

Excavations in Derbyshire during 1938.

PALAEOLITHIC.

CRESWELL CRAGS, DERBYSHIRE.

The Yew Tree Shelter. Excavations, continued on this site during 1937-8 by Mr. A. L. Armstrong, yielded further evidence of occupation contemporary with that of the Lower Middle and Middle zones of Mother Grundy's Parlour and proved this to be the principal period of its occupation during late Palaeolithic times. A scatter of microlithic flakes and implements on the top of the deposit indicates casual occupation.

WHALEY ROCK SHELTER No. 2.

This was located by Dr. Arthur Court, in August last (? 1937). The site consists of a talus of limestone rubble and rocks which on removal proved to mask a cliff at the rear; it appears to have resulted from the collapse of a former over-hang of the cliff which had provided a rock shelter during Pleistocene times.

Above the cliff is a small plateau of limestone, sheltered by a rocky slope at the rear, which has apparently been favoured as a camping ground from Neolithic to Roman times. The successive occupiers of the plateau have thrown their camp debris over the adjoining cliff and this material is now found stratified in the talus.

A systematic excavation was commenced here in September, 1937, under the direction of Mr. Leslie Armstrong, and is still progressing. The talus has been removed over a length of 20 feet in successive layers down to the Pleistocene horizon and the hidden face of the cliff exposed to a height of 12 feet. Except for a trial section

the Pleistocene deposit has not yet been excavated. This established the presence of Upper Palaeolithic artifacts, in association with remains of reindeer and hyena. The topmost level, now under examination, consists of an extensive occupation area with considerable charcoal and ash debris and has yielded a series of backed blades and scrapers of developed Aurignacian type.

The talus has yielded Neolithic pottery of Peterborough type and also later wares.

TRENT VALLEY GRAVELS.

Systematic research in the old terrace gravels and glacial drift of the Trent Valley has yielded a series of Lower Palaeolithic artifacts of Chellean and Acheulean facies, consisting of handaxes, flakes and scrapers. These have been discovered at numerous sites and for the first time in the counties of Derbyshire and Leicestershire. Confirmation of previous finds has been obtained in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. The work is being carried out by Mr. A. L. Armstrong, with the aid of the Lord Leverhulme award.

NEOLITHIC.

CHURCH DALE, ASHFORD.

Major T. A. Harris, of Ashford, has for some time been excavating a rock-shelter situated in Church Dale. Beneath a talus or rock debris traces of occupation were discovered and a series of burials, one of which was a typical 'crouched burial,' but the absence of pottery, or datable objects, rendered the age of the interments uncertain. At a depth of approximately four feet, a cist was discovered, having one side formed by the cliff face and the remainder outlined by limestone boulders. This was carefully excavated by Major Harris and Mr. Leslie Armstrong and found to contain the dis-articulated remains of two adults, amongst which were scattered

fragments of pottery of Peterborough ware. The pottery is richly ornamented and comprises portions of two different vessels, each of which has been decorated on the rim both internally and externally. A well-worked arrow-head, of the single barbed type (of *petit tranchet* derivative form), and several flakes of flint and chert accompanied the remains. This is the first record of Peterborough pottery in association with a cist burial. A full report will be published in the *Proceedings* at a later date.

The foregoing notes are taken from the *Proceedings* of the Prehistoric Society for 1938 (July-Dec.), N.S. vol. iv, pt. 2, by kind permission of the editor, Dr. J. G. D. Clark.

BRONZE AGE.

STANTON MOOR.

The excavation at Bronze Age sites on Stanton Moor by Messrs. J. C. and J. P. Heathcote have been continued. The second report dealing with the work up to 1934, which was published in *D.A.J.* 1936, included a map of the tumuli. The burial mounds from T17 to T27 inclusive, have been completely excavated but not yet recorded, and two sites T25 and T61 are now in progress of excavation.

The circle of six standing stones with adjacent barrow at Doll Tor has also been excavated and has shown interesting results. The most important finds besides the cinerary urns and flints have been some faïence beads probably of Egyptian origin. In addition most of the time during the last two years has been spent in uncovering the banks of the disc mounds T43, T56 and T61. Two of these mounds show small upright stones on their inner banks. The tumuli T28 to T54 have also been uncovered. These now appear generally as circular cairns. The outline of the presumed prehistoric field has also been uncovered, showing it to be a very wide rectangular line of stone.

J. P. HEATHCOTE.

ROMAN.

