# EXCAVATION OF THE HILL FORT OF MAM TOR, DERBYSHIRE 1965–69

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*Introduction*

During the summers of 1963 and 1964 the second writer organised training excavations for archaeology students from Manchester University at the Roman fort of Castleshaw, between Oldham and Huddersfield (Thompson 1973). While reasonably satisfactory for students taking the Roman Britain course, the site was clearly far from ideal for those who had selected British prehistory, apart from the mitigating effect of the discovery of a Beaker pit in the centre of the fort in 1964. When Dr. (now Professor) Barri Jones joined the University staff in 1964, he and the writer concluded that two sites, one prehistoric and one Roman, were needed, which for economy of effort and administration should be reasonably near each other; if there should prove to be an archaeological relationship this could be regarded as a desirable, but not essential, bonus. The two sites which most obviously met these requirements were in North Derbyshire, the hill-fort known as Mam Tor and the Roman fort of Brough (*Navio*), eight miles (12·9 kms) N.N.E. and nine miles (14·5 kms) N.E. of Buxton respectively and three miles (4·8 kms) from each other. Approaches were duly made to the owners and tenant farmers and with their permission[1] and encouragement excavation began in 1965.

Originally, Professor Jones and the writer exercised joint control of both sites but the arrangement was not entirely satisfactory, so that finally Professor Jones took responsibility for the work at Brough (Jones *et al.* 1965, 1969) and the writer for excavation at Mam Tor (Jones and Thompson 1965, Thompson 1971), though close contact was maintained for the discussion of mutual problems. The writer undertook a second season at Mam Tor in 1966 and after his departure to London at the beginning of 1967 a further three seasons' excavation there were undertaken by Dr. D. G. Coombs in 1967–9 (Coombs 1967, 1971, 1976). The present report is a work of collaboration, but in addition both writers would express their gratitude to Professor Jones and Dr. J. P. Wild for their assistance at all times and to Mrs. Jenny Coombs for her skilful illustration of the finds. Acknowledgement to other specialist contributors will be made at the appropriate points, but in general our thanks must go to all those Manchester students who laboured on this very exposed and windswept site, and in particular to Mr. Peter Webster for assistance with supervision.

## I THE SITE

*Geography and geology* (Fig. 1)

The traveller passing along the main A625 eastwards from Chapel-en-le-Frith towards Sheffield encounters some dramatic scenery. From Chapel the road climbs to 1,400 ft (420 m) and runs along the shoulder to Rushup Edge. At Mam Tor it takes a circuitous course to pick its way through the moraine-like hummocks below the south-east cliff face of the Tor and then drops rapidly to Castleton and so into the more pastoral scenery of the Hope Valley. The detour below Mam Tor can be avoided by taking the shorter but steeper road through the Winnats, the spectacular limestone gorge which leads down to Castleton. But the scenic qualities are best appreciated by joining the hundreds who every year walk the ridgeway north of the road over Lord's Seat, Mam Tor, Back Tor and Lose Hill, and then drop down into Hope. Far below on the left is the Vale of Edale, and, beyond, the flat plateaux and steep slopes formed by the

