



LINCOLN CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM  
PUBLICATIONS, No. 3.

(Second Edition.)

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# Roman Antiquities,

IN THE

CITY & COUNTY MUSEUM, LINCOLN.

(PART I.)

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APRIL, 1909.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

SOLD AT THE MUSEUM

SECOND EDITION.

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The first edition of this Publication having been so favourably received by the Public, it has been necessary to publish a second edition, and the Author has taken the opportunity of including recent additions.



Photo by

GROUP OF ROMAN REMAINS,  
Western end of the Archaeological Room,  
City and County Museum, Lincoln.

J. S. BALDREY.

## ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

The history of Lincoln in Roman times has been a subject for many authors, who have, from time to time, contributed a great amount of information regarding this interesting City.

This publication is therefore not intended to deal with the subject generally, but is written for the guidance of visitors to the Museum, who may be interested in the many specimens that illustrate the occupation of Lincoln and Lincolnshire during the Roman period.

It may, however, be desirable to briefly outline the occupation of the City by the Romans, so that interest may be added, to the collections of objects in the Museum.

Historians tell us that the invading army landing on the shores of the South of England, was divided into three sections, the right wing pushing forward and invading our county about the year 70,—possibly earlier.

Camps and fortresses were established along the route, until Lindum was established as the advanced military station of the section.

The fine position at the crest of the hill was taken advantage of.

About forty acres were walled in and a gateway built at each side of the quadrangle.

Most of the wall has disappeared, though a fragment of the north side has been enclosed for preservation.

Three of the gateways have also gone. Traces of the south gate may be seen near the summit of "Steep Hill." The east gate stood near the Deanery. The west gate was discovered in 1836 at the north-west angle of the Castle, it was partially exposed, but the weight of earth behind it caused the masonry to collapse so that this part was also lost to the city. The original drawing, made by Samuel Tuke, of the west gate when exposed, has been presented to the Museum by the Rev. Canon Maddison.

It is with great satisfaction, however, that it can be said that the north gate or Newport still remains after the traffic of many centuries has passed through it. It may only be a portion of what it originally was, but is a unique relic of Roman times. Long may it be preserved.

Within the quadrangle a well equipped military establishment was evidently erected, doubtless consisting of soldiers' quarters, officers' dwellings, and the lower portion of some of the actual columns of a Basilica may still be seen under the houses in Bailgate, and the positions of others traced by the stones let into the roadway. From time to time excavations have been made which have exposed various foundations and structures, but for the account of these, works on the subject must be referred to.

At a later date the lower portion of the city was also enclosed by walls and a second portion of the city established, and as the all conquering army moved further north and other positions were gained, the citizens of Lindum settled down, taking advantage of the rich soils around to cultivate, and to gradually adapt them to the requirements of commercial purposes.

This they did with wonderful skill and energy, improving the roads, cutting canals, draining the land by cutting dykes, and throwing up banks to decrease flooding. Many of these great works remain and are still used at the present time.

A prosperous city appears to have developed and the country evidently became settled and well colonised, as several villa sites have been found about the city, which were no doubt the residences of the wealthy people of the period.

The Roman remains to which this publication refers will be found at the west end of the lower room in the Museum, all are labelled, and to augment the information on the labels this pamphlet is issued.

#### TESSELLATED PAVEMENTS.

Several pavements have been found in and near Lincoln. The first to be referred to are those of the Greetwell Villa. A bed of ironstone underlies the district round the village of Greetwell, and whilst a shaft was being sunk, the first traces of the villa were found in 1884. The late Dr. O'Neill took a great interest in the excavation and thus describes it. "The discovery then made included a bath room, with a dado of tesserae going round the room, containing a bath, between three and four feet in depth; a very deep well in an adjoining apartment; two long walls, thirty yards apart, and between them several chambers, with tessellated pavements, and red tile flooring, and fragments of painted wall-plaster well designed and executed. The house must have been the home of a Roman gentleman of taste and opulence. The site was well chosen, with a direct southern exposure, but in consequence of the villa being built on the brow of a hill the lower rooms were on different planes."

At a later date more extensive discoveries were made under the direction of Mr. B. Ramsden, M.E., the manager of a company, which had taken over the previous workings.

The plan which is hung on the south wall of the Museum may be referred to as follows:—

The first part of the Roman Villa that was laid bare was the bath room near to the well shown on the plan at A. The floor of this room was of salmon-coloured concrete, its dimensions being about twenty-eight feet, by ten feet. The

well was contiguous to the bath, and was about eighteen feet deep, its inner diameter being about three feet six inches.

The next floor was that of a room B, measuring nineteen feet by ten and a half feet. It was paved with red tiles each about a foot square.

The next discovery was a long narrow corridor C, running north and south, thirty feet in length by ten feet broad, and five feet below the surface. This was laid down in concrete with a perfectly smooth hard surface, without tesserae. There were evidences of fire on this floor, and a quantity of charcoal found in the corridor.

