

## Archaeological Reports.

*Under this heading the editors will include notes of any investigations or discoveries which may be brought to their notice. Whilst not all the excavations may justify a further detailed description, this section will afford to present and future enquirers a guide to work being carried on within the county borders.*

### EXPLORATION OF PREHISTORIC SITES IN EAST DERBYSHIRE.

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Edinburgh Meeting, 1951.*

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NO new work has been undertaken during the past year, but the excavation of Ash Tree Cave, Burnfield Grips, near Whitwell, N.E. Derbyshire (referred to in previous Reports as "Site No. 1") has been continued by Mr. Leslie Armstrong, Dr. Arthur Court and Mr. W. H. Hanbury, and is in active progress.

The cave has proved to be considerably more extensive in length than was apparent twelve months ago. It is roughly triangular in plan and at that time appeared to terminate, 16 ft. from the entrance, in a vertical fissure 1 ft. 6 ins. wide, blocked at the base by loose stones and débris. Removal of this filling revealed a considerable overhang of the walls on both sides of the cave and the presence of a rear passage entirely blocked to roof level. Excavations have now proceeded to a point 22 ft. 6 ins. from the cave entrance, the width of the passage being 5 ft. at the level exposed, narrowing to 1 ft. in the open vertical fissure above. The whole of this rear portion was filled by a mass of rubble and tabular limestone compacted together by black loamy earth, which had infiltrated between the stones and filled all the cavities. In

several places near the walls the material was cemented into a solid stalagmitic breccia resulting from roof drip and the flow of water down the wall. No stratification was observable in this filling for a depth of 3 ft., but faint indications are now appearing at the level reached, which is 5 ft. 6 ins. below datum level. Owing to the steep dip of the floor, the black loam still persists and its base has not been ascertained over the last five feet.

The Neolithic date of this zone was established by the discovery of a typical Neolithic burial of de-fleshed bones deposited in a dry cove beneath the overhanging roof, to enclose which a semi-circular wall had been constructed of limestone slabs, some of them placed vertically, to fill the space between the floor and the overhang and form a cist-like cavity. This appeared to have been filled with brown sandy loam at the time the bones were deposited, into which there was only slight evidence of the infiltration of black loam near the top and between some of the enclosing stones. The remains include the right half of a pelvis; the sacrum; a tibia; a few ribs; numerous phalanges and vertebra; and a mandible, retaining most of the teeth. The teeth are well preserved and exhibit considerable, but not excessive, wear. The mandible is of a robust type and is believed to be that of a male, aged about 30 years, but the most interesting feature is the distortion in form and surface contour of the left condyle, apparently due to severe osteo arthritis. The right condyle is normal in all respects. A few small fragments of charcoal and two flakes of flint were found in the cist. This deposit of human bones is the third discovered in the cave (see the report for 1950), and clearly ante-dates the other two. The blocking up of the rear passage with stones appeared to have been done deliberately, after sealing the cist, as an additional protection.

With the exception of bones of recent animals, found near the top and fragments of charcoal and quartzite pot boilers, the black loam proved to be sterile in this section.

The stratum of yellow cave earth, of Upper Palaeolithic age, has continued to yield a few flakes of flint and

artifacts of Creswellian type, which include three beautiful microliths, similar to those found in the lowest Creswellian horizon of Whaley Cave; also a number of microlithic flakes exhibiting no secondary flaking, and a small bone awl.

The yellow cave earth, of Mousterian age, has been examined to a depth of one foot in a central cross section of the cave, upon which work is now in progress. This has yielded evidence of occasional, but not extensive, occupation by man indicated by the presence of charcoal, flaked quartzite pebbles and a large pebble pounder bearing traces of bruising at the ends; also fragments of split bones. The bones are heavily mineralized and the evidence of water-logging of the cave earth is conspicuous throughout. From this section teeth of *Hyaena*, Horse, Bison and Reindeer have been removed. The total depth of the deposit has not yet been ascertained.

### EXCAVATIONS AT CASTLE WOOD, PINXTON.

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By G. E. MONK.

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EXCAVATIONS have been in progress during 1950 and 1951 on the site of the earthwork — figured on the Ordnance Survey sheets as “Moat” — known as Pinxton Castle. A somewhat inconclusive description of this motte and bailey type defence work appeared in Vol. XL for 1918 by William Stevenson.

After several trial digs in 1950 it was decided to concentrate on a trench, running roughly 30° West of North on the westerly side of the inner bailey. This trench revealed a wall of bonded stone, no trace of cement being found. A corner stone at the north end of the trench was located and excavations proceeded at right angles until conditions stopped operations.

Post holes at intervals along the wall suggest a timber-framed building.

Owing to the ground on this side of the building being