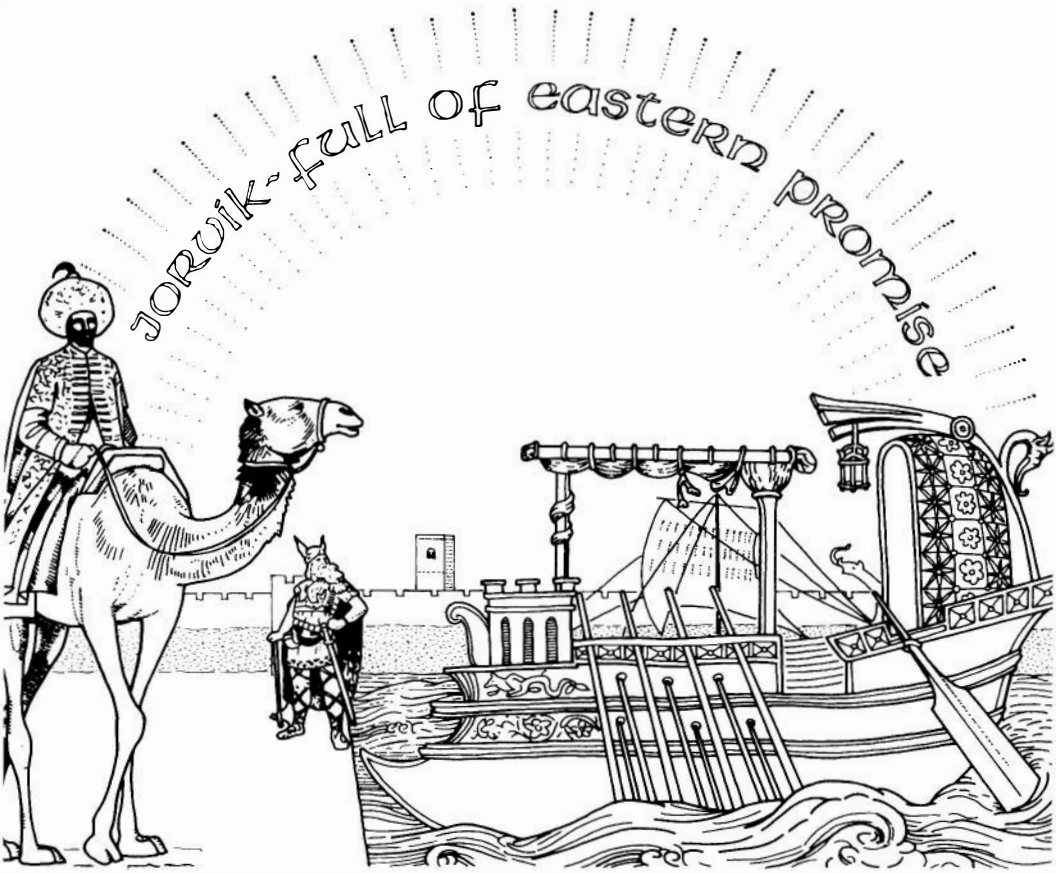
interim

BULLETIN OF THE YORK ARCHAEOLOGIST TRUST



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interim

WHEELED BED OR PERAMBULATOR.

ISSN 01431 – 134X

INTERIM is published by INTERIM at York Archaeological Trust, 47 Aldwark, York. It is issued irregularly, four times a year. Editorial and contributors' views are independent and do not necessarily reflect the official view of the Trust.

Subscription: send £2.00 and 4 self – addressed labels to INTERIM, York Archaeological Trust, 47 Aldwark, York YO1 2BX. Cheques etc. payable to INTERIM. Subscribers from abroad should use International Money Order or add bank clearance charge to cheque.

Cover: Terry Finnemore – *'York – filled with the treasures of merchants coming from all races'.*
Small finds: Sheena Howarth.
Drawings: Terry Finnemore. pp. 31 – 34 Cathy Brooks.

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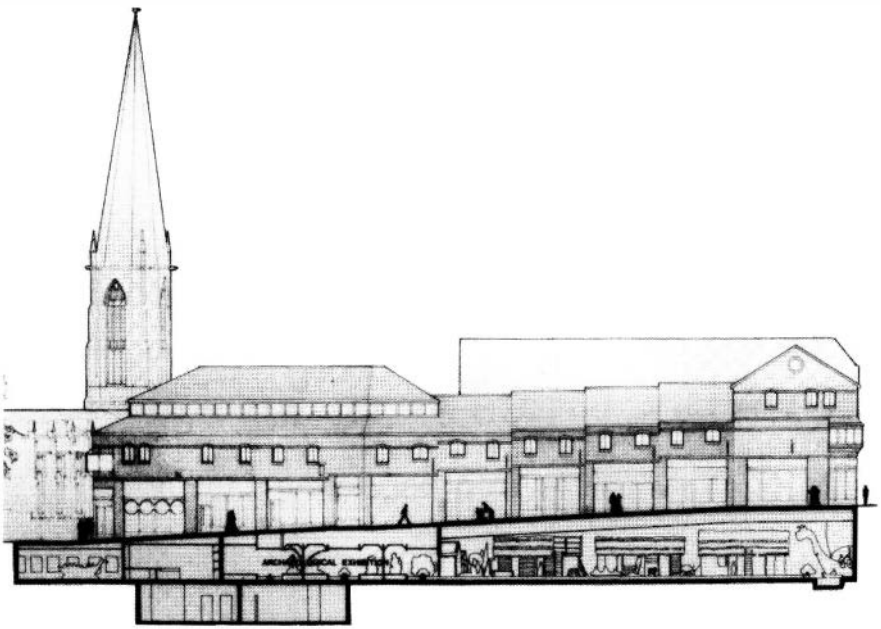
Typesetting by Goldtempest Limited, 1 Driffield Terrace, The Mount, York. Telephone 21751

Printed by Woodcock & Pearson York 31818



Elevation and Section of the proposed Jorvik Viking Centre.

COME ON DOWN TO VIKING TOWN!

'What a pity it can't all be preserved' has been the constant comment of half a million or so visitors to the Trust's Viking town excavations at Coppergate. In the early days of the dig we tried to convince people that the waterlogged remains of the timber buildings were so delicate they could not really be kept. Gradually, however, we began to realise that the beams, great oak posts and riven oak planks of the 10th century workshops and houses might well be preserved. A campaign began to lift, support and treat with fungicide each timber of the better preserved buildings. Every one was sealed in polythene, taken to the static water tanks at Clifton aerodrome, and stored under water. The Trust's ingenious and assiduous Conservator Jim Spriggs combed the technical journals and travelled throughout Britain and Europe to seek out the best methods for treating large waterlogged timbers. Now he has assembled all the equipment needed to do the job, in premises leased to the Trust by North Yorkshire County Council in Galmanhoe Lane, off Marygate. The laboratory has been purpose-converted and fitted out through the Tjaereborg Foundation's generous grant. The long process of conservation has begun.

Initially, however, we were not quite sure what we would do with the buildings when we got them. The Yorkshire Museum was already overflowing with artefacts of all periods, and declared itself unable to comtemplate giant artefacts of this kind — some over 8m long.

With the ability of an outsider to see the obvious the Trust's distinguished benefactor and steward Ian Skipper suggested they should be re-erected precisely where they had been found, in a basement under the new shopping mall to be built on Coppergate. Indeed he went so far as to suggest that the whole area, below and above the shopping mall, should be developed as a new archaeological museum for York and its region. Thus, way back in 1978, the Trust presented to York City Council a splendid scheme designed by Richard Collick Associates to do just that.

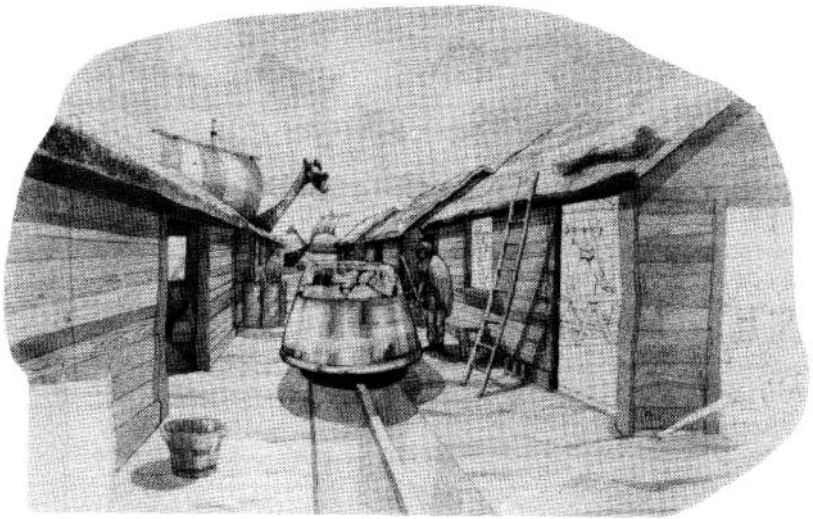
In the event the City Council decided to develop Coppergate quite differently, and suggested the Trust's Viking age buildings and the new archaeological museum should be on the Castle Car Park, in the shadow of Clifford's Tower and close to the Castle Museum. Off we went again, this time to Powell Moya Partners, designers of the immensely successful new Museum of London, who produced a dashing scheme, our 1979 museum, hailed in the *Architects' Journal* as 'the right project for the right site'. Even so the City Council, with the requirements of the Coppergate-Piccadilly development scheme particularly in mind, passed it over in favour of a

much smaller Jorvik Viking Centre. This had been designed, off their own bat, by Chapman Taylor and Partners for Wimpey Property Holdings Ltd as part of the successful Wimpey tender for the development.

