



Photograph by Walter Bid. 1965.

SIR IAN RICHMOND, C.B.E.

SIR IAN ARCHIBALD RICHMOND

1902-1965

IAN Richmond was born on 10 May 1902, the elder twin son of Daniel Richmond and his wife Helen, *née* Harper. His father was a medical practitioner in Rochdale and took a prominent part in the public life of that town, where he was a justice of the peace; he had received his medical education at the University of Edinburgh, and in later years Ian had many stories to recount of the standards of hygiene which were observed there in the 1890s, as related to him by his father: that was perhaps one thread which contributed to Ian's later interest in Roman Scotland—and in the medical services of the Roman army.

He was educated at Ruthin School, where his direct interest in Roman Britain was first aroused, so that when he went up to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, to read Honour Moderations and Greats he was already devoted to Roman archaeology and to its potentialities for throwing light on the history of Britain. It was doubtless for that reason that his performances in the Schools failed to reach the first class; but in compensation he had already begun, while still an undergraduate, the long series of stimulating studies for which he will always be remembered. The first to be published was his paper on 'Ptolemaic Scotland' (*PSAS* 56, 288-301), coming out in 1922, two years before he took Greats, and it was while he was still an undergraduate that he did the bulk of the work on his *Huddersfield in Roman Times* (Tolson Memorial Museum, 1925), which already showed the ability to link the evidence of field-work, excavation, the antiquaries' accounts, and the historical record into a coherent and stimulating picture. It was not surprising, therefore, that he was given the chance to widen his archaeological perspective by spending two years at the British School at Rome as holder of its Gilchrist Scholarship and as Craven Fellow and Goldsmiths' Senior Student of Oxford.

Up to the time when he went to Rome his main inspirations had been the writings of Haverfield, the teaching of R. G. Collingwood at Oxford, and the introduction to the art and methods of excavation which he had received from Mortimer Wheeler at Segontium; and he had already begun his career as an excavator in charge of investigation of the Roman site

at Cawthorn, near Pickering, on which he published five interim summaries in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, dealing with the findings of the seasons 1924-8, ultimately contributing a definitive account to the *Archaeological Journal* (vol. 89, 1933, 17-78). At Cawthorn he had taken over from F. G. Simpson, who was to prove another important influence on his archaeological career; but it was under Thomas Ashby, when he came to Rome, that he found what seemed to him then and for several years later to be his primary vocation, namely the study of Roman buildings in all their aspects, but with special attention to the monumental walls and gateways of cities. Ashby encouraged him to undertake a detailed study of the defences of Rome itself, from their construction by Aurelian to the middle of the sixth century; and in the two years of his full-time study at the British School, and further visits to Rome in 1927 and 1928, he was able to accomplish the detailed analysis and to prepare the fine series of measured plans, sections, and isometrical drawings which adorn and illuminate his book, published by the Clarendon Press in 1930, *The City Wall of Imperial Rome*. His training in architectural draughtsmanship came in the main from fellow-students at the British School, notably the late Reginald Cordingley and Mr. Marshall Sisson (to both of whom particular acknowledgements were made in the preface of the book), though in the recording of excavations one can detect the basic influence of Wheeler's Segontium report. The book itself covers a far wider range of Roman murage than its title might suggest; he had examined, in most cases by personal inspection, the defences of Roman towns in Italy itself and Provence and Spain and the city wall of Constantinople, and a by-product of those comparative studies was his paper on 'Five town-walls in Hispania citerior' (*JRS* 21, 1931, 86 ff.), followed two years later by 'Commemorative arches and city gates in the Augustan Age' (*JRS* 23, 149 ff.).

