who never existed).

From the same camp of Habitancum I have an elegant altar (in my museum) dedicated by the same Julius Victor, as follows,

MATRIBV

STRAMA

RINIS IVL

VICT.RV.S.L.M.

{NB. I am much indebted to Mr. Lionel Charlton (a Romish priest) for the spoils, the optima spolia of this Roman camp, just 12 miles from my own Roman camp.}

Most probably these two altars were erected by the same Julius Victor. I find this was a family of eminence in Worms. For in a French Dictionnaire Geographique we read that Victor was esteemed the 1st Bishop of that place in the year 349. Probably the historian, Aurelius Victor, was from Worms also.

I have many more inscriptions that I have not room for here. But my collection of books upon Roman antiquities in various languages is superb. One in Italian is beyond them all. And I have lately made myself sufficient master of that language to be able to gather its sweets. It opens out the field of antique Roman inscriptions beyond any thing I ever met with and without its aid, a man must be a very imperfect antiquarian, especially in Italy; where every Roman was proud of introducing

his tribe, his family, his rank, and his employment etc.

The last two letters so far discovered have less to say about antiquities, for Forster was finding his time more taken up with farming improvements. On Boxing day 1791, he reported, "I have made no acquisitions in Roman antiquities this year, having been too closely occupied with farming".³¹ In July 1793, he enquired of Senhouse:

If you are yet in the land of the living, give me it under your own hand, a fair and faithful testimony, that will satisfy me: and tell me at the same time, what Roman remains your Herculaneum turns out?

You will also indulge me with a full report of my favourite, Emily.

I fear I am not so much in her favour, as she is in mine. But, if she is as young and as handsome as ever, and as likely to give me heirs to my estates, I will make up my lee-way by a close siege!

Condé must fall at last, and bend to the attacks of the Grand Allies, youth, vigour, the glow of health, and warm addressing.

I wish you would follow my system! I grow younger every day. Ask our Beadnal friend,³² whether my report be true! My temperance is Corinthian, my exercise Herculean, my studies are Plinian, Ciceronian, Aristotelian.

I have made some noble acquisitions in Roman antiquities from my own camp of Bremenium (Rochester). And I have added about five hundred books (from Edinburgh) in all European languages to my library.³³

Forster tends to forget what he has already reported to Senhouse and becomes somewhat repetitive in his enthusiasm, but the letters clearly show his acquisition of the inscribed stones earlier recorded by Dutens, Hutchinson and Brand. Perhaps surprisingly there is no mention of the three fine altars to Minerva (*RIB* 1266, 1267 and 1268) later found in the Campville collection, though this is probably just the result of which letters have survived (or been discovered). Charles Forster's interests are those of the classical antiquarian, focused on inscriptions that allowed links to classical scholarship. He was no archaeologist in terms

of describing the surviving structures at Bremenium, making drawings or systematic excavations. Such had to await the 1852 excavations by Bruce for the Duke of Northumberland. Nor – and in many ways, sadly – did he recognise the Roman road running past his very door, though he celebrated the prehistoric encampment by changing the name to Campville.

To some eyes, Forster was perhaps a little too acquisitive. Hodgson notes that:

Mr Hope [Presbyterian minister, who had been at Rochester for thirty years in 1810] mentioned to us a stone, which he found near the south gate, which had an inscription, that to him appeared to mention the date of the building. By his account the letters were within the sort of border, within which centurial inscriptions are usually described. It was stolen from him; but we suppose it is the one No. 14, h. now at Campville [now *RIB* 1285].³⁴

THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

Charles Francis Forster died in 1807 and was buried at Warkworth.³⁵ He never caught his Emily and died unmarried. The Low Buston estate was entailed to his youngest brother William's family. This nephew, Francis, apparently found the estate 'heavily charged and mortgaged' and sold it in 1818, so perhaps Charles Francis had been extracting as much money as he could before his death. The Campville estate was not part of the entail, and this went to his son Augustus and daughter Julia.

