

LETOCETUM
EXCAVATIONS: MCMXII.

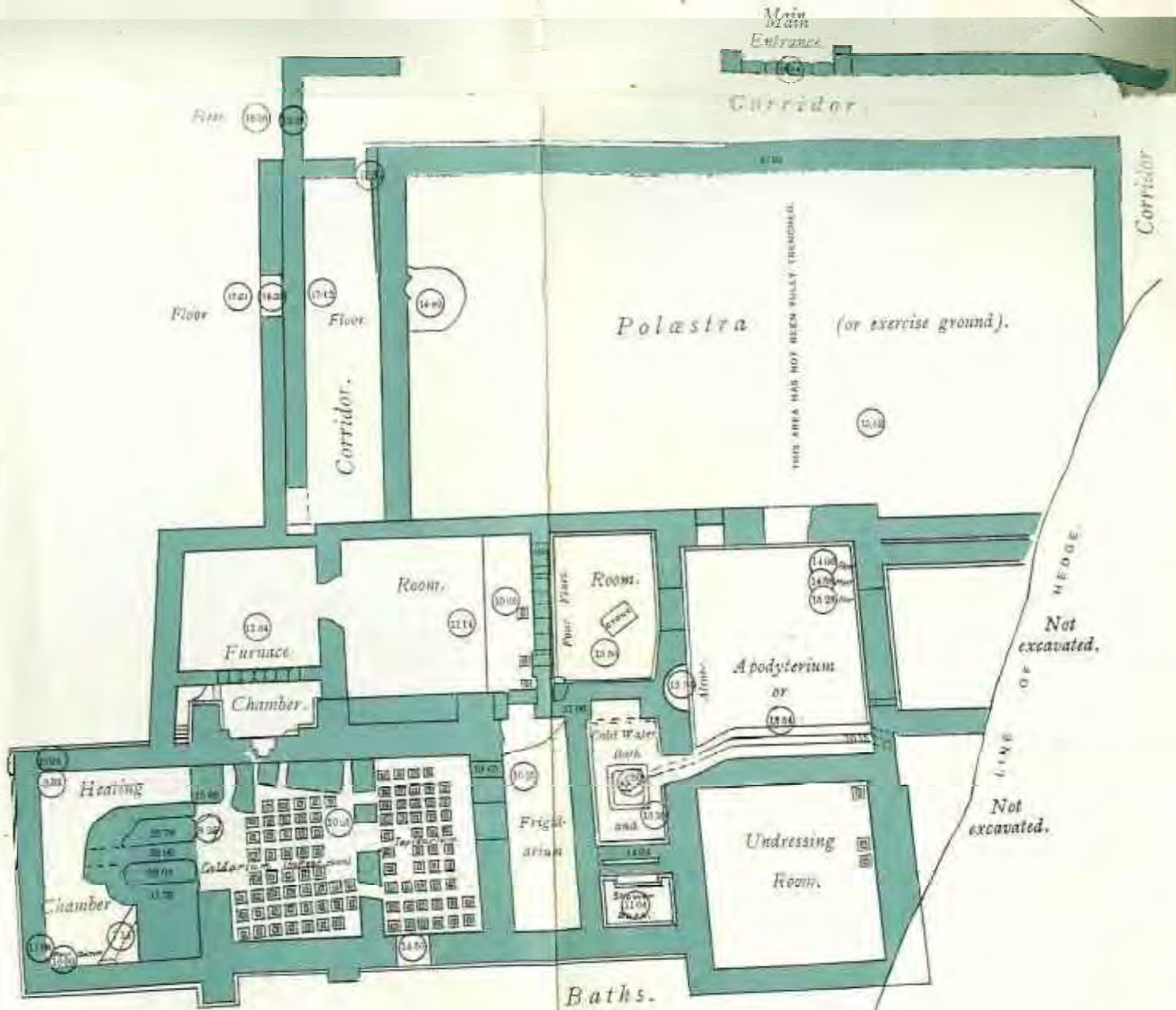
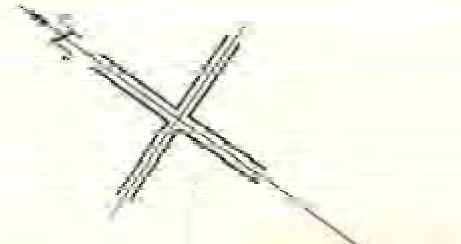
By R. J. K. Mott, Esq.,
 AND
 The North Staffs. Field Club.

