

As the ice cleared, man came north and found an unattractive land of moorland, forest and bog. Only on the coast was movement easy.

Cumbria never knew the Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic), for remains of this period have been found only as far north as Derby, our area being still ice-covered at this time. There is evidence, however, that man settled on the coast in the Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic). Here he could fish, hunt in the fringes of the unbroken forest, catch wildfowl and gather food from trees and the shore. He has left evidence in tiny flint tools, [1] found in the boulder clay along the coast, where they had been deposited from a chalk reef under the Irish Sea. [2] These people may have penetrated up the rivers, including the Derwent. They were probably short in stature, long-headed (dolicho-cephalic) and pleasant looking. [3] It is unlikely that we shall ever know whether they reached our area.

The succeeding culture of the New Stone Age (Neolithic), of about 4000BC onwards, did exist in the Cockermouth area. There is evidence these men who were not only hunters and fishers, introduced the revolutionary ideas of herding cattle and, on a very small scale, of growing crops, using polished stone hoes. They also brought the crafts of pottery and weaving and used wood and leather for domestic utensils. Their stone axes were ground and polished, an advance on those of Mesolithic man. The limestone, hills and boulder clays were suitable for stock, while the lighter and better drained soils of the moraines could be more easily worked to grow small areas of grain.

Pollen analysis suggests that with improved axes came the first attacks on the forests, providing timber for housing and equipment and leafy branches as supplementary fodder. [4]

At Moss Garth, in Portinscale, the discovery of chippings and five unfinished tools suggests that here was a finishing place for tool manufacture [5] and proves that man had penetrated that far from the coast. We know that he went into the fells for volcanic rocks to make axes and adzes and also barbs and tips on fish-spears and arrow-heads. [6] The axe manufacture carried on at a number of sites in the central fells was a well-organised trade, with finishing sites on lower and more hospitable ground and distribution over most of Britain. [7] The Buttermere valley is one route from the central area to the Cumbrian plain and 'Cockermouth' probably saw something of this trade.

The most spectacular finds of this period were those at Ehenside Tarn when it was drained about 1870, but a number of discoveries have been made in the Cockermouth area. A canoe, burned out from a tree trunk, was found in the Stanger stretch of the Cocker. The owner probably fished from it using a flint-tipped or bone-tipped spear. In 1931 a perforated axe-hammer, rather crudely tapered to a point at both ends and 5.3 inches [135mm] long, was found in the same area at Stanger Farm. Early this century a later Neolithic stone hammer-axe was unearthed in the garden of Moorland Close, 9 inches [225mm] long, weighing 7½ pounds, and two lighter unpolished axes of similar size were discovered in Eaglesfield last century. A stone hammerhead 5.5 inches cobble, was unearthed at Waterloo Farm and in 1861 a coarse crystalline perforated axe-hammer of over 11 inches turned up in Bewaldeth. The following year a similar find was made at Whinfell and in 1879 a 10 inch [250 mm] polished blue whinstone axe was found at Isel.

In January 1949 Mr. W. Cook of Anfield Farm found an axe head lying on the surface of a ploughed field. One end is square-butted, the other tapers to an axe edge. The hole is central, hour-glass shape and 2 inches across at the surface. The whole head measures 8 by 4 by 2.75 inches and weighs 4¾ pounds; it appears to be made of a coarse-grained igneous rock. [8] This axe was found within the Cockermouth boundary-how many more lie buried?

Stones which have been used for sharpening prehistoric cutting tools (celts) have been found in Cumbria, one from Lazonby having 70 grooves worn in it. [9]

Ehenside and other finds show that our predecessors of that time lived well. Great quantities of bones and shells occur amongst broken pottery, proving that they ate oxen, sheep, pigs, goats, deer, porpoise, fish and shell-fish.

Added to these products of their hunting, fishing and stock-farming would be the wild fruits they gathered and the grain they grew. They also had the benefits of weaving and leather crafts. Then came the first metal workers into our region, with the ability to use bronze. Concentrated in the south of the country, some had worked their way north to Cumbria by about 1800 BC. The new arrivals

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were very different from the stone-age dwellers already here. They were taller, averaging about 5 feet 8 inches muscular. Supported on cylindrical necks they had round heads (brachy-cephalic) instead of long, with broad jaws and wide mouths, up-turned noses and high cheek-bones, and eyes sunk beneath beetling brows. By our standards they were ugly! They may have enslaved the long-heads, they may have taken the women as wives, but they did not exterminate the people they found here. The evidence lies in burial barrows where long and round skulls have been found side by side and in later barrows where skulls of intermediate shape occur, proving intermarriage. [11]

The Early Bronze Age culture overlapped with the Neolithic. These Beaker Folk, so named from the drinking vessels which they made and which they buried with their dead, were nomadic stock-raisers, living in temporary wooden huts or bivouacs. The rare finds show that the earliest use of metal was to make flattish axe-heads in imitation of the stone axes. They still used stone, chipping the hour-glass hole from both sides, and the Anfield axe may be from this period. They still used flint for arrow-heads. The Neolithic folk had contacts with Ireland, for their stone axes have been found there. The Early Bronze people developed these contacts, for Ireland was one of the main centres of bronze manufacture in Europe, as copper, gold and tin could be obtained in the Wicklow Mountains. It is probable that a trading community, of which West Cumbria was a part, developed around the Irish Sea.

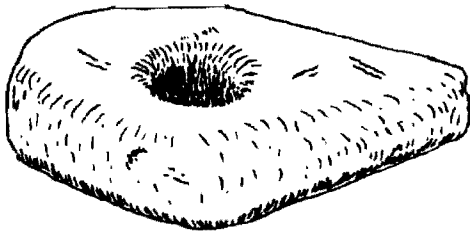


Fig 5. *The Anfield stone axe*

and scarcity would also account for the continued use of stone. In both stone and metal the workmanship was good, and good pottery of this period has been found in Cumbria.

The 17 megalithic (large-stone) circles found in the Lake District date from this time, their location in the Eden and Eamont region, in the Derwent valley and in West Cumbria showing that these were the areas of settlement. The nearest to Cockermouth is on Elva Plain, 470 feet level on the slopes of Elva Hill (OS 177 317).

This circle consists of 15 stones and an outlier, but by estimating what were once in the present gaps there may have been about thirty originally. The stones do not now stand high, one reaching 3 feet 6 inches, one 2 feet, the rest less, four of them being flush with the ground. Nor are they large, the biggest being about 4 feet square. One proves to consist of three on close inspection, not unknown in such circles. Megalithic circles are usually near a spring and the proximity of an isolated farmhouse to Elva Circle is proof of a water supply. The circle is about 100 feet [30.5m] across, hence its inclusion in the 'large' category. Askew states that a Mr. Fletcher Grave of Cockermouth reported that in about 1820, before enclosure of the common lands in this area, it consisted of many large stones and contained an inner circle of 'similar stones, sixty and twenty paces respectively in circumference. [13] There is no trace of an inner circle nor has one been mentioned by recent investigators.

The name 'Elva' has been variously given as derived from the Old Norse personal noun Elfr or from Wlva, whence Elfhow or elf-house, indicating that the site was believed to be haunted.

The purpose of the large circles is not clear.

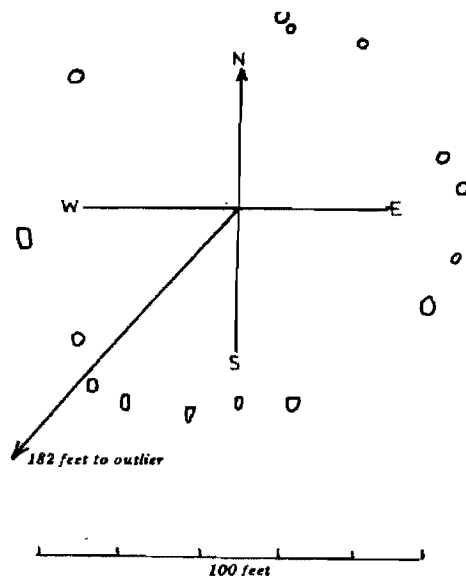


Fig 6. *Elva Plain circle*
(after W.D. Anderson NS23)

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They were for a long time thought to be for religious purposes, their proximity to reliable springs or wells which might have been regarded as sacred supporting this idea. Investigations have now shown that in the case of Castlerigg and Long Meg a line drawn from the outlier through the centre of the circle goes to the summit of a hill over which the sun rises on May 1st or 2nd, when Beltane fires were lit on summits in honour of the Earth God, Beal or Bile. [14] Examination of the pattern and dimensions of some 250 circles suggests definite alignment. The large circles were then possibly for astronomical observations to determine solstices, etc., and, as the religion of the time was linked to the sun and moon and changing seasons, as for example in the Beltane fires, their purpose was also religious. They would serve as tribal meeting places on these special occasions and also when an extraordinary gathering had to be called. One thing is certain - they were not built as burial places and there are no hearths suggesting sacrifices.