Forster had never published anything about his collection, and he was dead by the time the historian John Hodgson found his way to Campville in 1810. In his *History of Northumberland*, Hodgson noted:

This altar, and the stones bearing the four following inscriptions, are at Campville, where we took drawings of them in September, 1810.³⁶

The relevant volume of Hodgson's *History* (Part II, volume 1, or simply volume 2 in the

1973 reprint) was published in 1827, and it gave the first detailed survey of the Campville collection. He undoubtedly saw most of the collection as it was at the end of Charles Francis Forster's life, but he missed at least two inscriptions. He detailed the altar (*RIB* 1224) and tombstone (*RIB* 1246), which Forster had acquired from Risingham, together with the High Rochester altar found in the bathhouse in 1773 (*RIB* 1263), and the figured dedication-slab found before 1776 (*RIB* 1284). He then listed and detailed the three altars to Minerva (*RIB* 1266, 1267 and 1268). These three stones had been trimmed and reused in the Roman fort, and Hodgson records, presumably from a Campville source, that they were "found in the ruins of a large building on the west side of the south gate of the station"; these are the finest stones from Campville and had not been recorded previous to Hodgson seeing them at the site.

Hodgson then lists a number of fragments. One was part of a dedication slab (*RIB* 1280), of which the major portion was found outside the west wall in 1855, but the original Campville piece is now lost. Others were two building stones (*RIB* 1283 and 1285), and a much worn tombstone to someone who died aged 38 (*RIB* 1293). He also recorded a now-lost fragment (*RIB* 2371), which R. P. Wright classified as a forgery on stylistic and linguistic grounds.³⁷ As a forgery, made before 1810, this is interesting: was it made by people at High Rochester to fool Charles Forster and gain payment, or was it made by or for Forster himself as a piece of amusement?³⁸ Hodgson also listed a number of other smaller items at Campville: "Besides these, there are fragments of two other rude funereal inscriptions: a rude bas relief of a woman and child, and of bird with out-spread wings".³⁹

Despite (or perhaps because of) his name, Augustus Caesar Forster did not share his father's love of Roman antiquities and the Campville collection became neglected after the death of Charles Francis. Sir David Smith, the Duke of Northumberland's Land Commissioner, visited Campville in the 1820s and commented:

The late Mr. Forster collected to this place, a great number of Roman Altars and other antiquities from different parts, which are piled up in heaps about the place.⁴⁰

John Crawford Hodgson, writing an account of Holystone parish in 1907, noted:

By a statement written in 1825 this collection comprised two altars dedicated respectively to Minerva and *Genio et Signis*; another altar with two figures on it; a small altar; an altar D.M. and the fragment of an altar; a Roman coffin found with bones remaining in it; a small urn, supposed to have contained the ashes of a heart, and part of the foot of a Hercules. There had been other objects which had been taken away at different times, viz., Jove's eagle with the lightning in his claws; three altars; Mercury with his bag; two Roman millstones; and the head of a Venus.⁴¹

The nature of this 1825 document and its present location (if it now exists) are unknown. It may be another extract from Sir David Smith's manuscripts. Some of the smaller objects listed, however, clearly correspond to items mentioned in Forster's letters to Humphrey Senhouse.

The next stage in the history of the collection depended on the archaeological interests of the fourth Duke, and his connection with Augustus Forster. The Duke, Algernon Percy, inherited the title from his brother late in life in 1847. Known as "the Sailor Duke", he had had a naval career in the Napoleonic Wars.⁴² He also had strong archaeological interests, building up an important Egyptian collection, and after succeeding to the title he encouraged local excavations in Northumberland. In particular, he sponsored the 1852 and 1855 excavations at High Rochester. Augustus Forster had known the fourth Duke from the time they were both midshipmen in the navy, and shortly before his death in 1855 Augustus offered the Campville collection to him.⁴³ The stones were moved to Alnwick Castle in 1854, and the process was still a local memory in Holystone when the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club visited the Holystone locality in 1887:

There are still recollections at Holystone and neighbourhood of the removal. Mr. John

Nicholson writes: ‘Old Thomas Rutherford, the shoemaker of Holystone, tells me that he helped the Duke’s men to put the stones into the carts when they removed them from Campville. The Duke sent two carts to Campville for the stones, but these could not take all at one turn, but had to go back a second time, and old Tom was there on both occasions, and helped in with the stones. One of the slabs was lying in the dene against the fence; the others were standing at the end of Mr. Forster’s house.’ Apparently they had become neglected; the General’s successors having felt no interest in them.⁴⁴

At Alnwick the stones became part of the Duke’s more comprehensive collection. In 1875 John Collingwood Bruce included them in his *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, noting the Campville provenance of most of the items, and commenting (of *LS 553*, *RIB 1263*, the altar to *Genio et Signis*):

It was taken to Campville by General Forster. Augustus Caesar Forster, Esq., the son of the General, presented this and other stones of the Campville collection to his old shipmate, Algernon, the fourth Duke of Northumberland, who removed the whole to Alnwick Castle.⁴⁵

