





## TRANSACTIONS.

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ON THE ALTAR AND OTHER RELICS,  
FOUND DURING RECENT EXCAVA-  
TIONS (1895-6) ON THE SITE OF THE  
ROMAN STATION AT WILDERSPOOL  
(*VERATINUM*).

By Thomas May, *F. Educat. Inst. Scot.*

(Read 17th December, 1896.)

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NO fresh discovery on the site of the Roman Station at Wilderspool, the supposed *Veratinum* of the Ravennate, has been reported to this Society since 1871, when the late Dr. Kendrick read his interesting paper, printed in the *Transactions*, vol. xxiii. Nor has any independent treatise on the subject appeared subsequently to the publication of the late Mr. Beamont's *Account of the Roman Station at Wilderspool*, in 1876, now out of print.

This hiatus is owing to the fact that little worthy of mention has been brought to light, the cutting of the Ship Canal, between the autumn of 1887

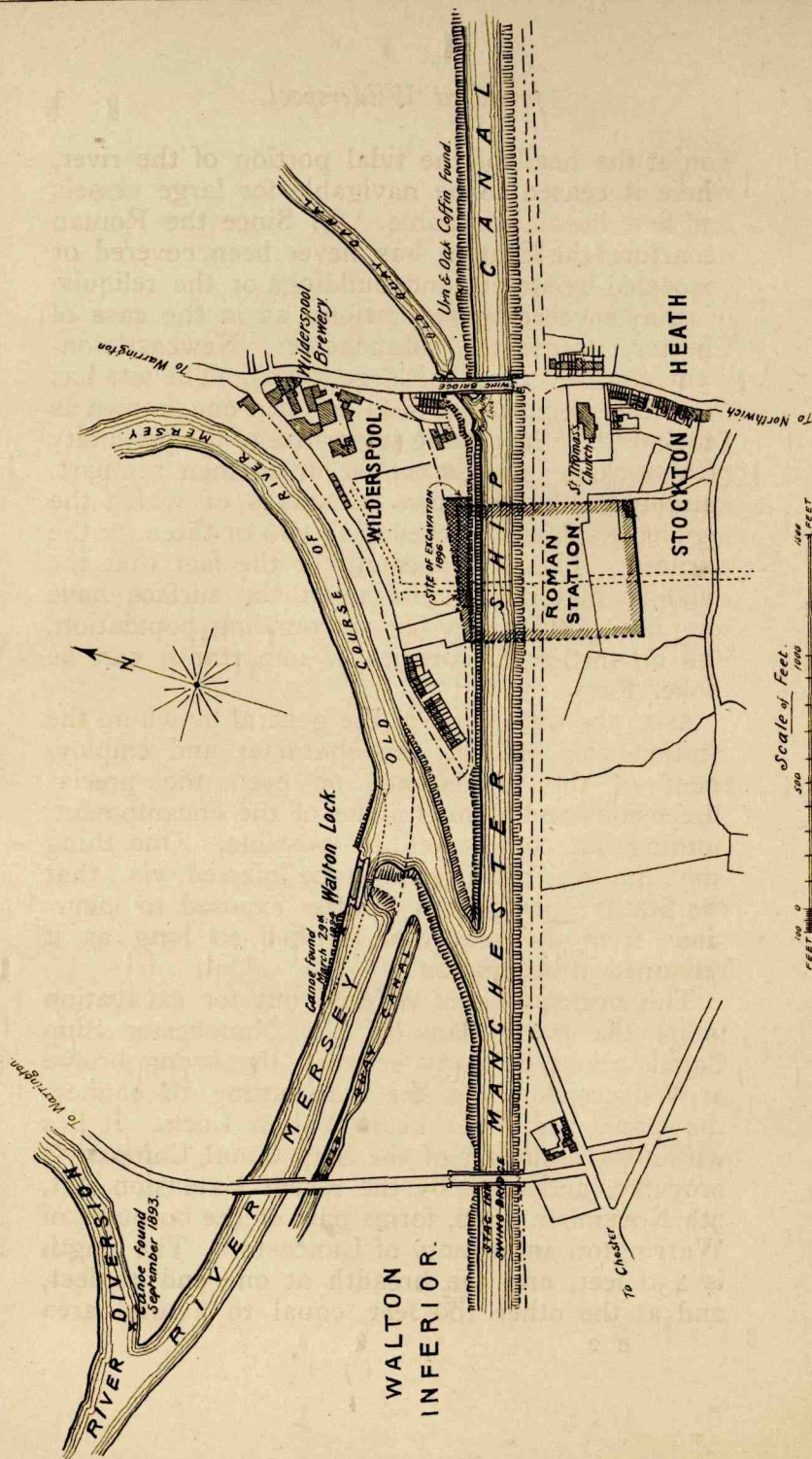


and the 1st January, 1894, having entirely swept away the greater portion of the Station, without archæological result.

The relics previously recovered are fully described in Dr. Kendrick's *Guide to the Roman Remains in the Warrington Museum*; while the late Mr. W. Thompson Watkin's exhaustive treatise on *Roman Cheshire*, dated 1886, summarises everything known and reported down to the date of the commencement, at the end of 1895, of the recent excavations.

As the most interesting points regarding the Station are still matters of uncertainty, it will pave the way for discussion to furnish a brief summary of what has been definitely established. (1) The Station itself was clearly one of secondary importance. It was no more than a *mansio*, or halting place, at the end of the average day's journey or march (rather less than 20 English miles) of the legions along the two great military highways, leading northwards through Wigan (*Coccium*), and north-eastwards through Manchester (*Man-cunium*), from Chester (*Deva*)—for over 300 years the head quarters of the 20th legion—on the one hand, and Kinderton (*Condote*) beyond Northwich, on the other. These *mansiones*, or halting-places, were originally *castra*, formed by making earthen entrenchments, and were afterwards provided with barracks, magazines of provisions, and accommodation for travellers of all descriptions.<sup>1</sup> The one at Wilderspool was probably garrisoned by a cohort of the *socii*, or auxiliaries attached to the 20th legion, the *Valerian*, *Victorious*, from the neighbouring head-quarter camp. (2) The site, when chosen, was on a *lingula*, or tongue of land, protected by the river Mersey in front, and by two small streams, the Cress or Cramond and Lumbrook, on either hand, and it occupied an important strategical posi-

<sup>1</sup> Vide Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*.





tion at the head of the tidal portion of the river, where it ceased to be navigable for large vessels and first became fordable. (3) Since the Roman departure the Station has never been covered or concealed by streets and buildings or the reliquiae of many succeeding generations, as in the case of Chester, Lancaster, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and several other large towns. The site has from time immemorial been an open one, known as Stockton Heath, a name suggestive of the proximity of a stockade, *fossa et vallum*, or earthen rampart, surmounted by the rows of stakes of which the legionary soldiers carried each two or three for the purpose. This will account for the fact that the building materials found upon the surface have long been used up by the surrounding population, and no further discoveries of importance can be looked for.

As to the time when or the general by whom the Station was erected, the character and employment of the inhabitants, or even the precise dimensions and Roman name of the encampment, nothing but conjectures are possible. One thing may, however, with certainty be inferred, viz., that the Station, being on a frontier exposed to incursions from the sea, was fortified so long as it remained in occupation.

The principal area marked out for excavation is on the north bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, about half-way between the swing bridge at Wilderspool, and the side-cutting to connect the Canal and river near Walton Lock. It lies within the boundary of the Ship Canal Company's property, and also, by the recent Extension Act, 9th November, 1896, forms part of the borough of Warrington and county of Lancaster. The length is 450 feet, and the breadth at one end 40 feet, and at the other 100 feet, equal to a total area

of 3,500 sq. yds.; the average thickness being 15 feet. As indicated by these dimensions, it forms a long, narrow strip, of considerable thickness, and includes: (1) a bed of undisturbed glacial sand, current bedded, and intercalated with strips of gravel and round lumps of boulder clay; (2) a layer, 2 to 5 feet thick, of soil; and (3) an accumulation (over some portions) of sand and rubbish, from the cutting of two canals.

By the courtesy of Mr. Frank Warburton, builder, of Stockton Heath, I have been enabled to make observations and collect specimens; and the Roman altar discovered by me, has been presented, by that gentleman, to the Warrington Museum. The preservation of the specimens is also greatly due to the care and intelligent co-operation of John Houghton, the workman employed in excavating.