The circles support the theory that Neolithic man made his way northwards from Africa, for similar ones are found in Algeria and Tunisia.

About 1400 BC the Early Bronze Age merged into the Middle Bronze, marked by a decreased use of stone, by a greater variety of types of axe and by developments in the making of spear-heads, daggers and rapiers. Barley as a cereal crop was another new feature. Trading with Ireland was continued and developed, before it fell off in the Late Bronze Age about 750 BC, perhaps because a stormier period followed a time of warm, calm summers. [15] The Irish trade used Morecambe Bay and the Derwent, Ellen and Eden Rivers. 'Cockermouth' was no doubt involved. Tools and ornaments are found over a wider area than in the Early Bronze Age and there is some evidence that manufacture and trading were thoroughly reorganised about 1000 BC, shortly before the end of the Middle Bronze Age.

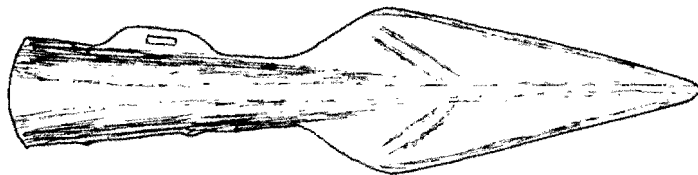


Fig. 7. Middle Bronze Age looped spear-head, 5 inches long. Found at Blindbothel (after Miss C. I. Fell, from a photograph NS 40, Tullie House Museum).

Further developments occurred about 800 BC or a little later, distinguished now as the Late Bronze Age, which was to last until the introduction of iron in this part of the country probably only shortly before the Romans arrived. During this period there were two waves of new arrivals, both Celtic speaking. The first, in the sixth and fifth centuries BC, were the Goidels

(Hiberno-Celts), ancestors of the present Gaels of Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland, who spoke Gadhelic or Gaelic. They were followed in the fourth century by the Brythons (Cambro-Celts) from Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, speaking Cymric or Welsh. [16] Some historians put these arrivals as early as 900 BC and some maintain that they were long-heads again, physically attractive and intellectually vigorous - and Askew said the inhabitants of Cockermouth and district are distinguished by their long-headedness!

As in the change from Early to Middle Bronze, so again there was now a great increase in the number and variety of bronze objects, as well as improvements in spinning and weaving. In Sweden the ox-plough had been introduced, but there is no evidence that it was known in Cumbria. Sledges and pack-animals would be the form of transport; evidence of horses or wheeled-vehicles did not appear until nearer Roman times. [17]

The Early Bronze Age people both buried and cremated their dead, ashes being placed in urns, usually collared, from about 1600 BC. Sometimes the body, or its ashes, was placed in a stone chest covered with slabs (a cist) and a cairn of stones built over it. Hundreds of cairns and tumuli or barrows are known in the West Cumbrian foothills and those examined have been of the Bronze Age, containing urns with human ashes and bone fragments. Cup and ring markings, such as those on the stone in Butts field at Dean (OS 073 250), are usually associated with Bronze Age burials.

Within Cockermouth itself is the small Toot or Tute Hill opposite the castle, unexcavated but traditionally considered to be a tumulus. The name derives from the ME 'tote', a look-out hill. Nearby

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Charley Hill is a natural mound, used on more than one occasion as a base for bombarding the castle.

Solitary standing stones, of which there were once a number near Cockermouth, may have been a method of marking the burial place of an important king, priest or warrior. Denwood refers to a huge monolith near the Derwent below Papcastle, demolished in 1946. Askew refers to one across the Derwent from what is now the A66 junction west of the town, possibly the same as Denwood's, and to three in a field between Papcastle and Broughton, all of blue-stone probably from the river bed.

In the middle and later bronze periods small stone circles were erected on burial sites in the foothills, some 500 years later than the large circles. By this time cremation was nearly always used. One such small circle stands near Studfold Gate (OS 040 224), once 110 feet by 87 feet. A modern wall passes through the centre and only eight stones remain in position.

In 1876, when digging a cutting half a mile south of Branthwaite for the Ullock to Distington railway, Bronze Age burial urns were unearthed. One of them, now in Carlisle, is 13.5 inches high and 12 inches maximum diameter, the upper half decorated with encrusted work- a band of zigzag pattern between two bands of vertical lines.

Findings of this period include a bronze javelin head, 4 inches [100 mm] long, which was four feet deep in moss at High Dyke, Blindbothel. It is of the type used by the Romans when they invaded Britain and in 1874, shortly after its discovery, was on view in the window of the Old Curiosity Shop in Station Street, Cockermouth, later going to Tullie House Museum. There is a record of a 5.1 inches bronze socketed spear head being found in Blindbothel in 1872. A bronze flanged axe, nearly 5 inches long, turned up at Waterloo Farm, and one slightly larger in Branthwaite. [18] In 1883 a stone mould

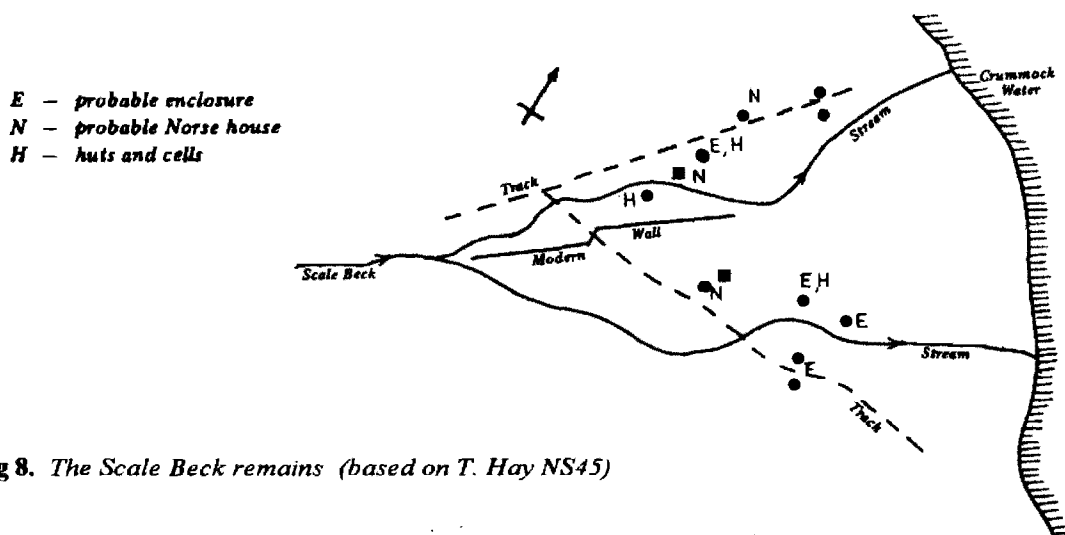


Fig 8. *The Scale Beck remains (based on T. Hay NS45)*

for casting spear heads was found, far from our area, at Croglin near Penrith. [19] A rather different find was of grains of barley, discovered in a Middle Bronze collared urn in Papcastle.

Large and small stone circles and other remains show that man penetrated into the hills in the Bronze Age, not only to seek stone for axes but to clear forest and settle. On Bannside Moor near Coniston charred remains of well-woven cloth were found in a collared urn, showing that there were sheep on the fells in the 2nd millennium BC, the sheep no doubt guarded from wolves, etc., and not allowed to roam freely as today. It has been suggested that they were kept on higher ground to avoid flatworm, a sheep parasite requiring water for its development. [20] What held in the Coniston area most probably occurred in the hills to the south and east of Cockermouth.