They were also duly included in the 1880 *Catalogue* of the Alnwick Castle collection produced by Albert Way and John Collingwood Bruce. In the preface they noted:

Not long after this period [the 1852 excavations at High Rochester], several altars and monumental stones, which had at various times been discovered in the Roman camps of High Rochester and Risingham, and had come into the possession of the late Mrs. Trevelyan, then of Longwitton, and of the late Mr. A. C. Forster, of Campville, near Harbottle, who had been a shipmate of the Sailor Duke’s during the earlier part of his service in the Royal Navy, were presented by their respective owners to his Grace, and now form important objects of interest in the Museum.⁴⁶

Bruce catalogued the same altars, tombstones and fragmentary inscriptions from Campville as Hodgson had. Two were already missing (*RIB 1280* (part) and *RIB 2371*). But Bruce also catalogued a tombstone to a soldier, aged

44, from the Fourth Cohort of Gauls (*RIB 1249*, *LS 562*) which he recorded as “formerly in the collection at Campville”. Collingwood and Wright comment “found before 1870 probably at Risingham, and not at High Rochester (Bruce); taken to Campville”.⁴⁷ Strictly their *ante quem* is correct, but the stone must have been part of Forster’s collection.

One further inscription can undoubtedly be attributed to the Campville collection, as noted earlier. This is the tombstone “sacred to the spirits of the departed and of Aurelius . . . centurion on the First Cohort of Dalmatians or Dacians” (*RIB 1289*, *LS 565*). This was part of the Alnwick collection, but Bruce simply noted “found at High Rochester”, with no Campville attribution. Collingwood and Wright therefore attribute it to Bruce’s excavations: “found in 1852 at High Rochester fort”.⁴⁸ In fact, as shown above, this was a stone acquired by Forster and described in his letter of September 17 1790: it meant a great deal to him because, through the presence of the First Cohort of Dalmatians, it directly linked Forster’s High Rochester to Senhouse’s Netherhall garrison.

The subsequent history of the Campville stones is as part of the Alnwick Castle collection, and these became part of the Joint Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle in 1960, where they remain today.

CONCLUSIONS

It is now possible to touch on why Forster’s contribution to Roman antiquities has been largely forgotten. Firstly, he never published. There are no letters to the *Gentleman’s Magazine* or short reports to *Archaeologia*, such as recorded many other antiquarians’ work, often much more limited than that of Forster. Secondly, he was unlucky. Hutchinson recorded antiquities in Redesdale in 1776, shortly before Forster started his collection. Hodgson visited Campville in 1810, shortly after his death, at a time when Forster’s son Augustus was probably still serving in the navy.⁴⁹ Hodgson recorded the antiquities, but not Forster’s name. Then the Campville collection became

part of the larger Alnwick Castle holding, and so was catalogued and recorded as part of that collection. It is thus hardly surprising that Birley was to omit Forster from his 'In Memoriam'. But, now the story of Forster's antiquarian collecting has been unravelled, it can hardly be said to be just. Charles Francis Forster's name deserves to be reunited again with the collection he originally made, and his contribution to the history of Roman studies in Northumberland duly recognised.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to David Bowcock and his colleagues at Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, for their help with the Senhouse Papers, and to Mr. J. Scott-Plummer of Kelso, owner of the

Senhouse Papers), for permission to publish the extracts from the letters. I also appreciate the comments of the Editor and his referees, and those of Lindsay Allason-Jones.

APPENDIX: THE KNOWN CAMPVILLE COLLECTION

The table below gives details of the known Campville inscribed stones, identified by their *RIB* number, their number in Bruce's *Lapidarium Septentrionale (LS)*, and in Way and Bruce's *Alnwick Catalogue (Aln. Cat.)*, the page number and identifier in I. A. Richmond's chapter on "The Romans in Redesdale" in *NCH*, 15 (1940), the page number and identifier in Hodgson (if applicable), and the page details in Hutchinson (if applicable).

<i>RIB</i>	<i>LS</i>	Aln. Cat.	<i>NCH</i> , 15	Hodgson	Hutchinson
Risingham					
1224	606	842	136, no. 22		(Brand,618)
1246	619	859	140, no. 34	ii, i,144	i, 185
1249	562	861	141, no. 38		
High Rochester					
1263	553	847	148, no. 17	ii, i, 142, 11	i, 195, 201
1266	548	840	150, no.23	ii, i, 142, 10	
1267	547	845	150, no. 22	ii, i, 141, 9	
1268	546	844	149, no. 21	ii, i, 141, 8	
1280 (part)	570 + 571	855	145, no. 3	ii, i, 144, 14a	
1283	574	867	146, no. 9	ii, i, 144, 14g	
1284	573	866	147, no. 10	ii, i, 142, 12	i, 210
1285	575	869	146, no. 8	ii, i, 144, 14h	
1289 **	565	860	151, no. 29		
1293	563	865	152, no. 34	ii,i,144,14b	
2371 (lost)	580		154, no. 47	ii,i,144, 14c	[falsa]

NOTES

¹ E. Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall*, Kendal (1961), 276–96.

