

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND ANTIQUARIAN AND  
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THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

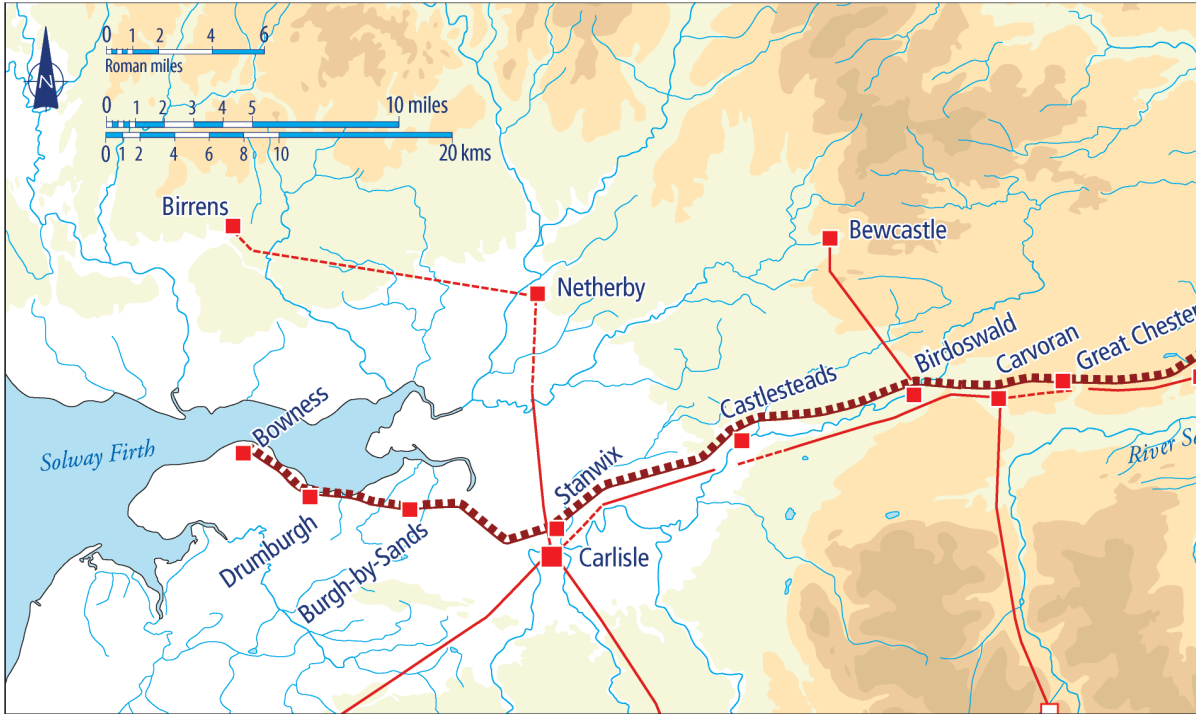
# THE PILGRIMAGES OF HADRIAN'S WALL 1849-2019: A HISTORY

David J. Breeze

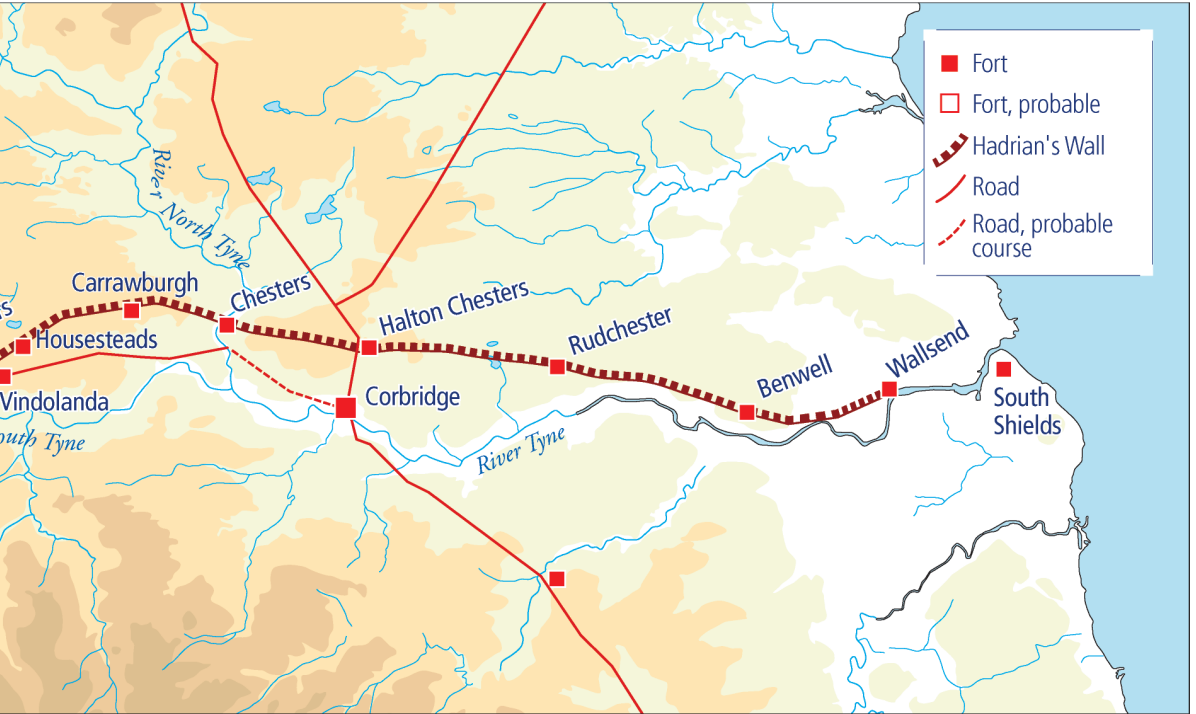
With contributions by Tony Birley, Katie Mountain, Ivana Protic,  
John Peter Wild and John Wilkes



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Hadrian's Wall





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Cumberland and Westmorland  
Antiquarian and Archaeological Society  
and the  
Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne

*The Pilgrimages of Hadrian's Wall 1849-2019: A History*

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For the Pilgrims of Hadrian's Wall,  
past and present





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## PREFACE

The Fourteenth Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall was held in July 2019. As on every Pilgrimage since the second in 1886, it was organised by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. To prepare the event, a committee, its structure hallowed by tradition, was formed consisting of three members of each society (Lindsay Allason-Jones, Nick Hodgson and Frances McIntosh representing the Newcastle Society and David Breeze, Ian Caruana and Humphrey Welfare the Cumberland and Westmorland Society), one nominee of Durham University (Richard Hingley) and one from Newcastle University (Rob Collins). The Presidents of the two societies served *ex officio* (Derek Cutts, Richard Pears and Nick Hodgson for the Newcastle Antiquaries with Rob David and Rachel Newman for Cumberland and Westmorland, the latter continuing on the committee after the end of her term of office). In addition, Andrew Birley, Bill Griffiths and Matthew Symonds were co-opted. David Breeze chaired the committee with Bill Griffiths as secretary and Ian Caruana as treasurer. The handbook to the Pilgrimage was compiled by Rob Collins and Matt Symonds.

The first meeting of the Pilgrimage committee was held on 17 October 2014 and meetings continued thereafter at six-monthly intervals until the final year when the frequency was increased to every two or three months. This long period of preparation allowed time for the necessary detailed planning and reflection, not least in relation to the programme.

Since 1949, the Pilgrimages have been supported in a variety of ways by English Heritage and its predecessors and that continued into 2019. The generosity of Newcastle University (at the Great North Museum), South Tyneside Council, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, and the two societies in offering the Pilgrims hospitality is also acknowledged with thanks and pleasure. Throughout the previous 50 years, the Pilgrimage has been preceded by the production of a special issue of the archaeological magazine *Current Archaeology* focussed on recent work on the Wall, sometimes with subsequent reports by its editor-in-chief Andrew Selkirk, a stalwart Pilgrim. Over the last 40 years, the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust has supported each Pilgrimage through the provision of funding for two student bursaries.

In 2019, the middle day of the Pilgrimage was spent at Vindolanda and here some posters were exhibited by students. One was by Martha Stewart on her project on Eric Birley. This included interesting material relating to earlier Pilgrimages and in particular that in 1949. The sight of photographs of past Pilgrimages stimulated thought on creating a record of all fourteen Pilgrimages and thus was born this book.

My own involvement in the Pilgrimage began in 1969. During the summer I undertook my final season of excavation at Carrawburgh, prior to taking up an appointment as an assistant inspector of ancient monuments with the then Ministry of Public Building and Works, and departed for the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies at Cardiff. On my return, I explained the excavation to the Pilgrims. From 1979 I have served on the organising committee for each Pilgrimage and chaired the last four, preparing the programme on each occasion. A personal element therefore enters my accounts of the last six Pilgrimages and as a result I have usually referred to myself in the first person.

The book considers each Pilgrimage in turn. Essential information is provided at the beginning of each account with a bibliography of the Pilgrimage at the end arranged in date order. Significant publications mentioned in connection with each Pilgrimage are also referenced. Quotations in the text are from these publications. The reminiscences of some Pilgrims have also been included.

The book is offered to past Pilgrims and friends as a record of a remarkable event, a tour of Hadrian's Wall first held 170 years ago and now probably the oldest continuing archaeological tour in the world.

*David J. Breeze*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

- AA1-5 *Archaeologia Aeliana* series 1-5  
CW1-3 *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* series 1-3  
PSAN1-4 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne* series 1-4  
RIB *Roman Inscriptions of Britain. I The Inscriptions on Stone*: Collingwood, R. G. and Wright, R. P. 1965, Oxford

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The first 'Pilgrimage' of Hadrian's Wall was held in 1849, the fourteenth in 2019. This book offers a review of these fourteen events, illustrated by photographs mainly of, and by, the participants. Accounts of the Pilgrimages up to 1959 can be found in Eric Birley's *Research on Hadrian's Wall*.

The first Pilgrimage was the brainchild of John Collingwood Bruce, a schoolmaster in Newcastle upon Tyne (Figure 1). Bruce was born in Newcastle in 1805, the son of John Bruce who ran the Percy Street Academy in the city. He was educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities with the intention of becoming a Presbyterian minister. After graduation he became a travelling preacher but soon gave up the calling to support his father in the Academy. Here he taught history, as well as other subjects, and edited school textbooks, mainly on history and geography.

In 1848, Bruce planned to visit Rome but the disruptions on the continent known as the 'Year of Revolutions' prevented this. Instead he undertook a tour of Hadrian's Wall. He was accompanied by his son Gainsford, then aged fourteen, and two brothers, Charles and Henry Burdon Richardson, the latter the drawing master in his school (Figure 2). Henry was charged with recording the Wall and



Figure 1. John Collingwood Bruce



Figure 2. J. C. Bruce at Limestone Corner in 1848. Bruce sits bottom left, while Gainsford is on top of the stone. Upper left are presumably Henry and Charles Richardson and the groom William

he produced nearly four dozen sketches; subsequently he added colour wash to create the paintings that survive to this day. These watercolours were donated by Gainsford Bruce to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle where they remain.

In autumn 1848 Bruce gave five lectures to the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle illustrated by Henry Richardson's drawings (Figure 3). Many in his audience 'were surprised to find that so magnificent a monument of the power of Rome existed within easy reach of their homes'. As a result, Bruce offered to organise a 'pilgrimage' to the Wall the following summer. The event was advertised in May 1849 and commenced on 25 June the same year. Bruce was not successful in persuading some of his contacts to attend, such as the railway engineer Robert Stephenson, a former pupil at his school, nor Charles Roach Smith, secretary of the British Archaeological Association, though Smith did visit the Wall later in the company of Bruce. Bruce did, however, address the Association on the subject of Hadrian's Wall at its annual conference in Chester shortly after the Pilgrimage.



Figure 3. The Literary and Philosophical Society's building in Newcastle

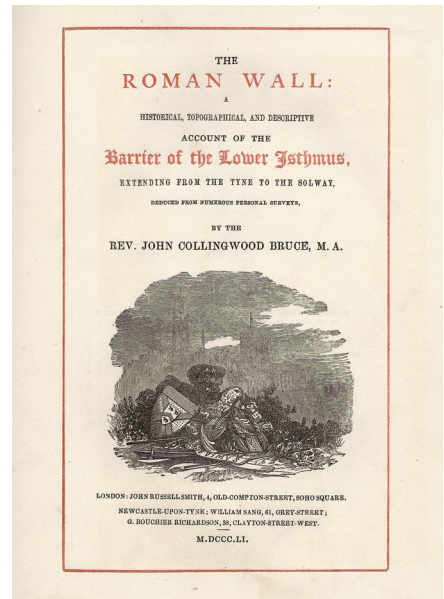


Figure 4. The opening page of the 1st edition of *The Roman Wall*, published in 1851

Another action flowed from the lectures to the 'Lit & Phil'; Bruce decided to write a book about the Wall. This was initially advertised before the lecture in Chester in August 1849. The first copies of *The Roman Wall* were dispatched on 2 January 1851 (Figure 4). This was followed by a second edition in 1853 and the third, magisterial, edition in 1867. In the meantime, Bruce had produced a shorter version for visitors to the monument, *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, in 1863. This was followed by two further editions in 1884 and 1885, re-named *The Hand-Book to the Roman Wall*. These six books are fascinating as they illustrate Bruce's progress in his understanding of Hadrian's Wall as well as describing the damage wrought to its remains over the decades, particularly on Tyneside. They are also the principal visible record of the work of Henry Burdon Richardson for many of his paintings served as the source for the engravings and woodcuts that were used in all six of Bruce's books on the Wall.

Following his death in 1892, Bruce's grandson-in-law, Robert Blair, picked up the mantle and edited the next five editions of the *Handbook*. The book has continued to be revised ever since, with R. G. Collingwood editing the 9th edition, Ian Richmond the 10th, 11th and 12th, Charles Daniels the 13th and myself the 14th.

John Collingwood Bruce, therefore, has two lasting legacies, the Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall and the *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (Figure 5). The former is probably the oldest, and continuing, archaeological tour in the world and the latter the oldest continuing archaeological guide-book.