Parallel with this corridor ran another D, thirty-three feet long, by eight feet broad, at an elevation of about eighteen inches with which it was connected by two steps. This corridor had a tessellated pavement, with a border of red tiles, eleven and a half inches square, across the north end.

The tesserae were formed of white limestone and red tile, from an inch to an inch and a half square.

The next chamber E, ran at right angles to the corridor D, nearly due east of it, the breadth of the intervening wall, which had almost disappeared, being about two feet. The dimensions of this apartment were twenty-seven feet long, by ten feet wide. The levels of D and E were different, but the steps connecting the two were wanting. The floor of this room or corridor, which was not destroyed, was also tessellated in red and white, the red tesserae being arranged in rectangular bands, one inside the other, of about nine inches in breadth, and two longitudinal bands running up the centre.

At the east end of the apartment E, and at right angles to it, the space for the wall of separation being about eighteen inches, was the chamber F, twenty-seven feet long by eleven feet wide. The pavement exhibited four rectangular bands of red tesserae running all round the room, one inside the other, the remainder of the tesserae being of limestone.

This was succeeded by a very long corridor G, one hundred and thirty-two feet in length and thirteen feet wide. The floor had a gradual rise from south to north of about six feet, to suit the inclination of the ground.

This corridor also had a tessellated pavement, the pattern of which was intricately worked. The centre, of blue and white tesserae, showed the well known "key pattern," with red and white stripes running down the whole length on each side. The floor of this corridor had another floor of concrete about eight inches below it, extending three-fourths of the entire length, suggesting alterations.

The extremity of what may be termed the south corridor H was next reached. The tessellated pavement was laid bare for more than a hundred feet in length, with a breadth of sixteen feet nine inches.

The design of this pavement differed from any previously found, as will be seen on the plan.

The floor marked I was next found, adjoining to H and parallel to it. Its original size was forty feet by twenty-one feet, made of concrete which was considerably decayed. About fourteen feet east of I, that marked J was discovered, which like the last, ran parallel with H, twenty-seven feet by thirteen feet in size. Various designs in the flooring of the villa were found during further baring, and it is to the promptitude of Alderman E. Pratt, who was Mayor at the time of the discovery, that the large pieces of pavement that are laid on the floor of this part of the Museum have been preserved, and presented by him.

A piece of the key pattern was presented by Miss O'Neill, and is to be seen in this collection, Miss O'Neill also gave pieces of plaster which have been placed in one of the cases, together with other antiquities from the late Dr. O'Neill's collection.

Two pieces of pavement found near the Cathedral have a beautiful geometric pattern, which in their original position formed the centre of the design, and were bordered with

semi-circles of tesserae arranged cable-like, enclosing figures of dolphins, etc.

Another piece of pavement will be seen to be of very simple design, a number of white cubes are placed to form squares which are arranged alternately with squares of red tesserae.

A fine example of this kind of work has for the central design, a face which is believed to represent the head of Mercury. This pavement was found in Bailgate on the site of the Basilica, and was carefully preserved in the Technical Schools, and subsequently presented to the Museum by the authorities.

Of this pavement, Professor Granger writes:—"The mosaic with a head of Mercury in the middle, has lotus flowers in the corners. Hence, we should rather speak of the Egyptian Mercury or (by his Greek name) Hermes. At first, Christ was sometimes represented as Hermes. Hence, there is always a possibility that a mosaic like this, may contain a Christian allusion."

A large piece of wall plaster is in this group, unfortunately it has been formerly kept in an exposed position, and the surface almost lost, by careful examination a large central diamond, with semi-circular lines touching each point may be seen to form part of the design. Miss O'Neill also gave the portions of pipe with which water appears to have been conveyed from Nettleham to Lincoln. One part is seen firmly encased in cement as when found, the other cleaned and perfect showing its simple but effective construction.

The position at Nettleham being lower than Lincoln suggests that a water tower must have been erected for the purpose of giving the necessary level for the water to flow to its destination.

A stone receptacle with the figure of a man carved on the side which is intact, has been described as an altar, but the large cavity suggests that a cinerary urn may have been

deposited therein. Probably each of the four sides bore carving, and a cover of stone surmounted it, to protect the remains.

Regarding this, Professor Granger adds his comments:—"The portion of a stone with reliefs upon the front and side is probably an altar to Hercules. The figure upon the front represents the hero with a club raised in one hand, and drinking cup in the other."

Two large Amphorae are also among this group, dug up, and like the foregoing specimen deposited at the Cathedral.

These vessels are of the usual form, and may have been used to store wine which was largely consumed by the Romans, they may, however, have been used as means of package for grain or indeed either liquid or solid cargo or stores may have been placed therein.