The changes produced by the cutting of the Ship Canal, have rendered the hitherto published Ordnance Survey maps unserviceable; and I am indebted to Mr. F. B. Greenwood, resident engineer, for a corrected map on the 25-inch scale, showing the principal landmarks in the vicinity.

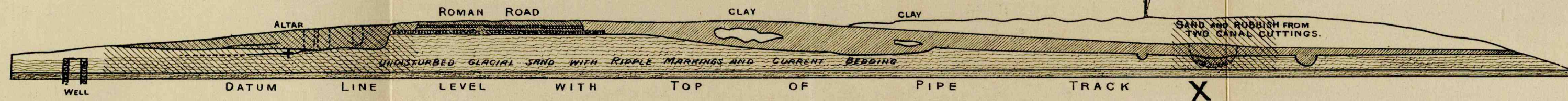
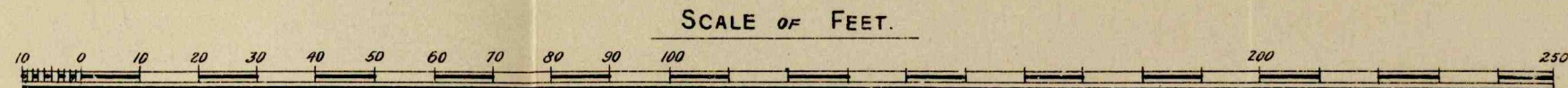
A plan and section, on the scale of 1 in. to 8 ft., showing the exact position of the principal discoveries, has been prepared by your local secretary, Mr. Wm. Owen, F.R.I.B.A., from measurements taken in September and December this year (1896); and, along with drawings of the altar and other relics, forms the most interesting and instructive portion of my paper.

The portions already excavated are shown by cross lines on the vertical longitudinal section. On the plan they are left blank, and the cross lines indicate the natural surface.

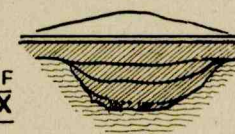
The stratum of surface soil exposed along the face of the cutting, in the lower portion of which



PLAN AND SECTION OF EXCAVATION FOR SAND, MADE IN 1895-6, ON SITE OF ROMAN STATION (VERATINUM), AT WILDERSPOOL, NEAR WARRINGTON.

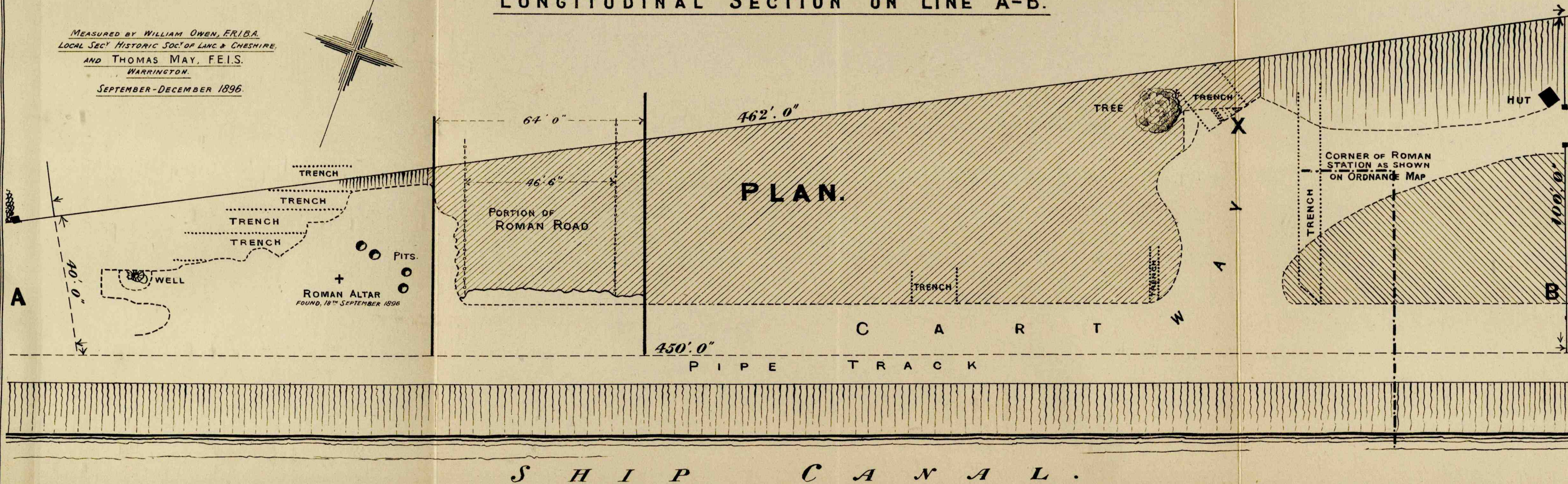
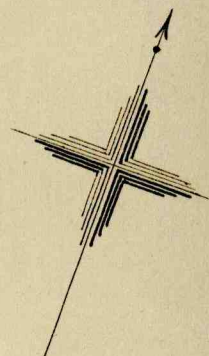


SECTION OF  
TRENCH AT X



LONGITUDINAL SECTION ON LINE A-B.

MEASURED BY WILLIAM OWEN, F.R.I.B.A.  
LOCAL SECY HISTORIC SOCY OF LANC & CHESHIRE  
AND THOMAS MAY, F.E.I.S.  
WARRINGTON.  
SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1896.





the Roman relics have been discovered, is indicated by darker shading on the vertical section, and the undisturbed glacial sand beneath by wavy horizontal lines, to represent current bedding.

At the west end of the excavation, the apparent course of four distinct trenches, numbered No. 1 to 4 on the plan, is marked by dotted lines. Though exposed in cross section, these trenches are not visible on the surface, having been filled up and levelled. The innermost, No. 4, for thirty-five feet of its length, which has been opened up, is about 7 ft. wide and 5 ft. deep; the two adjoining ones, Nos. 3 and 2, correspond. No. 1 runs partly underneath the boundary fence, and has only been cut about half-way across. It is estimated to be 8 or 9 ft. wide, and of equal depth; and is supposed to be a portion of the outer rampart or *fossa* of the encampment. The contrast between the bright red sand and dark alluvial soil renders the outline and direction of these trenches easy to trace.

On the old Ordnance Survey maps the supposed site of the Roman Station is demarcated by dotted lines forming a trapezoid, the breadth from east to west being 540 feet, and the mean length, taken at right angles, 710 feet, or, roughly speaking, 11 chains by 8, equal to an area of about  $8\frac{3}{4}$  acres. On what authority these dimensions are based I am unable to discover, but the position of the sections of the *fossa*, above described, which has been exposed on the north side of the Station, appears to indicate that the lines so laid down are approximately correct. A dotted line, pointing north-west by north, also correctly marks the course of the principal street, or *Via Prætoria*, which is 300 feet from the eastern but only 240 feet from the western rampart—an unsymmetrical and, therefore, unusual alignment of the Roman *via*.



The late Dr. Kendrick, in the paper read before this Society in 1871, stated—"The ground at Wilderspool, over which the Roman relics have from time to time been found, may be estimated at 36 "acres." Of this ground the only portions that remain uncovered or unexcavated are (1) a narrow strip, about 6 yards wide, along the southern rampart; and (2) the extra-mural or suburban area, about 840 yards long and 90 yards wide, between the Ship Canal and the river, known as the Back Field (formerly part of the grounds of Wilderspool House). This field is the property of Messrs. Greenall, Whitley and Co., Limited, at Wilderspool, who have kindly sanctioned the following-up of the trench, which can be seen at both ends of the excavation when intersected, but does not appear above the surface. At the east end, about 40 feet from where the N.E. corner of the Station is indicated on the Ordnance Survey map, a trench, 14 feet wide, about twice as long, and 7 to 9 feet deep, the long axis pointing in a N.W. direction, has been opened out. A fortnight's labour of one man so spent resulted in the uncovering of rude stone foundations, measuring about 8 feet in length, 7 feet 3 inches in width, and 1 foot 6 inches to 2 feet in depth, composed of sandstone blocks roughly squared with a hammer, laid in loamy sand without mortar, on a bed of undisturbed glacial gravel, at a depth of 7 feet 6 inches from the ordinary surface. Many of the stones were encased in a network of roots of trees that once grew above. The foundations appear to have belonged to some very solid erection which formerly stood upon the spot.