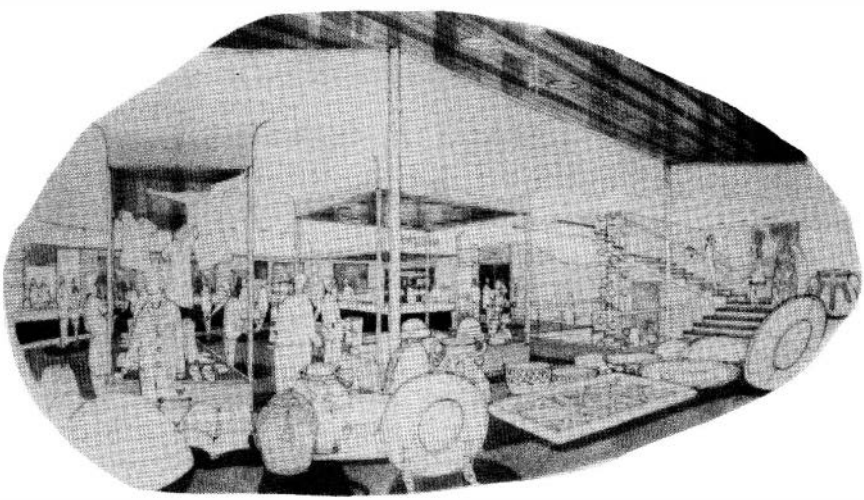
York Archaeological Trust thus finds itself embroiled in designing a third Jorvik Viking Centre in as many years. This time the shell is to be provided, though at the Trust's expense. It will be a basement under a new shopping walk from Coppergate to a new pedestrian square near the east end of St Mary's, Castlegate (the Heritage Centre).

To design its 1980 Jorvik Viking Centre the Trust chose Robertson Ward Associates. The brief required them to provide for up to half a million visitors annually. Into a relatively small space (22,000 sq ft) they had to fit an entrance and briefing area, a 'trip through time', a reconstructed Viking age street, the conserved timber buildings as found, an 'artefact hall' where excavated objects could be inspected, a shop, and all the plant and air conditioning devices required for completely enclosed premises. They fitted a quart admirably into the pint pot provided and York City Council has given planning consent for a Jorvik Viking Centre at last. Now the Trust, aided by its commercial arm Cultural Resource Management Ltd, and by the stewards of its Special Development Campaign, is trying to put together a complex package of promises, grants, guarantees and loans to produce the £2.3 million needed to build the Jorvik Viking Centre and to fit it out. Any INTERIM reader who shares the Trust's fierce determination to hand on to future generations tangible evidence of the Viking contribution to York, to the origin of English and European town life, and to Western culture, and who has that sort of money to spare, is invited urgently to contact Magnus Magnusson who is, to coin a phrase, masterminding the effort, indefatigably, on behalf of the Trust.

The Jorvik Viking Centre will welcome its first visitors in 1984. In automatic time cars they will enter a tunnel of time, and be taken back through the story of Coppergate from the 1984 Wimpey version, through the 1974 version, a Victorian legacy demolished to make way for the dig. Before that there will be Georgian, Stuart and Tudor versions, medieval and Norman versions, until, suddenly, the time car will emerge in a Coppergate alley as it might have been in the 10th century. Visitors will see freshly built Anglo-Scandinavian buildings, shops near the street front, workshops behind, and warehouses, pits, wells and latrines behind those. They will see, hear and experience the sights, sounds and smells (the pleasanter ones, probably) of the town as it was a millenium ago. Audio-visual techniques and multimedia programmes will bring the buildings and all they contained to life. At the end of the alley will be the riverbank, with a replica Viking ship at its moorings.



VIEW TOWARDS HARBOUR



VIEW FROM LOWER GROUND SHOP

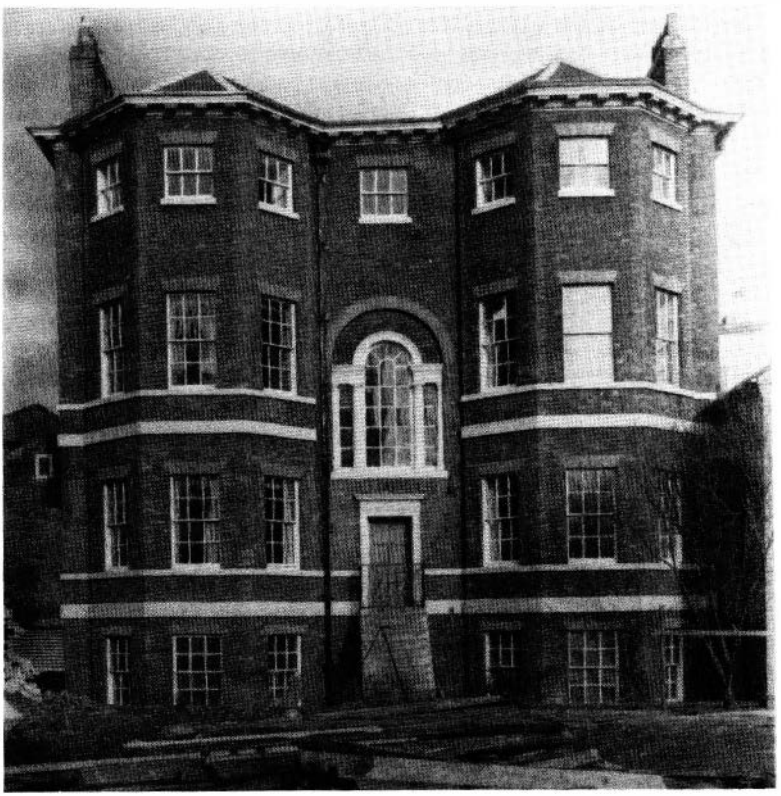
Around the corner in the next alley everything will change. Here visitors will see the buildings excavated in 1976-81. The remains will seem curiously familiar, providing the archaeological evidence for the reconstructions just seen next door in the adjacent alley. After this visitors will leave their time cars and enter a more conventional display gallery. Here a selection of the 12,000 or so objects excavated at Coppergate will be set out in individually-designed humidity-controlled cases to demonstrate the kinds of activity that went on there in the Viking age. Visitors will see evidence for industries — metal-working, die-cutting, amber and jet working, wood-working, cobbling, textile manufacture, bone and antler working and so on. The trade which linked York with all parts of the then-known world will be demonstrated by objects from the Red Sea, Byzantium, the Arab world, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Baltic, the Rhineland, Scotland and Ireland. Biological remains will give indications of the food preferences of Coppergaters, and of the environmental conditions in and around their crowded timber buildings. There will be intimate glimpses of contemporary life — board games, musical instruments, personal jewellery and accoutrements.

The combination of reconstructions, excavated structures and artefacts all displayed on the excavation site has been warmly welcomed. Joseph V. Noble, Director of the Museum of the City of New York, who recently spent a week going over the proposals with the Trust, described the project as a 'brilliant new concept in archaeological interpretation', while Councillor Clive Kay, Lord Mayor of York, welcomed it as imaginative and exciting, and of immense potential to the City of York. He felt it would create world wide interest.

The Trust is conscious that the Jorvik Viking Centre, in breaking new ground, will bring strains upon academic integrity. Equally, however, the Trust is determined to carry out the precept of its constitution to educate the public in archaeology. It feels that the end products of a great excavation like that drawing to an end at Coppergate should be more than the exhaustive and exhausting academic report — we shall certainly be producing that — and the conventional museum display — that will happen too when the new galleries of the Yorkshire Museum are completed. The Jorvik Viking Centre project, imaginatively conceived by Ian Skipper and vigorously promoted by him, will provide an end product which will reach far more people than any of those, and, we hope, it will continue to do so for generations to come. Mr Skipper feels that if it is successful it may even make a profit. That, it it ever comes, will help to ensure the continuance of archaeology in York and its region into the future.

Peter Addyman
Director of the York Archaeological Trust

castle garage



Rear view of Castlegate House from the excavation site.

Excavations are about to begin on the site of the Castle Garage, Castlegate and the stables of Castlegate House, Tower Street, where a three storey hotel will soon be erected. Exploratory bore holes suggest that there is a depth of 2 — 3.5m of archaeological deposits on the site, and this article outlines what we anticipate will be revealed in the coming months.

In the Roman period the site lay some 250m to the south-east of the legionary fortress, and it is likely that Roman civilian occupation will be encountered here. This may take the form of a cemetery, for inhumations have been found in the present Castle Car Park to the south and on the Coppergate site to the north (INTERIM vol 2 no 3 p 16).

In the pre-Norman period the site was close to the heart of the Anglo-Scandinavian town, and there is a good chance therefore that occupation deposits of the period will be found here and will form a useful comparison with those from Coppergate. At the time of the Norman conquest one of the two castles of York, represented today by the castle mound below Clifford's Tower, was erected to the south of the site, and this probably involved clearing a large area around it which would have included the Castle Garage site. In 1069 a combined Danish and Northumbrian force attacked York, and in an effort to expel them the Normans are said to have fired the houses near the castle to prevent their use as debris for filling the castle ditch. The area around the castle may have remained open ground until the 13th century while York recovered from the turmoil of the conquest.

In 1243 Henry III granted the Franciscans or Grey Friars an area to the north and west of the castle between Castlegate and the Ouse, part of which is included in the Castle Garage site. This Friary represents one of the most important reasons for excavating the site: it is the Trust's policy to examine an example of each of the different types of institutions in the medieval city and it has yet to examine a Friary. This one has a particular interest because it is known that in the 14th century the Friary buildings were used by Edward II and Edward III on their visits to York, and as a result of this royal patronage the Franciscan Friary became the most affluent of the York friaries. This may mean that the range of finds, and especially pottery, will be rather different from the material from the medieval sites in the city, and so should broaden our awareness of the varying standards of living in the city at this time.

