

8. Overhanging rim of bowl in coarse orange red ware, found in conjunction with fragments of "rustic ware".
9. Rim and body fragments (reconstructed) in sandy grey ware with dark grey surface and linear rustication. See type II in F. H. Thompson's appendix on the "Typology, Dating and Distribution of 'Rustic Ware' in Great Britain" in his report on "A Romano-British Pottery Kiln at North Hykeham, Lincolnshire". (*Antiquaries Journal*, XXXVIII, 1958.)
- 10-10a. Rim of sandy grey "rustic ware" jar of heavier make and with a double groove on the shoulder.
- 11-11a. Similar to no. 9 with a single shoulder groove and linear rustication, in sandy grey ware with dark grey surface.

A ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT ALPORT HILL, ASHLEYHAY

By JOHN LOMAS.

THE site is in the area immediately around the Triangulation Station erected by the Ordnance Survey on Alport Hill (Grid Ref. SK 306516). It is mentioned as being on the likely line of a Roman road from Little Chester to Buxton.¹ At an altitude of just over 1,000 ft. above sea level, there are unrestricted views in all directions. The soil is very light sandy, over sandstone; there is a spring of good water within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and also at about the same distance there is a disused lead mine shaft (marked on O.S. 6-in. map as a well). Flint scrapers of Bronze Age type have been found on ploughed land within 100 yds. of the site. The surface indications were a small narrow mound or bank about 2 ft. high, 30 ft. long and 8 ft. wide, and a concentration of sherds of pottery of Romano-British type, found on the ploughed land immediately to the east of the mound and apparently derived from the ploughed away part of it.² On the edge of the slope to the south of the site there is a low bank which has been the subject of comment and enquiry but which consists of the decayed remains of couch grass (*Triticum Repens*) carted from the ploughed portion of the field in recent times. Permission to excavate was given by Mr. S. Fletcher, the owner, and Mr. Bates, the occupier; the work was carried out by the writer assisted by Mr. G. Cooper and Miss M. Dear, to all of whom he would take this opportunity of expressing his thanks. The finds are in the keeping of the writer.

A trench 3 ft. wide was cut through the mound from east to west (A-B) and extending 8 ft. beyond its western edge (Figs. 13-14). Afterwards the whole of the mound was removed in strips 3 ft. wide parallel to the first trench, down to the undisturbed subsoil. The mound was found to consist of a mass of stones of varying size mixed with black sandy soil containing much

¹ *Derbyshire Countryside*, April 1937, 86-7.

² *D.A.J.*, LXXV (1955), 152.