WHALEY VALLEY. Excavations conducted by Dr. Arthur Court.

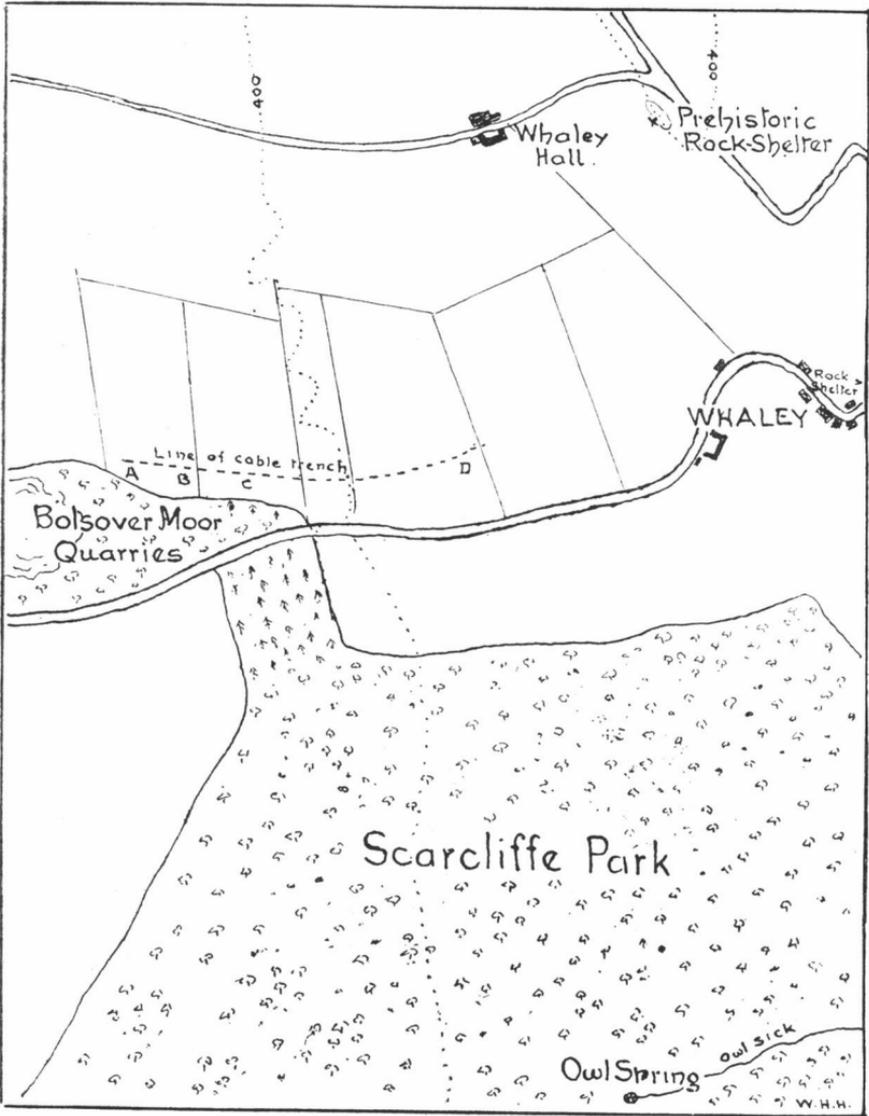
This valley runs north and south starting at the village of Elmton and joining the Poulter Valley at Langwith. It contains a considerable stream of pure water rising at a spring, on the 450 contour line, a short distance below the village of Elmton. The amount of water is such that the Chesterfield and Bolsover Water Board have installed pumping plant to supplement their supply.

The valley has been eroded out of the Magnesian Limestone and is broad and shallow at its upper part, narrowing as it joins the Poulter. On the west side of the lower part of this valley is a wood known as Scarcliffe Park, probably a relic of the old Sherwood Forest. In this wood is a spring known as Owl Spring, the overflow from which runs into the Whaley Brook. This spring also has recently been tapped by the Chesterfield and Bolsover Water Board.

On the crest of the valley particularly on the East side are outcrops of the Limestone now much reduced by weathering, and in the valley are evidences of Roman occupation which, so far as I am aware, have not been previously recorded.

