

ditch was about 15ft. wide and about 4 ft. deep with a somewhat irregular U-shape; there was a slight indication of a rampart on the fort side. This ditch does not seem to have continued in use for long, as in its later stages the road passed over the defences at the entrance, while behind the supposed mansio (see below) the ditch was evidently silted up by the final period of that building.

The ditch took an irregular course west-east in the area to the south of the fort and was traced again running S.W.-N.E. across field no. 527. At the northern end of this route it passed close behind the remains of a timber building of considerable size. This building of which only part was uncovered (the remainder lying under a large heap of topsoil deposited by the Manchester Corporation contractors) faced the east gate of the fort from the raised ground on the opposite side of the stream. The building fronted another road which presumably emanated from the east gate of the fort. This building from its size and position has been provisionally identified as the mansio attached to the fort. It was apparently burnt down some time in the middle of the 2nd century. Behind the supposed mansio a stone-lined drain had been laid along the centre of the now silted ditch, with cobbling on either side as access to outbuildings. In March 1967, traces were also found of a further building slightly to the south-west of the "mansio".

It is hoped that further evidence concerning the civil settlement at Melandra will emerge as building operations proceed. It is also hoped to complete excavation of the supposed mansio once the large heap of topsoil mentioned above is removed.

RECENT WORK AT STRUTT'S PARK, DERBY

By MARTIN FORREST

THE name Strutt's Park refers to a small but compact residential area within the county borough of Derby on the northern side of the town. Immediately to the north of the junction known locally as the Five Lamps, the A6 crosses the 200-ft. contour and begins to rise steadily in the direction of Duffield and Belper. This tongue of high ground which stands at a height of between 200 and 300 ft. drops sharply down to the river Derwent on the eastern side. Most of this area has been built over during the last seventy years.

In the past few years there has been speculation regarding the existence of an early Roman fort at Strutt's Park. There are three main elements involved in this discussion. Firstly, there have been in the past a number of Roman finds, many of them belonging to the 1st century A.D., on the west bank of the Derwent at Derby, mainly confined to the Strutt's Park

area. Secondly, to a Roman commander operating in these parts during the earliest days of Roman penetration north of the Trent, this high ground would have afforded an ideal site for a military settlement. Dr. Graham Webster has already considered two interesting possibilities in this connection.¹ Thirdly, a study of pottery from excavations at Little Chester, which lies a short distance away across the Derwent, suggested that Roman occupation of that site did not commence until the governorship of Agricola (A.D. 78-85).²

Since 1820, when skeletons, Roman coins and other remains were found in the region of Darley Grove,³ a number of Roman coins have come to light over the years. Those coins which are datable and whose exact place of discovery is known fall into two distinct groups when plotted on to a map of the locality (fig. 5).

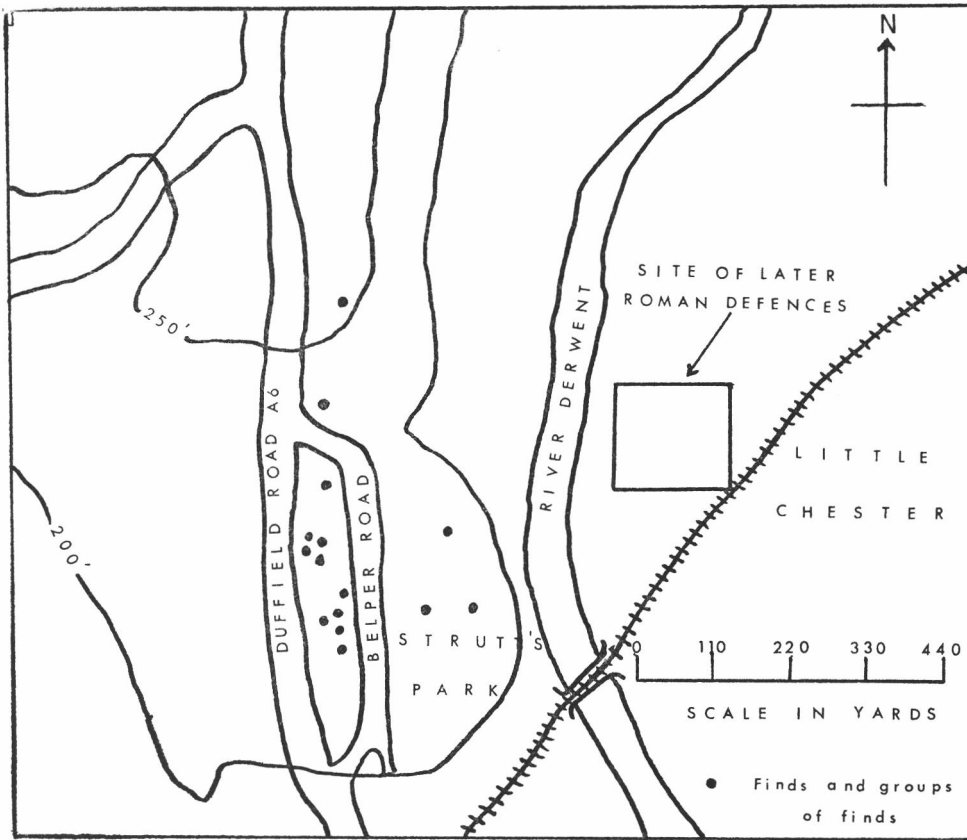


FIG. 5. Strutt's Park — Distribution map of pre-Agricolan material 1967.

¹ *D.A.J.*, LXXXI (1961), 108; also D. R. Dudley and G. Webster, *The Rebellion of Boudicca*, 40 and 149.

² *D.A.J.*, LXXXI (1961), 103.