The Figures are Levels.

Datum X feet below Floor Line
 in Heating Chamber.

Scale: 32 Feet = 1 Inch.

Descriptions are suggestive only.



C. LYHAM.

G.—ARCHÆOLOGY.—CHAIRMAN—MR. LYNAM.

At the commencement of last year's work of the Club, another project of the utmost importance was brought before the Council, which was no less than the proposition that the Club should enter upon a scheme for making excavations at the Roman Station, or City, of Etocetum, near to Lichfield. The owner of a part of the site thereof is Mr. R. J. K. Mott, of Wall House, situate within the boundaries of the Etocetum, and he welcomed the proposal frankly and fully, whereupon an agreement was entered into between Mr. Mott, the owner, and the Club, through the Council. Applications for the necessary funds were extensively advertised, which brought response sufficient to justify the Committee and Mr. Mott in making a practical start.

The first point for settlement was where the digging should be commenced, and as there was in existence a definite indication of a fragment of the ancient walling, it was determined to break ground at that spot. Soon, a considerable length of wall was unearthed, and in the course of time many others were thrown open, till at length the foundations of a complete Villa or House were openly disclosed. During the progress of this work Mr. Mott was quite indefatigable in his devotion to it, digging with his own hands where difficulties arose, and watching minutely the results of his workmen's picks and spades. By these means, adopted by Mr. Mott, everything that turned up was watched and recorded, and as a result articles of every sort are now housed either at Wall House or in the temporary museum which has been erected within one of the blocks of excavation next to be noticed. The Committee had paid sundry visits from time to time as the works proceeded, and Mr. Mott exhibited his "finds" and explained their characteristics and position where found upon the site. Items of more or less interest rewarded the trouble taken to discover and secure them. They are too numerous to mention here, but perhaps the principal feature is a rough wall stone low down in a foundation wall, carved with two human heads facing one another, and accompanied by an incised symbol,

circular in form, with an upright line through the centre of it. Coins, bones of various kinds, fragments of plaster floors with painted decorations, have been common. Also, the plastering of walls with colour decoration, bits of pottery and metal, glass in small quantities, ironwork, bricks, slates, incised initials on bricks, and marks of animals' feet are not uncommon. The Committee have had photographs taken of particular features, and they are to be had at Mr. Morris,' photographer, in Lichfield. A set of them accompanies this report.

Broadly speaking, the dimensions of the building first excavated (now shown on Plan 2) may be given as 96 feet by 72 feet, and it may be said to stand north and south through the extreme diagonal points. It would be hazardous to attempt to define the particular uses of the various rooms, but an outline may perhaps be ventured upon, subject to future revision. To the south-east front was an open colonnade, in its centre was the entrance to the building forming the main front, containing four rooms, that in the middle being the hall, or Atrium, leading to a quadrangle about 39 feet square, having a covered corridor on all sides about 6 feet 6 inches wide, the centre square being open. On the entrance side, projecting into the open court, was an apse or semi-circular building of thin rubble walling, probably used for some special purpose, as for a Shrine, as has been suggested, or it may be a fountain. On the north-east side of the square there were probably, originally, three rooms, but a subsequent alteration brought a thick wall to interfere with the corridor and one of the former rooms. On the remaining side of the square were the chamber for heating the buildings, in the manner known as channelled hypocaust, and possibly the bath rooms of the house. The general walls vary in thickness from 1 foot 6 inches to 3 feet. Some are put together as mere rubble work, and others are roughly coursed, but none are smoothly tooled or jointed. It must, however, be borne in mind that the greater part of what is to be now seen is mostly of the character of foundation walling. Roman mortar is generally understood to have in it a proportion of broken brick, but that has not been seen to be the case here, except very slightly. There are sundry door-



COURT YARD AND APSE, ROMAN VILLA, WELLS.