The layout of the Friary buildings is not known although it seems that the main entrance was opposite St Mary's church in Castlegate; another entrance probably led into the Castle precinct. Taking the known layout of other friaries into account there seems a good chance that at least part of the building plan will be recovered, and whatever may be recovered now can be viewed as the first step towards examining the entire site whenever further opportunities occur in the future.

After the dissolution in 1539 the Friary buildings were taken down. Until the middle of the 18th century maps of the area show the site was open ground, but by the late 19th century there were buildings on the corner of Castlegate and Tower Street, and in the 1930s Castle Garage was built. Test pits on the site suggest that a levelling up took place before its construction, and these modern buildings should not have disturbed archaeological deposits unduly.

Patrick Ottaway.

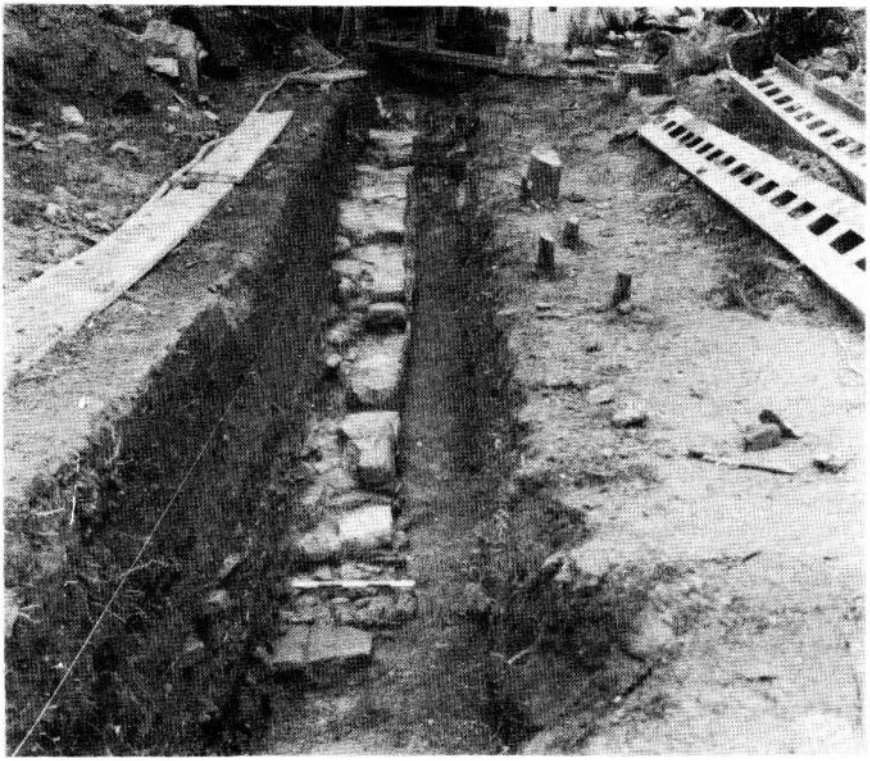
coney street

The possible re-development of the site of 23-31 Coney Street has long presented the Trust with the threat of having another large excavation on its hands. On a number of occasions throughout the later 1970's, planning applications were submitted by the site owners, Littlewoods, only to be refused by York City Council on the grounds of their unsympathetic treatment of York's most important shopping street. Thus when the site changed hands in mid-1980 and planning permission was granted for a smaller scale shopping development, we were mentally, if not financially, prepared to deal with this immediate threat.

The archaeological potential of the area between Coney Street and the river Ouse is temendous and excavations by Richard Hall in 1974-5 on the site of the new W.H. Smith store at 39-41 Coney Street had given us a glimpse of what might be found (INTERIM vol 2 no 2 pp 21-6; vol 2 no 3 pp 11-13). Always a rich shopping street and main thoroughfare throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, the character of dwelling which might be expected here is that of the rich merchant. The derivation of the street name from *Cunege strate* (a combination of Old Norse and Old English meaning Kings Street) is interesting although surely more likely to refer to the thoroughfare to the King's property of Earlsburgh than to suggest a royal residence on the street itself. However, it is known that during the late 12th and 13th centuries, well to do members of York's jewry lived on this street and it seems likely that theirs would have been houses of the type and quality exemplified by the well known 'Jew's house' in Lincoln, traditionally, but wrongly associated with the fabulously wealthy Aaron of Lincoln.

Little is known of the development of the area in the Anglian or Viking periods although it is from this time that the street name must date. Presumably the potential of the river bank would have been of some significance then as well, although the heavy flooding postulated by some experts would have made the western side of Coney Street a most unpleasant prospect for settlement.

In Roman times this area was between the south-western defences of the legionary fortress and the river and presumably contained the road which passed along this way on its route, eventually, from Throlam and Brough in the south toward Catterick to the north. Little is known of the character of any Roman buildings in this area although they might echo the granaries found at 39-41 Coney Street and relate to the function of the river as a trade route.



23–31 Coney Street: view N.E. along the trench.

The excavation on the W.H. Smith site had shown that the eastern bank of the river Ouse was subject to constant extension and that the present river wall marks the maximum encroachment into the river which was not reached until the 18th or even 19th century.

Preliminary investigation of the site of 23-31 Coney Street was confined to a 1m. wide exploratory trench stretching the length of the garden of number 25, some 32 metres in all. As had been expected from our W.H. Smith observations, the riverward end of the site was found to consist entirely of dumped levels of post-medieval date. These were seen at a depth of up to 2 metres in the excavation and at up to 7 metres in a river-side borehole, demonstrating once again that this was reclaimed land. This proved to be the case for the 20 metres of the site nearest the river, perhaps suggesting that the medieval and post-medieval river banks in this area had been gently sloping ones with occasional quays or wharves stretching out into the water but without the vertical stone river wall that we see today.

The eastern 12 metres of trial trench revealed the well preserved remains of a substantial structure of large well-mortared limestone blocks stepping down the slope towards the river. Contemporary with it on its southern side were at least two phases of what appeared to be a cobble slipway sloping fairly steeply towards the water. Needless to say, little could be made of the plan of this structure in a 1 metre wide trench, although it was on the same alignment as the modern buildings and a possible return wall running north was recorded at the river end. Little dating material was retrieved from these features but they should probably be seen as 16th century, seemingly the last time that properties in this area were functionally related to the river as well as to Coney Street.

Restrictions of time and money meant that excavation was not continued below these late medieval-early post-medieval features. However, such is the preservation of these levels that it seems likely that earlier water-front buildings may exist in a well preserved state to the rear of the present Coney Street buildings. The cellars of these shops have removed all evidence of post-Roman occupation on the street front itself, but although not fully investigated by the Trust, a number of contractors' trial holes which cut into the cellar floors revealed Roman levels as yet largely undisturbed.

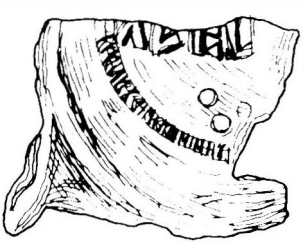
Despite the limited nature of the current excavations, enough has been found to demonstrate the survival of important riverside remains in this central area. If, as at present seems likely, the development of the site involves the wholesale stripping of archaeological levels from a considerable proportion of what is currently back gardens, further excavation on a much larger scale than has yet proved possible would seem to be well justified. Such work would require funds in addition to those accounted for in the Trust's already over-stretched budget and the likelihood of these being made available in the current financial climate is probably not very high.

David Brinklow.

coppergate

A relatively mild winter has allowed work to continue at Coppergate with rather less discomfort than in some previous years, although as usual the need to shield part of the site with a polythene and scaffolding cover has meant a diminution of the area being excavated. As was reported in our last issue, we are now concentrating on trying to excavate completely an inverted L-shaped area, the long arm of the L taking up one half of the site's long axis, and the short arm of the L being a strip across the Coppergate street frontage. The cover this winter has been over this frontage strip, and so no further work has been done on exposing more of the Roman stone and timber buildings briefly reported last time, or on the 10th century sunken building with some wooden internal fittings also mentioned before. However there is still hope of examining these structures, and completing the excavation of the L-shape, for in recent weeks we have been informed by the Department of the Environment that they will be able to supply the £17,500 required to carry on work until September 1981, when the redevelopment programme will commence.

On the frontage, work has concentrated mainly in the northernmost of the four properties under excavation, and here we have at last removed the earliest of the wattle buildings running back at 90° to the modern (and probably the ancient) line of Coppergate. In doing so, a fragmentary lead minting trial piece of the moneyer Adelbert, who coined for King Athelstan in York (927-39), was discovered, bringing the total of these rarities to three from Coppergate — exactly one-third of those known from pre-Norman England (for the others see INTERIM vol 6 no 3 pp 28-32 and vol 7 no 2 pp 17-21). One of the excavation's most intriguing finds also came from these levels, a cowrie shell identified as *Cypraea pantherina,* whose natural haunts are the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Presumably this shell had no



Fragmentary lead minting trial piece of Adelbert (925 – 39)

commercial value, and was simply a souvenir or curiosity, which perhaps reached York in company with a consignment of perfumes, oil, spices or even slaves. Together with the silks thought to come from the eastern end of the Mediterranean (INTERIM vol 6 no 2 pp 5-6; vol 7 no 2 pp 3-5) and the counterfeit arab *dirham* from Samarkand in the foothills of the Hindu Kush (INTERIM vol 7 no 3) it is beginning to give some archaeological substance to the remark in the anonymous *Life of St Oswald* written *c* 1000 that York was filled with the treasures of merchants coming from all races, particularly the Danes. Hitherto the trade routes and merchandise which contributed to York's wealth at this time have been largely matters of conjecture, but at last the Coppergate excavation is providing some answers. This quarter's Danish contribution to the growing list of foreign objects is a fragmentary *penning,* a silver coin minted at the trading centre of Hedeby, near modern Schlesvig at the base of the Jutland peninsula, c. 800. Like the more exotic objects listed above, it is a great rarity in England, and in fact only three others are known to have been found — two in the great Viking silver hoard discovered in 1840 at Cuerdale in Lancashire, and one more recently at Lavenham in Suffolk. These coins stayed in circulation for some time, as is shown by the Cuerdale hoard which is thought to have been deposited c. 903, and so it's not surprising or worrying to find one in layers of about the same date at Coppergate.

