

across the line of surface slope should go deep to carry the thrust of that part of the structure which was higher up the slope; but it is not likely that the *principia* at Melandra at any stage in its development would be so massive as to call for a precaution of this nature. The differences noted between the two walls seem to be better interpreted as suggesting two periods of construction.

Further work is required to elucidate fully the history of the *principia* at Melandra. At present the development seems to have been somewhat as follows:

- a. The first building was of timber, represented by
 - (i) the filled-in sleeper-trench of the east wall,
 - (ii) the oak posts recorded in *Toothill and Melandra*,
 - (iii) the post-hole found in 1960.
- b. The outer walls were later rebuilt in stone — or at least the lower portion since even in its second phase the *principia* may have been half-timbered. Before the masonry was built up the sleeper-trenches of the original version were packed with cobbles in clay.
- c. The oak posts marking off the forecourt from the inner court may not have been replaced by masonry in this second version; the evidence for such a wall is at present scanty. But the smaller posts of the timber front wall of the southerly rooms were replaced by a masonry wall which may have been put in later than the time when the exterior wall of the *principia* was first built in stone.

A ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT OWSLOW FARM, CARSLINGTON.

By JOHN LOMAS.

THE finding during ploughing operations in 1946 of an inscribed pig of lead at Owslow Farm, Carslington (Nat. Grid Ref. 238533) was reported by Mr. R. W. P. Cockerton.¹ In 1959 search in the find area

¹ *D.A.J.*, LXXIII (1953), 110.

resulted in the discovery of a concentration of sherds of coarse pottery of Romano-British types indicating the desirability of further investigation. Permission to excavate was given by Mr. Frank Oldfield, owner and occupier, to whom the writer expresses thanks for his co-operation and interest.

The site lies on either side of the dry stone wall dividing two fields known locally as "Jaggerways"² near to the parish boundary between Carsington and Brassington (Fig. 15). The area has been worked for lead ore since very early times, and there are many old shafts within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile radius. At 900 ft. above sea level, the site is sheltered from the north by land rising steeply to 1,000 ft. and to the south the land slopes gently downwards; the soil is a light loam over yellow-brown sub-soil over magnesian limestone, which is found at a depth of about 2 ft. On it stands a small barn which appears to be of considerable age since it shows signs of several reconstructions. Except for a lack of water supply, the site compares very favourably for occupation with any in the neighbourhood. There are no signs of any use of the land other than for farming.

The need to disturb as little as possible of a growing crop limited the area available for excavation on the eastern side of the wall, and on the western side the presence of a large concrete slab effectively sealed off an area 27 ft. by 13 ft.

Trench I, running north to south on the eastern side of the field wall, revealed a thin turf over black soil covering a rough paving of stones up to 6 in. by 8 in. one stone of which was a sector of a quern upper stone. Under the paving normal yellow-brown soil overlay the rock sub-soil. At a point 50 ft. from the northern end of the trench the paving appeared to have been disturbed; below it the soil had been removed and the major portions of the skeletons of two pigs inserted. These bones were in a very crumbly condition and from the small space occupied must have been devoid of flesh when buried. Soil accompanying them was dark in sharp contrast to the normal yellow-brown soil, and in it near the bottom

² K. Cameron, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, II, 356.

of the hole a piece of a bronze penannular brooch was found.

Trench II, set out at right angles to the field wall at the southern end of the concrete slab, cut through a pile of stones and a rubbish pit. This pit may be so called because the normal yellow soil had been removed and replaced by very dark soil containing domestic refuse, bits of bone and of oyster shell and sherds of pottery, including three small pieces of Samian ware, even though it may not have been designed as a rubbish pit. The stones, although not found in a natural position, could not be said to form part of a structure; they included a small piece of a quern and other pieces of coarse sandstone. Westward extension of this trench produced only infrequent sherds of pottery in the soil below the turf and nothing at all in the sub-soil.

Trench III, running north to south along the edge of the concrete slab, also passed through the rubbish pit and was eventually extended so as to clear it. At the north end there was almost no soil above the bedrock, soil depth increasing with southward progress to a maximum of 2 ft. 6 in. at the rubbish pit. Extension further southward produced results similar to those in the westward extension of Trench II.

Trench IV produced paving resting immediately on the natural rock.