Figure 5. The memorial to J. C. Bruce in St Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle

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## THE FIRST PILGRIMAGE 1849

*The Pilgrimage ran from Monday 25 June to Tuesday 3 July and was attended by 24 people. The direction of travel was from east to west.*

This first Pilgrimage was small with a core 24 strong. The charge for the nine days was £3 per head (about £375 at today's prices, which is roughly what the Pilgrims of 2019 paid). Both ladies and gentlemen attended, including Richard Abbatt, a schoolmaster from Stoke Newington in London. Abbatt published an account of the event, which also contains much useful information on the state of the Wall at that time (Figure 6). Other Pilgrims included Mrs Bruce and Gainsford Bruce; George Bouchier Richardson, a cousin of Charles and Henry Richardson and later the printer both of the first edition of *The Roman Wall* and of Abbatt's report on the Pilgrimage; William J. Beamont, later founder of the Cambridge School of Art; Canon Greenwell of Durham Cathedral, a notable explorer of prehistoric barrows; George Mounsey of Castleton, Carlisle; and James Raine, founder of the Surtees Society.

Most Pilgrims walked, with their luggage carried in a wagon drawn by two horses nicknamed Romulus and Remus. This band was joined in various places by local people and so Bruce on occasions found himself addressing audiences several hundred strong. He

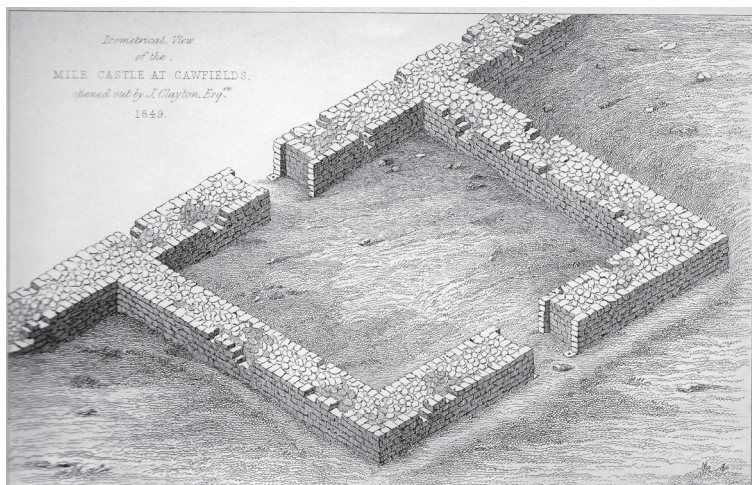


Figure 6. The drawing of MC 42 (Cawfields) included in Richard Abbatt's report on the 1849 Pilgrimage



Figure 7. Chesters in 1849

earned his title of Chief Pilgrim and Expositor.

Lunch then, as now, was an issue. On the first full day, Bruce's servant brought it out from Newcastle in his phaeton, and on the next two days the servant carried it from Newcastle on the train. Accommodation was required. On the second night, some stayed at the house of John Clayton at Chesters and other

at the houses of his neighbours (Figure 7). Clayton provided the Pilgrims with 'an elegant meal'. Later, hotels were occupied in places such as Haltwhistle and Gilsland and occasionally the local gentry fed the Pilgrims. The Pilgrimage progressed along the whole length of the Wall from Wallsend to Bowness-on-Solway. An unusual, and not to be repeated, element of the Pilgrimage was the writing of commemorative poems.

The Pilgrimage started at Wallsend on the afternoon of Monday 25 June. The Wall was then traced from Byker to Newcastle, the Pilgrims arriving at the castle in time for dinner at four o'clock. The start the next morning was at eight o'clock, in spite of eighteen toasts the previous evening, with lunch at Harlow Hill (MC 16) from two to three; the day ended at Chesters. The next day, again at eight, the Pilgrims set out, accompanied, as they had been the previous afternoon, by antiquarians from Hexham, creating a cavalcade which used 'every species of vehicle, and frequently extended a mile along the road'. Lunch was taken at Housesteads. Vindolanda was visited in the afternoon and the final site inspected was Haltwhistle Burn fort. The walk on the following day was resumed at this spot with lunch taken at Carvoran. Gilsland Spa Hotel provided accommodation and the next day, after a slightly later start at nine o'clock and lunch at Naworth Castle, the Pilgrims reached Stanwix. The sixth day commenced at Stanwix Church with a visit to Carlisle Castle and Cathedral following. Lunch was taken at two o'clock in Burgh-by-Sands where the Edward I Monument was visited. Bowness-on-Solway was reached that evening. Sunday was a day of rest, with Pilgrims attending church in the village. The return eastwards was leisurely, lasting over two days with dinner at Langley Castle on the first and a visit to Corbridge on the second.

One of the strangest events of the Pilgrimage, recorded by Abbatt, was the activity of the Pilgrims at various sites in collecting artefacts. At Benwell, where the northern part of the fort had been ploughed, they picked up fragments of Samian pottery. The Pilgrims arrived at Carrawburgh to find 'some labourers were hacking up the foundations and mounds for stones for fence walls. ... The Pilgrims also set to work; and an altar, with the following inscription HVITE RIBVS P. IBVS [*RIB* 1549]; a hinge, a dagger, a coin, supposed of Tetricus [reigned 271-3], and some pieces of pottery, were the fruits of a visit to this station', together with a second altar discovered in a drystone wall. At Great Chesters, 'in digging at the north-west corner of the station, we came to the charred substances indicative of fire'. The farm-servant at Birdoswald aided the party in locating the foundation of the west gateway. These activities were, thankfully, not repeated on subsequent Pilgrimages, though they are testament to the enthusiasm of those first Pilgrims.

The Pilgrimage excited considerable local interest. 'At least one-third of the inhabitants of the town [Haltwhistle] turned out to greet the strangers', while 'on approaching Gilsland ... all the company, at this fashionable place, turned out to view the novel sight of Pilgrims along the Roman Wall'. Subsequently, the Pilgrimage was well reported in the Carlisle and Newcastle papers.

It was not until 1885 that Bruce produced an account of the Pilgrimage, intended to aid the organisers of the second Pilgrimage as well as acting as a memoir. In his report, Bruce noted that the Wall had long suffered through being used as a quarry, but now the earthworks of the Vallum were being ploughed flat, a charge to be repeated over the decades to come. The reference to quarrying was particularly apposite for a turret had just been discovered at Walltown, later to be known as T 45b (Walltown West), and almost immediately destroyed by quarrying in spite of Bruce's protests.

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## THE SECOND PILGRIMAGE 1886

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 26 June to Saturday 3 July and was attended by a core of about 55 Pilgrims, though some came and went each day. The direction of travel was from east to west. Each Pilgrim was given a badge, a scallop shell in silver, the symbol of pilgrimage.*

There were calls for a repeat of the first Pilgrimage, but it was not until 1886 that this was held. Bruce by this time was 81 but he was awarded the title of Chief Pilgrim and Expounder General. He is seen, seated right, on the photograph of the Pilgrims taken at Lanercost Priory (Figure 8). In preparation for the event, Bruce published a third edition of his *Handbook to the Roman Wall*.



Figure 8. The 1886 Pilgrimage at Lanercost Priory; Bruce is seated right

This Pilgrimage was the first to be organised by the two local archaeological societies, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne (founded in 1813) and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (founded in 1866). The two ‘conductors’ were Robert Blair in Northumberland and R. S. Ferguson, usually known as Chancellor Ferguson from his position at Carlisle Cathedral, in Cumberland; the former acted as secretary to the organising committee (Figures 9 and 10). There was for the first time a Pilgrim from abroad, Professor Gerrit Assis Hulsebos of Utrecht University, attended (Figure 11). There was also another Pilgrim from 1849 in addition to Bruce – David Mackinlay formerly of North Shields and then of Glasgow.

This Pilgrimage started, as in 1849, with a visit to Wallsend where the Pilgrims were addressed by Bruce. After inspecting the site of the fort a bugle was sounded and the Pilgrims headed westwards led by the President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, the Earl



Figure 9. Robert Blair

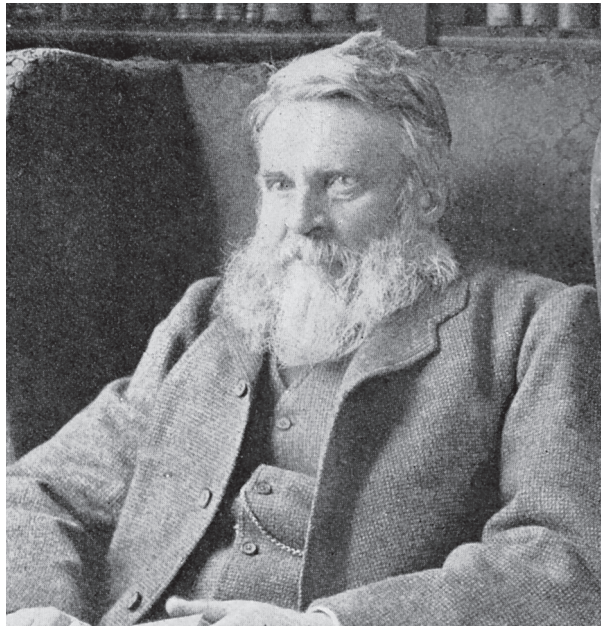


Figure 10. Chancellor Ferguson



Figure 11. Professor Hulsebos of Utrecht University

of Ravensworth. The bugle sounded the assembly each day and the Pilgrims then proceeded on their way, inspecting castles and churches on their route as well as the Roman remains.

In his advice to the organising committee, Bruce had recommended that ‘it would be well to have, as subsidiary guides, countrymen who know every spot lying in our track, so as to keep us as near as possible to the objects of our investigations, without treading upon forbidden ground’, wise advice based on his previous experience when the local farmers were alarmed at the rumours of hundreds of antiquarians from Newcastle about to march through their corn fields. Nevertheless, Bruce undertook most of the guiding, even on the crags, which included the highest point on the Wall, Winshields Crag. Other guides included C. J. Spence in Newcastle, Sheriton Holmes at Chesters bridge abutment, Robert Blair at Walltown where a newly-excavated turret was examined (T 45a), R. S. Ferguson at Poltross Burn milecastle (MC 48), Cadwallader Bates at Thirlwall Castle, and Charles J. Ferguson at Lanercost Priory and Naworth Castle.

In anticipation of the Pilgrimage, the Cumberland and Westmorland Society appointed a committee to make the necessary arrangements and to undertake excavations. The latter were at the milecastle on the Poltross Burn (MC 48) and an attempt to locate the bridge over the river Eden in Carlisle. Other sites were considered but rejected though the whole exercise raised interest in the Wall and its problems. The line of the Wall was



marked by about 150 flags. Red flags denoted the Wall, the Vallum by olive flags, a colour later discarded as not being distinctive against the grass, the roads by white and forts by red and white. The committee also repaired the track at Bleatarn to allow carriages to pass, causing the budget to be exceeded. In Northumberland a local initiative led to the excavation of a section of Wall on Harlow Hill.

As in 1849, the first evening was taken up with a dinner in the Keep where the Pilgrims were entertained by the playing of the Northumbrian pipes (Figure 12) The final dinner was held in the Central Hotel, Carlisle, where speeches were given by Bruce and by R. S. Ferguson in his role as President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society. Accommodation remained a problem with some Pilgrims dispersing to different inns and houses, others returning home for the night. The Chollerford Inn near Chesters provided accommodation on the second night, Shaw's Hotel in Gilsland (later re-named the Gilsland Spa Hotel, and now the Gilsland Hall Hotel) on the fourth and fifth nights, and finally the Central Hotel in Carlisle.



Figure 12. Richard Mowat who played to the Pilgrims of 1886 and 1906

Some Pilgrims travelled in their own vehicles, but considerable use was made of the trains as well. The Pilgrims also had to provide their own lunches. There was a full programme, with some sites, such as Chesters bridge abutment, being visited after dinner, while on one evening there were two lectures after the meal, and on another the monthly meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle was held. The Pilgrimage ended at Bowness-on-Solway where the Roman stones built in the houses were inspected 'and for the last time, the bugle sounded the assembly'.

At the monthly meeting of the Newcastle Society at the end of July the Rev. J. R. Boyle proposed a vote of thanks to Bruce, Blair and Ferguson and suggested that the Pilgrimages should become a regular event.

The Pilgrimage received much attention in the press and the report in the *Newcastle Daily Journal* formed the basis of the account in the *Transactions* of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society.

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## THE THIRD PILGRIMAGE 1896

*The Pilgrimage ran from Monday 22 June to Saturday 27 June and was attended by upwards of 60 Pilgrims. The direction of travel was from west to east. The badge again was a silver scallop shell.*

It was agreed in 1886 that the Pilgrimage should become a regular event held every ten years and so the next was held in 1896. In the meantime, Bruce had died in 1892 and two months later John Pattison Gibson had started a series of excavations on the Wall through his examination of Mucklebank turret (44b) (Figure 13). This was a highly significant event in itself but also for the beginning of a genealogical line of succession for Gibson was later to work with F. G. Simpson who in turn excavated with Ian Richmond and Eric Birley, and they in turn with John Gillam who taught or excavated with several of the most recent Pilgrimage guides.

Another important decision was that the Pilgrimages would run alternative east to west/west to east and that practice has normally continued to this day. As ten years before the joint organisers and ‘conductors’ were Robert Blair and R. S. Ferguson with the former again acting as secretary of the organising committee this time under the chairmanship of Major General Sir William Crossman.

As in 1886, members of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society marked out the line of the Wall with coloured flags; red for the Stone Wall, yellow (not olive) for the Vallum, white for the roads, and red and white for the forts. The flags could be seen from the carriages as the Pilgrims passed thereby speeding up their progress. Again, as ten years before, Pilgrims attended on certain days as it suited their particular interests.

The accommodation in Carlisle was again in the Central Hotel, now the Great Central Hotel (7s 6d for dinner, bed and breakfast) followed by the Shaws Hotel in Gilsland for the next three nights. Again, great use was made of the railway, sometimes by lines now long abandoned, with the Pilgrims being met by carriages as they alighted from their trains. Tickets for the carriages cost £2 7s 6d for the whole week, seats for single days not being provided. The Pilgrims were sustained by tea and cakes at various locations by the local vicars. It is recorded that the Rev. W. F. Gillbanks of Orton cycled the whole way.