#### WELL.

On the 11th December, 1896, a well, formed of large roughly-dressed sandstone blocks, laid in puddled clay from top to bottom, was uncovered at 24 feet

from the western and northern boundaries of the excavation, and 129 feet west from the middle line of the principal street. The shaft, on being cleaned out, was found to be irregularly rounded, 36 inches across one way and 30 inches the other, and to descend to a depth of 10 feet, at which depth water was formerly reached in the gravel before the cutting of the canals. At various depths in the sand removed from the shaft, fragments of Samian and common red ware were met with, and in the thin layer of loamy sediment at the bottom, two earthenware discs and a fragment of Samian ware. At 3 or 4 feet from the bottom, a large piece, nearly half, of a bowl of black Upchurch ware was found, buried in the puddled clay used for lining and enclosing the stone blocks forming the circular wall of the shaft. Though most of these blocks are roughly wedge-shaped they are not of uniform thickness or length, and there has been no attempt to form regular layers, the wide intervals being filled up with clay.

#### ROAD OR STREET.

There is in course of excavation a segment of the principal street, being a continuation of the great military highway which has been traced from Kinderton (*Condote*) and Northwich, in a northerly direction. The section thereof exposed on the 6th October, 1896, was found to be 36 feet wide and 40 in. thick. The section now exposed (17th December, 1896) is 21 ft. wide and about 48 in. thick, and consists of five distinct layers. The lowest, the *gremium*, is a mixture of loam or clay and sand, about 16 in. thick. The first course of the road itself, the *statumen*, consists of rude sandstone blocks, from a few pounds weight to a hundred-weight or more, nine inches to a foot in thickness; the second, the *rudus*, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. of ferruginous



gravel, the iron in which has caked into a pan harder and more durable than cement; the third, another course of sandstone blocks like the first, but smaller in size; the fourth, or *nucleus*, is made up of yellow gravel and cobble stones, or boulders of the hardest rocks. Above all these is from three inches to a foot of surface soil which has never been turned over with the plough. *Margins*, or footpaths, about three yards wide, paved with gravel upon sandstone blocks, extend on both sides; and the *sulcus*, or trench for nicking out the line of the road, can be distinctly traced in the clean sand beneath, on its eastern margin. An unlimited supply of the ferruginous gravel used by the Romans, was met with at Irlam, during the construction of the Ship Canal. The section forms a distinct ridge, or *agger*, and is the only indication visible upon the surface of the former existence of a Roman Station. From the Ship Canal Company's boundary it extends 80 yards further, pointing N.N.W., almost in a direct line for the bank of the river, which is only 140 yards distant. The ancient ford at Latchford lies three-quarters of a mile to the N.E.; and, as the river banks were soft and marshy and the approach involved a considerable detour, does not appear to have been the usual crossing of the Romans. Mr. W. Thompson Watkin, in describing this road on page 67 of his *Roman Cheshire*, is in error in stating that "from Wilderspool a road issued to the north, and proceeded, *via Wilderspool Causeway*, to the ford across the *Mersey*." The Wilderspool Causeway was constructed in 1624, to give improved access to Warrington Bridge, which was first built about the beginning of the 14th century, at some distance below the ford,<sup>2</sup> and the earlier road leading thereto by Ackers and Wash Lane.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Mr. Beaumont's *History of Latchford*, p. 71.

The street of the encampment leading direct from the northern gateway to the river, may have given access to a landing-place or wharf, or possibly to a bridge of some description. Though no trace is recorded of any solid structure, yet bridges, formed of rafts and canoes joined together, were regularly used by the Romans for crossing unfordable rivers. These canoes are represented in ancient sculptures as having rounded, turned-up ends, but their real dimensions would, of course, vary with the size of the trees out of which they were hewn; and that the dug-out canoe found near to Walton Lock on the 28th March, 1894,<sup>3</sup> was of Roman construction and so used in connection with the Station, the following facts seem to prove:

(1) *Lintres monoxylæ*, or boats scooped out of a single log, generally of oak, usually accompanied the legions on carts, for the purpose of constructing bridges and transporting produce in marshy places.<sup>4</sup>

(2) They are mentioned by Cæsar as being so employed by the Helvetians, for crossing the Saone (*De Bello Gallico*, lib. i., cap. xii.) "*Flumen est Arar, quod per fines Æduorum et Sequanorum in Rhodanum influit, incredibili lenitate, ita ut oculis, in utram partem fluat judicari non possit. Id Helvetii ratibus ac lintribus junctis transibant;*" a description which might well be applied to the Mersey in this portion of its flow.

(3) They are repeatedly represented on the columns of Trajan and Antonine; and a single-log canoe, with ends turned up and rounded in exactly the same fashion as seen in sculptures, was dug up on the banks of the river Nen, in Northamptonshire, on which are situated the

<sup>3</sup> Described by Mr. C. Madeley, and pictured by Mr. W. Owen. See *Trans. Hist. Soc. of Lanc. and Chesh.*, vol. xlv, 1894.

<sup>4</sup> See Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*.



Roman potteries, where the famous Castor ware was fabricated.

(4) The Canoe, found at Walton Lock, is well constructed with crescent-shaped waling pieces at bow and stern, ribs left in hollowing out the log, peg-holes cleanly cut with an auger, and rounded ends both in plan and section.

(5) The canoe was found only about 400 yards lower down the river from the Station.

(6) The fragments of water-worn Roman pottery and paving tiles now exhibited, were met with at the bottom of the Walton Lock cutting, at about the same level as the canoe.

On the opposite or south side of the Station and the Ship Canal, and about 170 yards to the west of St. Thomas' Church, Stockton Heath, a corresponding section of the same street is exposed. It is here 30 feet wide, and from 18 to 24 inches thick, being formed of a bed of rubble, covered by about a foot of ferruginous gravel. A deposit of red clay, and other traces of the Roman occupation, are visible on the face of the cutting for 20 yards on either hand, beneath  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet of soil. The only objects recovered during the excavation in July and August, 1896, which opened up the section, are the blue glass bead (fig. 5), and handle of an amphora, now exhibited.

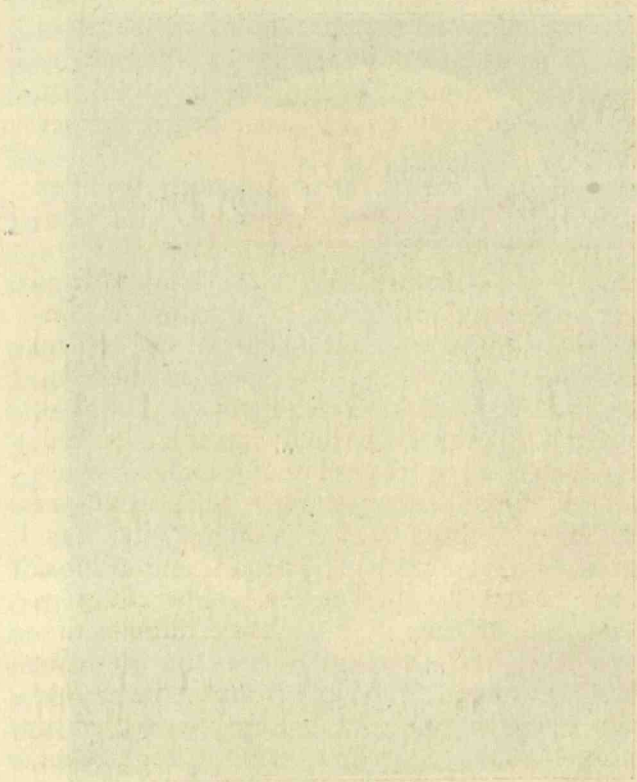
#### ALTAR.

The antiquarian who has discovered a Roman altar, may be supposed to have attained to the summit of his ambition. Unfortunately for human happiness, the drop of bitterness is ever present in the cup, and the altar, on being uncovered, was found lacking in the most important feature—it had no inscription. When examining the stones taken from what had evidently been



ALTAR FOUND ON THE SITE OF THE ROMAN STATION  
AT WILDERSPOOL (VERATINUM).





a trench, the soil being two or three feet thicker than elsewhere, at a total depth of 6 feet 4 inches, I observed, on the 18th September last, a block, which had been thrown down the bank for edging the cart track, to be of regular oblong shape. On scraping away the soil adhering to all parts of its surface, I came upon rough carving, and, on cleaning out the *focus* on its summit, recognised the nature of the find.