After his *biennium* in Rome he was appointed to a lectureship in Classical Archaeology and Ancient History at Queen's University, Belfast, where he remained for four years, devoting much of each summer to excavations in England—at Cawthorn in 1927 and 1928, and from 1928 onwards in partnership with the late F. G. Simpson at Birdoswald on Hadrian's Wall in Cumberland; he had paid a brief visit to the excavations there in September 1927, on his way back to Belfast from Cawthorn, and it was on that occasion that I first met him and had the opportunity of appreciating his keen eye for structural detail,

and the speed with which he was able to interpret it, as well as the keen sense of fun which was always one of his most endearing characteristics. I had read so much about his activities, as a field-worker and excavator and interpreter of Roman remains, that I had formed a clear picture of the man—tall, lean, restlessly energetic; never was a less accurate forecast so instantly shown to be right off target. He was on the short side, sturdily built though not really plump, walking delicately with swift, short paces; with a twinkle in his eye and evidently deriving intense enjoyment from the newly exposed section of the Turf Wall, even though he was standing in the pouring rain and leaning against the strong wind from the west which characterized that September, my own first season of excavation on the Wall.

In 1930 he was the obvious choice to succeed Ashby as Director of the British School at Rome, and it might have seemed that he would have to turn his back on Roman Britain, though he was able to continue his partnership with Simpson in the Birdoswald sector during the excavating season. But in 1932 he found it necessary, for reasons of health, to resign the directorship and return to this country; his post at Belfast had been filled, and there was at that time no apparent opportunity for his employment in any academic capacity. But he could never be idle, and he was able during his period of convalescence to undertake the editing and completion of the volume on *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome* which Ashby had been in sight of finishing when he died in 1931; and he took advantage of his enforced leisure to devote more time to field-work in Cumberland and Westmorland as well as to excavation with Simpson, encouraged by R. G. Collingwood to communicate his findings for publication in *Cumberland & Westmorland Transactions*. One by-product of his years in Rome was his epoch-making paper on 'Trajan's army on Trajan's Column' (*PBSR* 13, 1935, 1-40); his study of 'Tents of the Roman army and leather from Birdoswald' (*CW* 2 34, 1934, 62-90), written in partnership with the late James McIntyre, used the evidence of Trajan's Column and of the work *De munitionibus castrorum* to interpret the significance of a mass of scrap leather found in one of the ditches of Birdoswald fort; and with McIntyre he began the series of investigations in the field which were to lead to a variety of important studies of Roman marching-camps and signal-stations and the beginning of his active work on many Roman sites in Scotland.

It happened that in the summer of 1934 he visited my excavations at Chesterholm, and mentioned to me how frustrating

he found it to be without any apparent prospect of an archaeological post. At that time I was responsible for teaching the history and archaeology of Roman Britain in both divisions of the federal University of Durham, namely at Armstrong College, Newcastle, and in the Durham Colleges, and the task, also involving excavation for most of the summer, had begun to become more than one man could perform to his own satisfaction. Richmond was by now restored to the best of health, he was already deeply committed to the programme of investigations on Hadrian's Wall to which the University of Durham, under Simpson's prompting, was itself committed; the chance of strengthening its resources by securing his services was not to be missed. The authorities of both Divisions of the University were sympathetic and understanding, and the outcome was the splitting of the existing lectureship into two, Richmond taking over the Newcastle end while I confined myself to the Durham Colleges, though we both shared in the direction of the Durham University Excavation Committee's work *per lineam Valli*. His years at Newcastle, from January 1935 until his preferment to Oxford in the autumn of 1956, were years of remarkable achievement in a wide range of research and publication, as well as in service to what had meanwhile become King's College and to the University of Durham—in which he served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and as Public Orator.

It is to be hoped that it may be possible on another occasion to produce a full bibliography of Richmond's publications; here I must content myself with mentioning some key items in the list, arising from his first few years at Newcastle. Pride of place, for bulk and variety of stimulating detail as well as for its interweaving of archaeological evidence and topography and the historical sources into a coherent and convincing whole, must be given to his section for the closing volume, xv, of the *Northumberland County History*, published in 1940: 'The Romans in Redesdale', pp. 63–154 with numerous illustrations, including plans and sections of sites surveyed and tested by excavation in many cases, from south of Risingham to the Scottish border at Chew Green. But it was in the same period that the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland published his report on 'The Agricola fort at Fendoch' (*PSAS* 73, 1939, 110–54), including the virtually complete plan of a turf and timber fort which had been dismantled and evacuated after an occupation lasting only a few years; and two papers published in 1940 serve to show how his detailed investigations had not diverted his attention from a

general historical view: 'Ancient Rome and Northern England: a historical summary' (*Antiquity* 14, 1940, 292-300) and 'The rise and progress of Roman archaeology in Northumbria' (*Durham University Journal*, 1940, 55-64).