The first site visited was Bowness-on-Solway where Ferguson gave an address introducing the Wall to the Pilgrims and explaining the work which he and Joseph Robinson had undertaken on the Cumberland coast in the 1880s. He continued to act as the main guide for the days in Cumberland assisted by Thomas Hodgson who recounted the results of the excavations of Francis Haverfield on behalf of the Cumberland Excavation Committee over the previous two years. There was considerable discussion at Appletree where a turf wall had been discovered by Haverfield the previous year (Figure 14). The existence of a turf wall below the Stone Wall had been predicted by Cadwallader Bates that year. It was



Figure 13. John Pattison Gibson

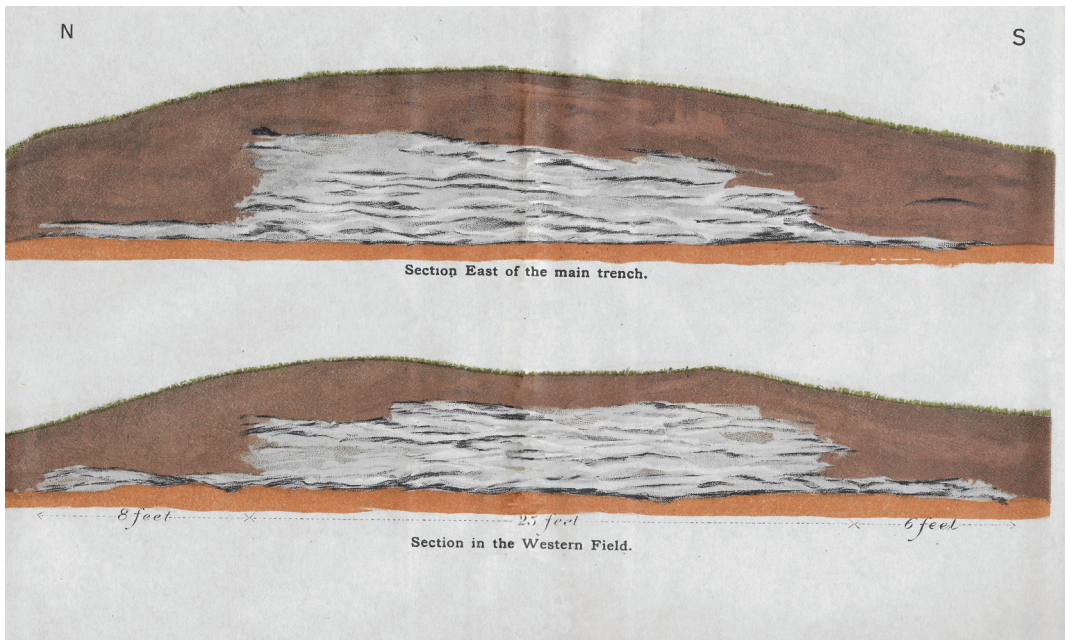


Figure 14. The 1895 section through the Turf Wall at Appletree

identified at Appletree where the Turf and Stone Walls are on different alignments and where the Vallum is also clearly visible.

There was a wide range of sites visited, including Roman quarries, some rarely visited since. This reflected the lack of traffic on the roads, the small size of the group, and the ease of access. It also related to the smaller number of sites available to visit. These, however, were increasing. Mucklebank turret (44b) and Great Chesters, both recently excavated by J. P. Gibson, the former largely at his own expense, were inspected. Gibson also conducted the Pilgrims round the forts at Housesteads and Chesters.

This Pilgrimage ended with tea in the Black Gate of Newcastle Castle, with a small group continuing eastwards to Wallsend. Here they were able to observe the continuing development of the area and read an inscription erected the previous year at the south-east angle of the fort recording its existence.

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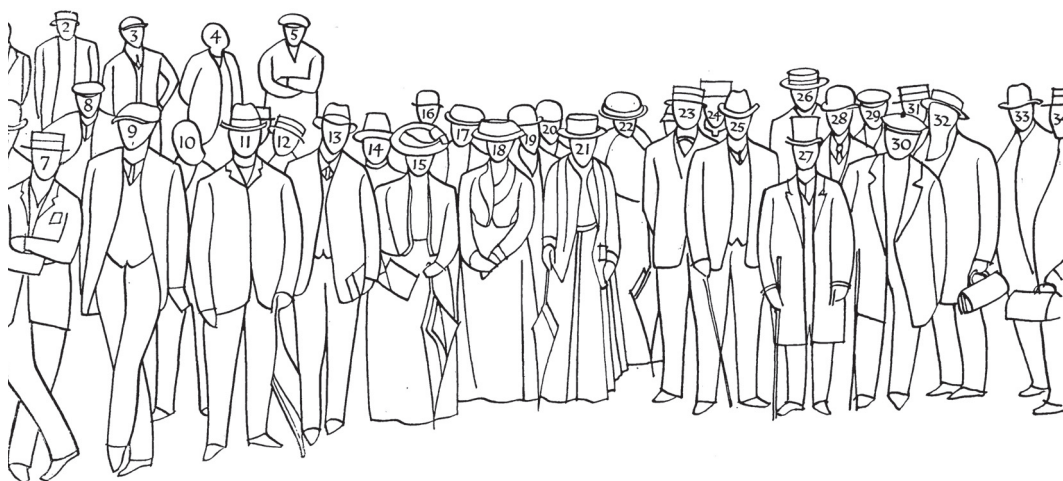
## THE FOURTH PILGRIMAGE 1906

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 23 June to Saturday 30 June and was attended by 62 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge was 'a Roman eagle with outspread wings, standing on a base on which were the letter S.P.Q.R.'*

By now the Pilgrimage was well established in the calendars of the two societies, and it is interesting to see that there was a strong continuity in the organising committees, with senior officers of both societies helping in its organisation. Much of the organisation fell again on the shoulders of Robert Blair (Figure 15).



Figure 15. The Pilgrims of 1906 at Wallsend



1. R. C. Oliver, 3. F. G. Simpson, 4. H. F. Abell, 5. W. M. Simpson, 7. Dr. Allison, 8. E. C. Chalmers, 9. S. S. Carr, 10. N. Temperley, 12. E. R. Newbiggin, 16. H. Criddle, 17. Miss K. Stephenson, 23. C. H. Hunter Blair, 24. Canon Bower, 25. J. Wight Duff, 26. Dr. Hardcastle, 27. Dr. Bradshaw, 28. R. S. Nesbit, 29. R. O. Heslop, 30. C. Hopper, 32. Robt. Blair, 33. Geo. Neilson, 34. R. C. Clephan. *The others have not been identified.*

The main guides were Thomas Hodgkin in Northumberland and Thomas and Elizabeth Hodgson in Cumberland, but they were supplemented by Walter S. Corder, J. P. Gibson, R. Oliver Heslop (who wrote a report on the Pilgrimage) and George Neilson (who published an important assessment of the visible remains of Hadrian's Wall, *Per Lineam Valli*, in 1891).

At the start of the Pilgrimage in Wallsend there were about 40 Pilgrims and it was remarked that 'so few of this year's pilgrims own both eagle and shell'. Corder provided a handout on the fort which included a photograph of the section of wall running down to the river found three years before and since destroyed; the photograph is reproduced in the report in *PSAN*. The opening event was held in the Keep and attended by about 150 Pilgrims and friends. Again, Northumbrian pipes were played, to great acclaim (Figure 16).

The following day 62 Pilgrims assembled at the cathedral, some inspecting the memorial to Bruce unveiled in October 1896. Carriages were provided as they set off westwards to Benwell. Three walked, including F. G. Simpson who was starting out on his career as one of the great excavators of the Wall, two cycled and two motored. Along the way they were joined by others.

The Hydropathic Hotel in Hexham was the location for the second night (Figure 17). After torrential rain at Housesteads (almost a regular event on the Pilgrimages), the party continued to Orchard House in Gilsland where they stayed the next three nights. In Cumberland, the Hodgsons distributed a handout on the excavations on the Roman Wall in Cumberland, 1894 to 1906, later published in the report on the Pilgrimage in the *Transactions* of the



Figure 16. James Hall, piper to the duke of Northumberland who played to the Pilgrims of 1906



Figure 17. The Hydropathic Hotel in Hexham

Cumberland and Westmorland Society. The Pilgrims spent their last night at the Crown and Mitre Hotel in Carlisle.

Along the way, the Pilgrims inspected the north gate of the milecastle in a garden at Wallbottle where it remains though obscured by shrubbery. At Portgate, George Neilson, introduced the Pilgrims to the existence of a Roman camp immediately south of the Vallum. This earthwork, alas, is no longer accepted as a camp; indeed even on that Pilgrimage doubt was expressed. Chesters was described by Gibson where the headquarters building had been cleared since the last Pilgrimage. Two walking parties came together at Winshields and proceeded to Cawfields. Between the milecastle and Great Chesters fort, a small structure was examined. It had been partially excavated by Percival Ross who believed it to have been a turret, but further work by Simpson in 1907 demonstrated a post-Roman date. Ross, however, was correct in arguing that there were two turrets between each milecastle. Birdoswald was, as always, visited, at the charge of 6d a head. West of Birdoswald a fresh section had been cut through the Turf Wall at Appletree for observation by the Pilgrims; this provoked learned discussion, not least by those familiar with the Antonine Wall in Scotland which was also built of turf. The Roman stones at Lanercost were inspected and the Pilgrims then crossed the river by the stepping stones en route to Naworth Castle (Figure 18). They again observed the destruction to the Wall being wrought by quarrying.

The second and third Pilgrimages had been primarily reported in the pages of the society journals, the *Transactions* of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society and the *Proceedings* of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle. Reports on the fourth now appeared in *Antiquary* and in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*. The report in *PSAN* was illustrated by photographs (as opposed to woodcuts), including one of Robert Spence's paintings, *An attack on the north gateway of Housesteads*. This had been created following Bosanquet's 1898 excavation of the fort. Not all the members of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle liked the painting and as a result of their criticism of the detail the artist reduced its size and made it darker.



Figure 18. The 1906 Pilgrimage crossing the river at Lanercost

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## THE FIFTH PILGRIMAGE 1920

*The Pilgrimage ran from Wednesday 1 September to Friday 3 September, with a preliminary lecture on Tuesday 31 August, and was attended by about 200 people. The direction of travel was from west to east.*

The First World War prevented the holding of the Pilgrimage in 1916. Instead, after the War a Pilgrimage was hastily organised and held in 1920. The expedition was restricted to the 25 miles (40 km) of Wall from Appletree to Chesters with a final visit to Corbridge where the earlier excavations had been brought to an end by the outbreak of the war. In spite of the short notice, the Pilgrimage was well attended. Unsurprisingly, all the participants were from Britain.

Great use was made of the local trains, with the Pilgrims otherwise travelling in charabancs. The main guides were Elizabeth Hodgson, F. G. Simpson, R. C. Bosanquet and R. G. Collingwood who the following year was to publish two influential articles on Hadrian's Wall.

On the first evening, 31 August, the Annual General Meeting of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society was held in the Crown and Mitre Hotel and was followed by a lecture by Elizabeth Hodgson on the problems of the Wall in general and especially on work done near Birdoswald. Mrs Hodgson focussed on the Vallum and the Turf Wall and its successor Stone Wall. She was followed by Simpson who noted that the main subjects he would be pursuing during the course of the Pilgrimage were the priority of the stone forts on the Wall and the slightings of the Vallum. The next day at Gilsland Simpson 'expounded his views on disputed points' to the Newcastle members while waiting for the Cumberland and Westmorland party to arrive. The Pilgrims then assembled at Gilsland railway station where they boarded motors cars being driven thence to Appletree (Figure 19). The problems of the interpretation of the Vallum remained a major concern. The discussion at Appletree was led by Elizabeth Hodgson who had excavated with Haverfield in his campaign from 1894 to 1903 and was reported fully in the account of the Pilgrimage in *PSAN* (Figure 20).



Figure 19. The Pilgrims at Appletree



Figure 20. Mrs Hodgson expounding at Appletree in 1920



Figure 21. The Pilgrims at Birdoswald

Inspection of Birdoswald followed (Figure 21) and the debate on the Vallum was resumed at Great Chesters where the significance of the crossings through the Vallum, lately discovered by Simpson's foreman William Hepple (unacknowledged), was discussed. This was the occasion too when Simpson was able to describe his pre-War excavations at the structures on the Stone Wall to the west of Birdoswald, which had 'virtually settled the question as to the builder of the Wall by the discovery of datable early Samian ware' (Figure 22).



Figure 22. F. G. Simpson at Birdoswald

The Pilgrims were guided round Housesteads by R. C. Bosanquet who had undertaken the iconic excavations there in 1898. At Chesters, R. G. Collingwood paid appropriate tribute to the sagacity of its previous owner John Clayton who had done so much to preserve and investigate Hadrian's Wall in the previous century as part of his detailed description of the objects in the site museum. Bosanquet undertook the guiding round the fort, while Corbridge was described by W. H. Knowles, one of the pre-War excavators. The Pilgrimage ended with a visit to Corbridge church to inspect the archway of the tower, which, it is said, was brought bodily from the Roman site.

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## THE SIXTH PILGRIMAGE 1930

*The Pilgrimage ran from Monday 30 June to Friday 4 July and was attended by up to 240 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge was a medallion bearing the head of Hadrian.*

The Pilgrimage was organised by the excursion committees of the two societies, W. C. Soden-Bird being secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle and Major R. E. Porter of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society.

This Pilgrimage opened on 30 June with a lecture by R. G. Collingwood on the problems of the Wall delivered in the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle to an audience of about 230 ('morning dress' was requested). There followed a reception and inspection of the paintings of Henry Burdon Richardson (Figure 23). Many had been used by Bruce in his lectures and as the bases for the engravings in his books on the Wall. His son Gainsford had donated them together with other paintings of the Wall to the Laing Art Gallery. Collingwood introduced a new dimension to the Pilgrimage by preparing a handbook in advance, *The Book of the Pilgrimage*. This initiative has been continued on every Pilgrimage since.