The hand-mill with which corn was ground consists of two stones. In the lower one an iron tubed cavity is made to receive the spindle that passed through the hole in the upper stone. A small hollow near the edge suggests that a stick was used to revolve it, the corn being inserted round the spindle, and when ground flowing out between the upper and nether mill stone.

A portion of a column, doubtless a base, was found on the site of the Basilica. It is much smaller than those which are still to be seen "in situ," and was part of a smaller column which may have been of some inner structure. This base was presented by the Rev. H. W. Hall, having been long preserved at the Vicarage, Cherry Willingham.

A small capital bearing the imbricate leaf pattern was also dug up in the city, and assists the imagination in restoring the beauty of the ancient city of the Romans.

Opposite the stairway to the upper room, a massive stone sarcophagus is placed, the gift of the Rev. Canon Lecke, Sub-Dean, after being for many years in the garden of the Chancery.

It was found in the Greetwell fields, and when opened contained the remains of two children. Being so near to the site of the Roman villa suggests a connection.

A stone slab near the above was found at the same spot, and the grooves on the surface, forming an inner square, suggests that this too is part of a receptacle being built up instead of hollowed out of the rock.

A large stone coffin, found with three others at the Technical Schools is placed in this group. These were found whilst making extensions in 1892, each enclosing remains, three of the skeletons were lying face downwards, and one sideways, probably because the coffins were too short, and by being placed in such positions the legs could be bent sufficiently to allow the body to be placed in its massive receptacle. The remains were embedded in a black substance which is conjectured to have been charcoal. Dr. O'Neill who took so great an interest in Roman antiquities at the time, sent a skull to William Frazer, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, who wrote a pamphlet on a "Skull from Lincoln, and an Irish Cranium," in which he says "This is the first Roman cranium submitted to scientific measurements in Ireland, and it appears to me to be a fair example of the race."

Then he goes on to say "The lady was young. . . . the orbital space megaseme, and the eyes, consequently, full and large, the nose somewhat broader than would be supposed from the bony nares; the mouth, probably, small and delicately shaped, as the palate bones are decidedly of small size."

Another coffin presented by the Rev. J. Conway Walter is constructed of lead, the donor writes as follows: "An interesting discovery was recently made in this neighbourhood. In the outskirts of the town of Horncastle a nurseryman was having gravel dug in his garden for sale, when the "pick" of the labourer struck against a hard substance, about two

feet below the surface, which, on examination, proved to be a lead coffin. It was constructed, except the lid, of one sheet of lead, slit at the corners, to allow of its being doubled up to form the sides and ends. These sides and ends had lost all cohesion, if they ever had any, between themselves and with the lid, so that the outer soil had fallen in and filled the interior. Among this soil were found the perfect bones of a skeleton, pronounced by medical experts to be that of a female. The coffin was 5ft. 2in. in length, the body being, of course, rather shorter. A few days after a second lead coffin was found, being parallel to the first, and about 2ft. to the north of it. This contained a skeleton with larger bones, pronounced to be those of a man, and was 5ft. 7in. in length. Both coffins lay east and west. About the body, especially about the legs, in both cases, were lumps of a yellowish substance, said to be fatty deposit, although it looked much more like lime, possibly placed there for sanitary purposes, and some of the lumps about the legs had the impression of the limbs while yet the flesh had been upon them, like fragments of a plaster mould.

I should add that some twenty-four years ago three lead coffins were found, within one hundred yards of the same spot, while workmen were digging for the foundations of a chapel. They were sold for old lead, and melted down. The recent find has fared better, one coffin having been sold for a private collection, and the other bought to be preserved as the property of the town. Now we want to know what we can of the history and origin of these interesting relics. Horncastle was a Roman station of some importance—Banovalum, or the Fort on the Bazin, a river running through the town. Roman cinerary urns have been found, and many Roman coins."

In another pamphlet the cinerary urns and other vessels will be dealt with, but it may be interesting to note that coffins and urns are found in close proximity, and it is be-

"Gaius Valerius, Son of Gaius of the Maecien tribe, Soldier in the Ninth Legion, Standard bearer, in the century commanded by Hospes. Aged 35, Service 14 years. He left directions in his will for this monument. He lies here. . .

As the final letters are missing Professor Haverfield adds that an alternative translation might read:—

"His heir set it up."

This stone belongs to the very beginnings of Roman Lincoln and probably dates about A.D. 45-55.

Another portion of an inscribed slab has been presented by Mr. M. Otter, who found it near the Cathedral during excavations several years ago.

The inscription has not yet been read, as the stone has become much weathered and only a few letters are decipherable.

The thanks of the Committee are here expressed to the donors of this fine group of Roman antiquities, all of which have been found in and near the City. Also to the proprietors of the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* and the *Lincoln Leader* for the gift of the blocks for the illustrations of the inscribed tablet.