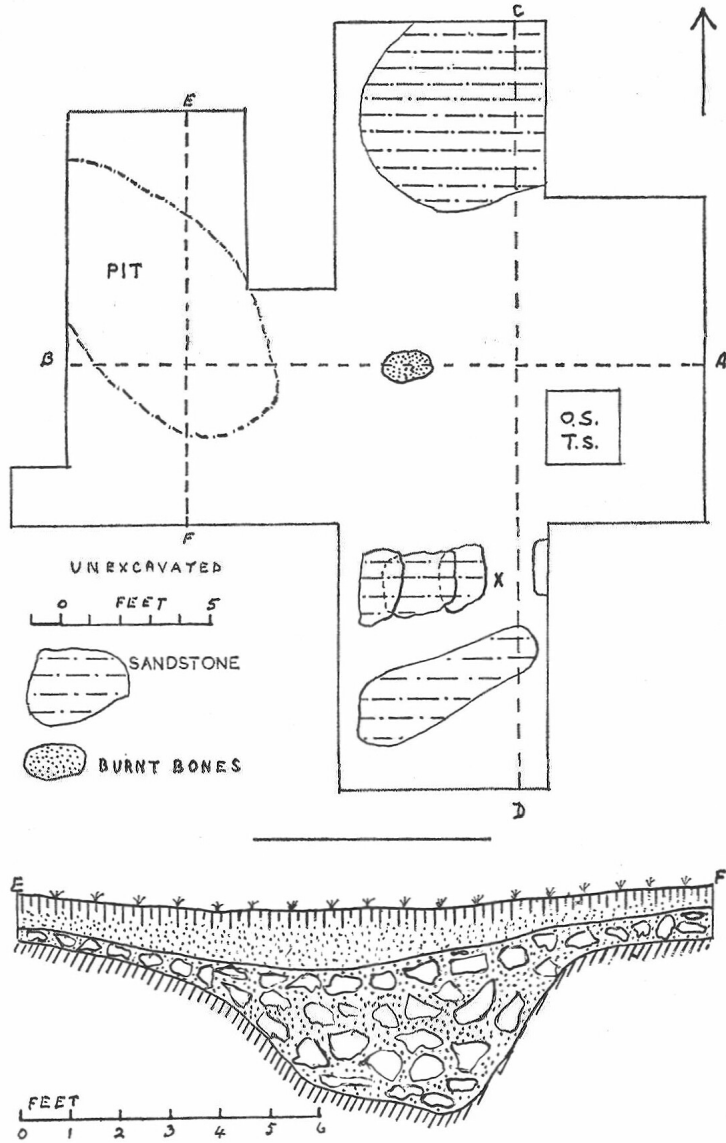


FIG. 13. Alport Hill — plan and section E-F.

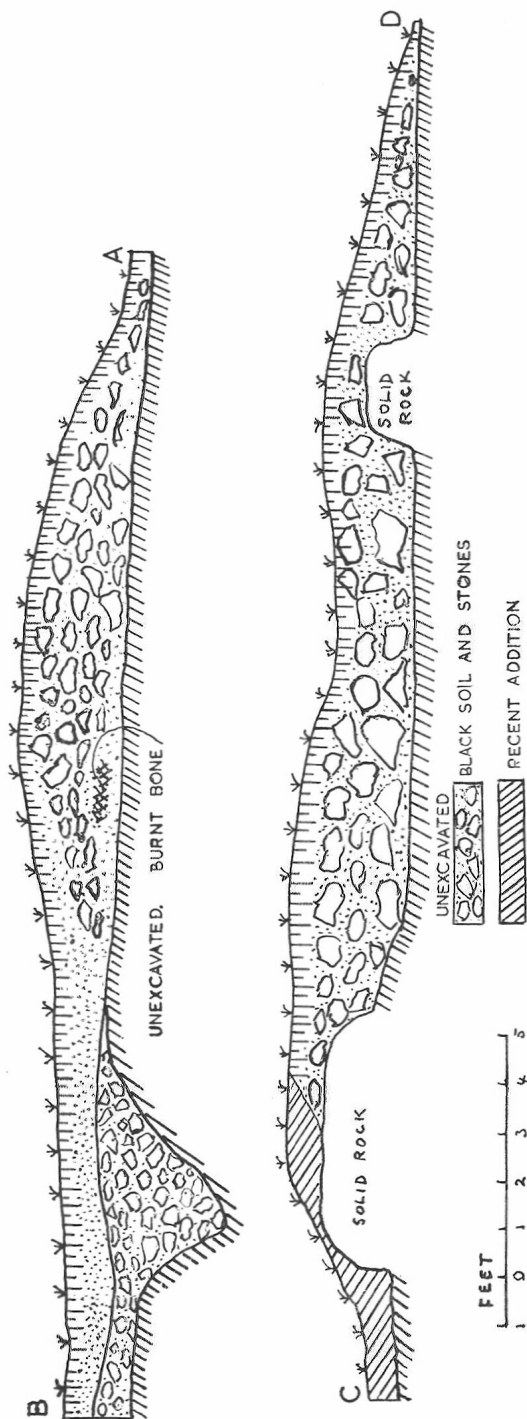


FIG. 14. Sections A-B and C-D at Alport Hill.

charcoal and with pottery scattered indiscriminately. No pottery was found in the subsoil. The original soil level was clearly defined over most of the area, and immediately below it were patches of clean white sand (leached) over a bright orange coloured layer (iron enriched) above the yellow sand subsoil. There were indications that additions had been made recently to the northern part of the mound by dumping of couch grass (C-D). No other evidence of stratification was recognized. A small deposit of burnt bones and charcoal was found as shown on the plan (Fig. 13). At X three stones overlapped each other leaning inwards; these might have been arranged but could equally well have been a natural formation. After clearance of the mound was completed the slight depression of the ground surface to the west was explored (E-F), and under it a pit of maximum depth 5 ft. and about 6 ft. by 4 ft. in area was found. Its contents consisted of similar material to that found in the mound with the addition of several pieces of lead ore and some pieces of sandstone showing signs of having been subjected to great heat. The southern edge of the pit was very clearly defined and almost vertical, whereas the northern edge showed evidence of having been undercut with resulting partial collapse. The broken surfaces of stone in the bottom of the pit were quite sharp and unweathered. Neither sides nor bottom showed signs of having been subjected to heat.