Slightly later than the time the Goidels and Brythons came to Cumbria, Belgic tribes entered south-east Britain bringing with them the ability to work in iron. This would be about the fifth century onwards, but probably this knowledge reached our area only shortly before the Romans. Its spread would be delayed by the unsettled state of the north of the country, peopled by warlike and backward Brigantes ('free men'). The Brigantes were divided into a large number of clans, and while the iron age culture had been established in eastern Yorkshire by the fourth century BC and may have helped

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the establishment of one Brigantian kingdom extending over the north of the country, it took a long time for the culture to cross the Pennines and Lakeland mountains to West Cumbria. The arrival of the Iron Age in the south of Britain had meanwhile increased the isolation of Cumbria as the remaining

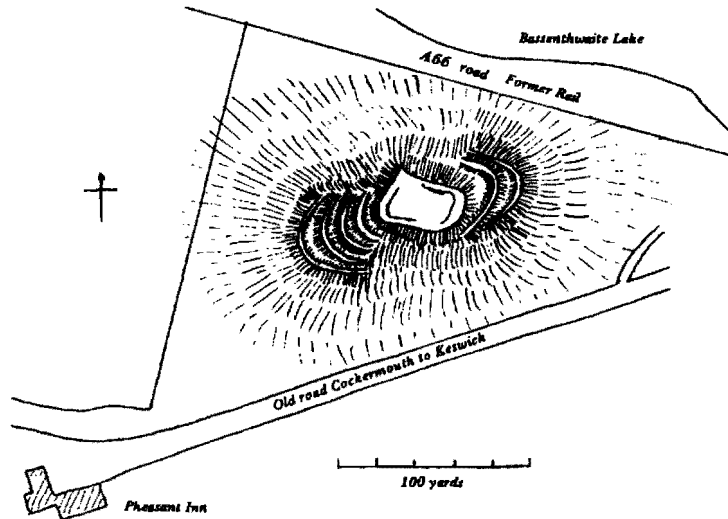


Fig 9. Iron Age refuge, Castle How, Piel Wyke (after J.R. Curwen NS11)

demand for stone axes fell off and the related trade contacts declined, an isolation not broken until the Romans came. [21]

The Iron Age inhabitants left ample evidence of their presence. They developed a system of settlement in which a number of dwellings were surrounded by a rampart and ditch, probably to keep out animals rather than men. Usually sites outside the mountains were chosen, with the exception in Cumbria of the large Iron Age fort on Carrock Fell, one of the largest in Britain is approx 800 x 370 feet [240 x 110 m] and possibly a Brigantian capital or a control

fort to supervise conquered tribes in the surrounding area (OS 342 337). On the other sites the hut circles of stone, turf and brushwood and the surrounding embankment of stones and rubble have collapsed and been overgrown, but the general layout may be seen and faint trackways and field outlines often discerned, especially from the air. The fallen remains of huts suggest that their walls were some four or five feet in height, capped by a pointed roof.

Outstanding Romano-British settlements, so called because of the overlap of the Iron Age with Roman occupation, have been excavated at Urswick in Furness and Ewe Close near Crosby Ravensworth, but we have good examples within a short distance of Cockermouth. At Lanthwaite Green, at the foot of the fells and near the beck flowing out from Gasgale Gill (OS 161 210), the outer circle may be clearly seen and within it a large number of small overgrown heaps of stone. On the other side of the lake some of the considerable remains along Scale Beck where it flows into Crummock are probably of this period, although many features date from later times. There is an enclosure on the fell north of Moota (OS 141 380) and in the coastal area a round hut at Wolsty Hall, Silloth, and a cattle enclosure at Risehow both date from the pre-Roman Iron Age.

On Aughtertree Fell (OS 262 381), near Sandale, 900 feet above sea-level, is a 'village' of three large circular enclosures with hollows inside and a complex of tracks and fields outside, probably occupied during the Roman period.

There is a site within Cockermouth at the Fitz ('riverside meadows'). In Fitz Wood, between the house and the A66, are a well-preserved rampart and ditch, 750 feet [230 m] round with a straight ditch cutting across (OS 108 304). This possibly dates from the Iron Age and may have been re-used in later times.

The Iron Age dwellers in the area also developed hilltop fortifications, probably for short-term refuge, a similar purpose to that of the peel towers of a later date. The top of Castle How at Piel (or Peel) Wyke, between the Pheasant Inn and the A66, has been adapted as such a refuge (OS 202 308). The hill is a short natural ridge. No work had to be done on the steep sides to improve its defence, but on the gentler slope of the western end four trenches were dug, while on the steeper eastern end two were sufficient. The first of these is a very slight hollow, but the inner one is appreciable, having been six feet deep and ten across. The summit, a plateau 42 yards by 20 yards, has been hollowed out and

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levelled, leaving the natural rock as a defensive embankment. It may have been strengthened by an oak palisade. There is no evidence of masonry and no remains, bones, pottery, etc. have been found. Obviously it was intended as a temporary refuge for a day or two until danger had passed. Before the making of the A66 there was a place on the lake shore below where dug-out canoes could land. [23] The name 'Fairy Glen' sometimes heard recalls the legend that this is where a fairy was last seen in Cumberland.

It is impossible to decide whether some sites were settlements and equally difficult to date them. Such are the remains at Park Hill, Dean; the two sets of parallel trenches in the butts field at Dean (flax retting ?) (OS 073 251) and the mounds and cup and ring stone in the same field; groundworks at Moorland Close; and fragments of straight ramparts near Loweswater. What was the 'White Causeway' north of Pardshaw Crags (OS 103 264)? Were the raised platform of compact gravel and small boulders and the moss ring enclosing an acre of swampy ground man-made? Were other small earthworks and terraces said to have been noticeable before enclosure between here and Cockermouth constructed defences? [24]

Turning from sites to implements, the most spectacular find from this period is the Embleton sword, now in the British Museum. Probably of a rather later date, the end of the first century AD or the beginning of the second, it is the type of Celtic work which the Romans found in use when they came to Cumbria. It is of iron, with bronze and enamelled hilt and scabbard, and was found near Wythop Mill (OS 178 295).[25] In 1985 a replica of the sword was made by the apprentices at Workington British Steel and presented to the Embleton parish on the occasion of a flower festival in the church.

It would appear that the Iron Age folk did not cremate their dead. The discovery of bronze sword and horse bones with one burial suggests that they may have buried ready for the next life.

From what has been written it will have become obvious that sites were often occupied for a considerable time. The Iron Age dwellings by Scale Beck were added to by the Norse. Boat How, on the southern side of Ennerdale near its upper end, may have been occupied from Neolithic times about the end of the tenth century BC to the Viking period, over two thousand years. The extensive remains on Stockdale, east of the road over Cold Fell, may have been left by Bronze Age farmers, Britons in Roman times, Viking shepherds of the tenth century AD or sheep farmers moving from the lowlands to higher summer pastures as late as the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries [26] - possibly by more than

one, even all, of these groups. The Ehenside Tarn site produced a rotary quern suggesting that it was in use in the

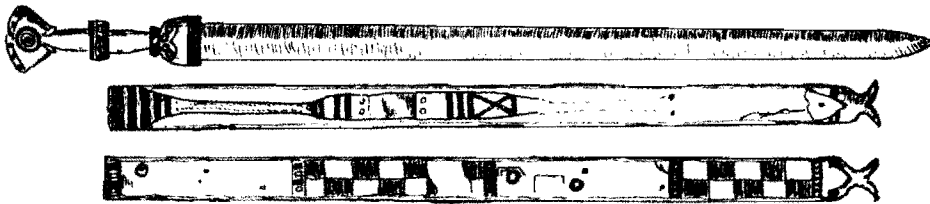


Fig. 10. The Embleton Sword (from a drawing in *Early Settlement in the Lake Counties* by permission of Miss C. I. Fell).

Roman period, a long time after the Neolithic settlers. The site at Wolsty was extended during Roman times.

The Cockermouth Fitz circle may have been occupied in mediaeval times. If a site was a good one it was natural that it should remain occupied or be reoccupied after an interval. This increases the difficulty of finding evidence of the overlaid earlier cultures, as clues are easily destroyed, but in spite of this and in spite of the considerable destruction, quite unwittingly, by agriculture, we can piece together some picture of what life in and around Cockermouth was like before the Romans came to Papcastle.

The first settlement of any size and importance in the Cocker mouth area was the Roman fort of Derventio, on the site of present-day Papcastle. Before considering this site in detail it will be helpful to understand something of why the Romans came, what they found here and what effect their stay had on the district.