At about the same time as Collingwood was preparing for the Pilgrimage he was also working on the ninth edition of Bruce's *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (Figure 24). He also had the enterprising and useful idea of numbering all the known and presumed milecastles and turrets along the Wall starting at Wallsend and running westwards to Bowness, later supplemented by the numbering of the sites down the Cumbrian coast.

The number of Pilgrims ranged from 180 on the first and last days to 240 on the second. The fee for the four days was 7s 6d, but Pilgrims had to find their own accommodation. The recommended hotels included the Hexham Hydro and the Crown and Mitre in Carlisle. They were also advised to bring their own picnic lunches. Coaches were provided but Pilgrims could travel in their own cars. These exceeded 70 in number and so it was decided



Figure 23. Henry Burdon Richardson's 1848 painting of the Vallum looking westwards towards Carrawburgh walked by the Pilgrims of 2019

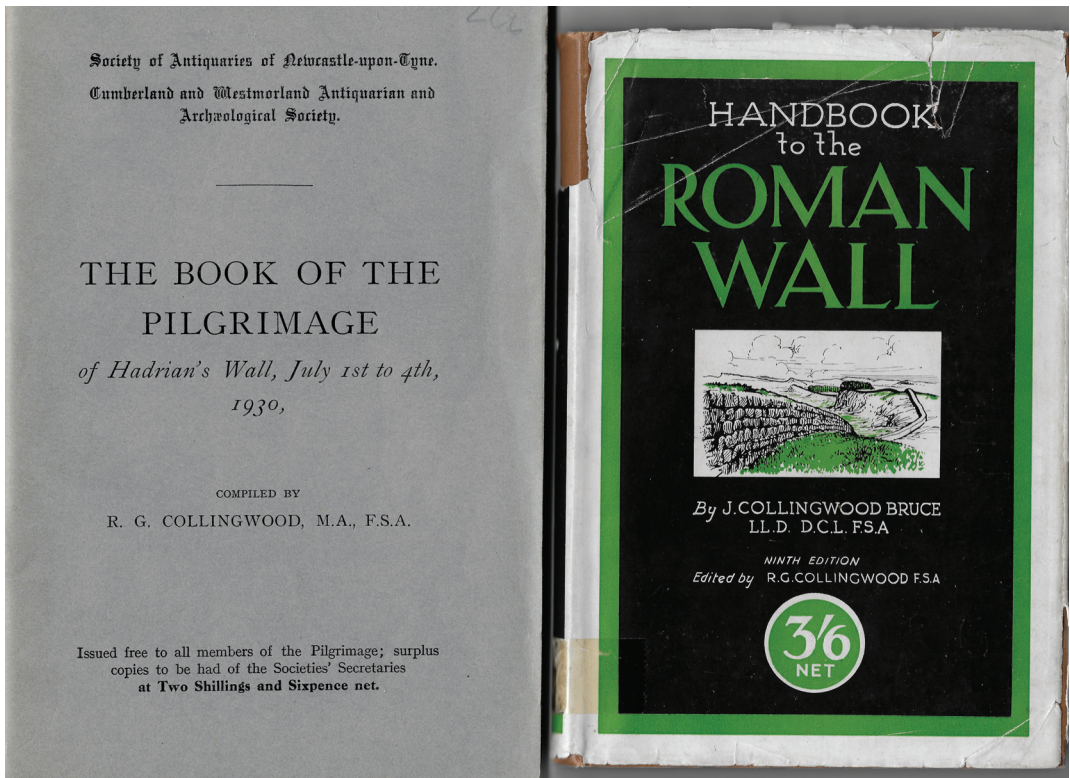


Figure 24. R. G. Collingwood's *The Book of the Pilgrimage* and his *Handbook to the Roman Wall*

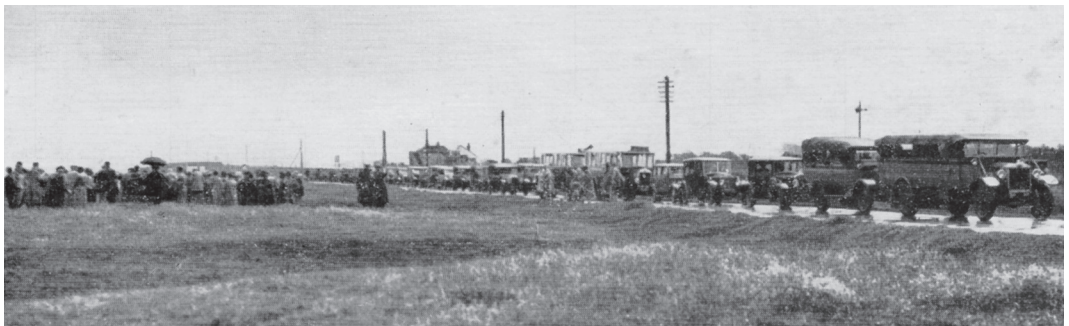


Figure 25. The cars line up in 1930

that no private cars would be allowed in the future (Figure 25). Numbers attending the Pilgrimage were so great that at some sites they were divided into four groups for the tour. The programme for the Pilgrimage lists the guides: Eric Birley, C. H. Hunter Blair, R. C. Bosanquet, W. Parker Brewis, R. G. Collingwood, Sir George Macdonald, I. A. Richmond, F. G. Simpson and G. R. B. Spain. Simpson was the main guide in the central sector where he had been devoting his energies for the last 35 years (Figure 26).

There were four official delegates: Sir Charles Peers, President of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Mortimer Wheeler representing the Royal Archaeological Institute, Sir George Macdonald from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and Professor Gustav Behrens of the German Limeskommission. The first two, together with O. G. S. Crawford, V. Nash Williams, Philip Corder, Miss M. V. Taylor, James Curle and several other



Figure 26. F. G. Simpson speaking at Great Chesters

archaeologists subsequently signed a letter congratulating the organising committee and expressing their 'warm appreciation of the excellence of the arrangements ... the perfect smoothness with which the machinery ran ... and a most favourable impression of the soundness of the methods by which the problems of the Wall are being attacked'.

The first full day of the Pilgrimage started at Wallsend on 1 July in glorious weather, remaining that way except for a few showers on the last morning. New theories were propounded on the significance of the installations on the Stanegate, the purpose of the Vallum crossings (Figure 27), and the possibility of a patrol track along the Vallum, while new evidence relating to the building of the Wall was presented and the issue of the Cumberland coast installations raised. Several excavations in progress were visited, including those at Birdoswald and Bowness (Figure 28). Special excavations had been undertaken in advance of the Pilgrimage. These included trenches at Chesters bath-house, the north gate at Housesteads examined by Simpson and the extramural settlement at Chesterholm (now better known as Vindolanda) excavated by Birley.

In their examination of the central sector the Pilgrims were agitated by the continuing quarrying of the Wall. An important step leading to the ending of quarrying was the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act 1931 which resulted in the designation of an amenity zone round its central sector.

Pilgrims can be long lived, and at the end of this Pilgrimage thanks were rendered to the organisers by Major R. C. Hedley who had attended the 1886 Pilgrimage 44 years before.

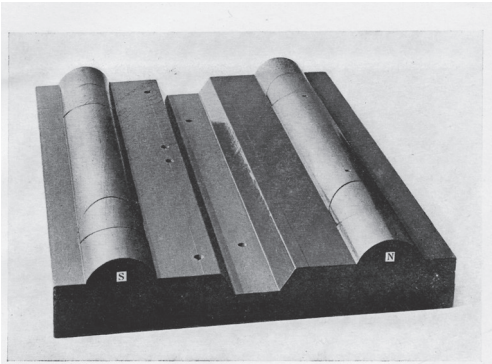


Fig. 7.—THE VALLUM IN ITS ORIGINAL CONDITION.

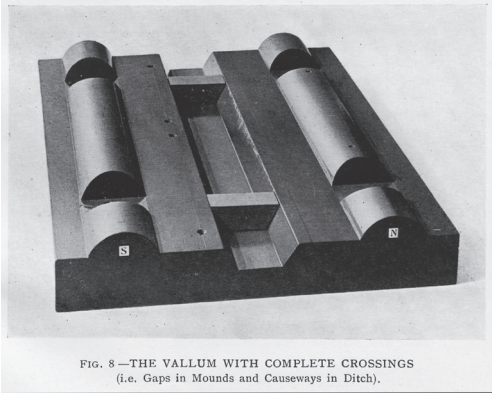


Fig. 8.—THE VALLUM WITH COMPLETE CROSSINGS  
(i.e. Gaps in Mounds and Causeways in Ditch).

Figure 27. The models created by F. G. Simpson to explain the crossings through the Vallum



Figure 28. The excavation team at Birdoswald in 1929 included several stalwarts of the Pilgrimages: John Charlton, Eric Birley a student, F. G. Simpson, a student, Kurt Stade, Simon Applebaum, R. G. Collingwood

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## THE SEVENTH (CENTENARY) PILGRIMAGE 1949

*The Pilgrimage ran from Monday 4 July to Saturday 9 July and was attended by 180 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge for the Pilgrimage was based on the reverse of a coin bearing the inscription BRITANNIA.*



The Second World War prevented the holding of the Pilgrimage in 1940 and so it was decided to hold a centenary Pilgrimage in 1949. On the initiative of Eric Birley, this was organised in conjunction with the first International Congress of Roman Frontiers Studies, another initiative of Eric Birley in this case intended as a step to help heal the wounds of war. The Congress was held in Newcastle from 11 to 14 July, and was preceded by the Pilgrimage. The juxtaposition of the Congress with the Pilgrimage allowed many foreign scholars to attend, from as far afield as Algeria and Copenhagen (Figure 29). Owing to its relationship to the Congress, the prescribed direction of travel was not followed.

After the experience of the 1930 Pilgrimage it was stipulated that all Pilgrims had to travel on one of the coaches and as a result the total number attending was 180. Of these the two societies were represented roughly equally with 80 participants each. Kate Hodgson, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Hodgson, was President of the Cumberland and



Figure 29. Members of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies who also attended the Pilgrimage in 1949



Figure 30. Thomas Romans, centre, and Ian Richmond, with ranging pole, at South Shields in 1949

Westmorland Society while the Rev. Thomas Romans was her counterpart in Newcastle. The joint secretaries of the organising committee were A. Howard Hall representing the Newcastle Society and J. E. Spence for the Cumberland and Westmorland Society.

Eric Birley prepared a special handbook for the Pilgrimage, *The Centenary Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall*. In this he reviewed the previous hundred years of research on the Wall as well as setting down some of the more urgent current problems which required attention. The Vallum remained top of the list, 'long the bugbear of the excavators on the Wall'. The discovery of causeways over the Vallum led to a consideration of the purpose of the Wall: the 'effect of the new barrier was to provide strict control of traffic'. A programme for the Pilgrimage was included together with information on the sites to be visited. The Pilgrimage handbook was supplemented by a copy of the Horsley Memorial lecture recently given by C. E. Stevens.

For the first time the Pilgrimage visited South Shields, the first port-of-call, almost literally, as the Pilgrims then sailed up the Tyne in a steam launch to Wallsend. At South Shields the Pilgrims observed the work of Ian Richmond in re-excavating the remains in the People's Roman Remains Park, first laid out following the excavations of 1875-7 (Figure 30). The most westerly point visited was Maryport. In geographical terms this was the most wide-ranging Pilgrimage to date, and all sites were visited on fine days. The Vallum remained a subject of enquiry, not least in view of the excavation of the Vallum crossing at Benwell where 'particular interest was aroused by the sight of the very steep sides of the Vallum ditch' (Figure 37). At T 26 b (Brunton) the main topic of discussion was the use of clay or mortar in the building of the Wall (Figure 31). At Housesteads the turret under the fort (T 36b), discovered by Simpson in 1945, was inspected and at Great Chesters Richmond informed the Pilgrims of the location of a milecastle (43) found below the fort in 1939. They also viewed the rural settlement at Milking Gap, described by Percy Hedley. The section across the Turf Wall was recut for the visit to Appletree.

There were two evening lectures, one in Newcastle by Richmond on the Northumberland sector and the other in Carlisle by Simpson on Cumberland. The main guides in the field were Ian Richmond, Eric Birley and John Gillam supported by students from Durham and Newcastle (Figure 32).



Figure 31. The Pilgrims examining T 26b (Brunton)



Figure 32. Eric and Peggy Birley together with John Gillam and Brenda Swinbank (later Heywood)

There were receptions in Newcastle where William Bulmer's new model of Hadrian's Wall (at the scale of 6 in. to the mile) was on display, and in Carlisle where the mayor hosted the event. Being the Centenary Pilgrimage, there was considerable coverage in the local press.

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## THE EIGHTH PILGRIMAGE 1959

*The Pilgrimage ran from Sunday 6 September to Thursday 10 September and was attended by about 200. The direction of travel was from west to east. The badge was a coin as in 1949.*



Again, the Pilgrimage was linked to a meeting of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, this time based in Durham, and was held later in the summer. The link with the Congress resulted in many foreign participants from Belgium, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States.

Eric Birley had been elected President of both societies, but an unfortunate accident prevented his attendance apart from a brief appearance on the last day (Figure 33). Nor was a handbook published owing to a printers' strike. Birley put this to good use in expanding his 1949 Centenary handbook and his proposed 1959 handbook into his *Research on Hadrian's Wall* published in 1961.

The organising committee was chaired by John Gillam with R. Scott-Little secretary for the Cumberland and Westmorland Society and A. Howard Hall again as secretary for the Newcastle Society (Figure 34). The fee for members of the two societies (and Durham/Newcastle students) was 1 guinea and non-members 2 guineas with accommodation, meals, etc, in addition. A mobile canteen provided lunches each day.