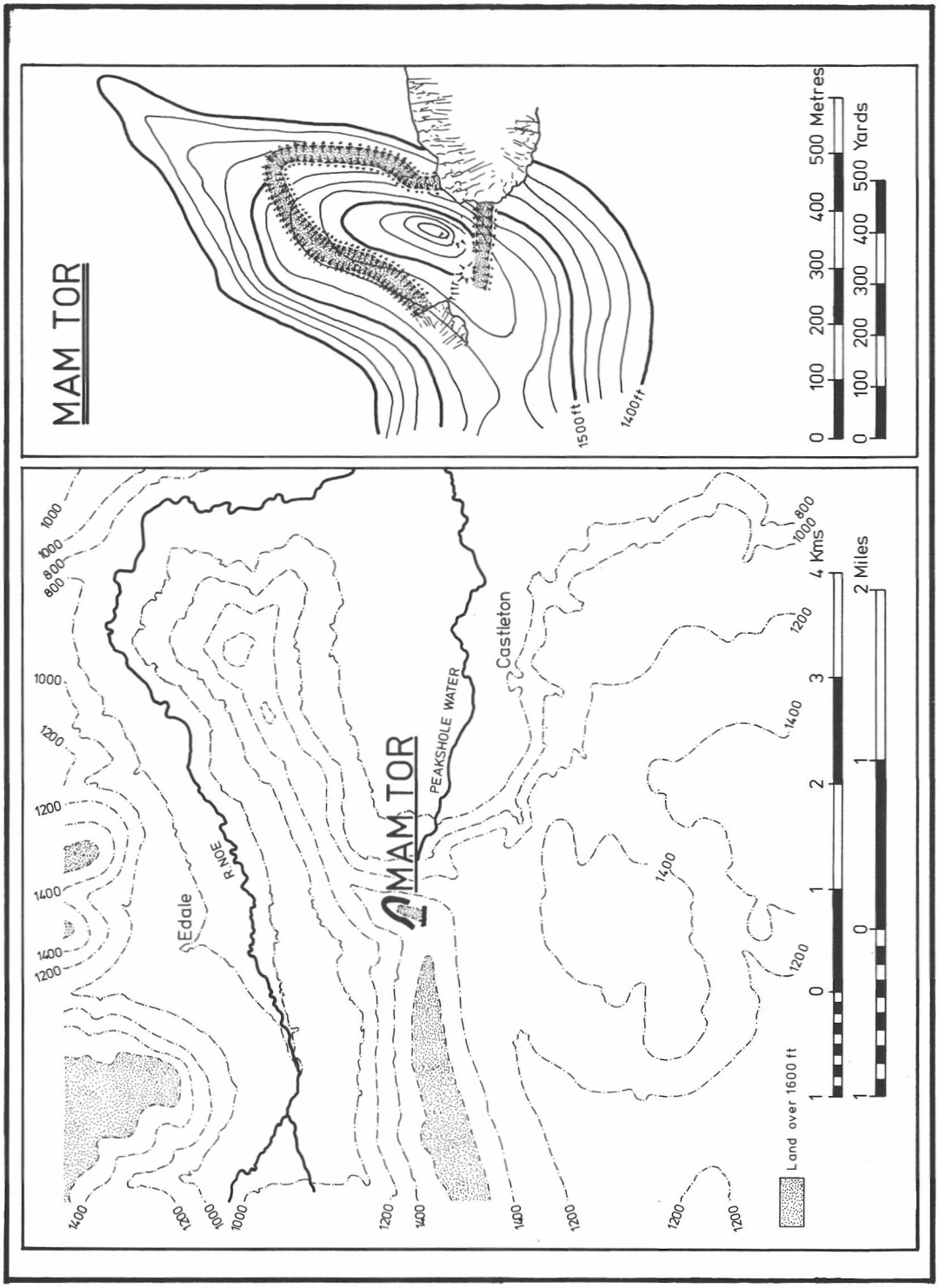



Fig. 1 Mam Tor: the site in its setting

gritstone moorlands of the Peak District. To the right one looks into the smoother and greener limestone hills of the Derbyshire Dales, though the dales themselves are too deeply indented to be immediately obvious.

The contrast between the two areas is the product of the junction of the older Carboniferous Limestone of the Derbyshire Dome to the south with the younger Millstone Grit Series to the north (Edwards and Trotter 1954, *passim*). The limestones are massive and thickly bedded, but the Millstone Grits can contain frequent intercalations of shales. This is well seen in the south-east cliff face of Mam Tor where the rapid alternation of sandstone and shale is clearly visible; in periods of heavy rainfall the more rapid erosion of the shale layers brings about the landslips which produce the hummocks already mentioned. A similar, but less pronounced, cliff lies on the south-west slope of Mam Tor and the road running down into Edale passes through more moraine-like scenery. In terms of vegetation there is a coarser growth of grass on the gritstone hills than on the limestone uplands, but today sheep are pastured on both, a fact which may not be without significance in any assessment of the prehistoric economy of the area.

*The hill-fort* (Pl. 1 and Fig. 2)

Mam Tor itself stands just east of the point where the gritstone ridge of Rushup Edge drops sharply to a col which affords reasonably easy access for the minor road leading into the Vale of Edale (Nat. Grid Ref. 125835). The earthwork occupies a short northerly variation from the otherwise south-west to north-east line of the ridge. In plan it is a tongue-shaped three sided figure of essentially univallate characteristics; a main rampart runs along the slope of the hog-back ridge with the silted ditch well below it, while the upcast from the ditch forms a low outer bank (Pl. 3b). A straight section of bank and ditch, nearly 660 ft (200 m) long, defines the base of the earthwork on the south and links the two natural cliff faces mentioned above, suggesting that these already existed in antiquity. At the west end there is a reasonably well-defined entrance with indications of an inturn on its western side.

The east and west defences of Mam Tor also terminate on the two cliffs, from which they run on an irregular but approximately northerly line for a distance of over 1300 ft (400 m) in a straight line from the southern rampart until they converge at the northern end; here there is a second entrance with fairly well defined inturns on both sides. There is a further break in the defences on the west side but this seems to be modern in origin, while to the north of the gap a spring flows through the defences and must have presented a problem to the hill-fort builders if it existed in their day. Tactically the weak point in the perimeter is at the north end where the ridge continues without the protection of any natural features, such as the col or the cliffs at the south end. But the convergence of the east and west ramparts to a point at the north entrance would have presented a narrow front to any potential attacker from this direction.

The interior of the hill-fort, which can be estimated at approximately 12 acres or nearly five hectares, was not ideally suited for occupation: the hog backed nature of the ridge means that the ground drops quite steeply from the maximum height of nearly 1,700 ft (518 m) O.D. on the narrow crest to the rampart on the west and east, which follows approximately the 1,600 ft (480 m) contour. Nevertheless, there are clear indications of quite numerous hut-platforms cut into these internal slopes on both the sheltered eastern and exposed western sides. The other features of note are the two round barrows towards the southern end of the interior.

*Previous references*

So marked a feature of the landscape as Mam Tor was bound to have engaged man's attention from early times. In fact the very name is likely to be of some antiquity with its reference to the Irish *mamm* = breast (Ekwall 1947, 298, s.v. Mamhead), although the significance of this earlier colloquial title is now lost; the present nickname