Two sides of fragmentary penning, *minted at Hedeby c. 800 A.D.*

Still in the northernmost property, below the building erected c. 900, we have been excavating one of the clearest indications yet recognised of 9th century activity on site. This takes the form of an alignment of posts and stakes whose position approximates to that of the south wall of the succeeding building, but which runs at an angle of about 10° to it. The alignment includes some timbers whose dimensions suggest that they too may represent the wall of a building, but there are no obvious floor deposits, and it may instead be a fence. The important thing, however, is that it is present at all, for it shows that the planner of c. 900 who laid out the regular tenements inherited the essence of his building alignment from the pre-existing phase of activity, althouth he adjusted it slightly for reasons which can only be guessed at — perhaps the street Coppergate was itself only demarcated c. 900; perhaps the boundary of All Saints churchyard was defined at that time, necessitating alterations in land-use in the vicinity; perhaps a combination of these and other factors we don't appreciate.

As regular readers will appreciate, this discovery of 9th century activity corresponds to that reported on other tenements further south in the previous INTERIM, and we can further equate activity at the north end of the street frontage strip with that at the south through the recent recognition and excavation of a series of fairly large, deep pits, similar to those already dealt with on the southern tenements. No particularly noteworthy finds have been discovered in these pits, but they do have the considerable merit of showing the level of natural soils in their sides and base, and to our delight there is not as much left to excavate as was initially feared — 80 cms at most. Unfortunately from the point of view of Anglo-Saxon and Roman York, this 80 cm looks fairly featureless, but looking on the bright side, this discovery gives added hope that we can finish work on this front strip by May, and resume work behind the frontage as the weather improves and the need for a cover recedes.

We can end this report with news that analysis of some of our earlier discoveries is now starting to produce interesting results, particularly about the metalworking debris — crucibles, moulds, slags etc — found over the last year in layers dated c. 900-50. Work by Justine Bayley in the Ancient Monuments Laboratory has shown that of the crucibles examined so far, a majority contained deposits of silver, rather less contained copper-alloy deposits, and a small number had been used for gold-working. The evidence for silver working is particularly important as together with the coin die and various minting trial pieces already discovered (INTERIM vol 6 no 3 pp 28-32; vol 7 no 2 pp 17-21; vol 7 no 3) it reinforces the suggestion that a mint operated within the limits of the site.

Another small quantity of these crucibles contain deposits which may indicate the making of glass with a high lead content, and it is intriguing that the peculiar "Roman-looking" pottery first mentioned in our last issue has now also been provisionally identified at both the Ancient Monuments Laboratory and at the Corning Glass Museum as containing glass-making debris. The point to be stressed here is that this is not just the melting and re-use of Roman glass fragments (cullet), but the making of glass from its raw ingredients. As well as the ususual pottery, several fragments of Roman tiles with a greenish glaze have also been recovered from these same contexts, and they too may well be debris from a glass-making kiln, perhaps having served as supports inside the kiln. What we would like now, of course, is to discover the kiln, and while there is no sign of it at present, who knows what the next three months will bring? Through the next INTERIM, you will be among the first to find out.

Richard Hall

ROMANS UNDER THE RAFT

A small development to the north of the city, close to the centre of the one time township of Clifton, enabled the Trust to check the alignment of the Roman road to Catterick predicted by the Royal Commission in 1962. This had been seen in contractors excavations under Clifton Green in less than ideal circumstances and had also been noted by ourselves during pipe laying operations from Bootham Crescent to Clifton Green during 1980. However, neither of these observations had been able to contribute much to our knowledge of the date or length of use of this road which runs parallel to a similar road less than 200 metres further west.

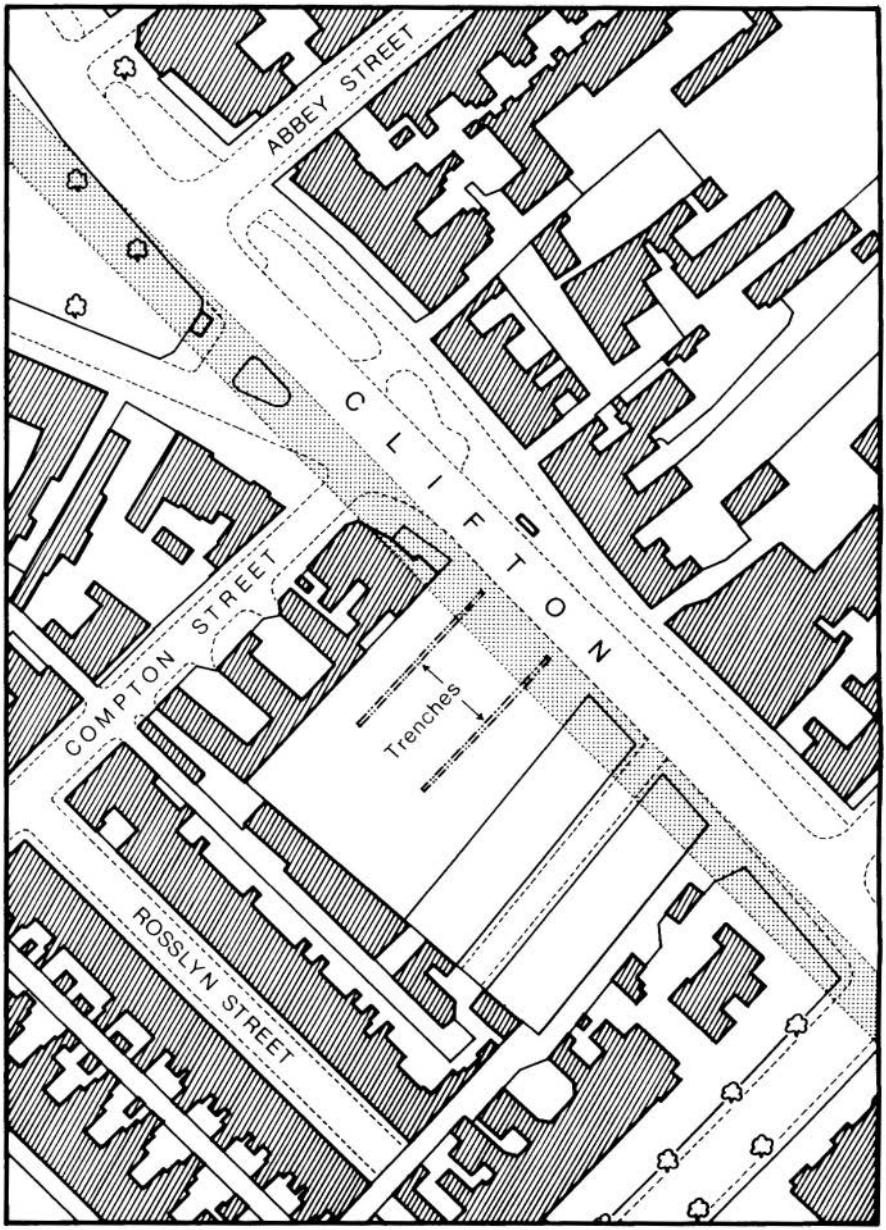
Two machine cut trenches were excavated at right angles to Clifton, 30 metres long, 0.5 — 0.75 metres wide and up to 0.80 metres deep in places. It was anticipated that these would give us an opportunity to examine a complete section cut at right angles across the road in question with at least a further 20 metres of trench available to look for any traces of extramural occupation. The plan was then to hand dig the area between the trenches so that the entire area would eventually be exposed.

There were certain constraints placed upon these excavations since the development contractors planned to build on a concrete raft, the construction of which involved the removal of only the uppermost half metre of deposit over the site. The obvious benefit of this type of building is that the deeper archaeology remains undisturbed beneath the protective raft and will be available for examination by archaeologists of the future.

Thus it was with some disappointment that we found late medieval and post medieval layers at a depth of over half a metre and we therefore had to deepen the trench to discover if Roman levels were present at all. The Roman road was eventually encountered at a depth of 0.75 metres below the present ground surface, its cobbled surface covered by a layer of dark silty material. West of the road, features cut into the clay subsoil were also apparent although these too were at depths below those to be disturbed.

Despite the lack of clear cut results from these observations, it is possible to confirm the line of the road to Catterick and its width of approximately six metres. It has also demonstrated that if larger developments are to take place in the area Roman extra-mural settlement will be destroyed and that we know little of the character, area or date of these settlements.

David Brinklow.