In all these trenches many nodules of lead were found, more than could reasonably be expected to occur naturally. Other small trenches were dug as shown on the plan (Fig. 15). They showed a greatly increased depth of soil in those areas not in front of the barn but were unproductive.

THE FINDS.

1. *The Pottery. Report by S. O. Kay.*

The pottery from the Owslow Farm site consists of coarse ware with ten small pieces of Samian ware. Recognition is not easy because all the pieces are very small. Derbyshire ware from the Hazelwood kiln site predominates, some two-thirds of all the pottery found being derived from this site. There are sherds of Castor

ware, and others which if not certainly derived from Cantley and Torksey have the characteristics of pottery known to originate from these sites.

Samian. The pieces of Samian ware are too small to be accurately classified. At most it can be said that there are sherds from three different rims, one piece having some ornamentation (Fig. 16, nos. 1, 2, 3). The fabric would appear from the degree to which it has been abraded to be rather soft, indicating a late dating.

Mortaria. Six pieces are present including two rim fragments; one of heavy bead and roll type is of cream paste with occasional black grits, the other of hammer head type (Fig. 16, no. 4) in buff paste still with traces of red paint. There are four pieces of bases of mortaria, of which one has mainly fine red grit and the others rather coarser grit with black in greater amount. No signs of any stamps.

Cream ware. There are rim sherds of two segmental or hemispherical bowls in cream-coloured ware, one with traces of red paint (Fig. 16, no. 5).

Castor ware. There are a number of small fragments, including a piece of a folded beaker (Fig. 16, no. 7), which has rouletted decoration. Also parts of the rims of two beakers in orange fabric with traces of red slip (Fig. 16, nos. 8, 10).

Fumed ware. Several pieces present, none with rim.

Cordoned jars. Recognizable pieces of two (Fig. 16, 6, 13), no. 6 having decoration on the cordon.

The other pottery illustrated (Fig. 16) may be described as follows:

- No. 9. Part of the neck of a narrow-necked jar in light grey ware.
- No. 11. Part of the rim of a dish in dark grey ware.
- No. 12. Part of the rim of a wide-mouthed bowl with everted rim. Torksey ware or similar.
- Nos. 14, 15. Rim fragments in ware very similar to that from Cantley.
- Nos. 16-25. Examples of Derbyshire ware, including (no. 19) a rim shape not previously noted. It is rather unusual that on this site roll rims outnumber those of dished type. One piece of the dished rim of a vessel found in the rubbish pit has a counterpart among the surface finds.

All the pottery is contemporary with Derbyshire ware and may therefore be dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