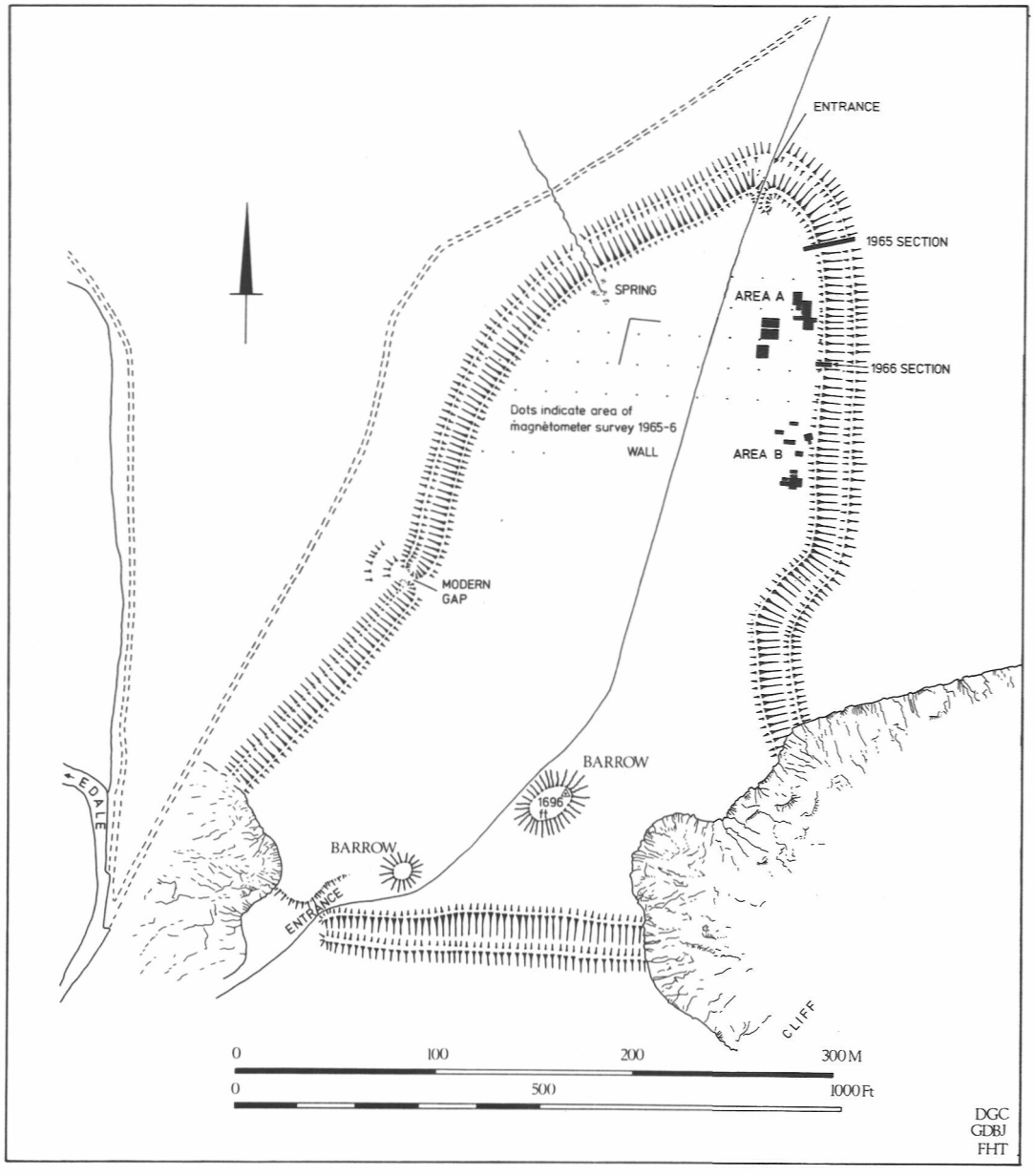



Fig. 2 Mam Tor: general plan of the site

'Shivering Mountain' derives, of course, from constant landslips below the south-east cliff. To romantically inclined seventeenth and eighteenth-century travellers the whole area was a source of fascination. Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe numbered Mam Tor and the limestone cleft of Peak Cavern in Castleton among the 'Seven Wonders' of Derbyshire; Defoe (Cole 1927, 578) explained Mam Tor as Mother Rock because of the constant crumbling which produced smaller mountains beneath, while Fiennes (Morris 1949, 107) also commented on the cliff facing Castleton: '. . . on that side its all broken that it looks just in resemblance as a great Hayricke thats cut down one half . . . .' The same feature struck Sir Thomas Browne's son, Edward, on his way through Derbyshire in 1662 (Wilkin 1836, i, 33): '. . . which is as if halfe of it had been rent away . . .' The more forthright language of the time described the other wonder, the Peak Cavern, as 'the devill's arse of peak' (Wilkin 1836, i, 32) and Browne went into scatological detail to describe his visit there. It has been suggested (Gordon 1959) that this local name, which in recent times was a synonym for 'at the world's end', was known as early as the eleventh century: in Domesday we find the entry 'Peches ers' = 'Peak's arse', where Peak may be derived from the same root as 'Puck'. The appearance of the cleft and the sound of the wind blowing through it combined to inspire this coarse pleasantry in the minds of the Saxon settlers of the area.

Curiously, for all its prominence, Mam Tor has not attracted much archaeological investigation until the current excavations. Bateman (1848, 124) notes that one of the two round barrows at the south end of the hill-fort was opened some time in the first half of the nineteenth century and that 'a brass celt and some fragments of an unbaked urn' were found, finds which would support a Bronze Age date. Pennington (1877, 43) mentions that 'arrowheads and other articles of flint have been picked up on Mam Tor and especially along the line of the fort' but this does little more than give a general indication of prehistoric activity in the area. In 1950 a rim sherd of coarse dark grey ware was picked up on Mam Tor by Mrs. C. M. Guido (then Piggott) F.S.A. (Piggott 1950, 77) and is now in Sheffield Museum (J 1950–82). In the same museum is a complete Iron Age (?) pot (L 24–1) from Back Tor, 1½ miles (2·4 kms) north-east of Mam Tor; scarcely 3 in (7·5 cm) high (Fig. 30), it is in light brown gritty ware with dark grey tones and makes an interesting comparison with the pottery from the 1965–9 excavations.