They began a serious occupation of the south of the country in AD 43, where they found an Iron Age culture fairly well developed on a basis of arable and stock farming with pottery making and textile manufacture. Pushing northwards through the forest they encountered the Brigantes, a confederation of tribes centred on York. Though wild and warlike, they had evolved some degree of civilisation, having a king and queen, using gold coinage and living in small communities. The Romans formed an alliance with the confederation, which enabled them to concentrate on organising the south of the country.[1]

The alliance broke down in AD 69 as a result of pro-Roman and anti-Roman factions amongst the Brigantes. The Romans postponed their intended invasion of Wales and came north, driving King Venutius from his stronghold near Richmond to establish a new town on Ingleborough. [2] His pro-Roman wife Cartimandua divorced him. By AD 74 the native peoples had retreated into the dales and the invaders stopped for four years at a temporary fort on Stainmore, facing through the gap into unconquered Cumbria, while they again turned their attention to conquering Wales. [3] This being accomplished by 78, Julius Agricola, appointed legate of Britain in that year, pushed north to the Forth-Clyde line, but the invaders abandoned much of Scotland by AD 96.

Meanwhile further south people were settling down under Roman rule, Britons near the towns tending to adopt Roman dress, education and language. Agricola's policy of conciliation seems to have been successful during his six years of governorship.

A system of roads and forts was developed in the Lake District very broadly around AD 90 with the two-fold purpose of separating sections of the local population so as to control them more effectively and of securing supply routes, such as that from Ravenglass to Ambleside and beyond. The Romans came as conquerors rather than as settlers, so chose sites for their military value, [4] but they were to remain for three and a half centuries, as long as from the end of the reign of James I in 1625 to the present day.

The method of occupation was to make a careful reconnaissance, then to lay out a network of roads dividing up the country. At each road junction, and between if distances were great, permanent forts were built. These might be for infantry or cavalry and each housed from 500 to 1000 men. A fort was commanded by a prefect or tribune, responsible to the legionary commander at York or Chester. [5]

The main roads north passed to the east of the Lake District, but the road from Ravenglass through the centre was important. Ravenglass, a port which flourished until medieval times, was with Chester a centre for importing wines and other supplies to the west. The remains of amphorae, great wine jars too big to be brought by road from Dover, have been found in the area. [6]

There were also eventually routes from Ravenglass up the west coast, probably to the end of Hadrian's Wall on the Solway, certainly to Carlisle via Papcastle, which was an important point in the developing road system.

In AD 117 the 9th Legion was defeated and shortly afterwards (in 122) the Emperor Hadrian came north. After his visit the wall which bears his name was built. There was already Stanegate from Carlisle to Corbridge and this continued to be used as a highway throughout the occupation, but Hadrian's Wall, running from Wallsend to Burgh Marsh and later extended to Bowness-on-Solway, closed the Tyne-Solway gap and became the permanent frontier of Roman Britain.

The Wall is a study in itself and we can only mention its effect on Cumbria, whose fortunes were often bound up with it. An attempt about AD 140 to provide a shock absorber in the Antonine Wall across the Clyde-Forth neck was not successful and forces on and behind the earlier wall were strengthened in the latter half of the century. There were wars between the troops and the native people in AD 155-8, 162 and 181. The first of these was a large-scale revolt of the Brigantes south of the Wall, put down with great severity.

Then in AD 193 Emperor Commodus was assassinated and Albinus, governor of Britain, withdrew most of the troops, taking them to Gaul to fight unsuccessfully in support of his claim to the

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vacant emperorship. While the defences were weakened the Wall was overrun from the north (in 197) and Roman fortifications destroyed as far south as York and Chester.

No doubt Lake District dwellers joined in, possibly in their own defence against the northern invaders, possibly joining with them against the Romans. The Wall was retaken by Rome, but repairs took 10 years and in AD 208-211 Emperor Severus (who had defeated Albinus in Gaul) came in person and conducted savage punitive campaigns.

A hundred years of peace followed, during which army recruiting became increasingly local and the Brigantes grew more co-operative under the valued protection of Rome. Then once again soldiers were withdrawn because of Roman discord and in AD 296 the Wall was overpowered and badly damaged. Repairs followed and peace reigned until 367 when Picts from the north, Saxons from Germany and Scots from Ireland all attacked, possibly attracted by the wealth of the region. [7] Although restored again, the Wall gradually ceased to be an effective frontier, defence being based on forts further south until in AD 410 Honorius proclaimed the independence of Britain. This meant he could no longer hold it and troops were withdrawn from the country.

It is necessary to keep the risings against Rome in perspective. For most of the 350 years of occupation there was peace along the Wall and in the area to the south of it, a peace which brought prosperity to the Papcastle district. Then with the end of Roman rule the Scots increased their raids on the coast and the Picts poured south of the Wall. Britain moved into the Dark Ages.

Recent work has revealed that from the end of the Wall at Bowness-on-Solway a complete system of mile-castles existed southwards to St. Bees, linking the forts at Maryport, Moresby, etc. The development of the road system in north Cumbria was geared to the needs of this line of defence against invasion by sea as well as to the Wall itself.

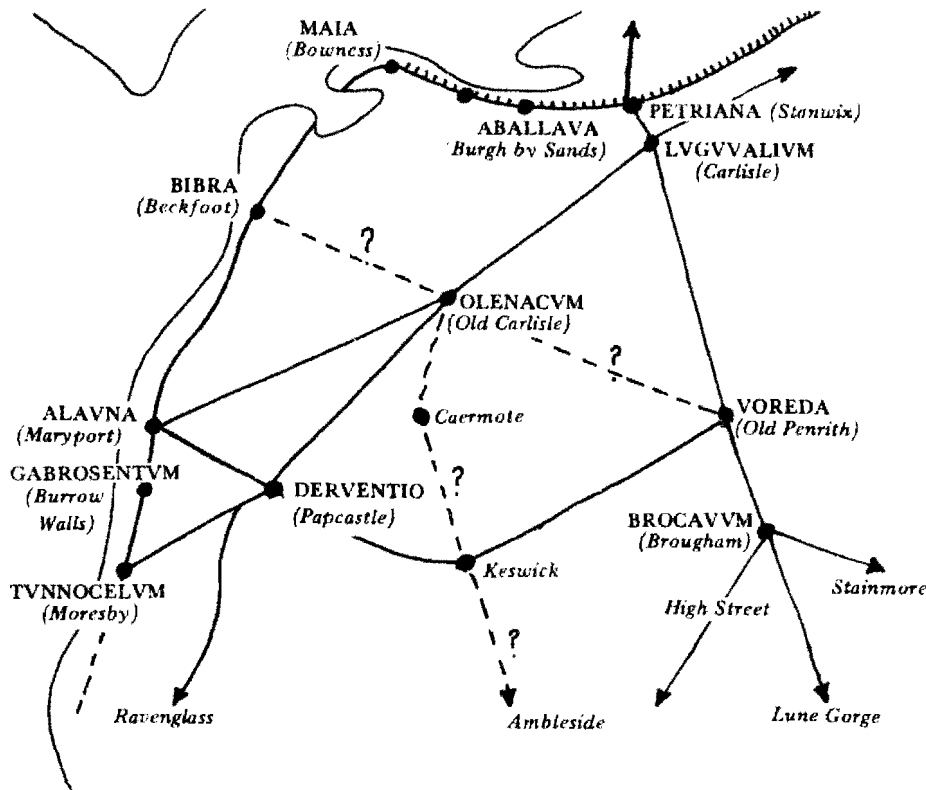


Fig. 11. The Roman Road system

Five roads radiated from Carlisle and Stanwix (the nine and a half acre fort to which the military moved from the city in AD 125), including that south-west to Old Carlisle near Wigton (OS 260 465). Old Carlisle was for long, possibly always, the only cavalry fort on the western flank of the Wall and the praefectus equitum in charge was senior to the prefects of the coastal forts and the inland fort at Papcastle. He was in effect commander of a district which may have stretched as far as Ravenglass and in an emergency could move a cavalry regiment or battalions of infantry from Old Carlisle without waiting for permission from either the senior officer of the Wall stationed at Stanwix or from headquarters at York. [1]

The south-westerly road continued beyond Old Carlisle to Papcastle and in 25 miles neither suddenly changed direction to avoid a difficult feature nor diverged more than half a mile from the direct line, so thorough was the original survey. The A595 follows the Roman road for considerable distances, the chief divergence being that the earlier route passed NW of Wharrels Hill and Bothel [2] and the present one curves round the SE.

Continuing in the same direction from Papcastle a road leads to Ravenglass.

In 1794 there was an "old paved way, seven yards in width, leading north and south" [3] near Eaglesfield, made of large flat stones. In 1816, passing near Lamplugh and Streetgate (significant name) in a direct line from Papcastle, was a road 18 feet wide [5.5m] made of cobbles and local freestone. [4] Limestone was to hand for the northern section, but sandstone was nevertheless used for the foundations to a cobbled surface.