The corners of the stone have been rounded by weathering, and a small fragment was accidentally broken off the left front corner of the base, after it was thrown down the bank. It is otherwise complete. The back portion is undressed, showing it was intended to be set up against a wall. It may be described as made up of three well-proportioned sections — a capital, shaft, and base; the material being the soft, red, local sandstone. The capital is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches across the front,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  broad, and  $5\frac{1}{4}$  high; the shaft 11 inches across,  $8\frac{1}{4}$  broad, and  $9\frac{1}{4}$  high; the base is about 14 inches across,  $10\frac{3}{4}$  broad, and 6 high. The total height is  $20\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The *focus* is merely an incised ring of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches outside diameter. There are two round bosses on the front corners of the summit; and the front of the capital is formed by three round mouldings, separated by horizontal grooves. A rude carving in high relief, on the right side of the shaft, represents what is usually termed the *præfericulum*, or ewer for holding and pouring the sacrificial wine for libations.

Of about a dozen altars found in the vicinity of Chester, five bear more or less elaborately carved representations of the sacrificial ewer; and very frequently sacrificial vessels, or implements, are carved on the sides of altars.

Their size bears no relation to the importance of the deity to whom they were dedicated. One of the



largest found at *Borcovicus*, a station on the Great Wall of Hadrian, in Northumberland, and inscribed to the sun-god Mithras, is 4 ft. 7 in. high. But among those recovered from the stations *per lineam valli*, numbering about five dozen, in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries at Newcastle-on-Tyne, many are of smaller size. The following are the heights and breadths of some of these:—22 × 10 in., 17 × 8 in., 15 × 12 in., 14 × 7 in., 12 × 8 in., 12 × 7 in., 11 × 7 in., 10 × 6 in., 10½ × 5 in., 8 × 5 in., and one found at Netherby, in Cumberland, is only 5½ in. high.

The *focus* is usually a more ornamental feature, but there is one in the Newcastle Museum in which it is simply an incised ring, as on the one we are considering.

In the absence of lettering upon its surface no rational conjecture can be formed as to the particular deity to which this altar was dedicated. Since altars were not always so appropriated, it might have been used for sacrifices to any one of the many Roman or local gods which the worshipper for the time being preferred.

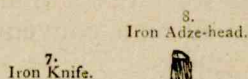
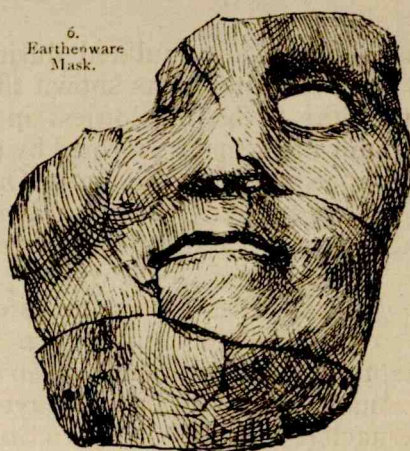
The position it occupied was a most important one, since it was found only 10 yards from the western edge of the *Via Prætoria*, and just inside the *Porta Prætoria*, or gate most exposed to the enemy. Here the departing traveller or legionary soldier could conveniently make vows and offer sacrifices to ensure a safe return.

The finding of an altar does not necessarily imply the existence of a temple near the same spot, as altars were frequently erected in open spaces. Of those deposited in the Grosvenor Museum at Chester, the majority were found *in situ* along the lines of the leading thoroughfares, which cross at right angles near the centre of the city, nearly on the lines of the ancient *viæ*. Elevated situations were preferred, and the clearing away of the sand heaps

Figs. 6 to 13 inclusive are in Dr. Kendrick's Collection, Warrington Museum.



3/4 Full Size



8. Iron Adze-head.

9. Iron Knife.

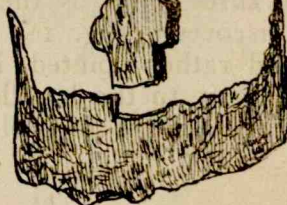
10. Iron Knife (fragment).

12. Iron Axe-head.

11. Iron Adze.



3/4 Full Size





and rubbish, accumulated during the construction of the two canals, has shown the actual position of this altar to be the loftiest in the locality. The summit of the *agger*, formed by the Roman street at this spot, is 40 ft. 6 in. above Ordnance datum, and a person standing upon it obtains a wide view of the Mersey valley and Lancashire plain to the north, east, and westward.

QUERNS.—Among the few stone objects recently recovered are the much-worn and weathered segments of a quern (*mola manuaria*), composed of the porous lava or volcanic trachyte derived from Andernach (*Antunacum*) near to Coblenz on the Rhine, where the material is still quarried and exported for a similar purpose. The adjoining rivers in both localities would furnish convenient water carriage for such heavy goods. These segments are nearly sufficient to form a complete circle, about 18 inches across. Another segment, rather less than half of a circle, is of hard sandstone grit.

BUILDING STONES.—Only three squared building stones have lately been met with. They are of the soft local sandstone, and measure respectively,  $22 \times 14 \times 15$  in.,  $22 \times 18 \times 12$  in., and  $19 \times 18 \times 9$  in.

WHETSTONE.—One of the articles shown is a portion, about half, of a whetstone, of very fine grained sandstone. Originally of almost rectangular section, it had been worn nearly round in the middle by use before being discarded. Several like fragments are in the Warrington Museum.

#### OBJECTS IN BRONZE.

A *ligula*, or diminutive long-handled spoon, though in three parts, is the most artistic article recently discovered (fig. 1). The bowl, which is narrow and rather pointed, has a tang and rivet for fastening it to the handle, and probably also to serve as a hinge for folding it into shorter

and more portable shape. The slender handle is bulbed at one end, twisted or torquated in the middle, and ornamented with incised rings or grooves here and there.

The *theca*, or tubular brass case for containing it, was found therewith in a much corroded and damaged condition, having been broken by the excavator's pick. As they were picked up separately, it cannot be said that the spoon was actually inside the case, but both fell from the cutting together, and are of nearly equal length.

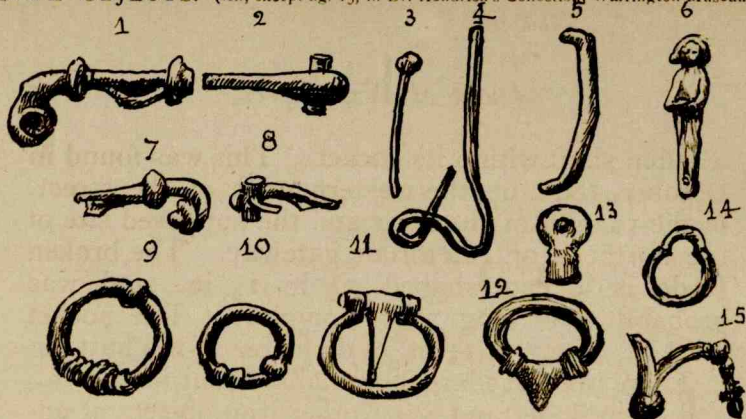
A thick bronze ring (fig. 2), of  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in. external and  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. internal diameter, was found about 1 ft. 6 in. below the ordinary surface, and near the top of the Roman stratum, where the clay deposit is shown on the section, near the middle of the cutting. It might be regarded as an ordinary curtain ring, but for the external groove. This groove suggests that the ring may have been employed in the same manner as the stone discs with marginal grooves, found in the lake dwellings, and generally recognised as potter's implements for fashioning the bases of dishes. When pressed against the revolving vessel of soft clay, this ring would form upon the surface a double groove, divided by a slight projection, such as can be observed on several of the fragments.

*Fibulæ*.—Figs. No. 3 and 4 represent two of the bronze *fibulæ* so much worn by the Romans and Britons, and generally found among their reliquiæ. These are of the ordinary bow-shaped pattern, and have a cross-bar, with traces of a coiled-spring attachment for the pin. The pin, and also the hook for retaining it, have been lost by corrosion.