His partnership with Simpson in the Birdoswald sector had come to triumphant fruition in 1934, the results of seven seasons' work, reported annually in *Cumberland & Westmorland Transactions*, being summed up in 'The Turf Wall of Hadrian' (*JRS* 25, 1935, 1-18). It is no secret that the long series of reports, covering also excavations in Northumberland, on excavations from 1928 until 1939 by the Simpson and Richmond partnership were from Richmond's pen, and it was his patience and diplomacy, in alliance with understanding editors of the two journals in which work *per lineam Valli* is published, which ensured that investigations inspired by Simpson should be reported upon regularly, season by season.

From 1935 onwards the Durham University Excavation Committee's training excavations were based on Corstopitum, the Roman site just west of the village of Corbridge in Northumberland, and in this case also it was due to Richmond that regular reports on the study of the site's complicated structural history were communicated to *Archaeologia Aeliana*, first in partnership with me and, after the war, with Mr. J. P. Gillam. Pride of place must be accorded to the very substantial study of 'Roman legionaries at Corbridge, their supply bases, temples and religious cults', published in 1943 (*AA*⁴ 21. 127-224). It was during the war years, too, that he produced, in partnership with Mr. Austin Child, the paper on 'Gateways of forts on Hadrian's Wall' (*AA*⁴ 20. 134-54) which links up with his studies in Rome, and with the progressive attention to the internal layout of Roman forts which was to lead ultimately to his Albert Reckitt Lecture on 'Roman Britain and Roman military antiquities' (*Proceedings of the British Academy* xli, 1955, 297-315), the value of which to Continental archaeologists has recently been demonstrated by Professor H. von Petrikovits, in an obituary tribute published in *Germania* 43, 1965, 425-8. It is fair to claim that Britain has provided more evidence for the stationary economy (as the Revd. Anthony Hedley put it in his first contribution to *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 150 years ago) of Roman forts than the rest of the Roman Empire put together; it is equally fair to claim that it is to Richmond more than any other scholar that we owe an understanding of that evidence—for cavalry forts through his investigations at Benwell and Haltonchesters

on Hadrian's Wall and at Carzield in Dumfriesshire, for military cohorts at Fendoch, and in the palmary case of Inchtuthil for legionary fortresses. But here too a full bibliography would be needed to show the full extent of the light which his researches have shed on the Romans' military structures. One of his last contributions to the *Journal of Roman Studies* may be cited to close this short list: 'The Roman siege-works of Masada, Israel' (*JRS* 52, 1962, 142-55).

During his years in Newcastle he took a prominent part in the activities of its Society of Antiquaries, serving as a member of its council from 1935, one of its honorary curators from 1940 to 1943, a vice-president 1942-50 and President of the Society for the three years 1951-3, and over the years he contributed some thirty papers to its publications. Yet in the same period he was in great demand as lecturer and as consultant in other parts of the country: he had given the Rhind Lectures in Edinburgh in 1933, and during his Newcastle period he delivered two Dalrymple Lectures in Glasgow, the Gray Lecture in Cambridge, the Ford Lectures in Oxford, and the Cadbury at Birmingham; but only in the case of the Riddell Memorial Lecture at Newcastle in 1948 did he publish the substance of his lecture, *Archaeology and the Afterlife in Pagan and Christian Imagery*. Indeed, one of the deep regrets of his friends and colleagues has been the very large amount of his work which remains unpublished, except in the brief but regular summaries which appeared year by year in the *Journal of Roman Studies*: it must be left to other hands to produce the definitive reports on the military sites at Hod Hill in Dorset and at Inchtuthil in Perthshire, and on the work he did in the civilian sector at Bath and Chedworth and Silchester, to mention only the most important instances. Yet what he did publish was remarkable as much for its volume and variety as for its high quality. *Roman Britain* (Britain in Pictures, 1947) and *Roman Britain* (Pelican History of Britain, 1955) both give readable and stimulating surveys, the earlier book a brief discussion of the Roman conquest and pacification of Britain, tribal communities and the city-state, the impact of the new culture, economic developments, and finally the causes of collapse; the later volume goes into more detail, with chapters on military history, towns, and urban centres, the countryside, economics, and finally religious cults, with a detailed bibliography provided for each of the chapters: a second edition was issued as a hardback in 1963, incorporating some additional material. Both books give a highly subjective view of the subject,

