

Ground. This, according to local inhabitants, was the field on the western side of the narrow road from Egstow to Tupton; a faint ridge running up this field nearly parallel to the road is still discernible and invites excavation.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. H. O. Hawkins, Clerk to the Chesterfield Rural District Council, for permission to excavate at Wingerworth, to Mr. Stone of Egstow Hall Farm for permission to excavate on his land, and to Mr. Levick for his drawing of the maps. Thanks are also due to members of the Chesterfield Historical Association Archaeological Group who worked on the first excavation, and to those members of the teaching staff and pupils of Netherthorpe Grammar School who participated in the digging at Egstow.

## EXPLORATION OF PREHISTORIC SITES IN EAST DERBYSHIRE.

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THE excavation of Ash Tree Cave, near Whitwell, has been continued by Mr. Leslie Armstrong, Dr. Arthur Court, Mr. W. H. Hanbury and Mr. Horace Jones; also the reconnaissance of the district in search of further sites of Creswellian occupation, but so far, without success.

*Ash Tree Cave.* The excavation of the central cross-section of the cave has been sunk to a depth of 15 ft. 6 ins. over a third of the length and to 14 ft. 6 inches over the remainder. Bed rock was reached at a depth of 14 ft. 6 ins. near the north wall, early in July, but at present has only been exposed over a width of 2 ft. 6 ins., because the limestone dips southwards at an angle of approxi-

mately 20 degrees and then steps vertically downwards. This exposure may, therefore, prove to be merely a lateral shelf when the excavation has been lowered over the remainder of the area, but the increasing clayey nature of the deposit indicates that the bottom is not far away.

Below 13 ft. the cave wall and the stones contained in the deposit are everywhere disintegrated in the same manner as observed in the lowest level of Pin Hole Cave, Creswell, but to a much less height. The disintegration penetrates to a depth of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins., and over, and the rock is reduced to yellow sand. Most of the contained stones are similarly affected. This condition in the Pin Hole was attributed to waterlogging and long submergence in still water and the consequent dissolving out of the carbonate of lime. Its occurrence here is of geological interest as further evidence relative to events which took place in this region during Mousterian times. Evidence of waterlogging has been observed in all the Mousterian zones of this cave, and has been referred to in earlier Reports. The most important and interesting find of the season is that of a Mousterian hearth in the lowest level reached, at 15 ft. 6 ins. Only half of the surface of this has been exposed at the time of writing and a superficial examination made. Probing reveals the thickness as at least 3 ins., and the composition to be wood-ash and crumbled charcoal, consolidated by calcareous clay; the product of leaching from the cave earth which accumulated above it. The hearth appears to be about 18 ins. in diameter; splinters of bone are numerous around it and a foot away from the margin was a large portion of a young Rhinoceros humerus. No significance is attached to this close proximity to the hearth, for the bone had been gnawed by Hyaenas, but it is probable that it had been brought there by man. This is one of the few large bones found in the cave. Numerous quartzite pebble tools have occurred, crudely worked, and, so far, none has been found in any horizon displaying the skilful secondary flaking comparable with the Pin Hole artifacts of similar age. No additions have been made to the fauna already recorded.