Figure 33. Eric Birley addressing the Pilgrims at Heddon-on-the-Wall at the end of the 1959 Pilgrimage; to his left are Tony Birley and John Wilkes



Figure 34. John Gillam addressing the Pilgrims at Birdoswald in 1959





Figure 35. Charmian Phillips (later Woodfield) explains her excavation at T 25b (St Oswald's) to the Pilgrims of 1959

On the first day the Pilgrims were introduced to a new investigator, Richard Bellhouse, who, at MF 1 (Biglands), spoke to the Pilgrims about his work on the installations along the Cumberland coast. On the first evening Brian Blake lectured on the settlements of the indigenous population in Cumberland, another first, followed by a visit two days later to the rural settlement at Milking Gap. During the week several of the current excavators of Hadrian's Wall spoke about their work – Brenda Heywood (formerly Swinbank) who described the recut section at Appletree and her excavations at Carvoran and Limestone Corner; Charmian Phillips (later Woodfield) her work at T 51b (Lea Hill) and 25b (St Oswald's) (Figure 35); and John Wilkes his work at Housesteads; with John Gillam the *de facto* Expounder General. Other speakers included Dorothy Charlesworth, John Mann, C. E. Stevens, R. P. Wright and Noel Shaw who described how he had found the mithraeum



Figure 36. Chesters bridge abutment



Figure 37. Benwell Vallum causeway dug to its original depth

at Carrawburgh (Figures 36 and 37). The full programme resulted in the Pilgrims not returning to their accommodation until 19.00 hours on some evenings.

The Pilgrimage ended at Newcastle where the Pilgrims inspected the new Museum of Antiquities and viewed a special exhibition prepared by David Smith. At the temporary bookstall, set up for the evening, ‘sales amounting to £23 were effected in ninety minutes’ according to the Museum’s annual report.

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## SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE 1959 PILGRIMAGE

### *Tony Birley*

The 1959 Pilgrimage, the eighth, was the first one that I attended. From the start it was marked by two problems. The first problem was that my father, Eric Birley, who had revived the Pilgrimages in 1949, and was due to lead this one, suffered a slipped disk shortly before the start and could only attend on the last day, at Heddon-on-the-Wall, leaning on a stick. The second problem was that there was a national printers’ strike, so no handbook could be produced. When the Pilgrimage and the strike were over, quite a few Pilgrims who had paid in advance for a handbook wrote to Eric Birley asking for one even though it would have contained, not least, obsolete instructions (e.g. “buses leave at 2.30 p.m.” etc.). Eric Birley therefore got down to composing *Research on Hadrian’s Wall*, published in 1961 (dedicated to the memory of F. G. Simpson, who had died in 1955). His files show what an immense effort he put into writing this book.

There was a very respectable turn-out by eminent foreign scholars, who were, as intended by Eric, treating the Pilgrimage as the prelude to the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies

that was to take place in Durham. They included, from Germany two distinguished archaeologists, Harald von Petrikovits and Wilhelm Scheiermacher, and from France the ancient historian André Piganiol, the epigraphist Hans-Georg Pflaum, and the archaeologist Colonel Jean Baradez, the former air force officer who had published *Fossatum Africae* (Figure 38). I was deputed to meet the francophone group at Carlisle station and did my best to explain in my limited French why Eric could not be there, ‘slipped disc’ not being easy to translate. ‘Ah oui, le lumbago!’ replied Piganiol who evidently did understand. So I took them to their quarters in Carlisle. I also managed to drive my Oxford ancient history tutor, C. E. Stevens, better known by his nickname as Tom Brown, to his overnight accommodation at a pub in Brampton. I was then aged 21 and in my third year reading “Greats”. I had just had one term doing Roman History with Tom, known as the ‘last of the Oxford eccentrics’, an amazing teacher. For our family he was a very old friend, who had been Eric’s best man when he married in 1934 (Figure 38). Tom had been on the 1930 Pilgrimage, riding his motor-cycle, with Ronald Syme in the side-car as his passenger and had of course dug on the Wall.

One more memory: Baradez at Bewcastle mentioned that he found he could understand the two brothers who farmed there with their gentle Cumbrian accent better than speakers of standard English.

### *John Peter Wild*

The digging circuit for archaeological volunteers in the late 1950s was relatively small, even intimate. Those with a developing interest in Roman Britain soon became aware that the field was polarised: a military north inhabited by scholars with an ancient historical background, led by Eric Birley, Ian Richmond and the Hadrian’s Wall coterie, and a civilian south, where excavators on a handful of major urban sites, such as Cirencester, Verulamium and Wroxeter, were addressing a research agenda not primarily set by the written sources. Common to all, however, was an interest in Romano-British pottery, both as a tool for dating and as a mirror for Roman technological skills.

This was where I began, digging pottery kilns along the A1 road development in the Nene Valley at Easter 1958. Later that year a pressing invitation from Michael Jarrett to the classical sixth at his old school to labour for him at Halton Chesters fort – and on wet days for Charles Daniels at the Shorden Brae mausoleum site – led to a bout of Wall fever from which I did not recover.

I joined the 1959 Pilgrimage as an impecunious student, thanks to the hospitality of Charmian Woodfield (née Phillips) who had a flat in Corbridge during the year she spent investigating turrets along the Wall (Figure 35). We were largely dependent on public transport to catch up with the Pilgrims’ progress, and we often had to miss social events. The western end of the Wall was least accessible to us, and I still have the vouchers for the coaches we could not take. But for a beginner the week’s programme offered an unparalleled grounding in the facts and theories then current on the structure and development of the Wall. In the central sector I tagged along, ears flapping, with a group consisting of Leo Rivet,



Figure 38. John Gillam, C. E. Stevens, Tony Birley, Tommy Hepple, the veteran foreman of many a Wall excavation, and Jean Baradez, taken at or near Housesteads on 9th September 1959

Richard Wright and C. E. (Tom) Stevens. The first two were spotting centurial stones still *in situ* – some of them known, some (apparently) new. Tom Stevens’ tall stories provided a background accompaniment. Soaking up everything a Wall addict needed to know – and a lot else of a more personal nature – taught me that the way to learn about Roman Britain was to *do* it, getting involved wherever digging was going on. One read books and articles, to be sure, but with a healthy scepticism when one knew the authors personally!



Figure 39. T 35a (Sewingshields Crag), excavated by Janet Birch the previous year (and published by Charmian Woodfield), being inspected by the Pilgrims in 1959

I already had a passing acquaintance with Ian Richmond (‘Dad’), who was unable to be present. However, it was Eric Birley (‘Uncle Eric’) who stole the show, even though he was only able to make a personal appearance at the end. At Carrawburgh R. du Cane, who owned the fort site, was given the opportunity to speak to the throng, to John Gillam’s voluble ire. But Charmian and I owed du Cane for a number of lifts in his sports car, including a white-knuckle sprint along the unmetalled Stanegate west of Vindolanda.

The Pilgrimage of 1959 preceded the fifth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies a series founded by Eric Birley, and hosted *pro hac vice* by Durham University. Many Congress members from overseas seized the opportunity to join the Pilgrimage. I had just returned from digging at Neuss for Gunther Müller and Harald von Petrikovits – who later employed me for a gap year in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn – and it was fascinating to have their reactions to the idiosyncracies of another frontier. Their mental map of the Wall was based on the Roman place-names, and they struggled with the terms for the landmarks familiar to the rest of us. But the young Dietwulf Baatz had no such hesitation, and was soon paddling in the North Tyne near the Chesters bridge abutment in search of its underwater features.

Perhaps inevitably, during the 2019 Pilgrimage I found myself peopling the landscape as I walked with a host of my role models and heroes, almost all now long-departed. Their voices, their wisdom – and their scurrilous stories – were still ringing in my head.

### *John Wilkes*

The absence of Eric Birley placed a great burden on John Mann who had to take over much of the organisation at short notice. Problems of site access were exemplified by the difficulty in getting the Northern single-decker bus through the narrow entrance of the Chesters entrance. The weather was unusually hot and Richard du Cane in his Aston Martin had to rescue several Pilgrims who found the walk west of Housesteads too much. Yet Andre Piganiol, the great French scholar, survived the week while wearing a coat and black homburg for much of the trip. He was one of the very distinguished foreign contingent. The great Kate Hodgson, Past President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society, was present and was hoisted bodily over more than one stile.

After the Pilgrimage David Smith organised a later (post-Congress) excursion to Scotland. The Pilgrims were received by Ian Richmond and J. K. St Joseph at their excavation at the legionary fortress at Inchtuthil and instructed on how to find post holes in a gravel bed. David had a torrid time since M. Pflaum protested that while he and Madame Pflaum were allowed a grand hotel room the great Piganiol was placed in a maid’s room under the eaves! David’s attempt to resist this force of Gallic hierarchy met with little success.

## THE NINTH PILGRIMAGE 1969

*The Pilgrimage ran from Sunday 7 to Friday 12 September and was attended by 209 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge for the Pilgrimage was a replica of a dragonesque brooch from South Shields.*



The handbook was compiled by A. R. Birley. He provided a list of previous Pilgrimages and a review of work over the previous ten years. There followed the programme and information on the sites to be visited, including my own excavations at Carrawburgh concluded that summer (Figure 40). The handbook ended with a bibliography.

The chair of the organising committee was R. P. Wright, President of the Newcastle Society, with J. M. Fleming serving as secretary. Accommodation in Newcastle was provided in one of the university halls of residence, while the Pilgrims in Carlisle were spread across several hotels between the railway station and the Crown and Mitre Hotel.

The Pilgrimage was preceded by the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies in Wales. Pilgrims travelling from Chester to Newcastle by coach were summarily ejected from a motorway carpark when they sought to eat their packed lunches there in spite of the protests of Michael Jarrett. The tour started in the east with a reception in the Museum of Antiquities by the Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University, Dr H. G. Miller, and the President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, R. P. Wright (dress informal). The Corbridge Hoard and ten new Roman inscriptions were displayed for the first time.

The guides included Richard Bellhouse, Eric Birley, Robin Birley, David Breeze, Dorothy Charlesworth, John Charlton, Charles Daniels, John Gillam, Robert Hogg, John Mann, David Smith, John Wilkes and R. P. Wright.

The Pilgrimage started with Eric Birley describing his excavations at Benwell Vallum causeway 40 years before. R. P. Wright spoke about the Broad Wall at Heddon-on-the-Wall



Figure 40. David Breeze explaining his excavation of the headquarters building at Carrawburgh in 1969

while John Gillam described T 26b (Brunton), Charles Daniels discussed the Chesters bridge abutment and Eric Birley, John Gillam and Grace Simpson, daughter of F. G. Simpson, spoke at Chesters fort and museum. The second day involved Limestone Corner (R. P. Wright), Carrawburgh mithraeum (John Gillam and Charles Daniels) and fort excavation (David Breeze) and Housesteads where Robin Birley, Dorothy Charlesworth, David Smith and John Wilkes spoke about their excavations and John Mann about the milecastle.

As so often on Pilgrimages, Vindolanda was visited on the central day, where Eric and Robin Birley were the guides, and this was followed by a walk undertaken by about 90 Pilgrims from Peel Crag past Thorny Doors, where Dorothy Charlesworth described her excavation of T 41a (Caw Gap), to MC 42 (Cawfields) where Eric Birley addressed the Pilgrims. The visit to Haltwhistle Burn fort was abandoned owing to the inclement weather. John Mann spoke at Great Chesters and the Pilgrims continued to Walltown where Charlie Anderson, foreman for the Ministry of Public Building and Works, described the work undertaken in clearing the Wall. Mann challenged the generally-held assumption that there was a walkway along the top of the Wall.

The next day, the Pilgrims were welcomed to Cumberland by John Charlton, President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society at MC 48 (Poltross Burn). The Pilgrims continued past Willowford, over the river Irthing by a temporary bridge to Birdoswald, thence to Appletree and T 52a (Banks East), being addressed by a range of guides (Eric Birley, Dorothy Charlesworth, John Gillam, David Smith and R. P. Wright). That evening a reception was hosted by John Charlton on behalf of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society at Tullie House Museum in Carlisle where they were welcomed by the Deputy Mayor of Carlisle.

Robert Hogg opened the last day at Stanwix fort and spoke again at Burgh-by-Sands together with Richard Bellhouse who, at MF 1 (Biglands), briefed the Pilgrims about his recent work on the Cumbrian coast. At Bowness-on-Solway, Charles Daniels described his excavation and Arendt Hubrecht of Nijmegen proposed the vote of thanks to the organising committee.

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## SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE 1969 PILGRIMAGE

### *Tony Birley*

For the 1969 Pilgrimage I actually compiled the Handbook. In the event I couldn't join the Pilgrimage because I had agreed to take part in Barri Jones' excavations in Cyrenaica, at Tocra and Benghazi (Berenice). After only a week, it must be added, those excavations, intended to finish off work begun but left incomplete by Richard Goodchild, who had died soon after leaving Libya for a Chair in London, were brought to an abrupt halt. This was a result of the coup led by two young army captains. One was Muammar Gaddafi, later Colonel: they deposed the elderly king, Idris, installed by the British after the war, and proclaimed the Libyan Arab Republic. But that is another story.

## THE TENTH PILGRIMAGE 1979

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 25 August to Friday 31 August and was attended by about 200 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge was a drawn portrait of Hadrian.*



The handbook was compiled by Brian Dobson. For the first time there were contributions from individual archaeologists on the sites they had worked on. There were also appendices on recent work on the Cumbrian coast and on the western Stanegate, a summary of Wall history and suggestions for further reading. In Newcastle, the Pilgrims were accommodated in one of Newcastle University's halls of residence and at the Crown and Mitre Hotel in Carlisle.

This year the guides wore badges of a different colour from those of the other Pilgrims. An initiative was that each coach had its own guide drawn from Tony Birley, David Breeze, Dorothy Charlesworth (President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society), Charles Daniels (President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle), Brian Dobson and John Gillam.

The progress was from east to west with the first site being South Shields and the last Maryport, with a foray northwards to view the outpost fort at Bewcastle. New sites visited were T 33b (Coesike) (Figure 41), T 34a (West Grindon), MC 35 (Sewingshields) then under excavation, and Chesterholm/Vindolanda, also being excavated. For the first time, the coaches operated in pairs throughout the Pilgrimage with the same sites visited on the same day but in the opposite order (Figure 42).