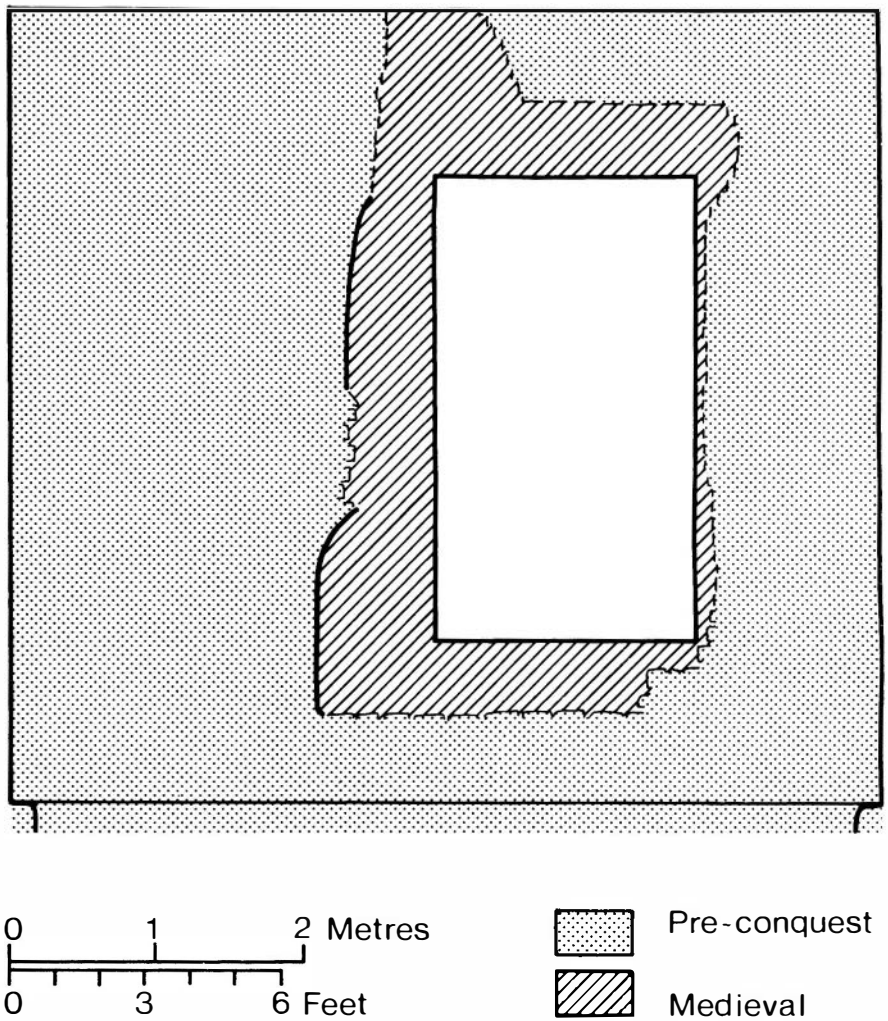
Clifton: map of the area showing the presumed course of the Roman road (stippled) and the location of the trenches. Scale 1:1250.

ST MARY BISHOPHILL JUNIOR 11

The Trust had apparently completed all work on this building — as reported in INTERIM vol 7 no 1 — when an exciting invitation to strip Victorian wall-plaster from the interior of the ground-floor chamber of the tower, and from certain areas within the church was received from the architect, Mr. Peter Marshall, in November 1980. We responded with alacrity and the resulting two-week campaign revealed, as we had hoped, a great deal of evidence of a kind denied to us on the exterior by erosion and chemical weathering.

The removal of all wall-plaster — and of a Victorian boiler in the south-east corner of the chamber — made it clear that a west door reported as being found, blocked, in the restoration of 1908, did indeed exist: the upper portion had been destroyed by a window of that date. It was defined by a pair of straight joints in the stonework, 0.72m apart, and was clearly of the rubble construction familiar to us from our examination of the unaltered single-splay windows of the upper chambers: structurally and architecturally there is every reason to suppose that this door is an original feature of the tower. There was no evidence for a splay: since the blocking was uncommonly poor we were able to record that the jambs ran straight through the wall. This, then, was the principal entrance to the tower as constructed: its centre-line lay only 0.02m from the centre of the west wall.

We were surprised to discover a blocked niche in the south wall: it proved possible to demonstrate that this blocking, the west wall of the south aisle, and a large square-headed window in the south wall of the tower were of the same 15th century date. Only the east jamb of this niche survived to a little above springer level, since the 15th century window had accounted for the rest: removal of a little blocking showed that the opening was internally splayed and rendered. The rendering — a very white lime plaster, still bearing the marks of the plasterer's float, which told us that he had stood where we ourselves stood in order to photograph them — proved to be identical to that found in the first floor chamber — where, for good reason, we believe it to be contemporary with the construction of the tower. As with the west door the construction is of rubble, and what remains of the head of the opening is slightly arched. Above it and on approximately the same line (a little to the east of the centre of the wall) is a similarly blocked window. This does have the appearances of having been cut through the wall: all that can be said is that it pre-dates the square-headed 15th century window.



St Mary Bishophill Junior: blocked openings in the south wall of the tower.

The combination of wet rot and a plump member of the Trust's staff led to the discovery of a square-sectioned internal plinth below the modern floor. Cautious examination by other personnel of similar spongy areas revealed that the plinth was continuous on all four walls of the building, although we were unable to determine its course beneath the tower arch. No plinths were found outside the building, either by ourselves or by the Edwardian restorers, who dug a hole to settle the point. It is considered that the plinth was intended from the first to carry a lodged floor, as it does now. A floor at this level looks right in relation to the blocked door and the tower arch; and if it looks right, it probably is right. Any other interpretation has to take account of the large drop from the sills of the door to a floor level below the plinth — a sill which itself must have been reached by steps from the original exterior ground level. The point is important as it influences the interpretation of the soil layers now underneath the floor; these now consist of underfloor rubbish: they may also have done so in the tenth or eleventh century. Since the organ and tower floor may be removed this year the possibility of archaeological investigation now exists.

The putlog system of scaffolding holes briefly described in INTERIM vol 7 no 1 was found as expected on the interior of the tower, in the form of a line of putlog holes corresponding exactly with the calculated though unobserved position of the lowest exterior lift. Seven were revealed in all; some had been cut out of the masonry, and an interesting and intriguing feature of these is a deep nick in the middle of the upper side of the rectangle: at the back of each nick was found a rust-stained, crushed area a little more than one centimetre across. The most plausible explanation for this feature is that the putlogs, trapped by the weight of new walling, were barred out as the scaffolding proceeded upwards. This would only be necessary if a limited number of putlogs was in use: the materials of one lift would be leap-frogged over those above, ready for use on a higher stretch of the fabric. Each putlog would have to be roped, unlashed from its standard or ledger, and finally prised out of the wall. An origin for the scaffolders in West Yorkshire seems to be indicated!

Within several of the putlog holes impressions remained of the putlogs themselves, preserved in wet mortar: one at least was square in section, while the remainder seem to have been irregular. One may have been a split log with bark adhering to the outer side. Some of the holes contained organic materials including seeds and insect remains, preserved by the very dry conditions in the fabric of the tower. These samples are now being analysed in the laboratory of the Environmental Archaeology Unit: one at least seems to include fibres from a rope.

The quantity of the insect remains is surprising, and suggests that the holes were open for many years. Several of the species are known to be associated with stored produce, while one is a rarity until the fourteenth century. Its discovery in a standing building may reflect an environment rather different to those previously examined by the Trust: the quality of preservation of insect remains and their surprising variety is leading to exciting possibilities in the investigation of micro-faunal assemblages from very dry conditions in historic buildings.

In another laboratory — the Conservation Laboratory — two larger finds are now being cleaned up: a pair of gritstone slabs, (one weighing nearly a hundredweight), found in the fabric of the tower. Each has a shallow half roll decorating the margins of its faces, and no further ornament. They are thought to be part of a stone altar-screen, and are clearly re-used from an earlier church — whether St Mary Bishophill Junior or not it is impossible to say. The stones are also unusual in that no other sculptured material has so far been found in this lower stage of the tower, although most of the quoinstones are undoubtedly robbed from Roman buildings, and some may be architectural fragments. The period of the screen remains is unfortunately in doubt: a late pre-Conquest date is most appropriate. The smaller of the two had been placed in an upright position in the west face of the east wall, immediately to the north of the tower arch, at about eye-height above the internal plinth: it was probably meant to be seen. The other had been set flat within the wall, and only its base was visible. This was recognised when the unornamented base of the smaller stone was examined after removal and the treatment of the two faces noted as being very similar.

Next we examined all the points of junction between the tower and the rest of the church — four in all. Two were easily disposed of — the west walls of the twelfth century north aisle and of the 15th century extension to the south aisle make butt joints with the tower. Removal of wall plaster from points at the junctions of north and south arcades with the east face of the tower revealed that they too make butt joints with it, thus demolishing any ideas we may have had about earlier naves (INTERIM vol 7 no 1). For not only is there a butt joint, but it is quite clear that the tower has actually been cut back to receive the two walls. The south arcade is entirely of the early 14th century, in spite of its thinness; while the wall making the butt joint on the north side has itself been pierced by an arcade of about 1180. It can thus be placed in the immediately post-Conquest period or thereabouts. A small consolation was the recovery from this wall of a pair of iron wedges, probably used as packing.

St Mary Bishophill Junior: small lap joints in the nave roof.