The general discussion of hill-forts of the Peak by F. L. Preston gives Mam Tor pride of place (Preston 1954, 3–4) and provides a useful summary of the evidence. He makes the point (Preston 1954, 17f.) that the hill-fort builders shunned the limestone in favour of the gritstones and shales, but we would doubt whether this distinction implies that the limestone areas were less heavily occupied. Mr. H. L. Butcher of Sheffield has been for some time engaged on a field survey of hut platforms within the defences of Mam Tor and the publication of a plan showing their density would be extremely useful. The excavation of the small hill-fort at Ball Cross Farm, near Bakewell, 10 miles (16 km) or so south-east of Mam Tor (Stanley, 1954) produced pottery with some similarities to that from Mam Tor, but this is the only site previously investigated in the area, apart from Almondbury, 20 miles (32 kms) or so to the north, with its long and complicated occupation (Varley 1948, Figs. 2 and 5, 1976). The two general surveys of Iron Age occupation of the area (Manby 1960 and Thompson 1971) both proposed a short chronology which must now, in the light of the carbon-14 dates from Mam Tor, be radically revised.

## II THE EXCAVATIONS

### *The proton magnetometer survey of 1965 and 1966* (Fig. 3)

As a preliminary to actual excavation, it was thought that a proton magnetometer survey of selected areas within the defences might yield useful information. Dr. Michael Tite kindly agreed to do the work and was present in both 1965 and 1966, covering linked areas to east and west of the bisecting stone wall at the north end of the hill-fort in

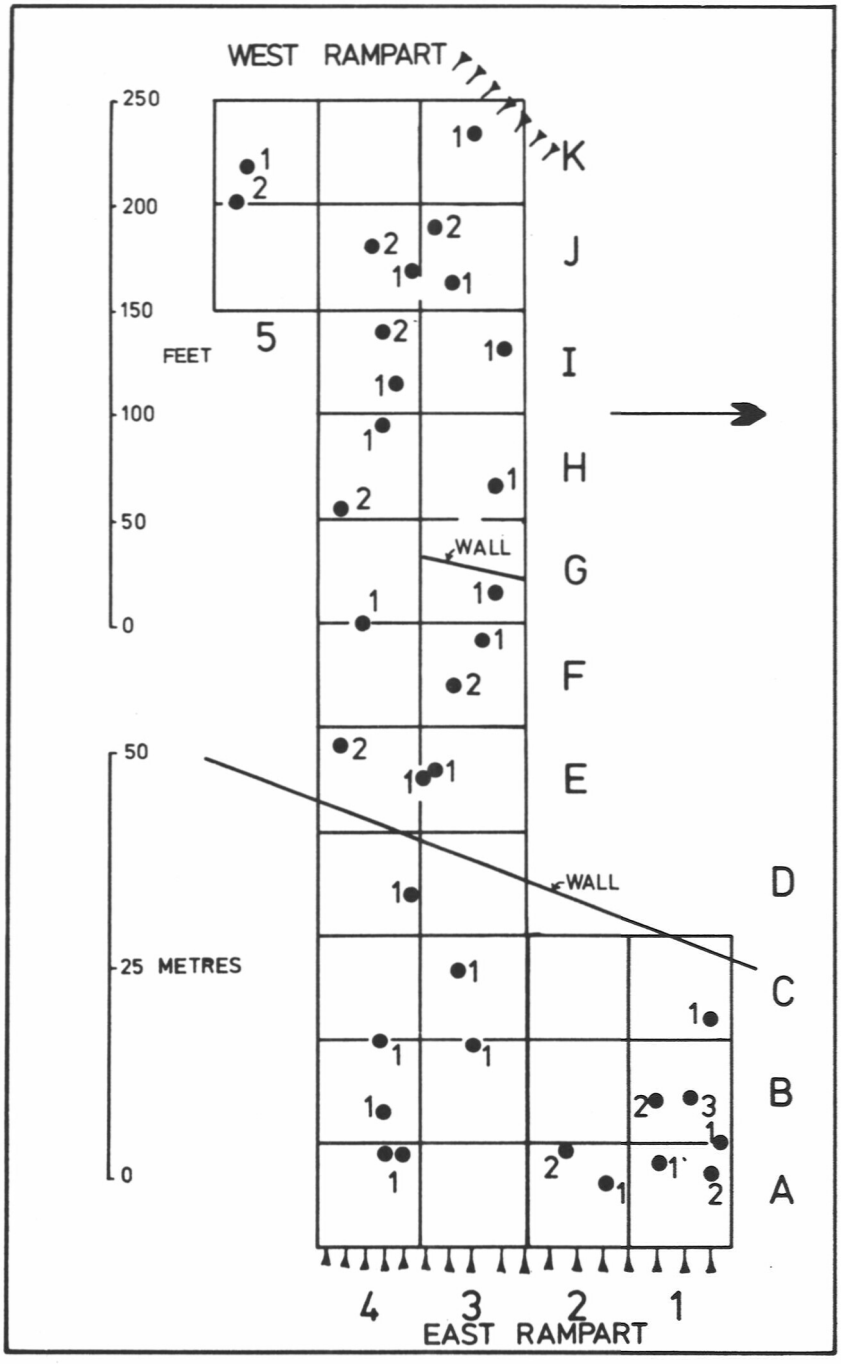



Fig. 3 Mam Tor: proton magnetometer survey, by Dr. M. S. Tite. Grid points correspond to area of survey shown on Fig. 2