Its route over Hotchberry has been located and there is considerable evidence further south in

Papcastle in the Roman road system

both names and ground signs. [5] As recently as the 1960s field drainage work uncovered it east of Dean Village. Near Dean a branch road diverged to Moresby, which may have been a garrison supply centre and which was well placed to watch the sea and a stretch of the coastal plain. A grant of land in Distington dated 1320 referred to "the great road under frothou towards Dean" and Stukeley wrote in 1776 that "there are evident signs of a Roman road from Morbium (Moresby) to Papcastle all the way"

Going NW from Papcastle is the road to Maryport, made of sandstone, limestone and cobbles. It follows a very straight route, along the occupation road west of Dovenby Hall to join the present Cockermouth-Maryport road from Linefoot to Dearham crossroads, whence it maintains the straight line to Camp Hill. [6] A raised section of the field path near the Dovenby Craggs - Broughton road (OS 097 325) is presumably part of this road. As far as is known Papcastle had no direct link with Burrow Walls, the fort near the mouth of the Derwent (a harbour since pre-historic times).

South East from Papcastle a road went via Whinlatter Pass to Keswick, then continued

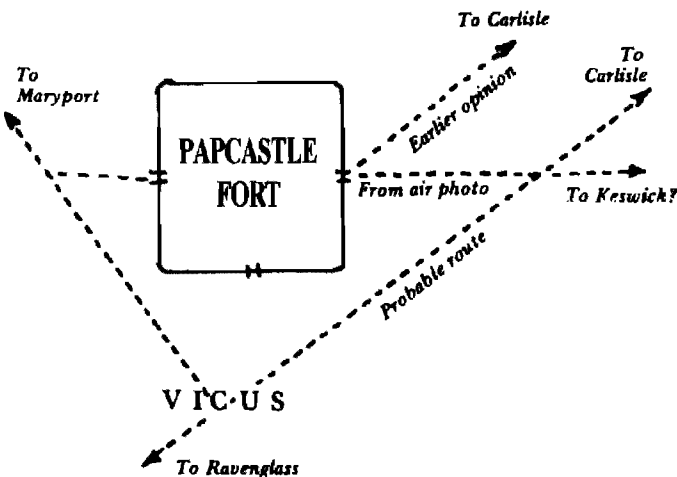


Fig 12. Roads at Papcastle Fort

eastwards. Evidence was provided in 1952 by the discovery just north of the former Braithwaite railway station of a metalled causeway, 20 feet wide, apparently never a farm track and lying in a Whinlatter-Keswick direction. [7] Earlier, in 1921, traces were reported of a Roman road crossing the Derwent above its confluence with the Greta and carried on an embankment to the foot of Whinlatter [8].

There is a very early reference in a Fountains Abbey Cartulary to a causeway across the nearby marshes. It seems reasonable to suppose that there

was a fort in such an obvious centre as Keswick, but it has never been found.

It is a natural choice for a control centre for the surrounding hills and is at the focus of a number of valleys. Roads would go not only east and west, but south to the fort at Ambleside and north via Caermote fort to Old Carlisle.

The purpose of Caermote (OS 202 368) near Bothel Craggs is obscure - possibly to control lead mining in the Caldbeck Fells to the east, possibly related to signalling from a nearby beacon. The original fort was a small 3.5 acre cohort camp and was later replaced by an even smaller one within the boundary of the first. [9] There may have been a road link with Papcastle. The road system in the immediate neighbourhood of Papcastle fort is interesting. Bellhouse points out that a change in direction of only 2 degrees at OS 133 340 on the Carlisle road avoids an ascent and coincides with the old Cockermouth - Carlisle road.[10] Continuation in the same direction passes to the south of the fort and leads to Tendley Hill. Also the road from Maryport passes the fort, this time on the south-west. The two roads may have connected outside the fort but within the vicus, the Carlisle road having a link to the east gate and the Maryport one to the south or west gate.

Aerial photography has shown a road from the east gate which may have served not only as a link road but also been part of the road to Whinlatter, avoiding two river crossings by reaching the Derwent above the Cocker's present or former entry and then turning southwards.

It appears that here the main roads did not pass through the fort, as at Maryport, but skirted it, as at Old Carlisle. [11] From Papcastle, as from Old Carlisle, reinforcements could be rapidly moved along the diverging roads in an emergency. Normally the roads would be patrolled and along them would pass convoys of supplies, escorted high-ranking army officers and detachments of troops. The local people doubtless used them to convey their produce to the welcome market provided by the Papcastle garrison.

Unfortunately the layout of Papcastle fort cannot be seen, as can that of Housesteads or Chesters. We may only dimly discern some of the enclosing ramparts. Excavations, never very extensive, have however revealed sufficient for us to have some idea of its position and extent and evidence from such excavations as those at Vindolanda helps us to piece together a picture of life in the extensive civil settlement or vicus which existed below the fort.

In his first edition of "Britannia", in 1586, the historian William Camden referred to "the carcase of an ancient fort whose Roman antiquity is attested by not a few monuments". In the edition of 1607 he added

"where among many monuments of antiquitie, was found a broad vessell of a greenish stone, artificially engraven with little images; which whether it had been a Laver to wash in, or a font... for which purpose it serveth now at Brid-Kirke, that is, at S. Bridgids Church hard by, I dare not say"

This is the famous Bridekirk font, now with runic inscriptions added in the 12th. century, possibly brought from the ruins of Papcastle as Camden says.

Detailed records begin in 1725 when the antiquary William Stukeley picnicked on the site with Humphrey Senhouse and the historian Gale. Stukeley wrote:

"The Roman castrum lies upon the top of the hill, above the village. I soon traced out its whole circumference, though the inhabitants had not the least notion of where it stood, supposing it to be lower down. . . . The whole town, and perhaps Cockermonth castle and town, are built out of it; likewise the walls of all the pastures and corn-fields adjoining. Free-stone cut is very common, which they say must have been fetched a good way off, because there is none such in the neighbourhood; and a good deal of ashlar is still left in the ground. . . . (He then refers to coins, etc., found on the site.)

The famous font, now at Bridekirk, was taken up at this place, in the pasture south of the south-east angle of the city, by a lane called Moorwent. . . . (References to stones, slates and flooring discovered.)... This was a beautiful and well-chosen place, a south-west side of the hill, a most noble river running under it, and a pretty good country about it, as one may judge by the churches;. . . On the side of the hill are many pretty springs; at one of them we drank a bottle of wine, to the memory of the founders; then poured some of the red juice into the fountain-head, to the nymph of the place. "[1]

In a letter of the early 1740s Thomas Routh spoke of ruins on the declivity towards the river below the fort. In a field between the village and the river, known as Sibby, was a pavement "curiously laid with large stones three-quarters of a yard square and two or three inches thick", on a base of "coarse strong cement". Some had been torn up in a search for coins underneath. In the same field two walls ran east-west, seven yards apart. Also found were a Samian vase (brick-red or black pottery with a lustrous glaze, named after the island of Samos), a stone trough or pillar base, a drain and a clay vessel. The following year a fibula and a coin of Trajan were unearthed.

F.L. Ballentine-Dykes of Dovenby, who made a complete survey of the road from Papcastle to Maryport which passed his home, wrote of Papcastle in 1859:

"The ditch is plain on the east, down past the Pinfold, through Mr. Wybergh's and Dr. Dodgson's grounds, and, in a somewhat irregular line, through Mr. Waugh's property to the river.

There is a very fine rampart at the river's edge for some little distance, giving apparently a river frontage. Nothing can be traced up the hill again on the west, all having been obliterated by a considerable wash and run on to the land from the town.

At the foot of the hill is a very distinct track of a road sweeping round to the south, and crossing the Derwent by a ford. It is popularly termed the Friar's Walk. This has greatly the appearance of a junction with the road lately discovered in Mr. Harris's pleasure grounds and running under part of his house (Derwent Lodge).

I happened to be looking over the locality a day or two after the discovery of a perfect Roman well, in Mr. Harris's pleasure-grounds. It had shortly been cleaned out, but no remains had been met with. I found it very neatly walled, about 2ft. 4 ins, in diameter, and 25 to 30 feet deep, very similar to the one in Maryport camp. As soon as it had been cleaned out, the water began to flow rapidly.

If the ditch bounded the camp, I thought that the well, being outside, might have appeared strange, but it was evidently used for other purposes. Close to it a sort of receptacle was discovered, in which was a large mass of unworked pottery-clay of a fine red colour and quality, unknown in this country. Along with the clay were also pieces of finished pottery and fragments. And the well, no doubt, was used for tempering the clay, and for other purposes of the workmen, who seem to have hastily left the locality. In the upper part of the ditch a quantity of charred grain also was found a few years ago."