Finally, an enigma. In the roof over the nave we found a number of ancient rafters, re-used in the 17th century. Two of these bear notched lap joints of the late 11th century, well known from elsewhere and easily recognised. But several of the remainder bear lap joints of quite a different sort — small, square, and shallow — for which, says Cecil Hewitt, there is a parallel in the 11th century roof of Sompting church, Sussex. Samples of these rafters, which may well relate to the earlier roof line described in INTERIM vol 7 no 1 p 36, are now beng examined by Jennifer Hillam, of the University of Sheffield Dendrochronological Laboratory. If, as we think, the samples give a date before the 11th century, then St Mary's church contains more pre-Conquest nave roof than is known from any other church in the country. We certainly hope so!

Colin Briden.

NEW LABS FOR OLD

At about 11a.m. on December 20th 1980, I was formally handed a bunch of keys. We had made it at last — our own Wood Preservation Laboratory was ready. Readers of INTERIM will recollect that in vol 5 no 2 the need for a new laboratory with space and facilities for treating large timbers was expressed in no uncertain terms. As the number of wooden objects requiring consevation has grown, so have our attempts to find suitable premises and of course, money.

The Trust has always found it hard to raise large sums of money for any activity other than digging, and to raise the cash to acquire, convert and equip a new laboratory has always appeared a daunting task. Nevertheless, it was a task that had to be tackled if any of our fine collection of wooden artefacts, mainly from Coppergate, were to survive.

Our attempts to find the resources for this project began in 1976 — the year the Coppergate excavation began. The first problem was to locate a suitable building. For some time, I had had my eye on a couple of disused premises in what we have just named Galmanhoe Lane, just off Marygate, and only a stones-throw from our present laboratory. They had been empty for some time, but belonged to the education department of one of the local authorities, and had originally been craft and sculpture studios. One is a large, single-storied brick structure, originally built as a bacon-curing factory, which we thought would make an excellent wood preservation laboratory. Next door is a two-storey 'pre-fab', the ground floor of which we thought would make a good finds store and office to relieve the very cramped conditions under which our Finds Adminsitrator in Aldwalk currently works, and the upper floor could become a general laboratory to replace the semi-subterranean rooms we work in at present at St. Mary's Lodge.

Enquiries soon revealed that the ownership of the buildings was in dispute between the York and North Yorkshire local authorities as a result of the 1974 local government reorganization, and that it would take some time before ownership, and plans for future use, could be resolved. There were encouraging signs, though, that whichever authority ended up owning the buildings would look favourably on our needs. The hope of eventually getting the use of these buildings spurred us on to greater fund-raising attempts, and we produced specifications and prices for the renovation and equipping of the Galmanhoe Lane buildings.

It took over four years for ownership to be resolved and the future use of the buildings decided, but eventually things went in our favour, and as we would be paying for renovation and upkeep as well as providing a free service for the City and the County, we were allowed a lease for a peppercorn rent. So, by early 1979, we knew the buildings were ours, and not long afterwards we heard that one of our applications for funds had been successful. The Danish Tjaerborg Trust, run on the profits of a very successful travel firm of the same name, was prepared to give us a large grant, paid in two annual lump sums, sufficient to cover most of the building works, installation of services, etc. Finally after some frustrating delays work eventually started in September 1980, and went relatively smoothly under the experienced guidance of the North Yorkshire Architects Department.

We knew at an early stage that there was a considerable short-fall between the grant money we had and what was actually needed to provide all the equipment and facilities that we wanted. So, in early 1979 we mounted a separate appeal for equipment and materials. This appeal is still running, and has chiefly been for equipment for processes which we were not able to carry out in our present laboratory for reasons of safety and lack of space. Over 50 specialist firms, both local, national and international, have received letters and publicity material from us, and the response has been tremendous:- the not inconsiderable amount of publicity which Coppergate excavation has generated has certainly helped us here. We were pleasantly surprised at the number of directors of firms who had heard of our work and were immediately sympathetic. The individual letters and appeal material were expertly put together by our friends in Cultural Resource Management who are now becoming highly skilled at fund-raising for the Trust (cf INTERIM vol 6 no 2 pp 3-4).

Several thousand pounds worth of equipment and supplies have been received. Examples of equipment acquired in this way include 5 tons (!) of poly-ethylene glycol wax from I.C.I., Shell Chemicals, and Union Carbide; a set of plastic stacking trays and storage boxes from W.C.B. Containers Ltd., and an electronic weighing machine from Gallenkamp Ltd; a freeze-drying unit from the Danish firm, Heto; and many more. Some of the firms have helped us more than once, or on a continuing basis, especially with supplies, and take a real interest in the development of our new laboratory.

Although, as mentioned earlier, the Danish grant was not sufficient to complete the whole project, we have now moved into the Wet Wood Laboratory, and are busy building tanks for treating timbers, setting up and testing new equipment, and generally making the place habitable. The second building, which will become our new General Laboratory and replace our present accommodation, will have to wait for a while until more funds

Jim Spriggs in the new Wood Preservation Laboratory

come in to finish it with. However, the main building works have been completed, heating and electrics installed, and it will not be long, we hope, before we can move into this building also. The old laboratory in St. Mary's Lodge will then revert to the Yorkshire Museum for use as extra storage space.

We do not envisage being able to expand our staffing levels, desirable though this would be, when we are in our new palatial laboratories. In fact our conservation staff has slowly grown over the years and we now have three full-time conservators, two part-time conservators, and a temporary technician employed on a Manpower Services scheme. One of the full-time conservators is employed by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of the D.o.E. to work on material from other excavations in Yorkshire. We hope to be able to expand this aspect of our work, particularly for waterlogged materials which we are now very well equipped to deal with. There are very few places in Britain which can boast a similar range of facilities for treating waterlogged objects, and we are very proud to be able to offer our services to others.

We are also very keen to provide more opportunities for students in conservation to work with us, as the wide variety of objects from our excavations offers very valuable practical experience.

As the Coppergate excavation draws towards its finishing date, our efforts in the new conservation laboratory will be focussed on working through the large backlog of untreated material. All of the objects will be required for study prior to publication and many, especially the large timbers, will be required for display in our proposed new Jorvik Viking Centre (see pp 3–6). Our work is certainly cut out for us, but in a new laboratory, formed with the help of so many people, we have a better chance of beating the challenges that archaeology in York offers us.

Jim Spriggs

NORTH YORKSHIRE AND CLEVELAND VERNACULAR BUILDING STUDY GROUP

Before describing the work of the Vernacular Buildings Study Group it is perhaps as well to answer the question that is probably being asked, ''what is meant by Vernacular Building''? The Oxford Dictionary defines 'vernacular' as native, indigenous or not of foreign origin and generally refers to language. In the context of houses or buildings the term originated in 1954 and deals with the study of both the social as well as the architectural phenomena of lesser houses — the manor houses, farmhouses, cottages and barns of the countryside. To comply with the term 'vernacular' the buildings should satisfy three criteria. Firstly, they should be of traditional or local form and be built of local material. Secondly, they should be of common occurrence and peculiar to one or more limited parts of the country. Finally, they should be small and mean in relation to some other buildings in the neighbourhood.

Over the past 25 years the study of vernacular architecture has aroused the interest of scholars in many fields, foremost of which have been the social and economic historians who have related the buildings to the activities and wealth of the country. Geographers and archaeologists have also found vernacular architecture a rich field for study, and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments now devotes a considerable proportion of its time to the subject.

Following on the heels of the academic interest has been an increasing awareness of the subject by the public at large stimulated no doubt by the threat to destroy old houses and the growing enthusiasm to convert cottages. There has also been a surge of interest by groups of people, usually starting in WEA classes, to make a study of their own villages before changes destroy their age-old character. Several of these groups have flourished into organisations concerned with the study of the buildings over a much wider area.

The North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group was formed eight years ago on the initiative of three people, Barry Harrison (a lecturer in Local History and Architecture for Leeds Extra Mural Department) who became Secretary, Barbara Hutton (editor of 'Vernacular Architecture') the Chairman, and Hazel Vokes the Treasurer. The Group now has a membership of nearly 60 people who come from all walks of life and live all over North Yorkshire and Cleveland. Members usually work in small groups in their own localities but also meet together for general field meetings, and have an Annual Weekend Conference. At these, the emphasis is placed on recording houses in selected localities.

Members measure, draw and write detailed reports on houses and buildings when asked to do so by the owners or with the owner's permission if the initiative comes from the members. The Group are not only interested in occupied buildings but also place great importance on recording those that have fallen into disrepair and are likely to disappear for ever. To date, something like 700 houses and buildings have been recorded from over 1,000 feet up in the Pennines down to near sea level. The area covered by the Group is extremely large and therefore the buildings we are called upon to look at cover a wide range of types, being built of timber, brick, stone of many different kinds, cobbles, chalk and, of course, cover a period dating from about 1300 AD to the last century.

Houses are usually recorded by a team of four people. Two set about taking detailed measurements of the building so that a scale drawing of at least the ground floor plan, front elevation and a gable end can be prepared. These plans are drawn to a scale of 1:100. When the building produces details of more particular interest such as stone fireplaces, roof beams, staircases etc, then these are drawn at a larger scale. The third person of the team makes a careful and systematic visual examination of the house, both externally and internally, making notes and sketches to allow the production of a detailed written report to go with the scale drawings. The report records details of the construction of the house as it is, and also attempts to deduce a historical development from all the evidence available and to date the building. Blocked doorways, windows, straight joints in the brickwork,

alterations in roof beams can all be used by the team to trace the former structure of the house. The fourth member of the team gives general help to the rest of the group but is often most usefully occupied talking to the owner, who can often explain recent changes that have been made and tell of the structures seen or removed during alterations.