and both deserve to be read and reread, in company with Haverfield's *Romanization of Roman Britain* and M. P. Charlesworth's *The Lost Province* (1949). In the same period he produced two editions of Collingwood Bruce's *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (10th ed., 1947 and 11th ed., 1957), and shortly before his death he completed a third and more thoroughly rewritten edition, published in 1966.

Apart from books, however, the years after the end of the war saw a truly remarkable output of his writing, not all of it directly credited to him. He had been called in as consultant by individual excavators and by societies up and down the kingdom, and from 1944 had been a member of the Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments for England and for Scotland, and he never spared himself in giving active counsel and direct help wherever and whenever he was called on. Here too one must be selective in mentioning individual items, but on any showing one must not omit his papers on 'The Roman city of Lincoln' and 'The four *coloniae* of Roman Britain' (*Archaeological Journal* 103, 1947, 26-84), his study written jointly with O. G. S. Crawford of 'The British section of the Ravenna Cosmography' (*Archaeologia* 93, 1949, 1-50), his report on 'Excavations at the Roman fort of Newstead, 1947' (*PSAS* 84, 1952, 1-38), and substantial unsigned contributions to the Scottish Commission's reports on Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, and Stirlingshire, or his stimulating introduction to the English Commission's volume on Roman York. Wherever a special committee was set up to excavate a Roman site, he was virtually sure to be asked to serve on it, and for him service was never a mere formality: he was prepared to travel from one end of the country to the other in order to attend a committee meeting, and when an excavation was in progress he could be counted on to visit it and to help the excavator to understand the significance of the structures which were coming to light. All this work as a consultant inevitably hindered progress on his own researches; a man of less energy and determination might well have written virtually nothing when so much of his time was taken up by such activities. Yet up to the end of his Newcastle period he never neglected his duties to the University of Durham and to its excavation committee, and no memoir of his career should omit a reference to his excavation, in partnership with Mr. Gillam, of the Carrawburgh Mithraeum—found in 1949, excavated in 1950, and published in full detail in 1951 (*AA^t* 29. 1-92), or the major share which he had in the creation of what is now the

Museum of Antiquities of the University and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, complete with its full-size reproduction of what the Carrawburgh Mithraeum must have been like in the last of its structural periods.

His move to Oxford in 1956 gave his friends cause to hope that, with much reduced commitments for teaching and for academic administration, he might be able to write more substantial works. Indeed, a foretaste of what might be expected was the publication in 1958 of *Roman and Native in North Britain*, which he had planned and edited, contributing to it important chapters on 'Roman and native in the fourth century A.D. and after' and on 'Ancient geographical sources for Britain north of Cheviot'. But it was not to be. He had too high a sense of duty to all the people and bodies which continued to look to him for guidance and advice; and perhaps he envisaged a longer career than it was granted to him to enjoy. A few days before his death he had completed the last of a long series of September excavations at the Agricola legionary fortress of Inchtuthil, undertaken with Dr. J. K. St. Joseph as his colleague; his investigation of Hod Hill had been completed, and he had the findings at Caerleon, Chester, and York at his finger-tips, together with the results of excavations throughout most of the military zone of Roman Britain: a substantial monograph on the Roman army and its installations might well have been aimed at. But first there were too many other tasks to perform, some of which he had indeed completed although he did not live to see them published, such as the forthcoming complete revision of Collingwood's *Archaeology of Roman Britain*. The full value of his Oxford years can perhaps be appreciated best by all those younger excavators who learnt to look forward to his visits, and to profit from his quick discernment and shrewd suggestions for following up points already made—or by those societies which he served, never treating high office in them as a sinecure. He was President of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies from 1958 to 1961, Director of the Society of Antiquaries 1959–64, and its President from April 1964 until his death.