IRON.—Among the few metallic articles lately recovered there is the broken and much-corroded cusp or head of a spear, retaining a portion of the

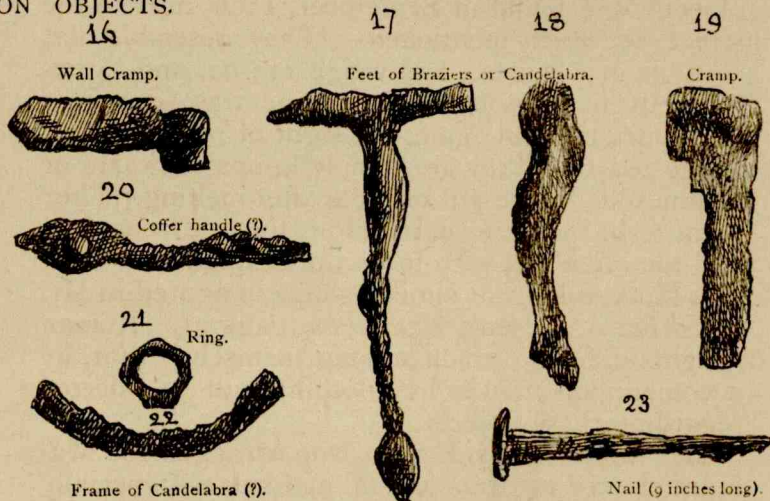


## BRONZE OBJECTS. (All, except fig. 15, in Dr. Kendrick's Collection, Warrington Museum.)



1, 2, 7, 8. Fibulae. 9, 10. Fibulae (brooches, penannular). 11. Buckle. 12, 13, 14. Rings. 15. Ornament. (About half size.) 3, 4. Pins. 5. Fragment.

## IRON OBJECTS.



Wall Cramp.

Feet of Braziers or Candelabra.

Cramp.

20

Coffer handle (?).

21

Ring.

22

Frame of Candelabra (?).

23

Nail (9 inches long).

## OBJECTS IN LEAD.



Disc.

Lamp, or Stoup for holding liquid.

Disc.

27

Iron Cusp or Spear-head, socketed (broken).

E.W. Cox fec:  
Apr 1907

wooden shaft within its socket. This was found in October, 1896, on the western edge of the street, in the vicinity of the altar and the supposed site of the northern or Prætorian gateway. The broken blade is lozenge-shaped,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in., and was probably 6 in. long when complete. The socket is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. long and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. in diameter at the butt.

There are three large iron nails, about 6 in., 7 in., and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, and a few other iron objects of unrecognisable shape, owing to corrosion.

LEAD.—Two similar and rather curious leaden objects were found in September, 1896, near to the street so often mentioned. They resemble flat sections of a sphere, and weigh  $11\frac{1}{2}$  oz. and 14 oz. respectively. Another similar one was seen near the same spot, but again lost sight of. It has been suggested that they are simply lumps of waste or residues left in the pot or ladle after melting. They seem to be too uniform in shape, too free from slag, and too often met with to be thus explained.

A stone weight of similar shape is figured in Mr. J. Corbet Anderson's *Uriconium*, page 91. Roman weights differ so much among themselves that, by a comparison of weights, nothing can be inferred regarding these objects.

Mr. Robert Blair, F.S.A., who arranged the Museum erected by Mr. Clayton, at Chesters, specially to contain his collection of Roman remains from the Station at *Cilurnum*, writes regarding similar leaden objects deposited therein:—"I find the discs "of lead, in the case at the Museum here, are of "two sizes. The larger is 2 in. in diameter, and "is just within  $7\frac{1}{2}$  oz. The smaller  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter, and just turns the scale at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oz.; so you "may say  $7\frac{1}{2}$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  oz., as I have only weighed "one of each size. There are six of the larger "and two of the smaller. They were all found "together, at the Roman Station here (*Cilurnum*),



"last year. They are convex on the one side and flat on the other. Though the larger is virtually a multiple of the smaller, I do not think they were used as weights. I should imagine they were intended for some game." That has been my own impression. No mention of these leaden discs can be found in the works of the principal authorities on Roman Britain.

#### GLASS.

Objects in glass are most conspicuous by their absence, only two or three small fragments of the beautiful iridescent Roman glass having been found.

*Glass Bead.*—This (fig. 5) was found in June or July, 1896, on that portion of the Station which lies to the south of the Ship Canal, as above stated. It is 1 inch in diameter, with a half-inch bore, and is well formed out of bright blue glass, with 14 rounded ribs or ridges. A similar bead is figured on page 287 of *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, and stated to be one of the most common forms of Roman glass beads. Such large beads, in all their varieties of form, hue, and material, were regarded as superstitious charms, possessed of great virtues for insuring good luck and curing all sorts of ailments, especially those of children, by the peasantry of a former generation, throughout the United Kingdom, Europe, and Northern Africa, and are so regarded even now in the more remote parts. They are known as "adder beads," "adders' heads," "Ethir-bore stanes," "adder or snake stones," "charm beads," "Druidical beads;" and among the Gaelic and Welsh-speaking population, as "Glaine nan Druidhe," "Glaine na Droedh," and "Clachan Nathaireach." They were once described to me by a man of fair education, holding the position of postmaster at

Loch Roag, in the Island of Lewis, as being the hardened residue of a slimy deposit, left by snakes following one another round and round a stalk of growing heather. He also informed me that fever and other ailments could sometimes be cured, by drinking the water in which they had lain. This account of their origin and virtues much resembles that given by Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* lib. xxix. cap. xii.) of the *ovum anguinum*, or "serpent's egg," so highly esteemed by the ancient Gauls, and associated with the Druids.

#### POTTERY.

It is well known that the manufacture of pottery was an important industry, and even figured prominently as a domestic art among the Romans. A good steward or householder understood the treatment of clays, and to every *villa* or country farmhouse there were attached a number of craftsmen in the condition of slaves. The *figuli* or potters were of this order, though their owners were freedmen or citizens of rank and authority. Bricks and tiles were made wherever they were required and suitable material was available. The remains of numerous ancient potteries have been discovered in this country, and Jewitt, in his *History of the Ceramic Art in Great Britain*, enumerates fifteen, including Wilderspool.

The immense quantity of fragments obtained from every Roman Station is explained by the fact that pottery was employed for many purposes, for which vessels made out of wooden boards or metal plates are now available, such as boxes, bags, cases, cupboards, coffins, drawers, casks or vats, pots, pans, kettles, pails, &c.

*Samian Ware*.—A large number of fragments, and one or two whole vessels, of the famous bright red Samian ware, are in the Warrington Museum.



There are in my possession about 75 plain and 50 figured fragments, no two belonging to the same vessel. Among them are six bearing potters' marks, viz., EDA . . (a name, or part of a name, not met with in the published lists), METTI . M., IULI MA., MO . . . ., . . TORI., BELINICCI . M. The latter occurs on a fragment in Chester Museum, and two or three times in Mr. C. Roach Smith's London collection. It is considered by Birch (*Ancient Pottery*, p. 359), to be particularly Gaulish. The ticket attached to eight of the earthenware moulds with incised figures, used in forming this class of ware, which belong to the Mayer Collection in the Liverpool Museum, states that they were obtained in Germany. Though a fragment of one of these moulds has been found at York, it is believed that our specimens are entirely the produce of Gaulish or German potteries, and imported.

Positive proof that these vessels, with embossed ornamentation, were turned and polished on a lathe after moulding, is furnished by several of the specimens now exhibited, on which there are portions of the ring forming the base. This ring is of double concave or dove-tail section, and could not have been withdrawn whole from any mould, though made up of several parts or segments.

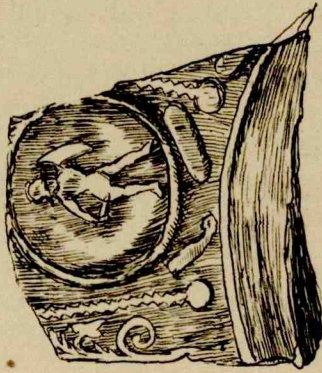
One specimen also bears a peculiar embossed stamp or potters' mark on the outside, somewhat resembling Greek script. Similar marks, in what appear to be Oriental characters, and as yet unexplained, are found on the lower part of the outsides of such vessels, and are stated to be all different.