Once the report and drawings have been completed a copy is given to the owner whilst other copies are sent to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and the County Record Office in Northallerton. Each member of the recording team has a copy for their own records and one copy is entered into the Group's files. This last copy is subject to close scrutiny and all the relevant details abstracted and entered onto a punched card system. Some of these details include date, plan type, roof type, material of construction and locality. Using this system it is possible to extract quickly required information and also to analyse the vast amount of material so far gathered and to begin to draw conclusions on, for example, the distribution of house types or the development of certain features over the years. The Chairman and Secretary are currently engaged in writing a book, to be published in 1981, which draws on the wealth of information already gathered.

During 1980 the Group entered the Chronicle Award competition sponsored annually by the BBC television programme of that name for a volunteer project in archaeology. After being selected to be among the finalists the Group were filmed in action recording houses in West Burton, a typical Dales village. The judges then visited York in order to inspect the reports and drawings made by the Group during the past three years. The competition was given added interest for us when Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group also entered the last six finalists. After close scrutiny and a hard fought final the Group were very pleased to have pipped their friends in the south and to have been accorded third position.

Locally, the Group are represented by a York Section which was formed in June of last year after the end of a two year WEA evening class on Vernacular Architecture. There are some twenty members in the Section, of whom about half actively participate in local fieldwork. The Section meets informally once a month to discuss various aspects of architecture and also to review the work completed on a study of the village of Wistow. As part of the WEA class a study was made of the house types, wills and inventories of the village of Stillington over the period 1500 to 1800 AD. The information gathered was analysed by Barry Harrison and a picture built up, amongst other things, of the changes in agricultural practices and house types over that period. On the formation of the York Section it was decided to carry out a similar study of the information available for the village of

Wistow where the wills and inventories lodged in the Borthwick Institute cover the period 1558 to 1842. Having once mastered the art of reading the inventories and deciphering some of the terms, they provide a fascinating insight into the life and standard of living of the time. The degree of detail in each document can vary but usually the contents of the various rooms in the house are listed together with the numbers of animals and types of agricultural equipment. The value of each item listed is given together with an overall total. In many cases the arithmetic leaves something to be desired, but checking this can be a trial in having to think in £ s d and not decimal currency. As many of the houses in the village as possible will be planned and, together with an analysis of the information from the documentary sources, a useful comparison may be made with that from Stillington.

As well as being involved in the village study the Section record houses when requested and are always interested to learn of further houses of interest. Recently, a very interesting report was prepared of the Prebendal House at Monk Fryston where some unique roof timbers were discovered.

If any readers of 'INTERIM' have a house they would like recording then we should be pleased to hear from you. Similarly, we are always pleased to welcome new members to the Group.

T Tolhurst
Secretary — York Section

POT SPOT

COOKING POTS (Part Two)

The character of much medieval cookery, as far as can be gleaned from recipes written down in the later Middle Ages, was very different from modern cuisine, although the staple gruels and stews in the cauldrons and cooking pots of the peasantry remained simple and unchanged by the exotic tastes of those who could afford expensive ingredients. Numerous eastern spices were imported, and much used to give flavour to meat that was not of high quality. A taste for sweet-sour combinations developed, and dried fruits and meat were often combined. The art of the cook lay in creating dishes as elaborate as possible; the chronicler Froissart mentions a feast at which there were a great number of dishes so strange and so disguised that one could not tell what they were, and when one reads the ingredients of many medieval recipes, one can see how this was achieved.

Much use was made of the pestle and mortar to grind up meat and other ingredients in the making of the various types of meatball, sausage and haggis-type concoctions that were so popular, and which conveniently used up the tougher and perhaps less fresh cuts of meat. These could be cooked in a liquid or broth, or by grilling or roasting, or sometimes by a combination of methods. "Take figs and raisins and grind them in a mortar", "take veal, hew it, seethe it, grind it small", "take the flesh of good crabs and good salmon and grind it small" are typical instructions.

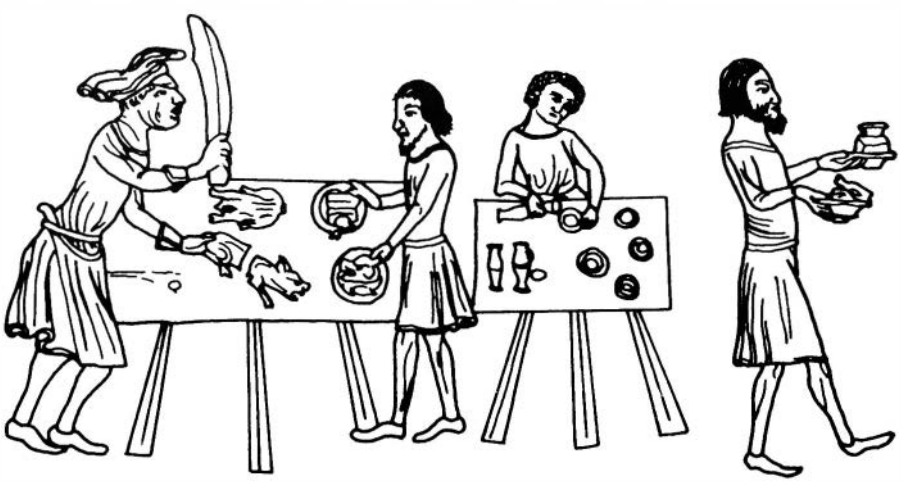


Fig 1 Kitchen scene. 14th century manuscript.

When spices are added to any dish, it is not one spice but several, and when quantities are occasionally mentioned, they seem to us to be excessive. However, it should be remembered that the oriental spices may have lost some of their strength on their long journey to western Europe, and also the adulteration of spices by dealers was not unknown. Nevertheless, the basic ingredients of many dishes must have been unrecognisable. Even a simple dish like poached eggs was elaborated on, using a sauce: "take eggs, break them, and seethe them in hot water. Then take them up as whole as thou mayest. Then take flour and mix with milk and cast thereto sugar (regarded as a spice) or honey and a little powdered ginger, and boil all together, and colour with saffron. And lay thy eggs in dishes, and cast the broth above, and cast on powder enough. Blanchepowder (a mixture of ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and sometimes sugar) is best."

The importance of sauces in medieval cookery can hardly be exaggerated. They were used both in cooking dishes such as casseroles, and serving with cooked food. When served with roast meats, they were poured over at the last moment before serving to table, as can be seen in Fig 1, where sauces are being poured from jugs. In towns, saucemaking even became a profession, so that people could obtain quantities of sauces for special occasions such as wedding feasts. The names of three saucemakers were entered among the freemen of York in the reigns of Edward I and II. One of the cheapest sauces was mustard, being native-grown, and it was considered a good sauce for almost any dish. The mustard seed was pounded in a mortar and moistened with vinegar. Probably all that added savour to the diet of most of the lower classes was mustard, garlic and onions, and perhaps verjuice (the juice of various unripe fruits, crabapples, green grapes or gooseberries, sometimes though not always, fermented; it was used for flavouring meat, fish and eggs).

Archaeologically, we cannot say for certain what vessels were used in the kitchen for making sauces. However, the medieval pipkin, with its easy-to-grip handle and often a pouring lip, may be considered the most likely candidate. Fig 2 shows pipkins from a Doncaster kiln where it seems production was fairly standardised and two sizes, large and small, were produced. Similar pipkins were made all over England. Some had added legs, as Fig 3 shows, copying a metal prototype which appears at about this time. The type continues into the post-medieval period, as Fig 4 shows.

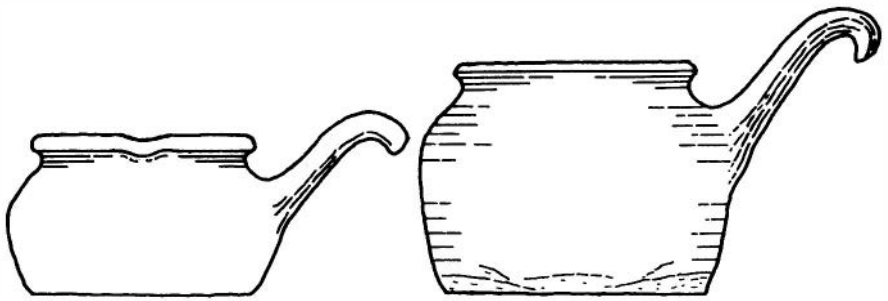


Fig 2 13th century pipkins, Doncaster. Scale of pot drawings is 1:4.

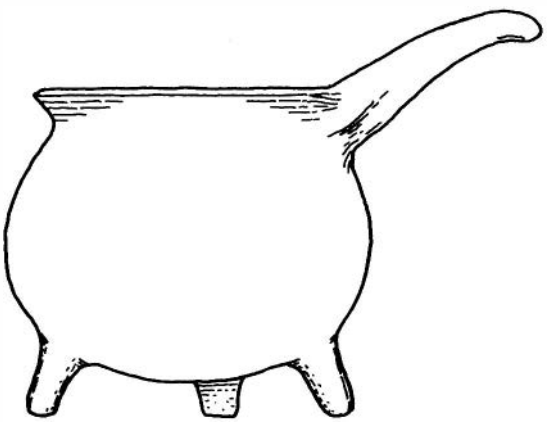


Fig 3 13th/14th century tripod pipkin, Winchester.