EXCAVATED ROOM, ROMAN VILLA, WALL.

ways indicated in certain walls, the angles of which are slightly rounded off, but no elaboration occurs, and the entire absence of windows of any form is a loss to investigation.

The second block of building lies to the south-west of the Villa, on ground of a lower level, and is some 40 feet distant from the first block, but the main walls lie parallel with the other block. This building is of a larger size than the first noticed, being 128 feet in length by 99 feet in width. The characteristics of this building are decidedly expressive of and point directly to the purposes of a bathing establishment for public use. Unfortunately, the plan cannot be fully traced, because a fence dividing ownerships exists at the southern end of the buildings, but, generally, it may be said that the block consists of, first, an open colonnade to the north-east then a vast enclosure (not yet fully trenched), followed to the west by a series of rooms of double depth. The exact appropriation of the various parts cannot, perhaps, be specifically stated, but it would seem that the colonnade flanked the apartments appropriated for the usual accompaniments of the practice of bathing, consisting mostly of recreation rooms. Then come the various apartments appropriated to the baths of the description we know as Turkish baths, with their gradual application of warm and hot air, and finishing of hot and cold water. In the north-west angle of the building is the furnace, from which the various chambers were supplied with heated air, and which distribute it to the rooms above by flues specially formed in the walls, and the heating of the floors, as is evidenced by the existing remains of the hypocausts, the water departments being marked by existing stone drains and pipes of lead, and the finishings of the rooms themselves. This block is without an apse, but in one of the walls there is a semi-circular recess or niche. It will be noticed that the indications of hypocaust, or heating floors, extends to most of the rooms. It will be noticed, also, on the plan that in this block the cross walls are not at right angles to the main walls, but are slightly on the skew but parallel to one another, not uncommon in these Roman buildings but involving measurements of triangulation throughout. There is nothing about

the works discovered which denotes anything of the heights of the buildings, not even whether any of them were more than one storey in height. Excepting, perhaps, in the furnace room, nothing points to any staircase, but, of course, they might have been (if existing) of wood. The walls vary in thickness from 2 feet to 3 feet 8 inches. The masonry is mostly of roughly coursed work. Some of the external walls have projecting plinths, and in some rooms there are projecting skirtings. Special linings to the walls were provided in the bath rooms, where water was in use. The levels of the various floors vary as figured on the plans.

The general situation of the buildings is about 40 yards to the north of Watling Street, near to its junction with Icknield Street, and lying westward of Wall Church, as shown on the Block Plan No. 1, but it is understood that the City extended both to the north and south of Watling Street, and at present there is no evidence of what was its total area—nor, indeed, is its precise import defined.

This being a Sectional report of the Club, we willingly give prominence to the practical work as far distant as Lichfield, but archæological efforts nearer home are not to be overlooked, the first of which to be mentioned is the recently-published history of the Battle of Blore Heath, by Mr. F. R. Twemlow, of Peatswood, which throws much new light upon the subject and reads as being as authentic as possible. That appearing in *The Staffordshire Advertiser* (and to be presently re-published) is by a non-member of the Club, Mr. Pape, of Newcastle, who has spent much time, patience, and learning in a study of the documents relating and belonging to the ancient Borough and to other repositories, and has produced a lengthy chain of direct interest, made up of numberless links, each vying in interest with the chain itself. For these efforts, Newcastle and the rest of us are much indebted.

Last, but by no means least, we are happy in remembering that from the pen of our President-nominate, Mr. S. A. H. Burne, we have had the value of numerous articles in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* which afford the assurance that the



BUROCLUST, ROMAN BATHS, WALL.

hidden treasures of history which our public libraries and other institutions contain will in the future be opened up to us by an indefatigable and learned exponent, who has taken the deepest interest in the concerns of the Club from the earliest date of his coming into North Staffordshire, and from whom we look forward for much advance for many years to come, in which anticipation we feel warranted by the height of the reputation attained by his near relative, Miss Charlotte Burne, Editor of the much-renowned Folk-lore publication.