*Castor or Durobrivian Ware.*—The produce of this famous pottery, situated on the banks of the Nen, in Northamptonshire, and traced by Mr. Artis over a layer of broken fragments for 20 miles, where not less than 2,000 slaves were simultaneously employed, is represented by half-

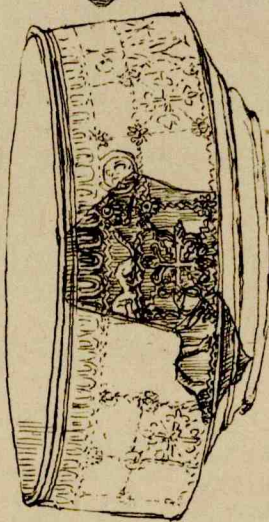
SAMIAN WARE.

(In the possession of Thomas May, Esq.)

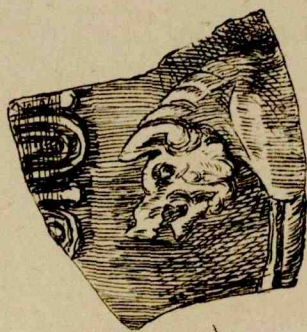
1.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
gladiatorial figure.



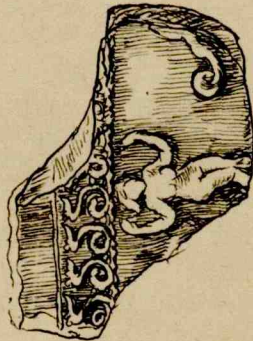
2.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
cross ornament and  
egg and tongue pattern border.



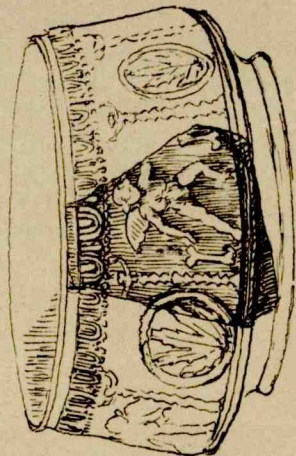
3.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
boar's head and  
egg and tongue pattern border.



4.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
dancing figure and serpents.



5.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
Cupid and foliage.



6.  
Bacchana and foliage.

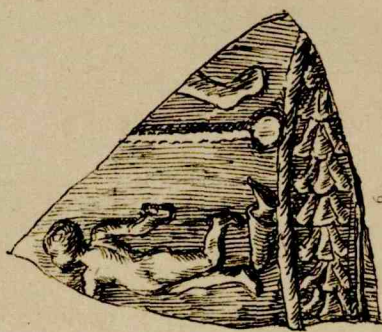
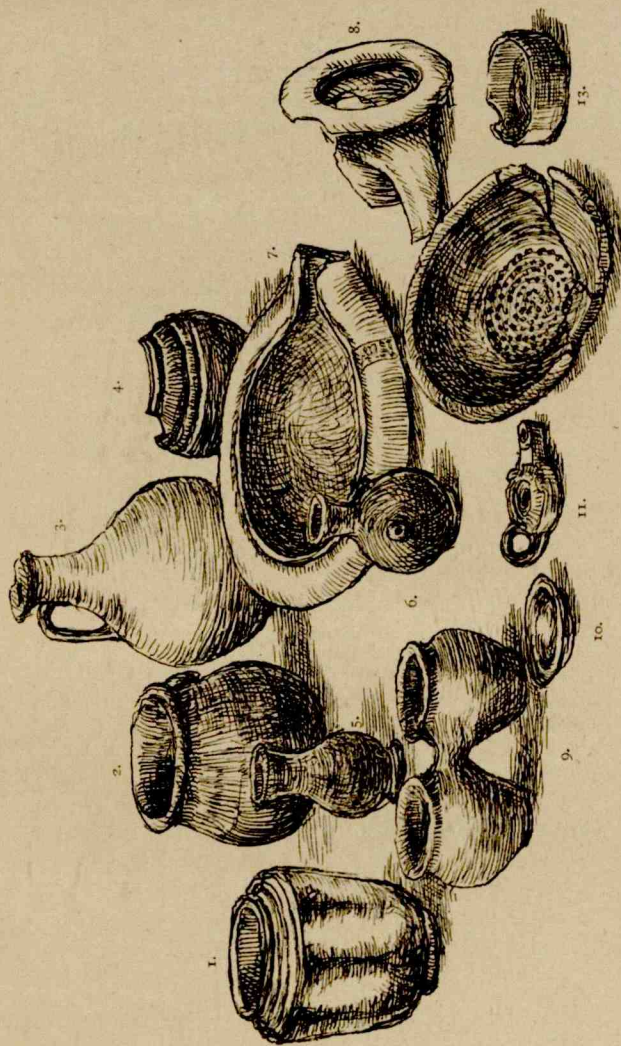




Fig. 1 is in the possession of William Burch, Esq., M.I.C.E.; the others are in Dr. Kendrick's Collection, Warrington Museum.



1. Olla, indented ware, terra cotta, with traces of gilding.
2. Olla, with ansae, red ware.
3. Ampulla, red ware.
4. Urns, black ware.
5. Urns, grey ware.
6. Tettix, or child's feeding bottle, red ware.
7. Mortarium, white ware.

8. Neck and part of handle of amphora.
9. Trine Vase, reddish yellow ware, common.
10. Salinium, smooth Samian.
11. Lampas, hand lamp, red ware.
12. Column, or strainer.
13. Red ware.

a-dozen small fragments. There is part of the base of a vase of the yellowish-brown paste, with a reddish-brown glaze of metallic lustre. There are also a couple of fragments of a vase of the yellowish-brown paste, with black glaze. One small fragment of the dark ware bears the characteristic ornamentation in engobe or slip, applied in white pipe-clay, shaped like two long ears of some animal. The drawing<sup>5</sup> now exhibited is from a photograph of a fragment, rather more than half, of a beautifully formed, indented vase of fine terra-cotta paste, probably made in the same locality. Traces of the gold with which it was gilded can be discovered, though they have been partly removed by cleaning. This is one of the few objects recovered from the Ship Canal cutting, and is now in the possession of Mr. Wm. Burch, M.I.C.E., of London.

*Upchurch Ware.*—The fragments obtained of black, grey, or greyish-black ware, usually described as Upchurch ware, produced by firing in “smother kilns,” with layers of straw or other vegetable matter in actual contact with the vessels, have been exceptionally numerous. The late Dr. Kendrick, in his *Guide*, page 16, says in regard to them, that “though the manufacture of black and grey pottery was largely carried on by the Romans at Castor, in Northamptonshire, and at Upchurch, in Kent, the form and ornamentation of the vessels in both cases differ from the examples we find at Wilderspool.”

This statement may be true regarding the Castor or Durobrivian ware, but the description given by Jewitt, in his *History of the Ceramic Art in Great Britain*, of the pottery manufactured in vast quantities on the Upchurch marshes, over a district five

<sup>5</sup> See *Trans. Warrington Lit. and Phil. Society*, 1894-5.



or six miles long by one or two broad, exactly corresponds with that found at Wilderspool. The vessels, he informs us, are light and thin, remarkably well potted, of fine clay, and varying in form and size to a surprising extent. They are remarkable for gracefulness and elegance of design, and simply and effectively decorated with lines, dots, bands, semicircles, patches, network, &c. The trellis pattern, so much used by the Romans, can be traced on nearly all my specimens.

Wright, in his well-known book, *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, page 260, also states "that we can scarcely excavate a Roman site, in any part of the island, without finding samples of the Upchurch ware. There can, indeed, be no doubt that the Upchurch marshes furnished a great proportion of the commoner pottery used in Roman Britain."

In his *Ancient Pottery and Porcelain*, page 334, Birch says, "This ware was generally used for containing the ashes of the dead after cremation." "It was adapted for useful purposes only;" and "of the latest period of the Gallo-Roman epoch."

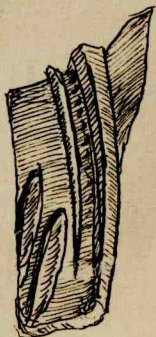
No special or local characteristics can, therefore, be claimed for this kind of ware, and it may be taken to indicate the continuous occupation of the Station, down to a very late date during or subsequent to the Roman period.

On very slight grounds it has also been inferred that much of the Roman pottery found at Wilderspool has been made upon the spot, from clay brought in from pits on Ackers Common, a mile and a quarter to the eastward, there being no natural deposits of clay on the actual site of the encampment. The reasons for doubting the accuracy of this conclusion are the following:—(1) The supposition that "an eminent colony of potters" carried on their operations within an inclosed area of about nine acres,

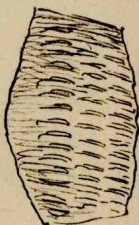
4. Fragment of Bowl,  
female figure.