The evidences are:—

- (1) Immediately east of the village of Whaley is a rock-shelter which was excavated by Mr. A. L. Armstrong and myself in the summer of 1937. Amongst other finds we unearthed a number of sherds of Romano-British origin.
- (2) Further north on the same side of the valley I am excavating another site from which more sherds of this period have been taken.
- (3) During the sinking at Owl Spring in the early summer of 1938 for the previously mentioned pumping plant



WHALEY VALLEY; plan showing sites mentioned in Dr. Arthur Court's note.

a pocket was encountered in the side of the shaft fourteen feet below the surface. In this pocket were found remains of several vessels which unfortunately were further broken on removal. They were no doubt pitchers, which I suggest, had been dropped down the well during water-drawing operations. They have been dated second century.

- (4) In the course of cable laying a trench was cut two feet six inches deep and one foot wide from the Whaley Spring to the Water-Softening Plant at the top of the western slope, a distance of about twelve hundred yards. At the sites marked on the plan some interesting finds were made:

at A a dozen unworked flints;

at B forty yards from A, numerous pieces of broken pottery including some interesting rims and base sections. Some of these have been dated 140-160 A.D., another *circa* 180 A.D., a third 140-170 A.D.—Torksey Ware. There was also some platter-ware, potboilers, large quantities of split bones and evidences of fire;

at C a hundred yards from B more second century pottery, bones, etc. were found;

at D four-hundred yards from C an arrow-head shaped flint, a number of flakes, and a single brown three-quarter inch cube resembling a tessera.

At A, B and C a foot below the surface large blocks of stone were encountered mostly covering the finds, but insufficient excavation was done for a conclusion to be drawn as to their purpose of origin, although the men engaged on the trench were of the opinion that they were worked stones. I may point out that these blocks were not encountered between B and C.

So far as can be seen there is no surface indication whatever on any of these sites.

The nearest known Roman road is the one which ran from near Chesterfield to Templeborough. Chesterfield being $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the Whaley Valley.

The finds lead me to think that in Roman times there was occupation over a considerable area in this valley, and since I have so far found no evidence of any villa residences I therefore conclude that these remains are parts of a hut settlement. I have to thank Mr. Adrian Oswald, of Wellow, for kindly dating the pottery.

ARTHUR COURT.

ROBIN HOOD'S STRIDE, BIRCHOVER.

A Romano-British hut circle and a cave shelter have been excavated by Messrs. J. C. and J. P. Heathcote; spindle-whorls, and parts of querns have been found. The outline of the hut circle is being left open.

MEDIEVAL.

EXCAVATIONS AT DALE ABBEY: Interim Report by H. M. Colvin.

The infirmary of Dale Abbey is a building about which little or nothing has hitherto been known. The excavators of 1878-9¹ stopped short after uncovering a few feet at the cloister end of the passage which must presumably have led to it, and which they dated to the fourteenth century, while the inventory² of October, 1538, makes absolutely no mention of an infirmary. There are, in fact, only two medieval references to it, in Bishop Redman's visitation returns,³ which record Brother Robert Aston as *custos infirmatorii* in 1478, and Brother George Slee, *diaconus*, as *servitor infirmorum* in 1494. It has always been held—with some show of probability—that in about 1485 what is now Dale church was made into

¹ See Sir W. H. St. J. Hope's reports in *D.A.J.*, I and II (1879 and 1880).

² Printed in S. Fox, *History of Morley Church*, pp. 33-41, and *Archaeologia*, vol. LIII (1871), pp. 221-4.

³ *Collectanea Anglo-Premontreatensia*, ed. F. A. Gasquet (Camden Soc.) vol. II, pp. 175, 183.

an infirmary chapel, and that the old church house was originally the infirmary hall. Although Premonstratensian infirmaries do not seem usually to have included a chapel,¹ this is certainly the most satisfactory explanation of the transformation of the church at this date that has yet been advanced.

It was in the hope of recovering the plan of the infirmary buildings and at the same time of throwing some light on these questions, that, with the kind permission of the Stanton Ironworks Company, the owners of the land, and of Mr. Falder, their tenant, the writer decided to attempt some excavations on the site. With the aid of boys from Trent College, work was begun in July, 1937, and continued in the summer of 1938. Excavations will be resumed during the coming season.