The Pilgrimage started with a reception hosted by Newcastle University in the Hatton Gallery (dress informal); on display were photographs from the Hadrian's Wall Archive, which had been the subject of a Manpower Services Project led by Charles Daniels; further photographs were displayed in the Museum of Antiquities. On the following evening there



Figure 41. Valerie Maxfield describing her excavation of T 33b (Coesike) in 1979



Figure 42. Three presidents at the end of the Wall in 1979, from the left, Beryl Charlton, Barbara Harbottle and Brian Dobson with Valerie Maxfield who gave an evening lecture in 1989 second from right

was a lecture on Hadrian's Wall by John Gillam, and on the third evening a visit to the Museum of Antiquities. The final evening event was a reception in Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. Two coaches conveyed some Pilgrims by way of Burnswark, where they were met by Alfie Truckell, curator of Dumfries Museum, to the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies based at Stirling University in Scotland.

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## REMINISCENCES

*Tony Birley*

I have a few memories of the Tenth Pilgrimage. One is of walking along the Wall at Sewingshields and in my still rather fractured French trying to recount the legend of King Arthur to the strikingly beautiful Algerian archaeologist Nacéra Benseddick, and her Algerian colleague Pierre Salama. Many years later, in the late 1990s, when I was Professor at Düsseldorf, my young *Mitarbeiter* (Lecturer) Konrad Vössing (now professor in Bonn) invited Dr. Benseddick to lecture about her work—Konrad had met her in Algeria when attending a Congress about St. Augustine. To the astonishment and admiration of the unusually large audience that her lecture attracted, she delivered it in excellent German, in spite of never having been in Germany before, having learned the language in Algiers. Very recently, there is another coincidence: the journal founded after the 1969 coup in Libya, has just published its fiftieth issue, which includes an article by Dr. Benseddick: 'Histoire coloniale. Les tribulations des collections archéologiques de l'Algérie', *Libyan Studies* 50 (2019) 165-177. She portrays the appalling state of that country's museums and heritage in vivid detail.

A rather different memory concerns another remarkable and also (I have to add) very beautiful lady, Mme Mertens, the wife of the Belgian archaeologist Joseph Mertens—the mother of ten sons, as we were amazed to hear. On the stretch of Wall between Cawfields and Carvoran I noticed that an elderly Dutch archaeologist was struggling to get up the steep parts. When I told him that he could return to the coach and would then be taken to Carvoran he declined, I suspected because he was being pushed by Mme Mertens, a fellow Dutch-speaker. I then pressed on rapidly and arrived at Carvoran well before the other Pilgrims, the only one who kept up with me being a young Frenchman. At the time my brother Robin had a horse called Glen which was kept at Carvoran, then owned by the Vindolanda Trust. To my embarrassment Glen approached us and began to eat the Frenchman's smart suede jacket, and all I could think of saying was the unhelpful remark: 'C'est le cheval de mon frère'.

The next stop was the Poltross Burn milecastle, where the Pilgrims were to be addressed by Charles Daniels after descending from the coaches parked in front of the Station Hotel. I am sorry to say that John Gillam and I decided to forego Charles' talk and while it was in progress sank two pints each of Old Peculier. As we resumed the journey John overheard a news flash on the driver's radio and called out: "They've killed Lord Louis Mountbatten!" John had served in the Far East during the war and remembered Earl Mountbatten, blown up with others by the IRA that day, as Lord Louis.



## THE ELEVENTH PILGRIMAGE 1989

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 26 August to Friday 1 September and was attended by about 220 people. The direction of travel was from west to east. The badge was the simple outline of a fort in plan inscribed HADRIAN'S WALL PILGRIMAGE XI 1989 on a square with rounded corners.*



This Pilgrimage, we may note, was the first to be held following the inscription of Hadrian's Wall as a World Heritage Site in 1987.

The handbook was compiled by Charles Daniels and, at nearly 100 pages, was three times the length of its two predecessors. The Pilgrimage followed the traditional pattern. The coach guides were David Breeze, Charles Daniels, Brian Dobson and Valerie Maxfield, each with an assistant, Ian Caruana, Jim Crow, Richard Hall and Nick Hodgson. Peter Fowler moved between the coaches providing information on the vernacular architecture of the Wall corridor. Enid Hart and Dorathy Morgan provided support. Ian Caruana acted as the treasurer for this Pilgrimage and the succeeding three.

In Carlisle most Pilgrims were accommodated in the Crown and Mitre Hotel while in Newcastle they stayed in the Claude Gibb Hall of Northumbria Polytechnic. Ekkehard Weber brought 30 of his students from Vienna University to attend the Pilgrimage.

The Pilgrimage opened with a civic reception in the Civic Centre, Carlisle, followed by dinner in the Crown and Mitre Hotel. After dinner David Breeze gave an introductory lecture on Hadrian's Wall followed by Richard Bellhouse on the Cumbrian coast. On the first day, the site of Stanwix fort was visited, followed by lunch at Tullie House Museum in Carlisle. At Bowness-on-Solway Barri Jones spoke about his recent work on the 'western Stanegate'. The Pilgrimage then proceeded down the Cumbrian coast to Maryport where Michael Jarrett described the fort and Brian Ashmore the Netherhall Collection. That evening the



Figure 43. Neil Holbrook describes the recent re-examination of Willowford Bridge in 1989

Cumberland and Westmorland Society's reception was hosted by James Cherry, President of the Society.

The sector from T 52a (Banks East) to MC 48 (Poltross Burn) was examined the second day. At Willowford Bridge, Neil Holbrook described the results of his recent re-examination of the structure (Figure 43), while at Birdoswald Tony Wilmott described his recent excavations in the presence of Eric Birley who excavated on the fort 60 years before. The Department of the Environment (formerly the Ministry of Public Building and Works) had provided a temporary bridge over the river Irthing linking Willowford and Birdoswald (Figure 44). Unfortunately, this was washed away the day before the visit but was replaced just in time for the arrival of the Pilgrims. That evening Professor Norman McCord, President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle hosted a reception.



Figure 44. The temporary bridge erected over the river Irthing at Willowford



Figure 45. English Heritage hosted lunch for the Pilgrims in a marquee at Corbridge

Eric Birley addressed the Pilgrims at the Roman Army Museum, Carvoran. Visits followed to MC 42 (Cawfields) and Vindolanda where Robin Birley described the site. That evening Peter Fowler hosted the Newcastle University reception at the Hatton Gallery with the Museum of Antiquities open, as it had been the evening before, to allow the Pilgrims to see the exhibits, including the Carrawburgh Mithraeum reconstruction, the improvements to which had been effected just in time for the Pilgrims' visit.

The central sector from Housesteads to Steel Rigg was the focus of the next day, with Jim Crow describing his excavations on behalf of the National Trust. This was followed by a visit to Corbridge where lunch was provided by English Heritage (Figures 45 and 46). That evening Valerie Maxfield delivered a lecture on Hadrian's Wall in its imperial setting at the monthly meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle; the offprint of the subsequent article was later distributed to Pilgrims. The exploration of the central sector continued with a walk from Housesteads to Sewingshields, where recent excavations had been undertaken. Charles Daniels described the Carrawburgh mithraeum and Paul Bidwell the Chesters bridge abutment which he had recently re-examined. The closing dinner was held in the Civic Centre in Newcastle preceded by a civic reception hosted by the Lord Mayor.

On the final day, Barbara Harbottle introduced the Pilgrims to the fort at Newcastle where she had conducted excavations leading to the marking out of some of the buildings beside the keep. The Benwell Vallum causeway and the temple of Antenociticus were visited before the Pilgrims moved on to a civic reception and lunch at South Shields Town Hall, then examining the fort under the direction of Paul Bidwell. Appropriately, the final site to be visited was Wallsend where the Pilgrims visited the new Heritage Centre and viewed the newly laid out fort (Figure 47).

Some Pilgrims then proceeded to the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies based at Canterbury with its focus on the Saxon Shore.



Figure 46. Brian Dobson (in red top) unravels the complexities of Corbridge for the Pilgrims in 1989



Figure 47. Charles Daniels expounds on his excavations at the fort at Wallsend in 1989

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## THE TWELFTH PILGRIMAGE 1999

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 14 August to Saturday 21 August and was attended by 212 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge was a drawn silhouette of Hadrian in front of the Wall printed on a rectangle with rounded corners.*



This Pilgrimage marked a step change in the provision of information, with the publication of *Hadrian's Wall 1989-1999* by Paul Bidwell. The Pilgrimage handbook had now grown to 224 pages with major contributions on all sites along the Wall where new work had taken place and not just those to be visited, supplemented by general articles on recent research, the Vindolanda writing-tablets, the environmental evidence, and the management of Hadrian's Wall.

The accommodation in Newcastle was the Claude Gibb Hall of Residence of Northumbria University while in Carlisle the Pilgrims were accommodated in the Cumbria Park Hotel and the Carlisle Art College. The coach guides were David Breeze with Jim Summerly, Jim Crow with Ian Caruana, Nick Hodgson with Graeme Stobbs and Valerie Maxfield with Tony Wilmott.

Several receptions were held. On the first evening the Lord Mayor of Newcastle hosted a reception in Claude Gibb Hall. This was followed by an introductory lecture by myself. The Society of Antiquaries reception was held in the Keep hosted by Richard Bailey, President, while Newcastle University hosted its reception in the Hatton Gallery. South Tyneside Council generously provided lunch in South Shields Town Hall and English Heritage at Corbridge. In the west, Carlisle City Council's reception was held at Tullie House while Cumbria County Council offered lunch at Birdoswald. The Cumberland and Westmorland Society reception was hosted by its President, Geoffrey Martin, in the Cumbria Park Hotel where also the final dinner was held.

As this was the 150th anniversary of the first Pilgrimage a wreath was laid at the monument to John Collingwood Bruce in Newcastle Cathedral, now a traditional Pilgrimage event.

The first full day started with a visit to Wallsend where a replica of the Chesters bathhouse had been erected. Following lunch in South Shields Town Hall, and a visit to the fort, the Pilgrims journeyed up the river Tyne to Newcastle by ship with Norman McCord providing the commentary (Figure 48). The second day was focused on the Wall as far west as Chesters. A foray to High Rochester included not only a visit to the cemetery (led by Beryl Charlton) and the fort, but also to the Brigantium archaeological park. Corbridge and Hexham were the foci of the afternoon while Vindolanda was inspected on a gloomy evening. At Housesteads the next morning we were welcomed by officials of the National Trust and walked thence to Steel Rigg in the rain with the guides placed at strategic points to describe the remains to the passing Pilgrims. The rain resulted in the curtailing of the afternoon programme to be replaced by inspection of the Haltwhistle Burn fort and camps led by Humphrey Welfare. There was a second northern foray to Bewcastle where Rachel Newman spoke about the cross and Paul Austen the castle (Figure 49).

The section of the Turf Wall at Appletree had been extended by Tony Wilmott to embrace the Vallum (Figure 50). The whole section was then back-filled; the report was subsequently published. Following an inspection of Birdoswald and the turrets of the Turf Wall, the Pilgrims visited Castlesteads. Nothing is now visible of the fort as the parkland of the house had been landscaped 200 years earlier but the 'Antiquity House' contains some inscriptions found at the site. The final day included a visit to MF 21 (Swarthy Hill) recently



Figure 48. The Pilgrims sail up the river Tyne from South Shields to Newcastle



Figure 49. Rachel Newman describes the Bewcastle Cross to the Pilgrims in 1999



Figure 50. The section through the Vallum and the Turf Wall at Appletree

excavated by Percival Turnbull, and Maryport, the first opportunity for Pilgrims to view the Netherhall Collection in its new home, the Senhouse Roman Museum in the former Naval battery on Sea Brows, achieved through the dedicated work of Commander Brian Ashmore.

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## THE THIRTEENTH PILGRIMAGE 2009

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 8 August to Saturday 13 August and was attended by 215 people. The direction of travel was from west to east. The badge was an eagle with partially folded wings and with the inscription 'Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage 2009'.*



The handbook for the Pilgrimage, *Hadrian's Wall 1999-2009*, was compiled by Nick Hodgson. The Pilgrimage started in Carlisle and faced the usual problem of accommodation. About half of the Pilgrims stayed in the Crown and Mitre in the centre of the city and the remainder in the Cumbria Park in Stanwix north of the river, in effect leading to the creating of two Pilgrimages. Following the move to Newcastle, most Pilgrims stayed in the Claude Gibb Hall of Northumbria University.

The coach leaders were Jim Summerly with Tony Birley, Valerie Maxfield with Jim Crow, Nick Hodgson with Matt Symonds and Tony Wilmott with Graeme Stobbs.

The opening dinner was held in the Crown and Mitre Hotel, Carlisle, and was followed by a lecture by Sean O'Brien on 'Hadrian's Wall in Literature'.

The first day was spent on the Cumbrian coast from the fort at Moresby northwards through Maryport to Bowness-on-Solway. That evening Dr Ernst Künzl gave a lecture on 'Enamelled vessels of the north-west provinces' followed by a visit to Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, where the 'pans' known as the Rudge Cup, the Amiens Skillet and the Ilam Pan were on display. The lecture was subsequently published in Breeze 2012 (Figure 51).



Figure 51. The Ilam Pan about which Ernst Künzl lectured in 2009

Remains of the Turf Wall were inspected on the second day. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd hosted a reception at Walby Grange Farm that evening. The subject of the third day was the Stanegate with visits to Vindolanda (Figure 52) and Corbridge, where Kim Bibby-Wilson played the Northumbrian pipes. That evening Richard Newman, President, hosted a reception by the Cumberland and Westmorland Society in the Cumbria Park Hotel with a poster session and books stalls.

The ditch to the west of Steel Rigg was inspected the next day where it was described by Humphrey Welfare who had recently published a paper on the Wall ditch in *Archaeologia Aeliana* (Figure 53). Housesteads was visited in the afternoon (Figure 54). That evening, as President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, I hosted a reception in Northumbria University.

The ditch again appeared in the programme for the next day, this time being walked from Limestone Corner to Tower Tye. Chesters fort, museum and bridge abutment were inspected in the afternoon. In the evening Newcastle University offered a reception in the Great North Museum.