each year respectively. In 1965 a 250 ft (76·20 m) square area was subdivided into a grid of 50 ft (15·24 m) squares, lettered A-E on the east-west axis and numbered 1-5 on the north-south axis. Within the area a total of 14 anomalies were located and 11 of these were subsequently investigated by excavating small trenches immediately north of the anomalies, with the following results:

| *Location* | *Reading* | *Surface Indications* | *Excavation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| A1/1 | 20y | nil | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) EW by 4 ft (1·2 m) NS. Continuous layer of stone slabs on natural, with single post-hole containing charcoal and one potsherd. |
| A1/2 | 12y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Edge of ?ditch or ?pit located, with dirty fill containing charcoal, much pottery (Fig. 27, 1·3) and lumps of plastic clay. |
| A2/1 | 5y | Platform | Not investigated. |
| A2/2 | 10y | Edge of platform | Not investigated. |
| A4/1 | 5–10y | Platform | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) EW by 3 ft (0·91 m) NS. Gully 18 in (45 cm) wide running NS cut in natural shale filling of light brown soil with charcoal. |
| B1/1 | 20y | Platform | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) square. Circular hearth of stone slabs with traces of intensive heat beyond (Pl. 2(b)). |
| B1/2 | 20y | Platform | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) square. Reddened area in SW corner-?hearth (Fig. 27, 2). |
| B1/3 | 50y | nil | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) square. Continuous stone slabbed surface at 18 in (45 cm) depth, with charcoal in soil above. |
| B3/1 | 20y | Platform | Trench 6 ft (1·83 m) square. Edge of curving trench (?hut wall) with post-hole and much pottery in association (Figs. 16–18). Platform 1. |
| B4/1 | 12y | nil | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Charcoal and burnt stone-?hearth. |
| B4/2 | 10y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) EW by 2 ft (0·6 m) NS. Gully running NS cut in shale with filling of yellow-brown soil containing some charcoal and one potsherd. |
| C1/1 | 10–15y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Occupation layer on stone slabbed ?floor—a little pottery, charcoal etc. |
| C3/1 | 15–20y | nil | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Occupation layer with much pottery (Fig. 27, 4–7) and possible hearth. |
| D4/1 | 35y | nil | Not investigated. |

In 1966 an area measuring 350 ft (106 m) from east to west and 100 ft (30 m) from north to south (with a 50 ft (15 m) extension to the south at the west end) was investigated on the west slope of the hill-fort. The 50 ft (15 m) grid was linked to that set out in 1965 and lettered F–L on the east-west axis and 3–6 on the north-south axis (Fig. 3). A total of 20 anomalies was recorded, of which six were investigated with the following results:

| *Location* | *Reading* | *Surface Indications* | *Excavation* |
|---|---|---|---|
| E3/1 | 20y | nil | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. No clear features. |
| E4/1 | 25y | nil | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. No clear features. |
| E4/2 | 10y | nil | Not investigated. |
| F3/1 | 25y | nil | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Slabbed area in SE corner. |
| F3/2 | 15y | nil | Not investigated. |
| G3/1 | 20y | nil | Not investigated. |
| G4/1 | 8y | nil | Not investigated. |
| H3/1 | 15y | nil | Not investigated. |
| H4/1 | 15y | nil | Not investigated. |
| H4/2 | 6y | nil | Not investigated. |
| I3/1 | 10y | nil | Not investigated. |
| I4/1 | 10y | nil | Not investigated. |
| I4/2 | 6y | nil | Not investigated. |
| J3/1 | 12y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Occupation soil with lumps of plastic clay. |
| J3/2 | 10y | nil | Not investigated. |
| J4/1 | 7y | nil | Not investigated. |
| J4/2 | 8y | nil | Not investigated. |
| K3/1 | 50y | nil | Not investigated. |
| K5/1 | 10y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Indications of occupation. |
| K5/2 | 50y | Platform | Trench 4 ft (1·2 m) square. Hearth associated with stake-holes and animal bone in overlying occupation layer; possible later hearth above. |

It may be seen that the distribution of the anomalies was relatively dense, both on the east and west slopes (Fig. 3, A–D and J–4) and on the central flat area (D–J). However, both on surface indications and the results of the excavation of selected anomalies, it became clear that occupation favoured the slopes inside the ramparts with a possible preference for the east side of the hill. This is much as one would expect in view of the altitude and windswept terrain, but the interesting result is the apparent permanence of occupation in terms of hut sites, hearths, etc., even if the total length of occupation, as evidenced by a study of the finds may not have been very long.

The detection of the anomaly B3/1 and the interesting results obtained from its limited excavation suggested that it would repay more extensive excavation. It was accordingly included in the programme of work for 1966 with useful results.

*The defence section of 1965* (Figs. 2 and 4 and Pls. 3a, 3b)

The primary objective of the first season at Mam Tor was to section the complete width of the eastern defences at a point approximately 120 ft (36 m) south of the north entrance. A trench (MT 65/1) 85 ft (25·5 m) by 6 ft (1·8 m) was laid out at right angles to the defences and extended from within the rampart to a point outside the counterscarp bank (using the word in a locative sense only). As it turned out, a fortnight was all too short for the work involved and the examination of the rampart was inconclusive, a defect remedied in 1966.