Papcastle fort and vicus

Of this description Eric Birley noted:

“the suggestion that the whole Roman site was enclosed by a rampart and ditch carried down the hill and along the north bank of the Derwent, thus in effect enclosing the vicus downhill from the fort. If Dykes was correct, that would mean that Papcastle (. . . like Maryport, Kirkby Thore) developed (no doubt in the third and fourth centuries) into a substantial place in its own right, the area ultimately defended by a rampart being substantially larger than that occupied by the fort under shelter of which the civilian settlement had grown up.” [2]

Ballentine-Dykes drew attention to the excellence of this site for a Roman fort. It stands on a spur of heavy clay almost three hundred feet above sea-level with clear views around. The north face falls fairly steeply into a narrow depression, marshy at the bottom; to the west the land runs down in a long ridge to flat ground by the river; while to the south it drops more quickly to the riverside land. Only the neck of the spur, to the east, required defensive work. In addition the Derwent circles it to the south.

The Friar’s Walk mentioned by Dykes fits in with the road to the south-west described in the last chapter. At its end there must have been a ford or bridge across the Derwent. There is no masonry visible and the crossing has never been investigated. Discoveries began to indicate that Papcastle was an important fort and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society decided to excavate, the aim being to fix the limits of the camp by trenching. Under W.G. Collingwood between four and seven men worked for a fortnight in 1912 at a cost of £20 and, although much of interest was found, it is not surprising that with such limited resources and time the task was not completed. To the north they found the rampart to be about nine feet across. A ditch was unnecessary on this side because of the slope, but about twelve feet north of the rampart was a retaining wall three feet wide.

There were no remains of the southern rampart. The excavators located a gate in the eastern wall. The north and south jambs were found, but the whole had been robbed and altered, the complete

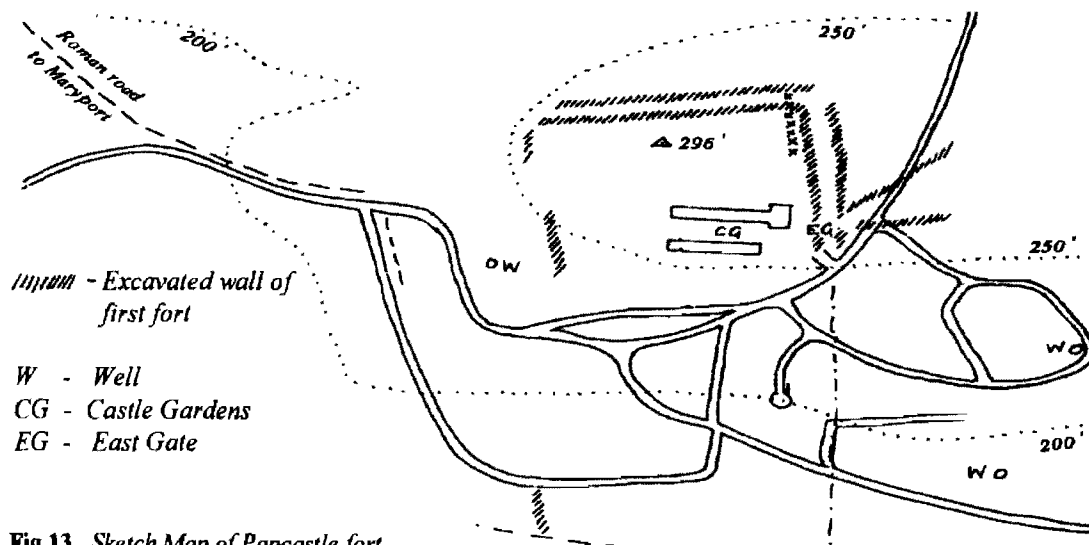


Fig 13. Sketch Map of Papcastle fort

rampart having been removed from south of the gateway, leaving a hollow. This gateway stood just to the right of the present entrance to Castle Gardens and its discovery is of interest in assessing the size of the fort, for if it was in the middle of the rampart then we can estimate where the south-east corner was, since the position of the north-east corner is known. By this argument, the corner must have been north-west of Derwent Lodge.

Papcastle fort and vicus

The paving of the gateway, as elsewhere on the site, was a concrete made of lime and river gravel, with many quartz and coloured pebbles on the surface as ornament. Fragments of roofing slates, amphorae and Samian ware lay on the floors by the gateway. Attempts to find a granary failed, nor was the principia located, but the team did uncover a building containing large quantities of fragmented pottery. Trenching revealed that large parts of the camp were terraced with retaining walls on the slope to the south, the northern rampart being almost on the crest of the hill.

An interesting discovery in 1912 was that there had been an earlier fort on the site, further below the surface and less disturbed than the one being excavated.

Collingwood comments thus on the results of his investigations:

“The whole site has been so thoroughly disturbed in the search for building stone that a complete excavation would perhaps be of little service. Our positive conclusions may be briefly put. There were two Roman forts at Papcastle: the earlier, of which we have only the north-east corner, built in good ashlar and lime masonry, and the later, less well built but probably larger, constructed late in the second century AD. There does not seem to be any interval of time between the two occupations; but we may perhaps connect the second with the general reorganisation of the frontier district associated with the name of Severus. Of this we have the north and east walls, the former complete and the length of the latter suggested by the position of the gate from which the Old Carlisle road started. It appears to have been a roughly rectangular fort, measuring perhaps 620 feet by 540 feet. But the comparative poverty of its internal remains might lead us to suppose that it was not an important military station.” [3]

Collingwood’s final conclusion is probably wrong. His suggested dimensions of 620 feet by 540 feet [188 x 164.5m] are of interest, for by comparison with visible Housesteads’s 600 feet by 360 feet we may get some idea of Papcastle’s size.

A further excavation, again rather limited, took place in 1961-2. The former Cockermouth Rural District Council decided to build elderly people’s bungalows on part of the site (Castle Gardens) and on behalf of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works a small team under Dorothy Charlesworth excavated in July 1961 and April-May 1962. The limiting factors were again time and shortage of suitable labour, to which was added the further handicap of avoiding the positions of the bungalow foundations. The remains were found to be very near the present surface, making easy the earlier robbery for building stone. Also dressed stone had been extensively re-used in successive Roman buildings, presenting the archaeologist with further difficulties. There was slight evidence of a fort with timber buildings. The post-hole which held the timber upright of the east gateway was located, on the inner side of the rampart, and obviously that on the northern side of the gateway as a cobbled road ran to its immediate south.

Remains found inside the fort suggest a long history. A succession of timber and stone barrack blocks, with the levels very close together, go up to the fourth century and pottery found on a cobbled

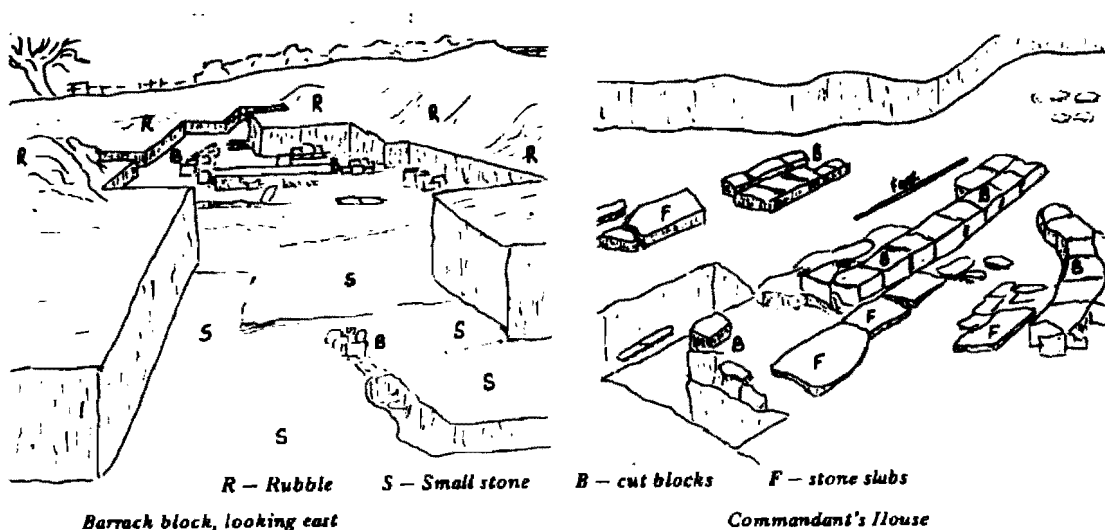


Fig 14. *The 1961-2 excavation of Papcastle fort*
(based on photographs, by permission of Miss D. Charlesworth, Department of the Environment)

Papcastle fort and vicus

barracks floor dates the final rebuilding at about AD 367. Many of the buildings at various times seem to have been erected without foundations and when reconstructions were carried out the earlier work was completely levelled, two factors which make detailed layout and successive buildings difficult to distinguish. (In general, stone replaced timber and turf in the walls, gateways, granaries and other main buildings of the Cumbrian forts from about the 2nd century, timber often being retained for barrack blocks.) In addition to determining that the barracks were built along the contours, the 1961-2 excavation located the commandant's quarters and in the NW corner of the area the team investigated what may have been the commandant's bath-house. It had been heavily robbed of stone, only the lowest course of masonry, set in mortar, remaining, but there were roofing tiles and a water-tank on the site.