The very disturbed condition of the mound, the major portion of which appears to have been ploughed away (there is reason to believe that only the presence of the Triangulation Station has prevented its complete obliteration), would reduce any conjecture as to its purpose, if other than as a dump for domestic or industrial refuse, to mere guesswork. It is only possible to say that the presence of wasters and of used sandstone indicates that a pottery kiln or a smelting furnace or both may have existed somewhere very near. The deposit of burnt bones and charcoal may be all that remains of a cremation burial. It is hoped that further work on the site may be possible.

THE FINDS.

Pottery (Fig. 15).

About 1 cwt. of sherds were found, over 95% being Derbyshire ware. Portions of 34 different rims included 13 rolled and 21 dished types. Three pieces of cream ware mortaria included one piece of rim (no. 28); the others were fragments from bases and had black grits. Several pieces of dark grey ware, rather lighter coloured in the break and having decoration of horizontal grooves, including pieces of rim (no. 13). Also one piece of rim of a black burnished vessel, not illustrated. Some of the Derbyshire ware rim variants are illustrated.

- No. 1. 6½ in. diam. hard, grey/buff, grey in break.
- No. 2. 6½ in. diam. hard, grey/brown, brown to red in break.
- No. 3. 6 in. diam. hard grey, grey in break.
- No. 4. 5½ in. diam. soft, pink/brown.
- No. 5. 5 in. diam. soft buff.
- No. 6. 3½ in. diam. soft pale yellow.
- No. 7. 5 in. diam. hard grey/buff, buff in break.
- No. 8. 7½ in. diam. hard grey/buff, grey/red in break.
- No. 9. 6½ in. diam. hard brown, brown/red in break.