The final day started with the laying of a wreath to the founding Pilgrim in St Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle, and a viewing of the remains of the fort beside the Keep. Shields



Figure 52. The Pilgrims arrived at Vindolanda in 2009 shortly after the exciting discovery of an altar to Jupiter Dolichenus



Figure 53. The Pilgrims return from examining the Wall ditch west of Peel Gap in 2009





Figure 54. Tony Wilmott explaining the working of the latrine at Housesteads to the Pilgrims of 2009

Road, Byker, where pits had been found on the berm, was visited, followed by Wallsend and South Shields where lunch was provided by South Tyneside Council. That evening the final reception was hosted by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle with the final dinner in the Civic Centre ending the Pilgrimage.

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## THE FOURTEENTH PILGRIMAGE 2019

*The Pilgrimage ran from Saturday 20 July to Saturday 28 July and was attended by 211 people. The direction of travel was from east to west. The badge was the outline of an altar, reflecting the discovery of an altar to Attius Tutor at Maryport in 2012, with the inscription 2019 | XIV VALI AELI | PILGRIMAGE.*



The handbook for the Pilgrimage, *Hadrian's Wall 2009-2019*, was compiled by Rob Collins and Matt Symonds. The Pilgrimage started in Newcastle with most Pilgrims staying in the Royal Station Hotel. The first event was dinner in the Banqueting Hall of the Civic Centre (Figure 55). Here, the guides introduced themselves: Mike Bishop, Rob Collins, Erik Graafstal, Nick Hodgson, Valerie Maxfield (in absentia that evening), Graeme Stobbs, Matt Symonds and Tony Wilmott.



Figure 55. The opening dinner of the 2019 Pilgrimage

The programme for the week had two themes – the building of Hadrian's Wall and its history in the late Empire – and the visits were arranged to reflect them. On the first day, the evidence for the original Broad Wall was examined at T 7b (Denton), the implementation of the Narrow Wall at T 26b (Brunton) and the fort decision at Chesters, with the Vallum and its slightings inspected at Wallington Drive, Newcastle, successfully preserved within a housing estate. The theme continued the next day with a visit to Housesteads and its underlying turret (T 36b), adjacent milecastle, and a walk along the Vallum and the Wall ditch from Carrawburgh to Tower Tye (Figure 56).

The third day saw the Pilgrimage turning eastwards. First, the Pilgrims assembled at St Nicholas' Cathedral in Newcastle to lay a wreath at the memorial to John Collingwood Bruce. Here Myles Robinson spoke movingly about his famous ancestor (Figure 57). Thence to Wallsend, where there was a special exhibition of cartoons of the Wall entitled *Borderline Funny*, organised by the Friends of Segedunum. The Pilgrims were given lunch at South Shields Town Hall by the Mayor of South Tyneside (Figure 58) before moving



Figure 56. The Pilgrims crossing the Military Road at Limestone Corner by way of a specially constructed stile



Figure 57. In 2019, Myles Robinson (right) spoke after the laying of the wreath, held by Lindsay Allason-Jones, to commemorate his ancestor John Collingwood Bruce in St Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle

to the fort (Figure 59). The guides at these two forts were Paul Bidwell, Alex Croom, Bill Griffiths, Nick Hodgson and Alan Rushworth with support from Al McCluskey, Graeme Stobbs and Geoff Woodward.

The middle day of the Pilgrimage was spent at Vindolanda where the Pilgrims were guided round the fort and extramural settlement, excavations, replica turret and milecastle gate, and the museum with its new extension by Marta Alberti, Andrew Birley, Barbara Birley, Elizabeth Greene and Alex Meyer (Figure 60). Here also there was a display by the Ermine Street Guard led by Chris Haines (Figure 61). This was the change-over day and thereafter most Pilgrims stayed at the County and Ibis Hotels in Carlisle.



Figure 58. The Mayor and Mayoress of South Tyneside host the Pilgrims at South Shields Town Hall in 2019



Figure 59. Two groups of Pilgrims explore the Roman fort at South Shields first laid out for public inspection in the 1870s

The next day was spent on the Cumbrian coast (Figure 62) where the highlight was the visit to the Senhouse Museum in Maryport, where the Pilgrims were introduced to the collection by myself, and informed about the recent excavations by the Pilgrimage guides. Graham Bell launched the report on Oxford Archaeology North's excavation in the civil settlement. Tullie House Museum was visited that evening; the Pilgrims were welcomed by Andrew Mackay and the Chief Pilgrim's 75th birthday was celebrated.

On the final two days the Pilgrims explored the Birdoswald-Willowford-Walltown sector. They walked the Wall from Birdoswald to MC 48 (Poltross Burn) and from Carvoran to Mucklebank turret (44b), while the Turf Wall was examined from Birdoswald to Appletree where its slighting was observed. A new entry to the Pilgrimage programme was a visit



Figure 60. Marta Alberti describes her excavations at Vindolanda



Figure 61. The Ermine Street Guard (Chris Haines to left) at Vindolanda



Figure 62. The milefortlet at Swarthy Hill looking south-west towards Maryport



Figure 63. Rebecca Jones explains Roman temporary camps to the Pilgrims at Burnhead camp.

to the Roman camp at Burnhead which was explained by Rebecca Jones and Humphrey Welfare (Figure 63). The final day also included a visit to the Roman Army Museum and the fort at Carvoran led by Andrew Birley.

During the Pilgrimage Professor Julie Sanders of Newcastle University hosted a reception in the Great North Museum and receptions were also given by the presidents of the two societies, the Newcastle Antiquaries reception being hosted by Nick Hodgson and that of Cumberland and Westmorland by Rob David. The final dinner was held in the Crown and Mitre Hotel, Carlisle, where Rebecca Jones offered the thanks of the Pilgrims to the organisers.

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## REFLECTIONS ON THE PILGRIMAGES OF HADRIAN'S WALL 1849-2019

Reading the accounts of the Pilgrimages of the past, written by the Pilgrims themselves, I am immediately struck by the enthusiasm displayed by all participants. They were prepared to turn out in all weathers, hot or cold, dry or wet, usually for a week, to discuss the problems of Hadrian's Wall in the company of the experts of the day. Nor were they afraid to challenge current orthodoxy. They saw theories come and go, and they remembered those thrown out and no doubt gained a little cynicism as a result.

They also remained cheerful in spite of long days. On early Pilgrimages, the walking day might start at eight o'clock – now nine o'clock is the regular departure time for the coaches – with Pilgrims sometimes not returning to their base until seven o'clock in the evening. In earlier times, some evenings might be occupied by lectures or society meetings or even a site visit. While these are no longer held, museum visits and evening receptions (including book stalls) can lengthen the day to ten in the evening

The logistical issues of the past are also the issues of today: how to transport 200 Pilgrims across the Northumberland and Cumberland countryside, accommodate and feed them. Today, we assume the existence of tarmacked roads and motor coaches, but Bruce in 1848 walked with a carriage to carry luggage, and himself and his artist companions when they tired, while his fourteen-year old son travelled by pony. The Newcastle to Carlisle railway had been opened just ten years earlier. But after that, the trains were widely used by these early Pilgrims who were delivered and returned, often along lines now disused and along with a more frequent timetable than today. Eventually motor coaches arrived to make the transport logistics easier.

At first, however, this was problematic. The report on the 1930 Pilgrimage recorded the length of its cavalcade of three motor coaches and 56 motor cars as half a mile. Since 1949 the number of coaches has been limited to four and no cars are allowed to accompany the Pilgrimage (Figure 64), apart from the two back-up cars, driven by Lindsay Allason-Jones and Rachel Newman on the last three Pilgrimages. Health and safety issues have



Figure 64. Tyne Valley Coaches have provided transport for the Pilgrims for decades; in the foreground is Edgar Surtees, the lead driver in 2009



Figure 65. Pilgrims test the waters of the Solway Estuary at Bowness

also grown in importance, with Graeme Stobbs being designated H&S officer in 2019 and all guides being required to wear high-visibility jackets.

The problems of accommodation have not gone away. In the late 19th century, few hotels were large enough to hold all the Pilgrims. The trains helped because they could move Pilgrims to towns down the line, or even home, and return them in time to join the party next day. The hotels could provide an evening meal, but the Pilgrims were left to themselves when it came to lunch. On the first three days of the first Pilgrimage Bruce's servant brought out the lunches from Newcastle in his carriage or on the train. In more recent Pilgrimages lunches have been provided for all Pilgrims – in 1989, 1999 and 2009 by Annette Gibbons who was awarded the OBE for services to food and farming industries in Cumbria in 2010.

Another important aspect that shines through the reports is the conviviality of the occasion (Figure 65). It is, perhaps, not surprising that early Pilgrimages were described as 'tourifications', a rather less serious word. Special dinners and receptions were held then as now. And they might be accompanied by the playing of the Northumbrian pipes, as Kim Bibby-Wilson has done for the last four Pilgrimages (Figure 66).

An opening lecture setting out the problems of the Wall at that time quickly became a regular feature. This was especially notable in 1920 when the Pilgrims were treated to two such lectures. The official one was by Mrs Hodgson who had participated in the excavations of Francis Haverfield on Hadrian's Wall from 1894 to 1903 and who wrote the best accounts of the work; she had strong views on the Vallum that are still relevant today. The next day the other lecture, possibly impromptu, was by F. G. Simpson, about



Figure 66. Kim Bibby-Wilson plays the Northumbrian pipes at the opening dinner of the 2019 Pilgrimage, following a tradition first established in 1886





Figure 67. The Pilgrims consider Hadrian's Wall problems at MC 42 (Cawfields) at the end of the 2019 Pilgrimage

to start his exploration of that earthwork. Evening lectures during the Pilgrimage are difficult as the Pilgrims tend to doze off when the lights dim after a day walking on the Wall.

As a result, the discussions have tended to take place in the field. This is appropriate as the Pilgrims can discourse – argue – about what is immediately in front of them (Figure 67). And it is salutary to note how the same basic problems of interpretation have not gone away, not least those relating to the Vallum which was examined in detail in 2019 as before.

The programme is carefully prepared to acknowledge the results of new research. This is straightforward when it entails the inspection of a newly excavated monument such as the bath-house at Wallsend in 2019 (Figure 68). However, it is not always easy to find the right sites in the field to illustrate research in the study as there has to be parking for coaches as well as accessible remains to examine. Moreover, the famous elements have to be visited each time, in particular the forts at South Shields, Wallsend, Chesters, Housesteads, Vindolanda and Birdoswald as well as the museums – the Great North Museum in Newcastle (previously the Museum of Antiquities), Tullie House Museum in Carlisle and the Senhouse Museum in Maryport – as they are the repositories of enormous and essential information about Hadrian's Wall, as indeed are the Pilgrims themselves (Figure 69). It is always good to do something different on each Pilgrimage such as sailing up the river Tyne or visiting a rarely inspected site such as the fort at Moresby in 2009. In 1999, on the 150th anniversary of the first Pilgrimage a wreath was laid at the memorial to John Collingwood Bruce and that has been continued each Pilgrimage since. Pilgrims are acutely aware of the damage that the heavy tread of many feet may do to the green sward and so in 2009 and in 2019 the decision was taken not to walk the central sector.

Early Pilgrimages tended to follow the same pattern, albeit in different directions, but many Pilgrims return decade after decade so some variety is important. In 2009, the daily visits were specifically related to the different aspects of the frontier: the Cumbrian coast;



Figure 68. New discoveries in 2019 included the bath-house at Wallsend



Figure 69. John Wilkes informs the Pilgrims of 2019 about his excavations at Housesteads in the 1950s and '60s

the Turf Wall; the Stanegate; the central sector; and Tyneside. In 2019, the programme was related to two aspects: the building of the Wall and its history in the late empire, both providing stimulus for discussion throughout the week. The Pilgrimage also attracts other events such as book launches (Figure 70).



Figure 70. The Pilgrimage has often been the occasion for other events. In 2019 Graham Bell launched the Oxford Archaeology report on the excavation in the civil settlement at Maryport

In the early Pilgrimages, many walked and there was less to see, in particular in relation to excavations. Some places, such as quarries, visited in the early Pilgrimages have fallen off the agenda, partly because of difficulties of access. In 1849, there was only the Newcastle Society's museum in the castle to visit. Today, there are many museums and more complicated sites to explore. In 2019 this was characterised by the visit to Vindolanda where a whole day was required to examine the visible remains, the on-going excavations, the replicas and the museum (as well as the shop). The use of coaches and the prohibition on private cars has also resulted in Pilgrims having less freedom to wander from the main body, as clearly happened in many nineteenth and early twentieth century Pilgrimages. The greater number of Pilgrims coupled with the changes in society have ended the pattern of succour being provided by local vicars, who also might act as local guides, and by members of the gentry.

The 1849 Pilgrimage was marked by the investigation of several sites by the Pilgrims; 'excavation' is not the word to describe their activities: 'looting' might be more appropriate. Nevertheless, we should note that some of their discoveries did find their way into museums. The activities of the 1849 Pilgrims reflected the spirit of the times, as did the repeated cleaning of the section through the Turf Wall at Appletree which was ended in 1999 by the detailed excavation of Tony Wilmott. This marked an increasing acknowledgement of the finite nature of the archaeological resource.

John Collingwood Bruce was the original 'expounder' and he was succeeded by many distinguished Wall archaeologists. In 1979 it was decided that each coach should have its own guide who would also undertake most of the guiding on the sites to be visited as well as pointing out the visible remains from the coach. By a delightful coincidence the first foreign guide, Erik Graafstal in 2019, is the municipal archaeologist for Utrecht that was also the home of Gerrit Hulsebos, the first foreign Pilgrim in 1886. It is a tradition that

Pilgrims are encouraged to change coaches so as to obtain the different views of the guides, as well as to help social cohesion.

Early on it was decided to reverse the direction of the Pilgrimage each time, but this has not always been followed. The Centenary Pilgrimage in 1949 followed the direction of its predecessor owing to its relationship to the first International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held that summer in Newcastle. The 1969 and 1979 Pilgrimages also both started in Newcastle, two coaches taking Pilgrims from the latter Pilgrimage proceeding northwards to the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Scotland. The close relationship between the Pilgrimage and the Congress continued until 1989 when it was decided that the Congress would continue on a three-yearly basis. By chance the Congress and the Pilgrimage coincided in 2009 when both were held in Newcastle. This link has been very beneficial to both the Pilgrimage and the Congress.