² R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, *RIB, volume 1, Inscriptions on Stone*, Oxford (1965). Individual inscriptions are referred to by their *RIB* number.

³ The writings of John Crawford Hodgson, who lived for many years in Forster's former home of Low Buston, are important sources of information

on Forster and his family. The references are: J. C. Hodgson, "Low Buston", *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, 11 (1887–1889), 507–25; "Holystone", *AA*³, 4 (1908), 107–46; and *NCH*, 5, especially 225–230.

⁴ Forster's choice of Felton Peth came through a family connection: his second cousin (the grandson of his great-aunt Katherine), a Francis Forster since the extended Forster clan intermarried, acquired the house through his mother's family; after his death c.1760, our Charles Francis Forster seems to have

lived there until 1778. See Forster pedigrees in *NCH*, 2, 99 (Forster of Elford and Newton-by-the-Sea) and *NCH*, 5, 227–8.

⁵ *NCH*, 5, 230.

⁶ *The Poll at the Election of the Knights of the Shire for the County of Northumberland. Poll of Electors 13–22 Oct. 1774.*

⁷ J. C. Hodgson suggested that “his character and exploits [in the 1774 election] are pilloried in various election ballads and lampoons” (*NCH*, 5, 230). I can find no evidence of this in the comprehensive set of papers and pamphlets produced during the 1774 election: *A Complete Collection of All the Papers which have appeared from the Different Parties in the Present Contest for Members for the County of Northumberland*, Newcastle (1774). In those papers, Coll[ingwood] Forster, the Duke’s Steward and political agent is extensively lampooned, and this may be the source of a confusion. Forster was indeed later lampooned in a non-political verse of 1787 (see below).

⁸ *A Complete Collection of All the Papers*, *op. cit.* 133.

⁹ This will effectively disinherited Charles’ second brother Joseph, but Joseph obtained lands at Arken-garthdale in Yorkshire through his mother’s inheritance (See *NCH*, 5, 227–9). Charles Francis also obtained some land there (see his will in Hodgson, “Holystone”, *op. cit.*, 132), and his letters refer to his Yorkshire ‘estates’, from which he dispatched grouse to both Humphrey Senhouse and his ‘Emily’.

¹⁰ J. C. Hodgson, “Holystone”, *op. cit.* 116.

¹¹ On the Netherhall antiquities, see M. G. Jarrett, *Maryport, Cumbria: A Roman Fort and its Garrison*, Kendal (1976).

¹² H. Rooke, “Roman antiquities in Cumberland”, *Archaeologia*, 10 (1792), 137–42.

¹³ E. Hughes, *E. North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century. volume 2 Cumberland and Westmorland 1700–1830*, Oxford (1965). Hughes’ reference to Senhouse and Forster is at 87.

¹⁴ Photocopies and transcripts of the Forster letters have been deposited with the Museum of Antiquities, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

¹⁵ I. A. Richmond and G. Askew, “The Roman road from High Rochester (Bremenium) to Bridge of Aln”, *PSAN*⁴, 8 (1937), 44–50, and I. A. Richmond and P. Hunter Blair, “A section of the road at Holystone”, *PSAN*⁴, 8 (1937), 51–2.

¹⁶ J. Smart, “An account of a Roman road in Northumberland, in a letter from John Smart, Esq. of Trewitt, to the Secretaries”, *AA*¹, 2 (1832), 246–7. The letter is dated 23 December 1826.

¹⁷ F. J. Haverfield, “Julius F VI: Notes on Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby, on William Camden and some Roman inscriptions”, *CW*², 11 (1911), 343–78.

¹⁸ L. W. Hepple, “Sir Robert Cotton, Camden’s Britannia, and the early history of Roman Wall studies”, *AA*⁵, 27 (1999), 1–19.

¹⁹ J. Rogan, “Christopher Hunter: Antiquary”, *AA*⁴, 32 (1954), 116–25.

²⁰ J. Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, London (1732), 241–5.