The rampart itself (Pl. 3a) survived to a height of 10 ft (3 m) above the old ground surface (15), a grey band, presumably turf, on a bright orange soil. There was some indication of a possible turf marker bank (14) concealed within a retaining bank of brown soil and stone (13) which had tended to spill down the slope. West of this and beneath the main body of the rampart, there appeared to have been an attempt to cut into the original slope to create a level platform, and on this successive tips of material had built up the rampart to a width of c. 18 ft (5·4 m): (12) dark brown soil; (11) turf; (10) banded clay and stones; (9) rubble; (8) clay and stones; (7) a thin turf line; (6) clay and stone; (5) orange-brown rubbly soil; (4) a thin clay band, again possibly a turf line; (3) loose rubble; (2) a spill of rubble, presumably collapsed rampart material and (1)

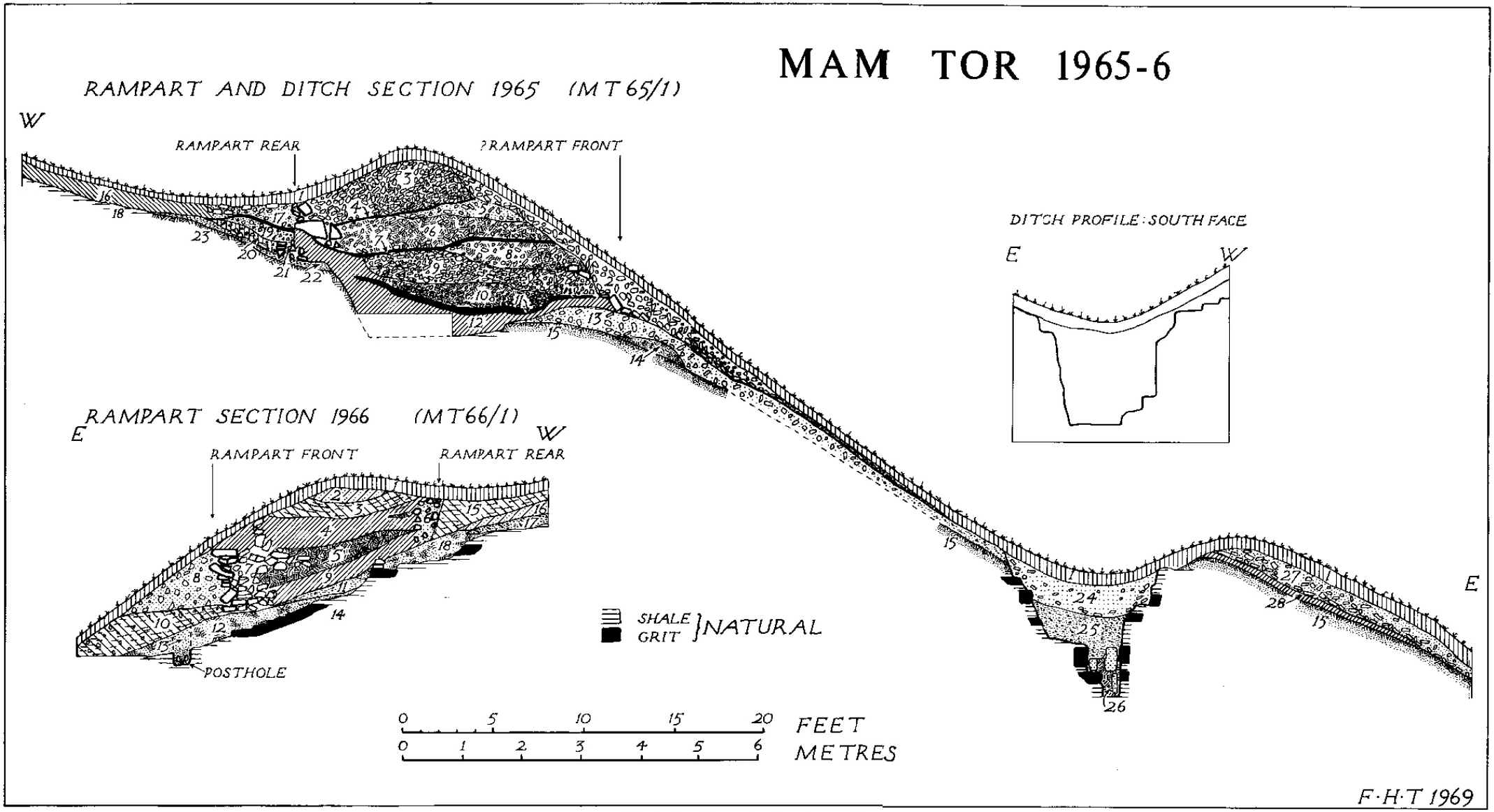



Fig. 4 Mam Tor: section through rampart

topsoil. Behind the rampart, (23), (22) and (18) were natural shale layers, and on them a slight stone retaining wall (21), defined the rampart rear and continued up to (1) in a more massive form. Finally, against the rear of the rampart further material had been tipped or had accumulated: (20) dark brown soil; (19) orange-brown stony soil separated from (17) rubbly brown soil, by a turf layer; and finally (16) soil which had gradually formed against the back of these layers through natural action. There was no clear indication of a stone front to the rampart apart from a few stones of a more massive nature (emphasised in the section), but the presence of others in the ditch bottom, together with the rubble spill (2), suggests that this had once existed.