SMOOTH WARE,  
with a cover's pattern mark (4).

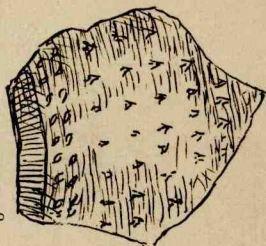
5. Fragment of Bowl,  
emossed ware,  
equestrian figure.



7. Fragment of Vase,  
Castor ware,  
with engobe or slip  
ornamentation.

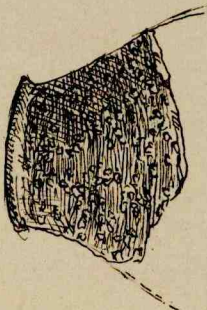
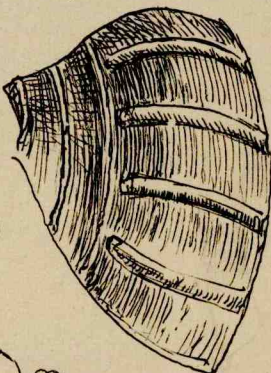


8. Fragment of Urn,  
red ware, common,  
hatchet pattern.

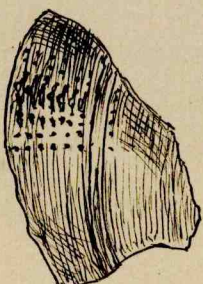


9. Fragment of Urn,  
red ware, washed with white slip,  
stipped ornamentation.

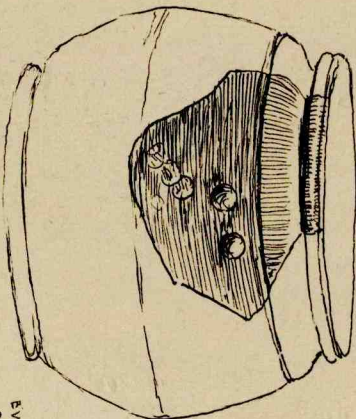
11. Fragment of Urn,  
dark grey ware,  
grooved pattern.



10. Fragment of Urn,  
rough cast ware, red body,  
washed with black slip.



12. Fragment of Urn,  
upchurch or black ware,  
dotted pattern in  
black slip.



13. Fragment of Urn,  
upchurch or grey ware,  
ornamented  
with knobs or warts.

EW C  
MAY 1917

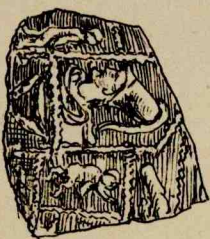
# FRAGMENTS OF ROMAN WORK FOUND AT VERATINUM.



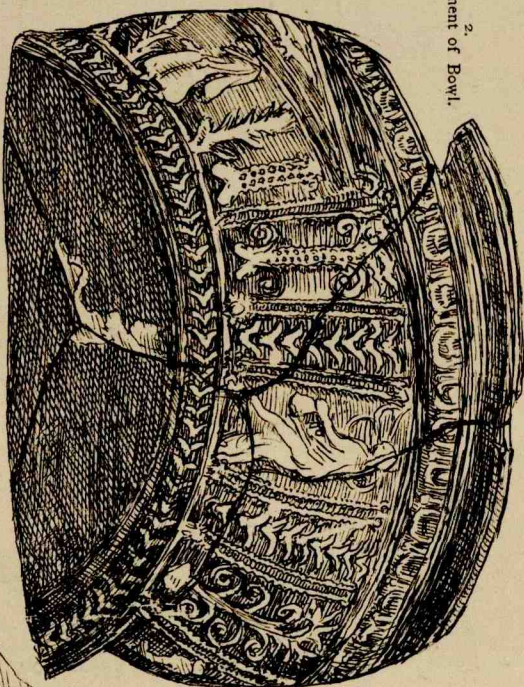
ORNAMENTAL WARE.

Figs. 2, 3, and 4 are in Dr. Kendrick's Collection, Warrington Museum.

Fragment of Bowl.



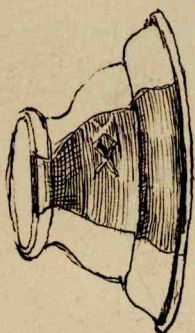
1.  
Fragment; helmeted bust,  
moulded or embossed  
ornamentation.



3.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
tells pattern  
on rim.



4.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
female figure.



5.  
Fragment of Salinum,  
smooth wave,  
with owner's potter's mark (X).



6.  
Fragment of Bowl,  
embossed ware,  
equestrian figure.

would involve that it was entirely occupied by the potteries and huts or slums of the slaves employed in the work. (2) The fragments obtained are not of the description of potters' waste—they are not *sui generis*—and include no distorted specimens; but are evenly spread, along with other reliquiæ, over the Roman stratum. (3) They include a fair proportion of Samian, Durobrivian, and other kinds of ware, which no one supposes to have been made upon the spot. (4) The number of fragments is not in excess of those found on the site of other Roman Stations. (5) The deposits of red clay met with in different parts of the Station may have been employed as foundations of buildings erected upon the sandy surface, in the same manner as well-puddled clay was employed in the foundations of the Great Wall between Carlisle and Newcastle. (6) No kilns have been uncovered, as at Castor and Upchurch, where the kilns were erected on or beside the clay. We must, therefore, look for traces of the potters who made the common red ware, found more abundantly in Wilderspool than any other, and also the bricks, tiles, and larger amphoræ, nearer to the Ackers pits, where the clay deposits out of which they were fabricated are supposed to exist.

The very mixed character of my specimens, which include fragments of jars, pots, bottles, stew-pans, strainers, dishes, and mortars, with a few pieces of table-ware of a finer description (salt-cellar, vinegar-cups, bowls, and vases) interspersed, shows them to be purely of the nature of kitchen refuse.

The so-called theatrical mask, or *persona tragica*, of common red ware, in Warrington Museum, so often referred to, may also be more properly regarded as an architectural ornament, or kind of wall plaque, with nail-holes for attachment, having neither the expression nor other characteristics of a Roman



dramatic *persona*, tragic or comic. Indeed, Dr Kendrick himself mentions<sup>6</sup> a similar one, without eye-holes, in the Mayer Collection, which could not have been used for theatrical purposes.

*Mortaria*.—I have obtained about half-a-bushel of fragments of the large earthenware mortars, of red, yellow, drab, or fawn-coloured clay, studded with sharp gravel inside to resist friction by a wooden or earthenware pestle. The reason these kitchen utensils are everywhere met with is due to the character of Roman cookery. Force-meats, rissoles, stews, and the like were their favourite dishes, and they were in the habit of pounding and mincing their viands. Dr. Kendrick's surmise, that *mortaria* were also used by the local potters for "blunging" or levigating the slip used in preparing the finer kinds of pottery, seems rather far-fetched: they are too small for such a purpose.

*Amphoræ*, or large jars of light brown unglazed ware; *ampullæ*, or water-bottles of red ware: *cola*, or strainers; *vases*, *urnæ*, *lances* or dishes, and many other forms, are likewise represented by numerous fragments.

*Bricks and Tiles*.—Bricks and tiles are conspicuous by their absence. In addition to the fragments obtained from the Walton Lock cutting, there is only one specimen of flue or revetting tile, scored with wavy lines to secure adhesion of the cement; and a few other small fragments.

#### COINS.

In the present state of opinion and knowledge the most important "find," during the recent excavations, is a coin of Constantine the Great, which brings down the date of the Station a century and a-half later than was previously supposed. This

<sup>6</sup> *Trans. Chester Archæolog. Soc.*, 1876, p. 163.

coin was met with on the west side of the Roman street, in the vicinity of the altar and Prætorian gate, at about eighteen inches below the surface and an equal distance above the undisturbed sand, on the 3rd October, 1896. Owing to its unworn condition, the minutest portions of the lettering and design are visible, but the surface is so oxidised that it can be easily rubbed off. Its preservation is due to the care of the excavator, John Houghton, who enclosed it in cotton wool on its first discovery.