It was impossible to continue from the spot where the former excavations terminated, as this is in Lord Stanhope's ground, but work was commenced in the Abbey Field farther to the east, with the result that the foundations of the passage have been traced to their extremity some 125 feet from the door in the claustral buildings. The north wall of this passage was at some date doubled in width, so that it is now 5-6 feet wide, with a straight joint down the centre. At the end of the passage, which is slightly over seven feet wide, foundations of a wall running north and south were excavated, and east of this there are further substantial foundations, including the base of a large buttress-like projection. The south wall of the passage stops short of the north wall by some 24 feet, and then turns south for 30 feet before meeting a wider foundation (A) running east and west. There is the base of a buttress on its west face.

Further to the west a complicated series of foundations has been partially excavated. Attached to the south wall

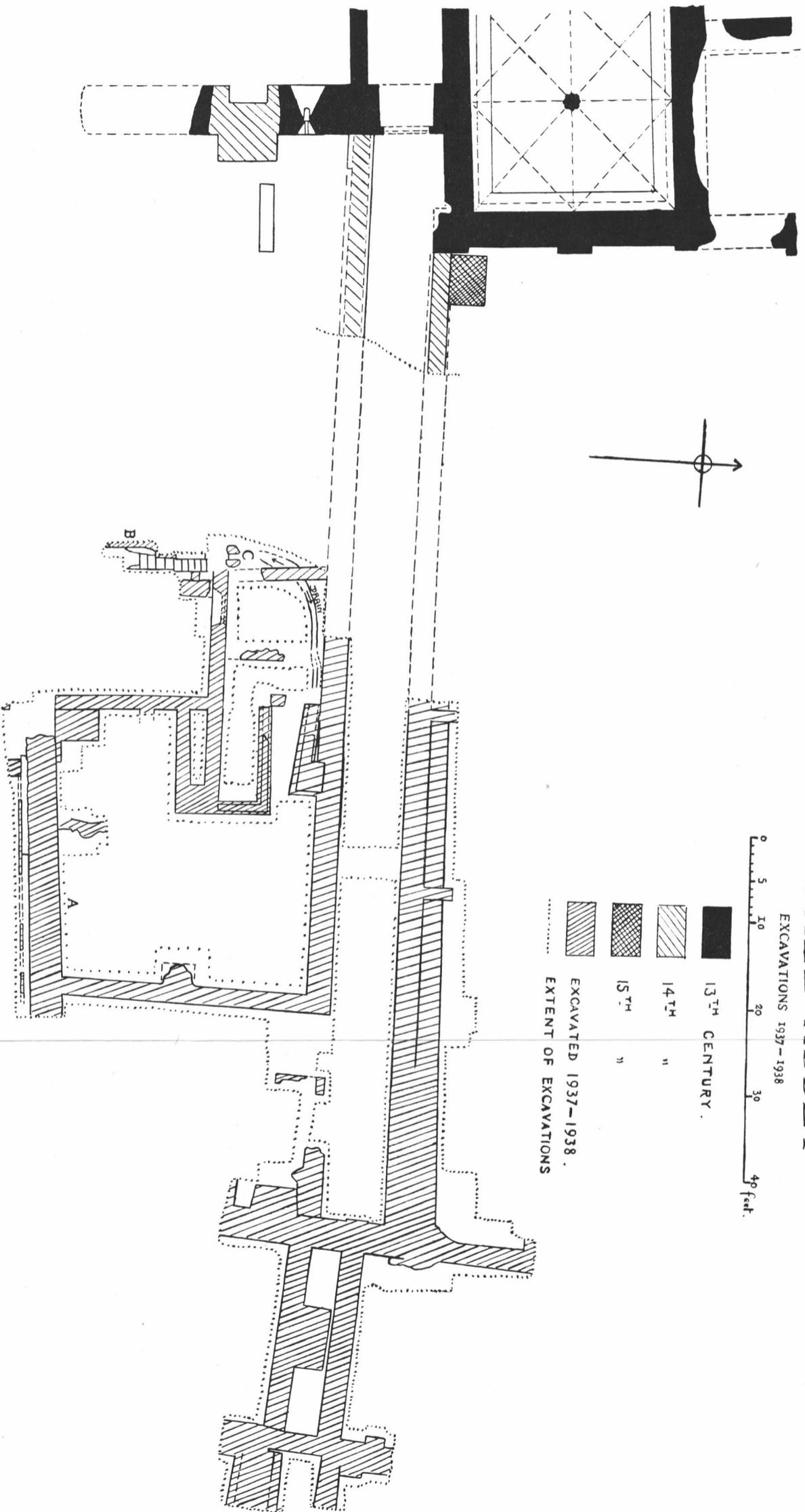
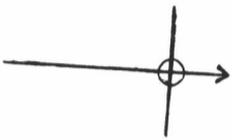
¹ A. W. Clapham; "Architecture of the English Premonstratensians," in *Archaeologia*, vol. LXXIII (1923), p. 129.