The attendance of Pilgrims from abroad started with the second Pilgrimage, as we have seen, and has continued since. In 2019, there were Pilgrims from China and the United States of America as well as the Netherlands and Germany.

Then as now Pilgrims tended to return decade after decade. Collingwood Bruce and David Mackinley participated in both the first and second Pilgrimages, 37 years apart. Major Hedley was present on the second Pilgrimage in 1886 and gave the vote of thanks at the end of the sixth Pilgrimage in 1930, 44 years later. Barbara Birley attended the 1930 Pilgrimage and was present in 1999, 69 years later. Three Pilgrims of 1959, John Libby, John Peter Wild and John Wilkes, attended the 2019 Pilgrimage. It is remarkable to appreciate that only two lives separate us from John Collingwood Bruce and the first Pilgrimage 170 years ago. This was emphasised by the laying of the wreath at Bruce's memorial in the Cathedral of St Nicholas in Newcastle in 2019 by his descendant Myles Robinson.

The records also show that there was considerable continuity in the membership of the organising committees, and in the guides themselves drawn from the ranks of the two societies. This reflects both the strong interest in the Wall and the acknowledgement by the two societies that this is one of the most important events in their calendars.

There have, of course, been changes. Until 1949, reports were subsequently published in each of the societies' journals, though unfortunately usually anonymously, and sometimes elsewhere. In 1930, however, R. G. Collingwood introduced a novel concept - a handbook prepared in advance. This was considered so authoritative that the Newcastle Society's report on that Pilgrimage was thereafter much reduced in size. There were several reports on the Centenary Pilgrimage but the last detailed report was in 1959 in the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society* since the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne* had recently ceased publication. Thereafter short reports have been published in the Annual Reports of the Council of the Newcastle Society and in the newsletters of both societies. So, too the reports in the local newspapers declined from the extensive coverage of the earlier Pilgrimages to brief notices.

The 1930 handbook, revolutionary though it was, was a relatively light publication (54 pages) setting out the programme and briefly describing work over the previous decade. For the 1999 Pilgrimage Paul Bidwell suggested a more detailed exploration of recent work and thus was born *Hadrian's Wall 1989-1999*, to be followed, so far, by two successors, each about 240 pages in length. They form a major contribution to Hadrian's Wall literature, joined by *The Roman Army in Northern England*, produced by Paul Bidwell and Nick Hodgson for the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Newcastle in 2009. One aspect of these publications that has remained unchanged over the decades is their printing by Titus Wilson in Kendal.

The 2019 Pilgrimage followed the normal pattern: a carefully arranged programme, two guides for each of the four coaches, sundry other site guides, a limit of 220 Pilgrims, two

back-up cars, three hotels, special opening and closing dinners, receptions, a handbook, and one day of rain... In 2019, as in previous years, the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust supported the presence of two students on the Pilgrimage. In her vote of thanks at the final Pilgrimage dinner, Rebecca Jones paid tribute to their presence in the following way:

‘only 27% of those I have thanked have been women. And there are two more women I must acknowledge – our two Robert Kiln bursary students: Katie Mountain from Newcastle University and Ivana Protic from the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade. Can I use this opportunity to thank you both for the help that you have given the Pilgrims this week, I hope that you have got a lot out of your attendance and learnt not only lots about the Wall, its structures and artefacts, camps, the military and civil communities, the Cumberland coast and the Vallum! But also you have seen the camaraderie, humour, good nature and kindness of the Pilgrimage, the intellectual stimulus that it provides, and had a glimpse into how to organise a week-long Roman event for over 200 people! In turn, you have impressed us with your studies, your interest, your intellectual engagement and your friendship and I hope that this week has given both your research areas and future careers a boost. Being awarded a bursary to attend is an important accomplishment and we hope that it helps your CVs in the future!’

I leave the last words to Katie and Ivana (Figure 71).



Figure 71. Ivana Protic and Katie Mountain at South Shields

## AN ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCE ON THE FOURTEENTH PILGRIMAGE

### *Katie Mountain*

I was extremely honoured and grateful to be offered a Robert Kiln bursary for the Fourteenth Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall. As a native of the North-East, having a fascination with the Wall since I was young and recently studying the frontier for my MA at Newcastle University, I was more than excited.

I was not disappointed. I was overwhelmed with the knowledge and personal experiences of those who researched and excavated the sites, and I was glad finally to put faces to names I had so far only read. One of many highlights for me was the walk from Appletree along the Turf Wall and up to Birdoswald fort. As we walked further east along the stone wall with its milecastles and turrets, looking ahead as the Wall continues over the crags of the Great Whin Sill, you could fully appreciate all the various defining features of this impressive construction across the vast landscape.

Throughout all the walks and visits to sites, I had the chance to speak with Pilgrims from across the world. The conversations and entertainment lasted well into the evenings with the many outstanding receptions and dinners. I made a lot of new friends and colleagues and felt truly welcomed into the archaeological world of the frontier. I look forward to the next ten years of research and hope I will see all the Pilgrims along the way and again at the Fifteenth Pilgrimage in 2029.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A YOUNG PILGRIM

### *Ivana Protic*

Last September, during the Twenty-Fourth Limes Congress held in my home country Serbia, in ancient Viminacium, David Breeze introduced me to the existence of the Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage and subsequently I was offered one of the student bursaries. After several months of bureaucratic procedures to obtain a UK visa, I found myself on the train from London to Newcastle upon Tyne. I was very eager and enthusiastic and couldn't wait for the Pilgrimage to start. On the night of the 20 July all the Pilgrims attended a wonderful banquet where I saw a lot of familiar faces from the Congress and heard a lot of well-known names from textbooks I have been reading since I started studying archaeology.

Eight days of learning, hiking and meeting Pilgrims from all over the world followed. I came home with new knowledge about how the Wall functioned, the relationship between soldiers and civilians, the everyday life of Roman soldiers, and of course how it is viewed today.

My strongest memory is standing next to Turret 45a, cold wind blowing, rain drops hitting my face and my hair dripping wet, but I couldn't be happier. The scenery was unforgettable; it felt as if all the Pilgrims had travelled back in time. Standing there, looking at the endless foggy horizon of the *Barbaricum*, thinking about Roman soldiers who didn't have a bus waiting to take them to the hotel where they'll eat a warm meal and put on dry clothes, made me realize just how tough these men were.

The Tullie House Museum in Carlisle and the Roman Army Museum made a big impression on me. Here were displayed everything I had ever learned about the Roman army and I was hypnotized. Also, seeing Vindolanda's amazing landscape and tablets, glass, and shoes was a unique experience and the way the team and the site are organized is on an enviable level. All the expectations I had were exceeded, I am sure that the acquired knowledge will serve me well in the future. If it was not for the offer of the bursary I wouldn't have had this experience and my view of Roman frontiers would not have been so enriched. I am eagerly waiting for the 2029 Pilgrimage and hoping I'll be a part of it!

## THE BOOKS ON HADRIAN'S WALL BY JOHN COLLINGWOOD BRUCE

Bruce was prolific in his lifetime and his *Handbook to the Roman Wall* has continued in print, repeatedly updated, since his death (Figure 72).

### *The Roman Wall*

Bruce, J. C. 1851 *The Roman Wall. A Historical, Topographical and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, extending from the Tyne to the Solway, deduced from numerous personal surveys*, London and Newcastle.

Bruce, J. C. 1853 *The Roman Wall ...*, 2nd ed. London.

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### *The Handbook to the Roman Wall*

Bruce, J. C. 1863 *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, London and Newcastle.

Bruce, J. C. 1884 *The Hand-book to the Roman Wall*, 2nd ed. London and Newcastle.

Bruce, J. C. 1885 *The Hand-book to the Roman Wall*, 3rd ed. London and Newcastle.

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Collingwood, R. G. (editor) 1933 *The Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 9th ed. London and Newcastle (reprinted 1937).

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Figure 72. All editions of the Handbook to the Roman Wall were on display in the library of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle during the 2019 Pilgrimage

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 Richmond, I. A. (editor) 1966 *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 12th ed. Newcastle (reprinted 1970).  
 Daniels, C. M. (editor) 1978 *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 13th ed. Newcastle.  
 Breeze, D. J. (editor) 2006 *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 14th ed. Newcastle.

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

For a history of research on Hadrian's Wall during the Pilgrimages see:  
 Breeze, D. J. 2014 *Hadrian's Wall. A History of Archaeological Thought*, Kendal.

## ARCHIVES OF THE PILGRIMAGES

The minutes and other relevant material of the organising committees of several of the Pilgrimages are held in the Northumberland County Archives at Woodhorn and at the Cumbria Archive Centre in Carlisle. A list of this material is available on the website of the Cumberland and Westmorland Society, *Cumbriapast* (clicking on Research and then Our Archives leads to the records).



Figure 73. Claire Hensman, Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria, launches the newest book on Hadrian's Wall, *Hadrian's Wall: A Journey through Time*, at the Cumberland and Westmorland Society's 2019 reception, flanked, from the left, by David Breeze, author, Mark Richards, illustrator, and, right, Peter Savin, photographer, and Steve Matthews, publisher (Bookcase Carlisle)



## PICTURE CREDITS AND SOURCES

Frontispiece, figures 3, 42, 59, 60, 68 and 71 David J Breeze  
Figure 1 and back cover Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Great North Museum, Newcastle  
Figures 2, 7, 23 Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums  
Figures 5, 44, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 54, 65 and 69 Graeme Stobbs  
Figures 8, 17, 26 Northumberland County Archives  
Figure 9 AA2, 22 (1923) opposite 187  
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Figure 11 The Municipality of Utrecht: catalogue number 221292 The Utrecht Archives  
Figures 12 and 16 Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum per Anne Moore  
Figure 13 AA3, 10 (1913) opposite 300  
Figure 14 CW1, 14 (1896) between 188 and 189  
Figure 15 PSAN4, 10, frontispiece  
Figure 18 PSAN3, 2, no. 23 (1906) opposite 294  
Figure 19 PSAN 3, no 9 (1920) opposite 281  
Figure 20 PSAN3, no. 9 (1920) opposite 284  
Figure 21 PSAN3, no 9 (1920) opposite 281  
Figure 22 PSAN3, no. 9 (1920) opposite 284  
Figure 25 PSAN4, 4 (1929-30) opposite 1  
Figure 28 Ian Richmond  
Figures 31 and 32 Brenda Swinbank, later Heywood  
Figure 33 The Vindolanda Trust  
Figures 35, 36, 37 and 39 John Peter Wild  
Figure 38 Tony Birley  
Figure 40 Valerie Maxfield  
Figure 41 Bill Hanson  
Figures 43 and 46 Ian Caruana  
Figures 45 and 47 Nick Hodgson  
Figure 51 Tullie House Museum, Carlisle  
Figures 56, 57, 61, 62, 63, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74 and front cover Erik Graafstal  
Figure 58 The South Shields Gazette  
Figure 66 Sue Ward



Figure 74. Rebecca Jones bringing the 2019 Pilgrimage to a close with her vote of thanks in the Crown and Mitre Hotel, Carlisle

The Pilgrimages of Hadrian's Wall have been organised since 1886 by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society.

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle was founded in 1813. It promotes the preservation, study and enjoyment of the historical and archaeological heritage in general, and of the North East of England in particular, and welcomes anyone wishing to explore the history and archaeology of the region. The society has a diverse membership of over 700 people. There are regular monthly meetings and countryside walks and visits. The society publishes an annual journal, *Archaeologia Aeliana* (now available online), and a news bulletin twice a year, as well as providing regular information online.

Many objects owned by the society are on display in museums, including the Great North Museum in Newcastle and the Chantry Museum in Morpeth, where the bagpipe collection is housed. The society also has a library of national importance containing over 30,000 books available for study in the Great North Museum. The society also sponsors and publishes research into North East history and archaeology.

For further information and to join online, see the website: [newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk](http://newcastle-antiquaries.org.uk)

The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society was founded in 1866 to promote, encourage, foster and coordinate the study of archaeology, history, genealogy, customs and traditions of what is now the county of Cumbria. The society publishes its *Transactions* annually (now available online) and its newsletter three times a year, as well as special reports and monographs. There is a programme of lectures each year held in Carlisle, Penrith, Kendal and south-west Cumbria as well as walks and field visits.

The society is a major supporter of archaeological and historical research in Cumbria, offering grants for field work and publication in particular. The Clare Fell Bursary Fund offers bursaries to young people under 25 who wish to undertake a particular project on some aspect of the archaeology of Cumbria or to young people living in Cumbria who wish to undertake a project relating to the archaeology of another area.

Further information and to join online, see the website: [cumbriapast.com](http://cumbriapast.com)



David Breeze has attended every Pilgrimage (and Congress of Roman Frontier Studies) since 1969. He chaired the organising committee for the 1989, 1999, 2009 and 2019 Pilgrimages, latterly serving as Chief Pilgrim. David has been President of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society as well as Chairman of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies. He has excavated on both Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall and has written several books on both frontiers as well as a general book on all Roman frontiers.

The first Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall was held in 1849 and attracted considerable local interest. Since 1886 the event has been organised by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society. The Centenary Pilgrimage was in 1949 and since then they have been held in the ninth year of each decade. Over 200 Pilgrims spend a week visiting sites that reflect recent work on the Wall in addition to inspecting the well-known forts and museums, each carrying a copy of the handbook for the Pilgrimage. This book tells the stories of the 14 Pilgrimages held over the last 170 years. The Pilgrimage is probably the oldest and continuing archaeological tour in the world.

*Reading this, I felt as though I understood for the first time how the Pilgrimage got to where it is today.* Matt Symonds, editor of *Current World Archaeology*

**CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

*Front cover: Matt Symonds addresses the Pilgrims at MC 48 (Poltross Burn) in 2019*  
*Back cover: John Collingwood Bruce at the Keep of Newcastle Castle*