The distance between the supposed rampart front and the inner lip of the ditch was 25 ft (7·5 m). The ditch itself was a simple feature of no great defensive strength (Pls. 4a, 4b): 8 ft (2·4 m) wide at the top, and cut irregularly, but on the whole vertically, down through the alternating gritstone and shale layers to a depth of 5–6 ft (1·6–1·8 m). The fill was composed of: (26) brown clayey silt with shale chips and loose gritstone blocks; (25) shaly brown soil; and (24) a yellow-brown stony soil. Although the ditch was not a very formidable obstacle, the defences as a whole were presumably quite effective through their being sited on a steep slope; thus the vertical distance between the bottom of the ditch and the present rampart top is 30 ft (9 m). Finally the counterscarp bank was of very simple construction: (28) a layer of dark brown soil on the old ground surface, (15), capped by (27), a bank of flaggy rubble.

No finds were recorded in or beneath the rampart, or from the ditch fill. Structurally, there was a suggestion of a heightening of the rampart, marked by (7), the intermediate turf layer, and a possible secondary stone revetment to the rear of the rampart. But certainty was not possible because of the rushed nature of the excavation leading to a severe contraction of the trench at the bottom and difficulty in recording the section. It was for this reason that it was decided to make a fresh examination of the rampart only in 1966.

*The rampart section of 1966* (Figs. 2 and 4; Pls. 5a, 5b)

The point chosen for the examination of the rampart lay 190 ft (57 m) due south of the 1965 section; the trench measured 26 ft (7·8 m) by 6 ft (1·8 m) and was excavated to natural rock, (14), the familiar alternation of shale and grit, but showing no sign of a deliberately levelled platform, to receive the rampart. The old ground surface was the clean yellow-brown soil encountered previously with occasional traces of clay (12 and 18), alternating, according to the underlying rock, with a grey shaly silt (11 and 17), on which, behind the rampart, was noted a dirty yellow-brown soil (16), probably the result of constructional activity. A notable feature was a circular posthole (13), 2 ft (0·6 m) in front of the stone front of the rampart (Pl. 5b); it was 1 ft (0·3 m) in diameter and appeared as a soft yellow-brown fill containing packing stones and charcoal fragments, in the natural blue grey shale. It was traced to a depth of 9 in (22·5 cm) in the shale but was presumably cut through the overlying ground surface, (12), but not detected because of the similarity of the soils in colour and texture. It must presumably be interpreted as one post of a fairly substantial palisade pre-dating the more permanent defences still visible today, but it would be very desirable to check this point by excavating along the line of the rampart front, and if more post holes were found, to establish their frequency. In the absence of datable finds it is difficult to say by how much such a palisade may have preceded the later defences but the interval may not have been long.

The rampart itself proved to be of a relatively simple construction in comparison with the previous year. It survived to a height of 6 ft (1·8 m) and its overall width proved to be 12 ft (3·6 m). In front, a berm (10) had been formed by throwing brown soil, mixed with stone and occasional charcoal on to the natural slope. On this a stone revetment wall (7), 3 ft (0·9 m) thick, held back an earth rampart (Pl. 5a) made up as follows: (9) brown soil; (5) grey clayey soil, probably turf; (4) brown soil; (3) charcoaly brown soil; (2) yellow-brown soil; and (6) a slight rubble revetment at the rear. Outside the front

revetment (emphasised in the section, Fig. 4) a stony spill (8) had formed, no doubt the result of the collapse of the revetment at a higher level. The slight stone face in (4) is best regarded as fortuitous rather than as secondary revetment. Behind the rear revetment a thick layer of charcoaly brown soil (15) had formed, and topsoil (1) extended over the whole section. As in 1965, no finds at all were recorded from this section.

*Discussion*

The most striking conclusion to emerge from a comparison of the sections cut in 1965 and 1966 is the apparent difference in the construction of the rampart. The suggestion of a strengthened rampart noted in 1965, both on grounds of stratification and height, found no confirmation in 1966. What the explanation may be is not certain. Certainly, the 1966 section suggests a straightforward sequence of, possibly, palisade, followed by a simple box rampart of earth contained within a fairly massive front revetment of stone and a weaker rear revetment. It is possible that different work-teams were responsible for different stretches, so accounting for the difference, but more probably there was felt to be a need for a more massive rampart in the vicinity of the northern entrance where the more level nature of the ground presents a tactical weakness. At all events, the differences emphasize the need for caution in forming conclusions about the defences of a hill-fort on the basis of a single section.