DALE ABBEY

EXCAVATIONS 1937-1938



-  13TH CENTURY.
-  14TH "
-  15TH "
-  EXCAVATED 1937-1938.
-  EXTENT OF EXCAVATIONS



of the passage there is an irregularly-shaped projection of uncertain purpose, and to the south of this again there are foundations of two small, narrow structures. From these a foundation extends westwards, with traces of the base of a doorway. To the south of this foundation there is a series of rectangular slabs resembling flagstones, but too narrow to form a pavement. On the west side of these slabs a wall (B) with chamfered plinth and one course of ashlar facing has been discovered but not yet properly excavated. West of the projection there are considerable remains of a drain running parallel with the passage. This drain has a floor of roofing-tiles about 6-8 inches wide, and sloping sides formed of rough stone slabs. It was originally covered in with similar slabs, nearly all of which were, however, in a fragmentary condition. The easternmost portion of the drain is made of roofing-tiles only, set so as to form a V. The drain is bisected by the remains of a wall, and the water apparently flowed away from this on either side. The western end of the drain is unfortunately almost completely destroyed, but it appears to have led to two large stones (C) which may have formed a rough shoot. There are remains of what was probably another drain, running along the south side of wall A. It is partially constructed of re-used tracery-bars.

At the western end of wall A there is a large rectangular block of masonry across which three sections of a chamfered plinth had been roughly placed.¹ This plinth has no connection with the foundation, and was evidently placed in its present position after the dissolution.

The only datable worked stones so far discovered are two fragments of geometrical tracery, and until a larger area has been explored, it is impossible to determine either the date or the exact purpose of the buildings so far excavated. The finds will eventually be on view either at Dale Abbey or at Derby Museum. They include a fine

¹ These are omitted from the accompanying plan.

13th century head in painted glass, fragments of a medieval glass vessel of Near Eastern type, medieval inlaid tiles and pottery, and various metal objects, including a key.

H. M. COLVIN.

OBJECTS FOUND.

I. WORKED STONES.

The number of worked stones found has so far been small, and the only pieces of any importance are two fragments of geometrical window tracery. One is a cusp from a large quatrefoil, and has sockets for iron tracery-bars.

Two irregularly-shaped stones of very friable nature bear deep grooves resembling those sometimes to be found on the jambs of church doors, and may possibly have been used for sharpening knives or arrows.

II. ROOFING MATERIALS.

1. Swithland slates with holes for pegs or nails, probably the latter.
2. Stone roofing slabs with holes for pegs or nails.
3. Tiles with one or two lugs and green glaze on part exposed to weather; one fragment bears the imprint of an animal's paw.
4. Fragments of green- or brown-glazed ridge-tiles with $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ cresting.¹

III. POTTERY.

A certain amount of medieval pottery has been found during the course of the excavations, including most of a small green-glazed bowl, but this will be left for fuller treatment in a later report. Fragments of dark brown Tudor and Jacobean ware occur in quantities throughout

¹ For the manufacture of these in Nottingham see A. Parker "Nottingham Pottery," in *Transactions of Thoroton Socy.*, vol. xxxvi (1932), p. 123, pl. xix.

the site, evidently dating from the period when it lay derelict after the dissolution.¹ Some bear yellow rosettes and other similar ornamentation.

IV. MEDIEVAL PAVING-TILES.

A number of medieval inlaid paving-tiles have been discovered, bearing the same designs as those excavated in 1878-9. They are mainly in a fragmentary condition, but there are one or two complete specimens. There are also several fragments and one whole tile bearing a dull metallic brown glaze of poor quality.