²¹ W. Hutchinson, *A View of Northumberland, with an excursion to the Abbey of Mailross in Scotland*, vol. 1, Newcastle Upon Tyne (1778), 195–211.

²² Horace Walpole to William Cole, March 13 1780, in W. S. Lewis (ed.), *Horace Walpole’s Correspondence with the Rev. William Cole*, vol. 2, Oxford (1937), 204.

²³ J. Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, vol. 2, 149, Newcastle upon Tyne (1827).

²⁴ Cumberland Record Office (Carlisle), henceforward CRO, Senhouse Papers: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse October 22 1788, from Buston.

²⁵ CRO: Senhouse Papers: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse, November 23 1788, from Buston.

²⁶ I am grateful to Lindsay Allason-Jones for this suggested identification. The Horsley drawing is item L on P.192, N.20 of the illustrations in Horsley, *op. cit.* Horsley saw it “in the station itself, and against a hedge” (224), but by the nineteenth century the upper (fish) fragment was lost. The lower portion is in the Joint Museum of Antiquities.

²⁷ J. Brand, *History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Newcastle Upon Tyne*, vol.1, Newcastle Upon Tyne (1789), 618, plate inserted 606–7.

²⁸ On Lionel Charlton (1720–1788), see *Dictionary of National Biography*, 10 (1887), 128. Charlton had studied at Edinburgh University. His letter is printed in *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 23 (1753), 224–5.

²⁹ CRO, Senhouse Papers: DSen 5/5/1/8/9, Forster to Senhouse, September 17 1790, from Campville.

³⁰ L. Dutens, *Explication de quelques Médailles de Peuple, de Villes, et de Rois Grecques et Phéniciennes*, Londres (1773), 112. For Dutens, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, 16 (1888), 268–70.

³¹ CRO, Senhouse Papers: DSen 5/5/18/9, Forster to Senhouse, December 26 1791, from Buston.

³² This is John Wood, Humphrey Senhouse’s brother-in-law.

³³ CRO, Senhouse Papers: DSen 5/5/1/8/36, Forster to Senhouse, July 29 1793, from Buston.

³⁴ J. Hodgson, *op. cit.* 145.

³⁵ His fine memorial is on the chancel wall on the north side of the altar.

³⁶ J. Hodgson, *op. cit.* 141.

³⁷ Collingwood and Wright, *op. cit.* 744.

³⁸ Such copying or creation goes back at least to Reginald Bainbrigg's copies at Appleby in 1601.

³⁹ J. Hodgson, *op. cit.* 145.

⁴⁰ J. C. Hodgson, "Holystone", *op. cit.* 128, citing Smith's MS "Camps and Castles", in the Alnwick Castle archives. On Smith, see J. C. Hodgson, "Sir David William Smith, Bt., Antiquary, etc", *PSAN*³, 10 (1921–1922), 80–2.

⁴¹ J. C. Hodgson, "Holystone", *op. cit.* 130.

⁴² On the 4th Duke, see R. A. Lomas, *A Power in the Land: The Percies*, East Linton (1999), 185–200, and the further references given there.

⁴³ It is worth noting the later history of Forster connections with Campville and High Rochester. After Augustus Caesar Forster's death in 1855, his only son, Augustus Charles Francis, inherited Campville, and when he in turn died in 1884 the estate passed to the next heir, who was Charles Francis' great-nephew (through his second brother Joseph), Robert Thompson of Stockton, who used it as a shooting box. His son, Major Arthur Thompson made drawing of the rectangular Roman tombs

then present south of High Rochester, reproduced in *NCH*, 15, 104, and gave permission for the 1935 excavations on his land at High Rochester; he was then living at East Bolton, but owned Dykehead farm on the east side of *Bremenium* fort. (See *AA*⁴, 13 (1936), 170.) So an archaeological connection remained for well over a century after Charles Francis Forster's death.

⁴⁴ J. Hardy, "Report of the Meetings of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, for the year 1887", *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, 11 (1887–1889), 50.

⁴⁵ J. C. Bruce, *Lapidarium Septentrionale: or a Description of the Monuments of Roman Rule in the North of England*, London and Newcastle (1875), 287.

⁴⁶ A. Way and J. C. Bruce, *Catalogue of Antiquities at Alnwick Castle*, Newcastle Upon Tyne (1880), viii.

⁴⁷ Collingwood and Wright, *op. cit.* 411.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 426.

⁴⁹ Augustus Forster married at Portsmouth in 1805, but the marriage was dissolved in 1811 and he remarried in 1813 to a lady from Newburn.