Finds on this occasion included coins, bronze and pottery, some of it Samian ware. Three discoveries are worthy of special mention. The first consisted of some fragments of bronze scale armour. [4] The second was a tombstone. It had an inscription on its lower side, recording Apullio who died at 35 and probably his daughter Sabina and wife Huctia who died at 17 and 42. This was only the stone's first use, for after serving as a memorial it had apparently formed part of a water-tank and weapons had been sharpened on its edge wearing grooves. Finally it became a paving stone. [5]

The third find, a draped bronze figure only 3¾ inches ht, is in Tullie House. The right arm is broken, but the other holds a cornucopia. It may represent a goddess, possibly a blending of Roman and British mythology. [6]

Tullie House obtained in 1899 a fibula (a clasp or buckle) from Papcastle, believed to be from the beginning of the first century and therefore brought to Derwentio from elsewhere. [7]

Other discoveries, often made during building in the village, include a fragment of a stone pine-cone, the form of gravestone used by the Etruscans. Tullie House also has a small un-inscribed altar "found in the Derwent, probably near Papcastle."

Few inscriptions have been found, perhaps because Cumbrians were superstitious about writing on stones and defaced any they found. [8] In 1865 a stone was found with a vow inscribed commemorating the dedicator's promotion in AD 242 from Papcastle to a post at Burgh. It refers to Aballava and for long this was assumed to be the Roman name for this fort, still being used in 1925. [9]

Only comparatively recently was it decided that Papcastle was Derwentio and that Aballava was the name of the fort at Burgh by Sands. "Derwentio" comes from the Celtic for "abounding in oaks".

An inscription of AD 241 was "dug up amongst the ruins of the court of Cockermouth Castle...

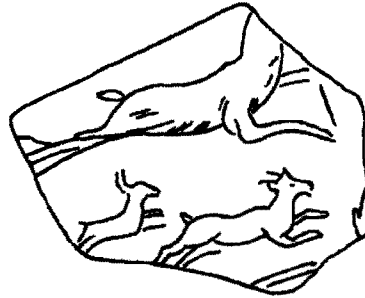


Fig 15. *Figured Samian ware from Papcastle fort*

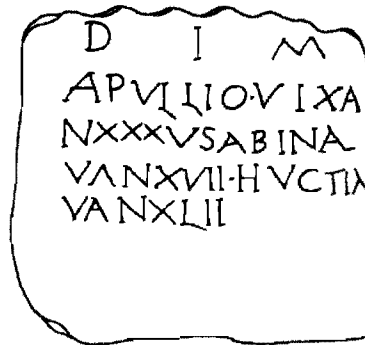


Fig 16. *Papcastle tombstone, water-tank side and paving stone (based on a photograph NS65 by permission of Dept of Environment)*



Fig 17. *Papcastle Bronze (from photo NS65 by permission of Dept of Environment)*

Papcastle fort and vicus

in lowering the ground” and R.G. Collingwood drew attention to one in another part of the castle .

“In the second Dungeon in Cockermonth Castle, close to the ground on the right as you go in, built into the wall, is a stone ten by six inches, inscribed LEG VI/VIPFF in a style not unlike the Sixth Legion’s records in the Birdoswald sector of Hadrian’s Wall. It therefore probably indicates work by that Legion at Papcastle in the first half of the second century.” [10]

Scraps of leather have been found on the camp site suggesting a shoemaker’s or leather worker’s shop.

When on the move the Roman army lived in ridge-shaped leather tents, covering an area ten feet square, known as ‘papilio’ because of their butterfly shape. The Tullie House Museum contains a piece of such a tent from Papcastle. It shows one piece to have been superimposed on another and joined by a leather thong. Other thongs apparently tied back the flaps to open the tent. [11]

The air reconnaissance of northern Britain carried out by Dr. St. Joseph in the early 1950s [12] showed the walls on three sides of the fort, the guard chambers of the gate on the west and a road leading eastwards from the east gate. The photographs give the size as 600 feet north to south and 500 feet east to west, just over 6.75 acres. Birley observes:

“That makes it substantially larger than most of the forts in our district, and adds to the urgency for finding more about its internal layout” [13]

and he describes it as

“a key site in the occupation of our territory”

Some knowledge was added by the excavation ten years later, but there is much more we would like to know about the site.

The aerial photographs indicate that the fort was enlarged. This may have been necessary from time to time to house additional units, such as a *cuneus* (a later type of cavalry unit) which one of the inscriptions suggests may have been stationed here.

The soldiers here would have the duties of watching the mountains and valleys to the south and east and of doing patrol and convoy duties on the diverging roads. Somewhere outside the camp would be a parade ground.

The needs of a garrison of this size were considerable and to satisfy those needs a large civilian vicus grew between the fort and the Derwent. (It is estimated that a garrison of 1000 soldiers in Housesteads required nearly 2500 civilians - men, women and children living outside). [14] Air reconnaissance and the present low ridges in the area suggest that the space below the fort was filled by a settlement of considerable size, the whole enclosed by a rampart and ditch. *Vici* outside Cumbrian forts grew rapidly in the 3rd century.

Life in such a settlement is a study in itself and it is impossible to give more than a brief outline of the activities which must have been found in the lower part of Papcastle at that time. The population would include British families attracted by the possibility of work and trade and, after the first fears were overcome, by the peaceful existence within the shadow of the fort. There were probably women and children of various nationalities who had followed their soldier “husbands” across the Channel under arrangements made by the authorities. There would be retired soldiers, for after Hadrian’s Wall was completed the garrisons in the area were fairly static and men would tend to settle down in the only place they knew well, practising some trade or craft and remaining on the military reserve, and making homes with the women with whom they had lived during service and whom they were allowed to marry on retirement. Many of these men would have some standing, for after 25 years’ service Roman citizenship was granted, a reward much prized as a legal status.

Romans became increasingly scarce as troops were drawn more and more from other parts of the empire - Spain, France, the Rhine, the Tyrol, even as far as the Tigris, - and from Britain itself. Hadrian is thought to have favoured local farmers’ sons as recruits, for they were strong and used to the climate, and if recruited at the usual age of 18 to 22 were good for about 25 years’ service.

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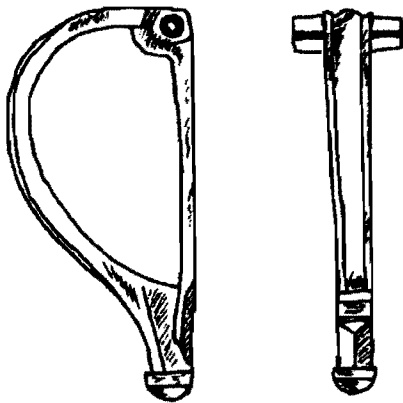


Fig 18. *A fibula (clasp) from Papcastle fort (after Eric Birley, NS63)*

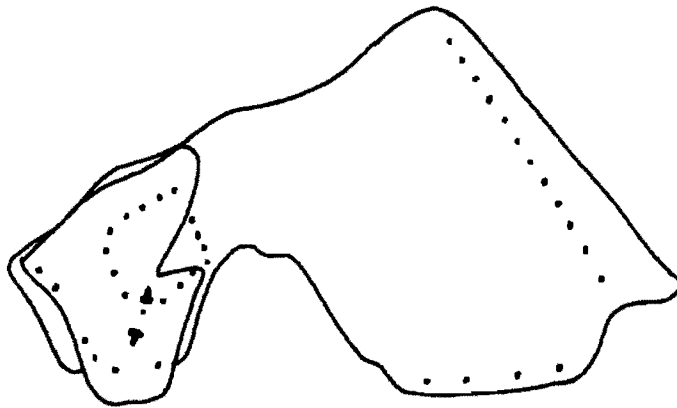


Fig 19. *Pieces of leather from Papcastle, originally attached by leather thongs (after McIntrye and Richmond, NS34)*

The local population became a mixture of nationalities. Inter-marriage produced a hybrid race. Figures are not available for Papcastle, but it is thought that of the 13,000 troops on the Wall itself 40% were 'married' by the middle of the 2nd century and at Housesteads half the 1000 soldiers were married by the 3rd century when the Emperor Septimus Severus annulled the regulation requiring a man to wait until retirement before marrying. The accommodation at Papcastle would be similar to that recently uncovered at Vindolanda, families sharing strip houses or living in the married quarters provided.

