

ART. VIII.—*Three Interesting Sites.* By THOMAS HAY.

Read at Penrith, July 7th, 1936.

LODEPOT HILL is the northerly end of the more elevated part of the High Street Range. On the north slope of this hill there is a curious hollow which is partly due to artificial causes. It lies exactly on the 2,000 foot contour. In fact its shape has caused that contour line on the six-inch map (West. 13 N.W.) to swerve round in a little loop.

What first drew my attention to the spot was the unnatural look of the hollow and then, secondly, the discovery of rock débris which appeared very like slag. Nearly the whole surface is covered with grass, and this adds to the difficulty of examining the site. Old trackways both above and below the hollow are still to be found, and there are also two funnel-shaped hollows like those one finds on the top of old kilns.

Some of the specimens were sent to Dr. A. Raistrick of Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and he tells me that they are not slag but altered natural ore. The main constituent is Haematite with a good deal of quartz disseminated all through it. When it is remembered that this site lies close alongside the so-called Roman Road on the top of High Street, it becomes all the more interesting. There has been an old iron-working here, but whether the two funnel-shaped depressions are early furnaces or merely "bell-pits" for the excavation of the ore in the vein I do not yet know.

Dr. Raistrick further tells me that many scattered haematite veins were worked between 1690 and 1720 by a company at Hackett Forge, Little Langdale, and that they explored the whole district. It was they who cut the sledway now known as Rossett Gill Pass at the head

of Langdale, and they brought waterways from Little Langdale Tarn and Blea Tarn to their stamping mills at Hackett Forge. Their main supply of ore was from the Bowfell-Scawfell area, but they had smaller supplies from Brotherswater, Kirkstone and the Helvellyn Range.

In any case this old iron-working must be the source of the name of Lodepot Hill.

KIRKSTONE ROAD.

At the top of the Kirkstone Pass there is the foundation of an old well made road. It lies at the foot of Red Screes on the west side of the pass and thus exactly opposite to the present road and the Inn. The main part that is still visible lies on the flattish top of the pass, but the two ends lead on to steeper ground where there would naturally be greater wear and tear from denudational agents. Consequently in tracing the road it becomes less and less visible as we leave the centre of the flatter area. There are not many places where the original width can be measured. It is made of large blocks of the local rock and in very few places are both margins intact at the same spot. One good measurement gave 20 feet 6 inches.

This early summer of 1936 with its long drought has made the track of this road more visible than usual. But at any time with careful search it can be found at intervals, not continuously, and stretching for a distance of over 700 yards on the top of the pass. Whole lengths of it are completely missing and in places it has been used as a source of supply by the surface quarrymen.

In these *Transactions*, N.S. xviii, there begins on p. 131 an article by the Rev. Frederick W. Ragg on "Five Documents concerning Sizergh, Strickland and Barton." From it I quote the following lines from the English version of Charter II:

" Know all living and to come that I, William, son of

William de Lancaster, have given and granted and by this my charter have confirmed to Gilbert my son the manor of Hartsop with its belongings and common of pasture according to these bounds:—beginning at the great Kirkstone Road the boundary ascends to the head of Caudale and descends and then ascends to Fresswald below Aidesdale and then to Thomas Knott (the Knott) and descends to Rost Dode (Rest Dodd) by Martindale Forest and thence descends a sike to the middle of Angle Tarn and descends a beck to the waters called Hee and it ascends below Robshow Cross and thence to the head of Roukin by Deepdale Head and to the head of Dove Crag and thence to the head of Woffe Cove and thence it descends to the great Kirkstone Road.”

The wording in reference to the great Kirkstone Road runs in the Latin: “*incipiendo a magna via Kirkestain*” and again “*et descendit inferius ad magnam viam Kirkestain.*”

I am quite unlearned in old Latin documents, but this seems to prove that there was a very noticeable road over the Kirkstone in the 13th century. Again I must confess to a total ignorance of the state to which roadmaking had progressed in the middle ages, the cynic might suggest, as a first approximation to the truth, that it hardly existed at all. Yet here we have a great road known in the 13th century of which considerable traces can still be found. May it not be that this old road over the Kirkstone is Roman? It is quite inconceivable that the Roman occupation had posts at Ambleside and in the Penrith area without a direct communication between them.

AN OLD QUAY.

Towards the south end of Windermere and on its east shore there is a curious flat shelf at the water's edge. It lies below Town Head and is completely grass-covered, thus presenting no contrast with its surroundings except

such as arises from its shape. It measures about 100 yards long, 10 yards wide and lies about four feet above water level. It is absolutely flat and must be artificial. It seems to be composed of good sized angular blocks of the local stone, and the whole talus from the top to the water is of this nature. There is much small matter under the grass, filling up interstices between the larger blocks, and in two or three slight depressions of this grassy surface I found some slag. About one third of the way from the south end there is a very fine moutonnée rock rounded by the ice and on the side of this rock and, as it were, firmed into place by it there seems to be a slight remnant of a vertical wall front. I suggest that this has been an old quay. But how old is it? Does it merely go back to the time when the lake formed the highway for the transit of Langdale slates and the other heavy traffic of the district? Has there been a bloomery on it and has all trace of it been smoothed away when the site became part of the beautiful park land around Town Head? Has the old quay ever been found which was the point of departure of the stones used in the construction of the Borrans Camp?

Again one is tempted to wonder whether such a solid construction as this does not point to something more thorough than the work of mediæval quarrymen.

These notes may end with the record of two small pieces of pottery found about a month ago in or near the enclosure of Dunmallet. They were sent to Mr. G. E. Chambers of the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments, and he says the first piece with splashings of glaze is most likely mediæval. The other piece is probably 14th century—at any rate not prior to c. 1300. It is part of a very shallow spout of a vessel about eight inches high. They appear to give evidence of the later occupation of this prehistoric site which has been referred to in our own *Transactions*.