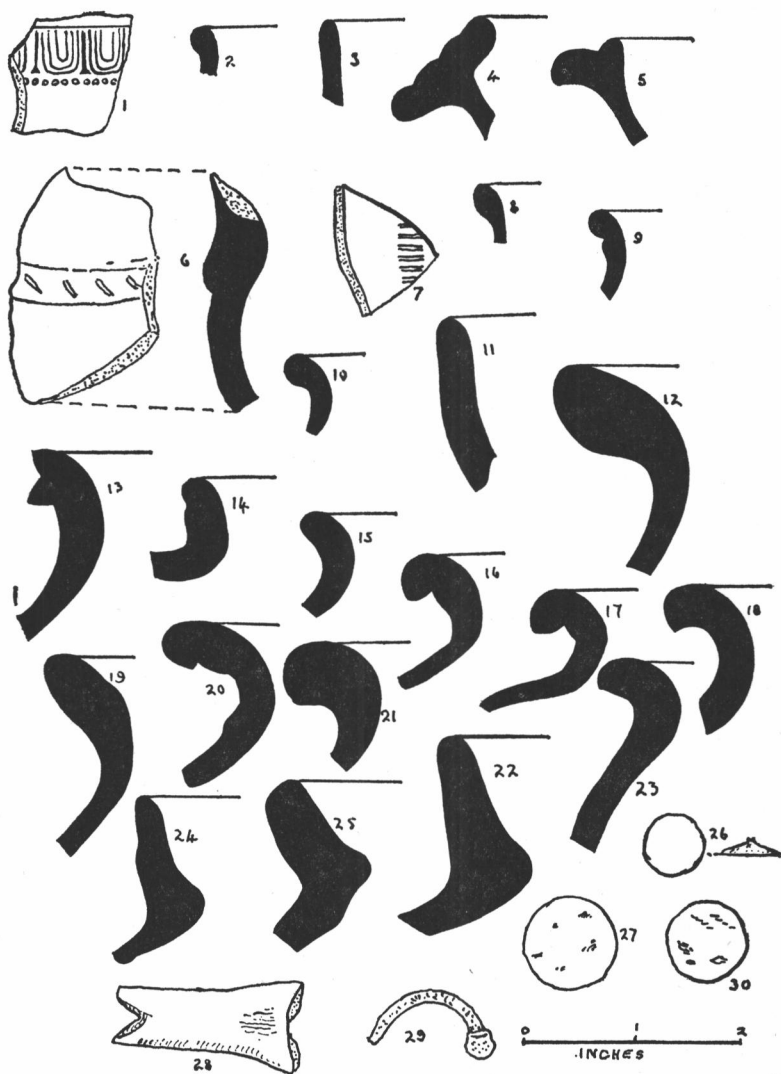


FIG. 16. Pottery (1-25), metal objects (26-7, 29, 30) and bone (28) from Owslow Farm.

2. *Metal objects.*

- No. 26. Part of a small metal button or stud from rubbish pit. Corroded but from appearance of broken surface it is of copper. $9/16$ in. in diameter.
- No. 27. A round disc of lead, $7/8$ in. in diameter.
- No. 29. Part of a bronze penannular brooch from trench I.
- No. 30. A round disc of brass or bronze, $3/4$ in. in diameter, with no trace of imprint, from rubbish pit.

3. *Bone.*

- No. 28. Piece of bone about $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. long from rubbish pit. Possibly part of leg bone of domestic fowl, having V-shaped notches cut in opposite sides of narrow end.
- Pieces of oyster shell in the rubbish pit and among the plough soil.

4. *Quern Stones.*

- a. One, a piece of millstone grit, could have come from the Wirksworth Moor and Cromford Black Rocks area. A regular shaped portion having two sides approximately radial, the angle between them 35° . Diameter of inner circle about 8 in., outer diameter about 2 ft. Upper stone, slightly concave from inner edge to outer. Dressed in ridges which are not quite radial; from ridge to ridge 1 in. and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. deep. Dressed by pecking. A similar quern stone is to be seen at Wroxeter. Found on or as part of paving in trench I.
- b. One piece found in the rubbish pit. Only possible to say that it is part of a lower stone.
- c. Four other pieces found incorporated in the field walls in the immediate vicinity of the site. These have suffered considerably from weathering and other agencies but their original use is plain.

No Roman tiles were found on or around the site.

DISCUSSION.

The reporting of the pig of lead followed by the finding of other signs of occupation in Roman times raised hopes that a Roman lead smelting site might be discovered. These hopes have not been realized, nor does it seem likely that they will be in this immediate area. The shallowness of soil makes it unlikely that any substantial structure could ever be (as at Wall or Wroxeter) concealed. If such a site existed here, a more favourable spot from the point of view of good natural draught would be

on the hill top just north of Owslow Farm. Here no recognizable trace is likely to be found now because of the lead mining of more recent times.

It is clear from the evidence of domestic rubbish that the site was occupied during the first half of the 3rd century, but this does not indicate anything more than an isolated dwelling, although the existence of others nearby is by no means ruled out. There are no small finds indicative of habitation between Roman and Victorian times (a few sherds of Victorian pottery are found among the plough soil), but the site is sheltered and could have been in use for farming purposes almost continuously from very early times. The field to the west of the field wall has not been ploughed for about a hundred years and this accounts for the comparatively undisturbed condition of the rubbish pit; modern cultivation would have dispersed its contents as thoroughly as appears to have happened to anything in the eastern field, where Romano-British pottery is found up to 60 yds. down the slope. Depth of soil behind and to either side of the barn is about 2 ft. deeper than in front of the barn; this suggests that that depth of soil has been eroded away (by farm traffic to and from the barn assisted by cultivations) to be spread with its contents lower down the slope. This is borne out by the finding of a sherd of Derbyshire ware in the rubbish pit and its fitting counterpart among the surface finds. It seems likely that all else is concealed under the concrete slab or under the barn.

The writer wishes to thank Mr. S. O. Kay for work on the pottery, Miss B. M. Slade for assistance on the site and Mr. T. G. Manby who visited the site for work on the small metal finds. The finds, which are the property of the landowner, are at present in the keeping of the writer.