Honours had come to him from many quarters. He held honorary doctorates conferred by the universities of Edinburgh, Belfast, Leeds, Manchester, and Newcastle upon Tyne, he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1947, he was created C.B.E. in 1958, and was knighted in 1964. But he seemed to rejoice even more in the progress of the archaeologists whose careers he had been able to assist; and although on public

occasions, as when lecturing or taking the chair at a meeting, he could appear solemn and at times even portentous, there was nobody who could be more lively, entertaining, witty, and relaxed in private. He had an impish sense of humour, and an unforced liking for people in all walks of life—his workmen (and he preferred paid labour to student volunteers) just as much as his colleagues. But it would need a symposium to do full justice to the wide range of his activities and to the many facets of his lively personality. Dr. St. Joseph, who over the years co-operated with him longer and more closely than anyone else, has reminded me in particular of his uncanny ability to see the relevance to some matter under discussion of knowledge derived from some apparently quite different field. I myself never ceased to wonder at his ability to settle down to writing in the train, or immediately after returning to base after a long day's excavation, often taking up a piece of work which the day's activities can have done nothing to prepare him for; it was as if he had the juggler's ability to keep several balls flying through the air without dropping one—and yet even while he was writing he was able to keep up a conversation, perhaps on an entirely different topic.

In the University of Durham he had been given a personal Readership in 1943 and a personal Professorship in 1950; when he moved to Oxford in 1956 it was as the first incumbent of a new Chair, for the Archaeology of the Roman Empire, and as such Fellow of All Souls, for which he came to acquire a deep affection. His inaugural lecture, printed in 1957, was entitled *The Archaeology of the Roman Empire: a scheme of study*, and in the last years of his life he had begun to renew his active interest in other provinces, in spite of maintaining his overload (as it seemed to his friends) of attention to Roman Britain. Yet he had the enviable capacity to find relaxation and renewed energy in a change of air and a change of effort: reconnaissance in the field in Wales and the Marches, and the September excavations at Inchtuthil, helped to recharge his spirit for a return to his writing-desk and his drawing-board; so, too, did Mediterranean cruises, even though they were planned to provide materials for further writing, as in the last paper which he contributed to the *Journal of Roman Studies*, 'Palmyra under the aegis of the Romans' (*JRS* 53, 1963, 43-54).

It would be wrong to end a memoir of Ian Richmond without a reference to his happy family life. In 1938 he married Miss Isabel Little, who had taken part in several of his excavations

on the Wall; they had two children, a son Hugh who is now an architect, and a daughter Helen whose first child gave him one of his greatest delights—on becoming a grandparent. He always had an unaffected kindness for children, as my sons well remember from their early days at Chesterholm.

For several months before his death, on 4 October 1965, he had been in poor health, and he had been advised to slacken his activity and take things quietly; but he could not throw off the habits of a lifetime, and he was soon hard at work again. After the last September excavation at Inchtuthil he paid a visit to Cumberland, to discuss plans for a special excavation to commemorate the centenary of the Cumberland & Westmorland Archaeological Society in 1966, when he was due to become that society's President, and a day or two later he attended a Gaudy at his old college: friends of mine who saw him on one or other of those occasions have told me in what high spirits he was. But a few days later he was dead, peacefully in his bed at home in Oxford.

Posterity will remember him, and treasure his writings as those of a great archaeologist and historian in line of succession to Haverfield and Collingwood, but his friends will remember him even more as a warm-hearted and witty and very generous personality.

ERIC BIRLEY