³ S. Glover, *The history, gazetteer and directory of the county of Derby*, 1829, I, 293 n.

The finds from the higher ground above 200 ft. consist almost entirely of coins which date from the 2nd century B.C. to the reign of Vespasian.⁴ The exceptions are one coin of Hadrian and two 3rd-century coins from Duffield Road and Penny Long Lane. The second category consists entirely of coins dating to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries.⁵ Almost all of these come from the low ground nearby and may well be associated with Rykniel Street which is thought to have skirted or crossed the southern end of the Strutt's Park high ground as it approached Little Chester.⁶ The discovery of a republican and 1st century A.D. coins on the higher ground in this naturally fortified position has led to further investigations.

In 1966 it was decided to embark upon a survey of local householders in the Strutt's Park area with a view to seeking further information about the extent and precise date of Roman occupation there. Letters were sent and visits made to many houses in Belper Road, Robin Road, Duffield Road, Otter Street, Kingston Street, Ruskin Road and Chevin Road. As a result over forty sherds of pottery, well over half of them definitely Roman, have been collected from the gardens of local residents.

Fragments from the surface of flower beds tend to be broken into very small pieces and heavily abraded through constant contact with the gardener's spade. Mr. Brian Hartley of the University of Leeds has very kindly examined the pieces of samian ware and shown them to constitute a consistent group of pre-Flavian South Gaulish pottery, large enough to make it certain that the site was occupied by A.D. 60 at the latest. The fragments included a small base sherd from a Ritterling 9 which hints at the possibility of a Claudian date for the site. Several pieces come from the base of a form 24/25 which bears the name ER.T.IV. This die always appears on form 24/25 and is definitely Neronian in date. Two examples occurred in the Boudiccan burning at Colchester. Such coarse pottery as there was consisted of fairly small body sherds which were undatable. They included two pieces of amphora, part of a flagon neck in white fabric and a thin form of gritty orange ware, similar in fabric to Derbyshire ware.

As has been mentioned already, it now seems certain that the establishment of a Roman presence on the east bank of the river Derwent belongs to the Agricolan period (A.D. 78-85). The latest of the 1st-century coins from Strutt's Park belongs to the later part of Vespasian's reign and bears the legend IMP. CAES. VESPASIAN. AVG. COS. VIII.P.P.⁷ This coin can therefore be dated to the year A.D. 77 which fits in very conveniently with the suggestion that Strutt's Park was abandoned in favour of a new

⁴ *D.A.J.*, XIII (1891), 116-9; XV (1893), 20-5; XLIX (1927), 353-5. One coin of Nero and one coin of the late 2nd century B.C. found in Belper Road and Kingston Street respectively were handed in at Derby Museum 1960-1.

⁵ *V.C.H. Derbyshire*, I, 220. One coin of Hadrian found in Garden Street was handed in at Derby Museum in 1965. One late 2nd century A.D. coin has been found in West Avenue and reported to me by H. F. Calvert of Melbourne.

⁶ An early road surface thought to be the Roman Rykniel Street was noted by the author in a section cut across Kedleston Street during road-works in 1966.

⁷ *D.A.J.*, XLIX (1927), 355.

fort across the Derwent at Little Chester during the early years of Agricola's campaigns. The new settlement would seem to belong to the period of consolidation prior to a northward advance.

Much remains to be done and it is hoped to continue with the work in 1968. We now have a clearer idea of the span of life which this site enjoyed; the most pressing problem is to cover a wider area with the survey, spreading our activities to the western side of the A6, where Roman material is said to have been unearthed some years ago, in an attempt to define the extent and dimensions of this pre-Agricolan occupation.

I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Brian Hartley for his examination of the pottery, to pupils at Bemrose School, Derby, and to members of the Junior Archaeological Section, who assisted me in this work, to Ray Marjoram and Roy Hughes for their support and encouragement and, above all, to the residents of Strutt's Park who kindly allowed me access to their flower-beds and vegetable-plots.

AN EARTHWORK AT SAWLEY, DERBYSHIRE

By MALCOLM TODD

DISCOVERIES of unrecorded earthworks are not so commonly made that a new and striking example in Derbyshire need excite no comment. Air-photographs taken recently by Dr. J. K. St Joseph¹ have revealed a small rectangular earthwork on the low-lying ground south of Sawley church (SK 474313). The defences of the work consist of a rampart, some 18 ft. wide, and an associated ditch, both of which can be traced on the ground round most of the circuit.² The dimensions of the work, measured along the rampart-crests are: north 261 ft.; south 240; east 281; west 286. They give an area of 1.5 acres over the ramparts. In the centre of the west side there are evident traces of a gate-opening, about 21 ft. across, and 40 ft. away to the west lies a mound, some 30 ft. long by 12 ft. wide, positioned like a *tutulus*, but now so formless as to leave its function in doubt. The rampart and ditch are particularly well preserved on the north and west sides, the bank still standing 2½ ft. high. Within the defences, however, there has been a good deal of superficial disturbance, presumably by ploughing.

¹ Dr. J. K. St. Joseph has kindly pointed this new site out to me and provided a photograph.

² The line of the ditch is indistinct on the south side, being here obscured by traces of an old field boundary, a few trees of which still remain. Since only a surface survey has been made, many details of the planning of the defences, e.g. the precise width of the rampart, the radii of the rampart-curves at the corners, and the exact arrangement of the rampart ends at the gate-opening, cannot yet be adequately recorded. It is, however, quite certain from a contoured survey prepared by students in the Department of Civil Engineering in the University of Nottingham that the south-west and south-east angles are not based on right angles and that the length of the eastern defences falls short of that of the west side by some 20ft.