The most interesting specimen found is a fragment of a wall-tile of the Great Malvern series. It can be identified as the right hand top corner of a large tile bearing an elaborate pinnaced canopy and the inscription ANNO R R H VI XXXVI (*i.e.* 36 Henry VI, or 1457-8), itself part of a set of five similar tiles bearing respectively the symbols of the passion, the sacred monogram, the royal arms and the pelican in her piety.² A similar tile was found at Dale in 1878, but it is only briefly mentioned in Sir W. Hope's report. Tiles from the Malvern kiln are found in Worcestershire and the adjacent counties, but only a few isolated specimens occur in the East Midlands—at Cubley and Newton Solney in Derbyshire,³ and at Lenton Priory in Notts.⁴ The interest of the Dale specimen lies chiefly in the fact that it is a waster (the glaze has run down the fracture, and it is very badly stamped) and must therefore presumably have been made at the Dale kiln from a stamp supplied from Great Malvern. The East Midland tiles do not seem to have been produced much after the middle

¹ For this ware see A. Parker, *loc. cit.* pp. 99-102, pl. vii.

² There is a complete set in the British Museum, and part of the tile in question at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The complete set is also figured by J. Nichols, *Examples of Decorative Tiles* (1845).

³ J. Ward, "The Medieval Pavement and Wall Tiles of Derbyshire," in *D.A.J.* xiv (1892), pp. 122-4, 128-9.

⁴ A. Parker, *loc. cit.*, p. 77.

of the fifteenth century, and an Abbot of Dale wanting tiles after that date may have been forced to send for them to Malvern or Droitwich (where Malvern patterns were produced).

V. GLASS-WARE.

1. Two important fragments of medieval glass were discovered when clearing out the drain. Mr. W. A. Thorpe, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, who is kindly examining them for me, reports that "they are both crystal painted in fired-on enamel colours¹ according to a well-known Near Eastern process used for the decoration of beakers, mosque-lamps, etc. at Damascus and possibly at Cairo and elsewhere in the Near East. Their interest is that they appear to belong to a small group of glasses decorated in this technique with Christian subjects, European heraldry, and so on, represented by a well-known beaker in the Museum at Sigmaringen, with a bird below a zone of inscription in white, the celebrated ALDREVANDIN beaker in the British Museum with Swabian heraldry, and the very beautiful cup at the British Museum with a seated Virgin and Child flanked by SS. Peter and Paul, and one or two others of the 13th-early 14th centuries. A fragment of this type was found by W. R. Lethaby in a tomb at Westminster." Mr. Thorpe also suggests that the larger fragment may be part of the upper half of a beaker, and that the white cross with which it is decorated may be part of an inscribed zone with a portion of the figure subject below it. There will be a fuller description of this glass in the final report.

2. Part of a glass phial dating from about the seventeenth century.

3. The base and part of the side of a cobalt blue glass vessel of eighteenth-century date.

¹ Blue, red and white.

VI. PAINTED GLASS.

Many fragments of late thirteenth-century painted glass have come to light during the excavations, particularly in the neighbourhood of wall A and that connecting it with the south wall of the passage. Many of these fragments are in a very brittle condition, and nearly all are quite



Painted Glass Head from Dale Abbey (three-quarters).

opaque, but the design, which is executed in a dull reddish paint, can in most cases be made out without difficulty. The finest piece of glass so far recovered is that here illustrated. It represents the crowned head of a female, probably a saint, who is wearing a very beautiful veil decorated with quatrefoils and other similar motifs, and dates from the last quarter of the thirteenth

century.¹ Among the other fragments there are several border-pieces, some with a flowing design scratched out of the paint with a pointed instrument in a manner common during the late 13th and 14th centuries. Several of the smaller pieces still retain their leading, and there is also some 'pot-metal' stained red and green. It is hoped to illustrate more of this glass in the final report.

Close to wall A a mass of fused glass was found, about seven inches long, six inches wide, and half to one inch thick. It appears to consist of melted fragments of window glass fused into a solid lump.

VII. BONE AND METAL OBJECTS.

- (i) A much corroded iron key 8 inches long.
- (ii) A piece of seamed lead piping 10½ inches long and about ½ inch in diameter.
- (iii) A lump of blackened and decayed wood enclosed in a much corroded mass of metal, size roughly 6 by 3 inches.
- (iv) A plain copper ring: external diameter 9/10 inch, about 1/10 inch thick (date uncertain).
- (v) A late medieval copper buckle.
- (vi) A small copper bell, perhaps from a dog's collar; found in the drain.
- (vii) Part of a bone buckle.
- (viii) A small bone instrument with bluntly pointed end and carved with spiral grooves; date and purpose unknown.

H. M. COLVIN.

¹ Cf. the slightly later figure of St. Catherine in Deerhurst Priory Church, Glos., to which the Dale head bears a striking resemblance (J. D. Le Couteur, *English Mediaeval Painted Glass*, fig. 16).