It is a coin of the third brass, about the size of an English farthing, and bears a laureated bust of the emperor, with *CONSTANTINUS AUG* on the obverse; a gate of castrum, with star above it, and *PRUDENTIÆ AUGG* on the reverse, and the letters *SMTS E* (*Sacra Moneta Trèveris Signata* of the E. Monetary Office) in the exergue. This indicates that it was struck at Trèves, the Augusta Trevirorum, once capital of the Roman empire, at a period when there were two emperors sharing the purple, not later than A.D. 323, when Licinius Senior was put to death, and Constantine became sole emperor.

The coins of this emperor are the most common in Britain; and among 120 found at Richborough, there are four with the letters *PTRE*, referring to Trèves as the place of issue. Coins of similar type have been found at Chester and London, but not minted at Trèves.

The coins enumerated by Dr. Kendrick (*Guide*, page 28), and now in the Warrington Museum, are—Vespasian 2, Titus 1, Domitian 4, Nerva 2, Trajan 6, Hadrian 4, Antoninus Pius 2, Marcus Aurelius 3, and 9 illegible. To this list Mr. W. Thompson Watkin adds Commodus 2 (which are the latest hitherto recorded), and states that “there are also in the Museum 2 first brass coins, 5 second brass coins, and two third brass coins illegible.”



The opinion expressed by the latter authority,<sup>7</sup> as to the date of the destruction of the Station, is as follows:—

“Unless the two third brass coins are an exception (which from inspection I doubt), the whole of those found are of the Higher Empire, and prior to the great insurrection of Commodus (A.D. 180), the effects of which appear to have been felt not only in the north, but in Lancashire and Cheshire. Was this the date of the destruction of the Station, and was it ever re-built? If not existing (as a Station) at the close of the Roman period, would it be embraced in the Ravennate? We have still to obtain the evidence of buried inscriptions, some of which must certainly be hidden in the neighbourhood. Until then, the period of its extinction is mere guess work; but in favour of an early destruction, may be mentioned the state of the streets as revealed by the excavations of Dr. Robson and Mr. Beamont, as before stated, when I described the roads. These roads are not of the Lower Empire, and their good state of preservation would almost seem to suggest that they had been early abandoned. This fact, and the remarkable absence of coins of the Lower Empire, which are generally most plentiful at all Roman stations, possesses a deep significance, and is well worthy of further investigation.”

The discovery of a coin proving the existence of the Station as late as A.D. 323 is, therefore, of some archæological interest. It goes to show not only that the continuous existence of the Station down to the close of the Roman occupation and its inclusion in the Ravennate list under the name of *Veratinum* was possible, but also that it may have

7 *Roman Cheshire*, page 272.

remained a populous locality until now and retained an echo of its original appellation in the modern name of Warrington.

I am indebted to Mr. Robert Blair, F.S.A., who is well known as a numismatist, for the identification of a recently-discovered coin of Trajan (A.D. 98-117), and one of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), both in a too-much corroded condition for anyone but an expert to recognise.

Doubtless the conclusions of the older archæologists often need revision. Thus the famous Mr. Whitaker describes the peninsula once formed by the Mersey at Latchford, as "one of the most remarkable sites for a fortress that imagination can conceive," and identifies an earthen mound upon it as the rampart of the Roman encampment we are considering. "This rampart," says Mr. Ormerod, *History of Chester*, vol. i, part ii, p. 403, "was thrown up by my honest friend Mr. Lyon, the owner of Old Warps, to form an elevated retreat for sheep in time of high floods, as his worthy son, John Lyon, Esq., is ready to aver upon oath."

Even Ormerod himself may nod, for on the next page of his *History* he says—"When the numerous remains unearthed by Dr. Kendrick at Wilderspool are considered, we find every evidence of the oldest or one of the oldest settlements in Cheshire; in its altars, urns, a legendary (legionary?) tablet, and coins; but singularly the latest date does not go beyond A.D. 180." Where are these altars and legionary tablet? Certainly they are not known as existing in the locality, the altar now exhibited being the only one recorded.

The late Dr. Kendrick, we are told, gave up the idea that Wilderspool was *Condate*, and shortly before his death acknowledged that Mr. Watkin was right in identifying the latter with Kinderton. In his *Guide*, p. 5, he states: "I lay no further



"claim to the position of an archæologist than as "a mere collector." Therefore we can fully appreciate his valuable collection of relics without being obliged to pin our faith to his conclusions. During the recent excavations no signs whatever were observed in the Roman stratum of the "fierce "conflagration" so often mentioned in his *Guide*, and no sufficient grounds appear to have existed for invoking such a *Deus ex machinâ* to account for the destruction of the Station. From the only locality where "a stratum of blackened and carbonized vegetable soil" was seen, the Roman stratum had been previously removed, and a piece of modern pottery was found directly underneath. This fragment and specimens of the carbonized vegetable soil with separated grains of charred wheat in bottles are upon the table. All the other appearances relied on by Dr. Kendrick as evidences of a conflagration have proved equally fallacious. "Layers of sand in natural strata, but whitened "or calcined by the heat of a conflagration," are mentioned on p. 6 of the *Guide*. But the calcined appearance of the sand is produced by the roots of trees (it is visible beneath the tree represented in the plan and section), or any other object on the surface which prevents the percolation of moisture, and also by the reduction on exposure, to black oxide, of the red oxide of iron by which the sand is coloured. On p. 7 of the *Guide* it is stated, with reference to the deposits of red clay at the level of the Roman stratum: "Even here the "reddened hue of the upper part of the clay shows "that even in its wet state it has felt the influence "of the conflagration and become partly baked." These deposits of soft clay are in fact equally red at top and bottom. The iron objects are stated on p. 25 "to have suffered much by corrosive "oxidation, apparently aggravated by the blister.

"ing effect of intense fire"; and Dr. Kendrick adds—"That this has been the cause of so great disfigurement of otherwise perfect specimens is evidenced by the fact that the blistered effect is apparently on one side."

By simple inspection of the objects themselves in the Warrington Museum or upon the table, the absurdity of this assumption will be perceived, since they are not more blistered on one side than the other, nor more corroded than the iron swords from the Viking graves, buried in the earth three or four centuries later, as seen in many of our museums. Even "irregular masses of lead" are cited as evidence of "the supposed general conflagration of the Station," yet the perfect objects in lead, both here and in Warrington Museum, are exceptionally numerous, and clearly demonstrate the absence of any general conflagration. How could they and such delicate objects as the bronze *ligula* or diminutive spoon have survived such an ordeal?

There are, consequently, no adequate grounds for inferring the destruction of the Station at Wilderspool at an earlier date than other Roman settlements round about. The latest coins recorded as having been found at Ribchester, (*Bremontonacum*), are of Valens, A.D. 364; at Manchester (*Mancunium*) of Valentinian, A.D. 364; at Chester (*Deva*) of Magnus Maximus, A.D. 383. There were also discovered in the two last-mentioned localities a number of the small barbarous *minimi* in use after the Roman departure, proving their continued occupation down to about the fifth century of our era. Why, then, should the earlier destruction of the Station at Wilderspool be assumed without definite proof?

In direct proof of the prolonged existence of the Station, the recent discoveries at Cambridge of Prof. T. McKenny Hughes, M.A., F.S.A., &c., may



be cited. From noting the objects, associated together at several horizons in a corner that had once been a laystall, or place where rubbish might be shot for fifteen centuries, he inferred "that the "Roman type of the commoner ware (of pottery) "did prevail all through the six centuries from "the withdrawal of the Romans to the Norman "conquest." At Wilderspool, numerous fragments of Old English pottery have been collected, principally on the undisturbed surface of the Roman street.

The Saxon names of the adjoining hamlets, Stockton Heath and Walton Superior and Inferior, indicate a survival of the Station, or some portion of it, down to the Saxon period. Town Field was the name of the site at the beginning of this century, and at Humberstone, in Leicestershire, there are three sides of a similar encampment, defended by a mound and trench, still known as Town Field. This, and other remains near Wily, known by the popular name of Stocktown Works, and described by Sir R. Colt Hoare in his *Ancient Wilts*, are referred to by Wright as "seeming to "show, that in some parts of the island, even in "the country villages, the peasantry were not driven "from their habitations."

It need hardly be mentioned that the names of many modern towns retain an echo of the names of Roman settlements on the same spot, as is supposed to be the case with *Veratinum* and Warrington.