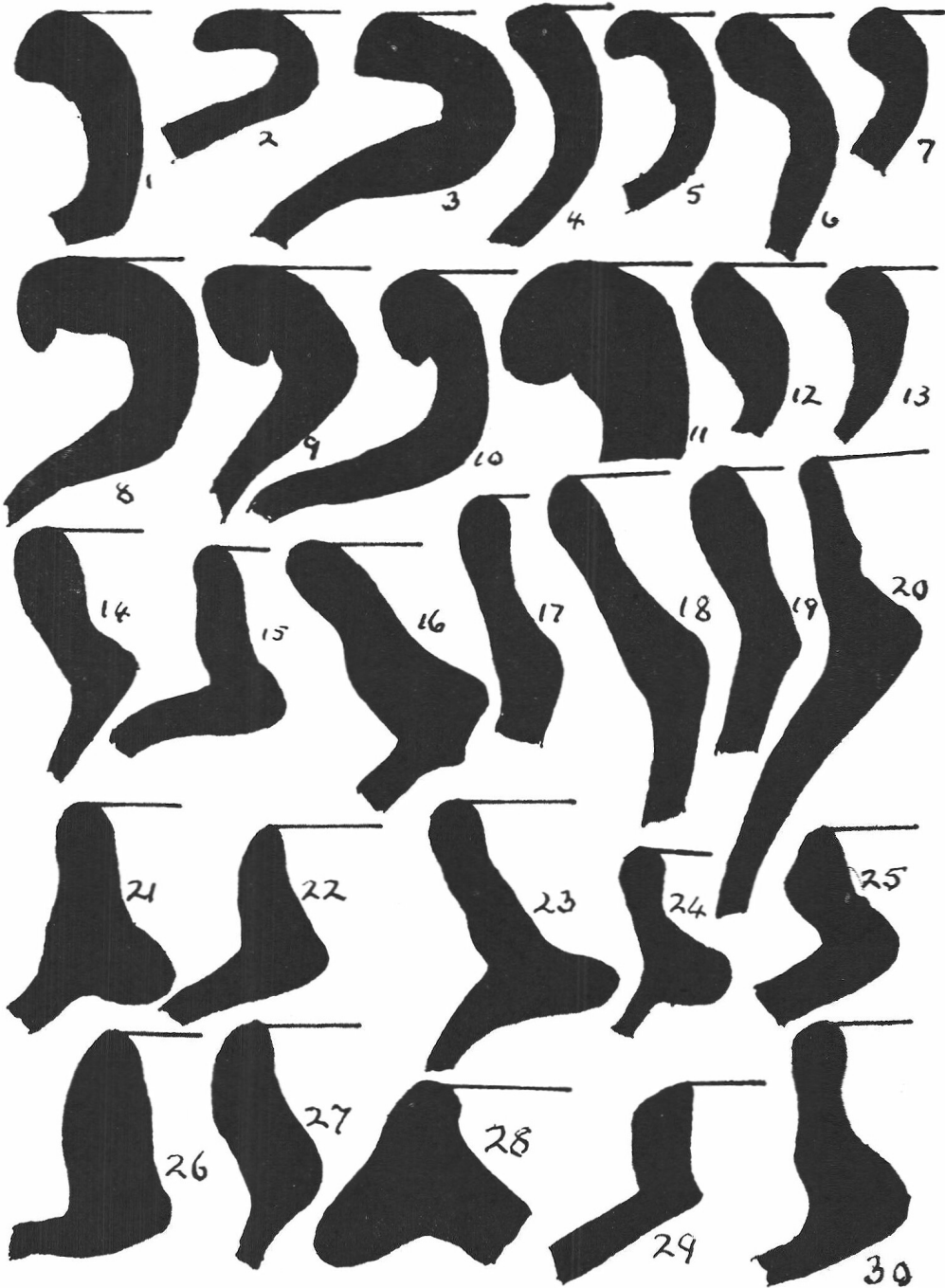


FIG. 15. Pottery from Alport Hill.

- No. 10. 6 in. diam. grey/brown, red in break.
 No. 11. hard buff, grey in break.
 No. 12. 3½ in. diam. grey/buff, grey in break.
 No. 14. Very hard, grey to brown, badly distorted.
 No. 15. 6 in. diam. brown, rather shiny brown in break.
 No. 16. 7 in. diam. grey/brown, red in break.
 No. 17. 8 in. diam. grey/buff.
 No. 18. 6½ in. diam. hard grey/brown, red in break.
 No. 19. 6½ in. diam. soft, red/brown.
 No. 20. 5 in. diam. hard, orange, grey in break very large grits.
 No. 21. hard grey/brown.
 No. 22. 4½ in. diam. hard grey.
 No. 23. 7 in. diam. hard grey/brown.
 No. 24. 3½ in. diam. hard brown.
 No. 25. 4½ in. diam. hard grey, red/brown in break.
 No. 26. hard grey/brown.
 No. 27. 6½ in. diam. hard grey/buff.
 No. 29. 5½ in. diam. soft pale buff, buff to grey in break.
 No. 30. 6 in. diam. hard grey.

Six badly distorted rims were found.

Metal.

Several pieces of lead ore were found. The acid soil would very quickly destroy metal objects. The only metal object found was a modern cigarette lighter, immediately below the turf.

Stone.

Several pieces of sandstone of the kind occurred in and around the site, but showed signs of having been subjected to great heat. Some had one surface fused and pale greenish-yellow in colour, with lines of fracture behind the fused surface running through the stone very like the condition of sandstone furnace lining material seen at the Calke, Melbourne, blast furnace site which has not yet been published.

MELANDRA EXCAVATIONS 1961

By J. A. PETCH.

WITH the help of members of the local W.E.A. a little further progress was made in the course of three week-ends in October towards the ultimate unravelling of the history of Melandra. Work in 1960 had suggested that the internal masonry cross-wall of the *aedes principiorum cum basilica* might have been a later addition to the exterior masonry walls. Examination of the east end of this wall in 1961 showed that it was contemporaneous with and bonded into the east wall. The difference in level of the two sets of footings at the west end seems to be due to the need to overcome the disadvantages inherent in erecting an extensive building on a sloping hillside without first levelling the slope. Such evidence as the work in 1960 might have seemed to provide for the belief that there was a reoccupation of Melandra marked by modification of the first masonry lay-out of the fort proves to have been illusory.