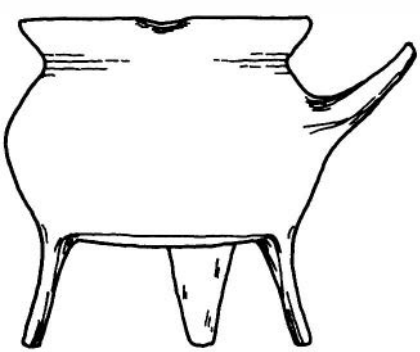


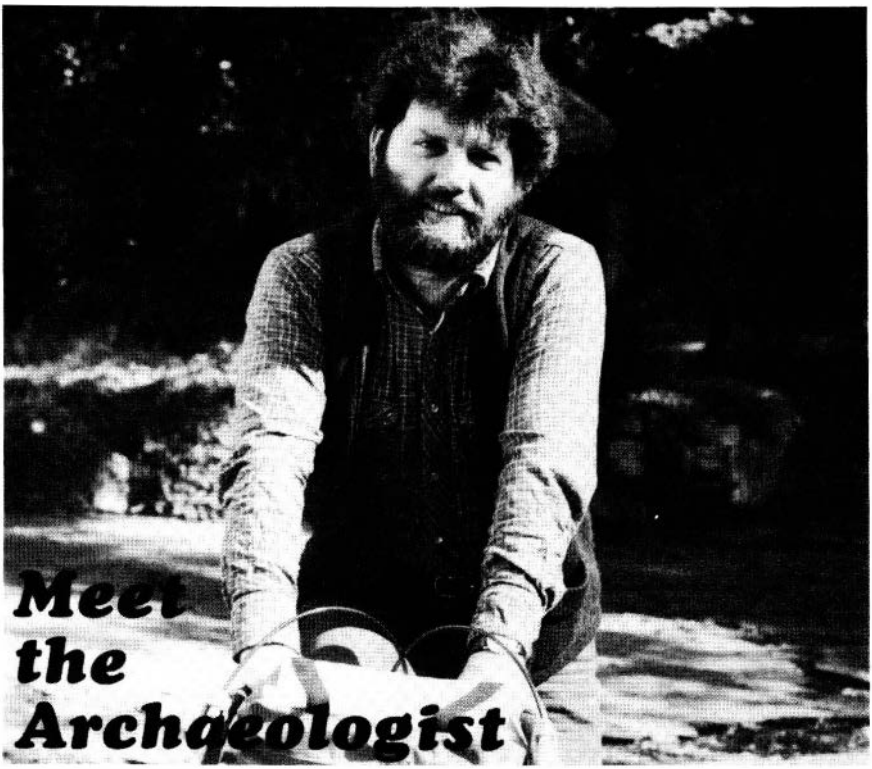
Fig 4 16th century tripod pipkin, Winchester.

The straight handles of these vessels make them eminently suitable for holding steady while stirring, a prime requisite for saucemaking; the pouring lip found on many of them would also be appropriate. This usage is confirmed by a very specific reference in a recipe for 'Sauce Madam' (given in full in Part 3 in INTERIM's next issue), where it states "take galantine (a sort of gravy) and grease and do put it in a posnet (a small cooking pot with feet and handle)". Usually, though, the reference is more general, as in this recipe for gauncile, a sauce for goose: "take flour and cow's milk, saffron well ground, garlic, and put into a fair little pot. And seethe it over the fire, and serve forth". This sauce is unusually restrained in its ingredients.

This is not to say, of course, that sauces were never made in other pots, or that other things could not be cooked in pipkins. Other dishes that required frequent stirring, for example pulse dishes, might have been cooked in these straight-handled pipkins. A housewife in the 14th century was advised: "Wot you well that pea or bean pottages or others burn easily, if the burning brands touch the bottom of the pot when it is on the fire. Item, before your pottage burns and in order that it burn not, stir it often in the bottom of the pot, and turn your spoon in the bottom so that the pottage may not take hold there." Heaven help the poor washer-up (Fig 5) if this advice was not followed!

Catherine Brooks

Fig 5 Washing up. 14th century manuscript.



Continuing the theme of the last INTERIM when we focussed on one of our draftsmen, in this issue we stay with the drawing office, yes, Terry Finnemore, Surveyor, draftsman, This is Your Life! (Well its taken seven volumes of INTERIM to get round to cracking that old joke).

A true Mercian, being born in Birmingham, Warwickshire, Terry spent his early years in the second city, and his formative years in the cathedral city of Lichfield, Staffordshire. An active member of the school photographic club, Terry after attending day release at Lichfield School of Art, left school to train as a news artist on the *'Birmingham Post and Mail'*. This involved working on most aspects of the presentation of the paper, including feature illustration, photographic retouching and the design of various advertisements and brochures, as well as the daily items such as deleting the ball out of the Spot The Ball photograph, and putting a dashed line and a cross onto another photograph, to show where someone had plunged from a tower block. Clearly, however, life at the 'Post' lacked pzaz, so before completing his first decade there, Terry left to travel overland to Morocco.

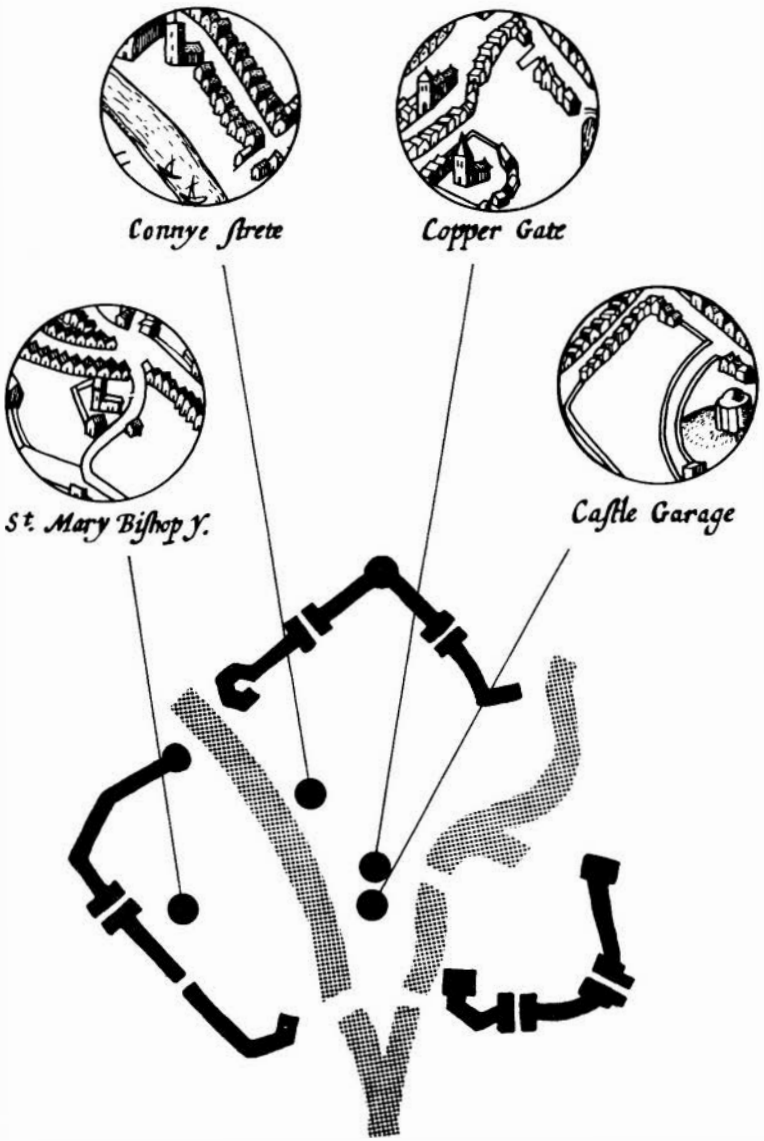
On his return Terry tried his hand at a number of projects including doing illustrations for and helping to produce and distribute the Birmingham *Street Press;* (Birmingham's answer to *'Oz'* and *'It');* working as an artist for a printing firm; and later as an artist in a small advertising studio. He also spent a good deal of time painting and drawing, and making pottery, designed posters, helped to paint and decorate an Italian Bistro and learnt basic guitar, and in between times squeezed in a couple of 'O' and 'A' levels, and visits to all of the major rock festivals.

Terry was also a keen walker and cyclist, being a member of the Lichfield City Cycling Club, and cycling secretary of the North Birmingham Youth Hostel Association. Weekend trips into Wales of 250 miles were not uncommon — brave man! Foreign soil was traversed in a cycling tour of Belgium and Luxemburg, while the inebriated return of the Lichfield City Cycling Club from 'the Christmas dinner run' at an Inn in sleepy Norton-juxta-Twycross, is still vividly imprinted in his mind to this day. Strangely enough it was a long route march over the mountains from Harlech to Barmouth, at the tender age of twelve at the Boy's Brigade summer camp in Wales! which first kindled Terry's interest in long distance walking. Perhaps it was this love of the great outdoors which led Terry to undertake research tracing and travelling along the ancient roads and trackways of the Midland counties.

Although in 1969 he had helped in the rescue excavation of a Norman Motte and Bailey at Castle Bromwich, Warwickshire; it was not until 1976 that Terry again became involved in archaeology. This was at Beadlam Roman villa in North Yorkshire, which he later helped to supervise in 1978, and then at the Welton Wold Iron Age/Roman site near Hull. On February 14th 1977, a date which clearly lives in his memory, Terry began working for the Y.A.T. on what Magnus Magnusson described as 'the hell hole of Aldwark'. After that Terry moved to the Bedern where he drew site features, and plans for the visitor's display. He then graduated to his present position in the Trust's drawing office, where one of the first jobs he well remembers, was having to drill with a Black and Decker through the steel shoring of Coppergate, in order to attach the string hooks for the new site grid.

Presently Terry is involved in an ongoing shed-building situation, whose longevity has earned it the title of 'the East Wing'; exercizing his new lightweight cycle, doing research and fieldwork in Staffordshire and enjoying the Moors and Dales of Yorkshire as much as possible.

His ambition:- next time around, to come back as a cat!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