There were definite strata of social position and class distinction, evident in living accommodation as well as in social mixing. Commanding officers and leading provincial administrators and their wives were at the top of the scale.

Life was short by our standards. Burials provide information, inscriptions telling us of the family life and religious outlook of the time (occasional references to Christianity come in the fourth century). Human remains reveal size, diseases and length of life. Nothing is available from Papcastle, but in a cemetery for poor people at York 42% of the women had died by 26 and most of the men by 40. The men were about our size, the women rather smaller. Skeletons indicate that diet was good, without vitamin deficiency, but rheumatism was common. The civilian cemetery outside Brougham fort shows that the dead were given simple cremations and food vessels, etc., provided for the after-life. [15] Somewhere lies undiscovered the cemetery for Derventio.

A multitude of tasks would be performed by the civilians; they were an essential part of the maintenance of the garrison. They would provide food and other agricultural supplies, farmers coming in from the surrounding district to the Papcastle market, where resident craftsmen as well as the military would need their products. Converging from the valleys of Lorton and Embleton and from the wide sweep of plain to the north and west would arrive supplies of milk, cheese, butter, eggs, meat, hides, wool, skins, etc. There is evidence of some forts using a considerable variety of vegetables, fruit and wild products such as nuts and nettles. Hunters and herdsmen would be involved as well as farmers. Wine, olive oil and spices were imported to this area.

A wide variety of craftsmen would seek to satisfy the needs of soldiers and civilians - leather-workers making shoes, belts, purses, harness and tents; carpenters producing large articles such as doors, furniture and wagons and small utensils like cups, platters, spoons and dice-boxes; metal-workers providing hammers and chisels, harness and wagon parts, nails, knives, locks, chains; and masons, quarrymen, foresters and lime- and charcoal-burners, etc., following their trades. Glass came mostly from the continent, pottery from the British midlands or Gaul, most grain from southern Britain. The Romans worked iron, copper, lead and silver in the area. They were skilled metal-workers producing finer products such as brooches and other jewellery, religious figures and harness mounts.

Celtic art was often adapted by native craftsmen to the tastes of the Roman purchasers. In 1847 quarrymen clearing the surface of the limestone at Eaglesfield found a twisted ring of fine gold, near

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the line of the Roman road and presumably of Romano-British origin. [16] It was sold to a watchmaker in Cockermouth.

In addition there was employment to be found as baths staff- rubbing bathers with oil, selling delicacies to the troops as they enjoyed what was a social occasion, cleaning the premises, stoking; or in managing the mansio or inn where officers travelling would stay and one could find work in the separate bath-house of the inn, in its kitchen and dining room, in the stables or in generally keeping the building clean and ready. Within the vicus there would also be drinking booths, gambling rooms and brothels for the soldiers' use.

Indications of the position of granaries in the vicus have been found. Askew quotes William Dickinson in his 'Agricultural Essay on West Cumberland':

"The soil of Sibby Brows is reputed to be blackened with the carbon of burned grain belonging to the ancient Romans. Tradition says... granaries... which stood there, were accidentally destroyed by fire; or this district may lie on the remains of an ancient forest destroyed by the same agency." [17]

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, grain was already being grown before the Romans came. In 1904, in Brewery Field on the east bank of the Cocker, was found a filled cavity, eight feet deep and six wide at the top, lined with three inches of puddled clay. There was blackened grain in the bottom, older than the Papcastle wheat, and this may have been an early British grain store. [18] More recently, in 1923, a trench being dug for a gas-main passed through a layer of blackened wheat near the east gateway of the fort. Many grains were almost intact, though reduced to 31% of their normal weight. There were Samian ware remains with the wheat. This was not a granary site. [19]

Another link with the Roman occupants came in the 1940s when a local resident saw a party of Italian farm-workers, from the prisoner-of-war camp on Moota, collecting snails to eat. They said Papcastle was the only place they had found this kind, familiar to them in Italy. This was a reminder of Whellan's comment in 1860

"The new road from Cockermouth is cut through a portion of the field where the castrum stood. The large edible snail (*Helix pomatia*) is said to be common in the adjoining hedges and may have been introduced by the Romans as an article of diet."

Mention must be made of the wells in the vicus. That referred to by Stukeley lies in the centre of the lawn in front of Derwent Lodge. There are others in the area, one behind Well House in the west of the present village and one now by the front garden wall of No. 6, The Mount.

Inscriptions from elsewhere indicate that a vicus was largely a self-governing community with its own village elders, [20] responsible for cleaning the streets, organising the market, providing a water supply, settling disputes, collecting taxes, making official returns, etc. Over all would be the commanding officer of the fort, responsible for general economic and political policy and ensuring that the needs of his troops had precedence, but with no time to spare for minor day-to-day administration. Nevertheless, civilian life would be constantly overshadowed by the military presence.

It is likely that the Romans paid little attention to the central hills and valleys, unless there were minerals to be mined. Provided they gave no trouble, the British living well up the valley from Cockermouth would see little of the occupying forces, although gradually some Roman influence reached them, for small Roman objects and coins have been found in the hill villages. These might have been obtained when people were tempted by the opportunity to sell in the market or attracted by the pay of army service, but on the whole the valley people remained poor and outside the main stream of events. Closer to the military agriculture thrived, farms springing up along the roads and round the forts, for here markets and protection were alike provided. Farmers experienced a prosperity they had never known before, encouraged by the Romans to grow corn to save their imports and helped by the introduction of iron ploughs.

It would be interesting to see what lies below present-day Papcastle. Perhaps little, considering the extensive use of the stone for Cockermouth Castle and other local building. We must read into the site what has been discovered in the vicus at Vindolanda and is still being discovered as excavations continue. Even at Housesteads, regarded as a show fort, only 20% of the vicus has been

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investigated. [21]

When we look at the low mounds of the camp ramparts and at the flat fields along the river, it is hard to imagine a thriving, bustling community of perhaps three thousand, with roofed buildings, smoking fires, open-fronted shops, rumbling carts, marching soldiers, playing children and all the noise and confusion of a thriving market, overlooked by the hill-top fort which dominated and controlled life. The illustrators of recent publications on Hadrian's Wall, and on the soldiers and civilians who lived along it have done a great service in helping our imagination. What they depict of the Wall forts and vici would be repeated, with local modifications, at Derwentio.

MORE ABOUT ROMAN PAPCASTLE

This History of Cockermouth contains three chapters on the Papcastle Roman site, west of the town, detailing its domestic and military life and importance.

Since the 1981 edition of this book, there have been further excavations which suggest that the site was much larger than once thought and important as a military base in Cumbria.

In 1984 there was a short rescue dig on the site of the Burroughs Cottages which had to be demolished. The dig by the University of Lancaster discovered massive foundations of what was probably a temple; at a low level appreciable remains of early timber structures; a well-metalled road; evidence of much industrial activity and a number of interesting small finds, including a statue previously unknown in Britain. The dig director, Adrian Olivier, suggested this pointed to the possibility that Papcastle had been the armoury supplying the forts of the north-west of Cumbria. In the mid-1990s the occupant of a house in modern Papcastle decided to extend his home. Digging the foundations revealed much evidence of Roman occupation – pottery, large stone foundations, etc. The houseowner persuaded Channel 4's popular archaeology programme "Time Team" to visit Papcastle, and in 1998 despite being restricted to just three days, they found much at Derwent Lodge Cottage and on Sibby Brows rediscovered the extent of the vicus. Evidence from this weekend included a road system, strip houses along roadways, some perhaps second century buildings, a bronze mirror, Samian ware pottery etc. The archaeologists summing up their discoveries as "*smashing finds*", now consider that unusually for the North of England, this was a permanent settlement and proper town, perhaps on a par with Corbridge. There is now strong evidence that Roman Papcastle may well have occupied nearly all the area from the fort south to the river Derwent.