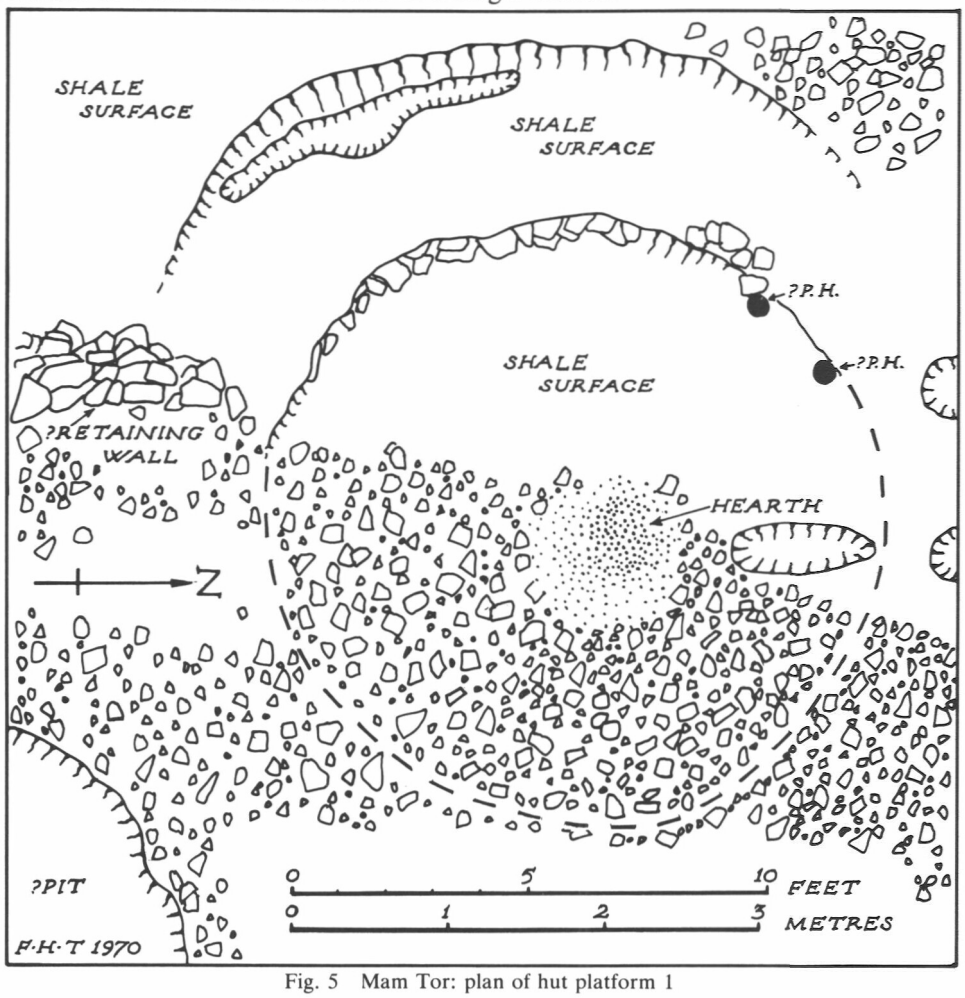



Fig. 5 Mam Tor: plan of hut platform 1

*The excavation of Platform 1 1966* (Fig. 5 and Pl. 6a)

The promising results of the investigation of anomaly B3/1 in 1965 (p. 13), coupled with the clear surface indications of a hut platform, made it the obvious choice for a small area excavation in 1966. This was intended to yield both structural information and, it was hoped, an increased quantity of finds, particularly pottery. Immediately, adjoining the platform to the north was a large scoop into the hill slope, suggesting the site of a larger hut suitable for investigation at a later stage (this platform was investigated in 1967, trenches X and Y, Fig. 5, but produced no evidence of a hut). The excavation took the form of a 20 ft (6 m) square subdivided into an area 20 ft (6 m) by 10 ft (3 m) on the west, and an area 20 ft (6 m) by 7 ft (2·1 m) on the east, separated by a baulk 3 ft (0·9 m) wide. The 6 ft (1·8 m) square trench cut to investigate the anomaly in 1965 lay in the western area, with its east edge coinciding with the baulk and its south edge 5 ft (1·5 m) from the south end. The excavation was carried down to the underlying rock, ultimately over the whole area after the removal of the baulk.

Clear indications emerged of a hut-site, although the structural evidence was not particularly well defined. In the western half of the site the underlying shale had been cut back to form a crescentic platform 4 ft (1·2 m) wide, inside which a semi-circular platform had been cut at a lower level, again down to a shale surface. It seems probable that the gritstone overlying the shale layers had been deliberately removed and taken to the eastern half of the site for use as levelling material to offset the fairly steep natural slope. In an approximately central position appeared a hearth, marked by the scorching and reddening of this gritstone surface. There was no structural evidence in the form of post-holes to indicate the eastern perimeter of the hut, but it seems likely that it was built with drystone or turf walls 4 ft (1·2 m) wide on the evidence of the crescentic platform on the west side of the site. If so, this would give the hut an internal diameter of 13 ft (3·9 m), and it is interesting to note that two possible post-holes set on this internal perimeter to the north-west may mark the position of a narrow door, scarcely 2 ft (0·6 m) wide. Other features of note were a roughly built stone wall at the south end of the site, which may represent a crude form of terracing, and the edge of a possible pit in the south-east corner which was not investigated. Elsewhere, a number of gullies were located but had no clearly recognisable function.

The excavation indicated a single period of occupation, but apparently of a permanent nature. On the shale and gritstone surfaces within the hut perimeter was a clearly defined occupation layer, a yellow-brown soil with charcoal scraps and fairly frequent potsherds. The latter, together with the sherds from the anomaly investigation of 1965, constitute a distinct group (Figs. 16–18) and afford a useful comparison with the pottery from the later hut excavations (Figs. 19–26); possible parallels and the chronological context are discussed in detail below (pp. 44). After the hut was abandoned, a fairly thick layer of gritstone slabs and clean yellow-brown soil formed above the occupation layer and ultimately the present humus. The presence of the gritstone slabs may perhaps indicate drystone rather than turf walls for the hut. It should also be mentioned that, in addition to the post-holes located in the anomaly excavation of 1965, two other post-holes were located, one 3 ft (0·9 m) to the north and the other 3 ft (0·9 m) to the east, over the hearth. But in each case, they were cut into and must post-date the occupation layer, and are best regarded as of comparatively recent date.

*The excavations in the interior 1967–69.* (Figs, 6 and 7)

The excavations in the interior were concerned with the hut platforms which were clearly visible on the surface as depressions covering a wide area, being especially prominent on the flanks of the fort. The excavations between 1967–9 were confined to the eastern half of the fort. Within this area two main sectors were examined, a northerly one (Area A) excavated in 1967–8 containing platforms 2–3 and a southerly one (Area B) excavated in 1969 with platforms 4–9.

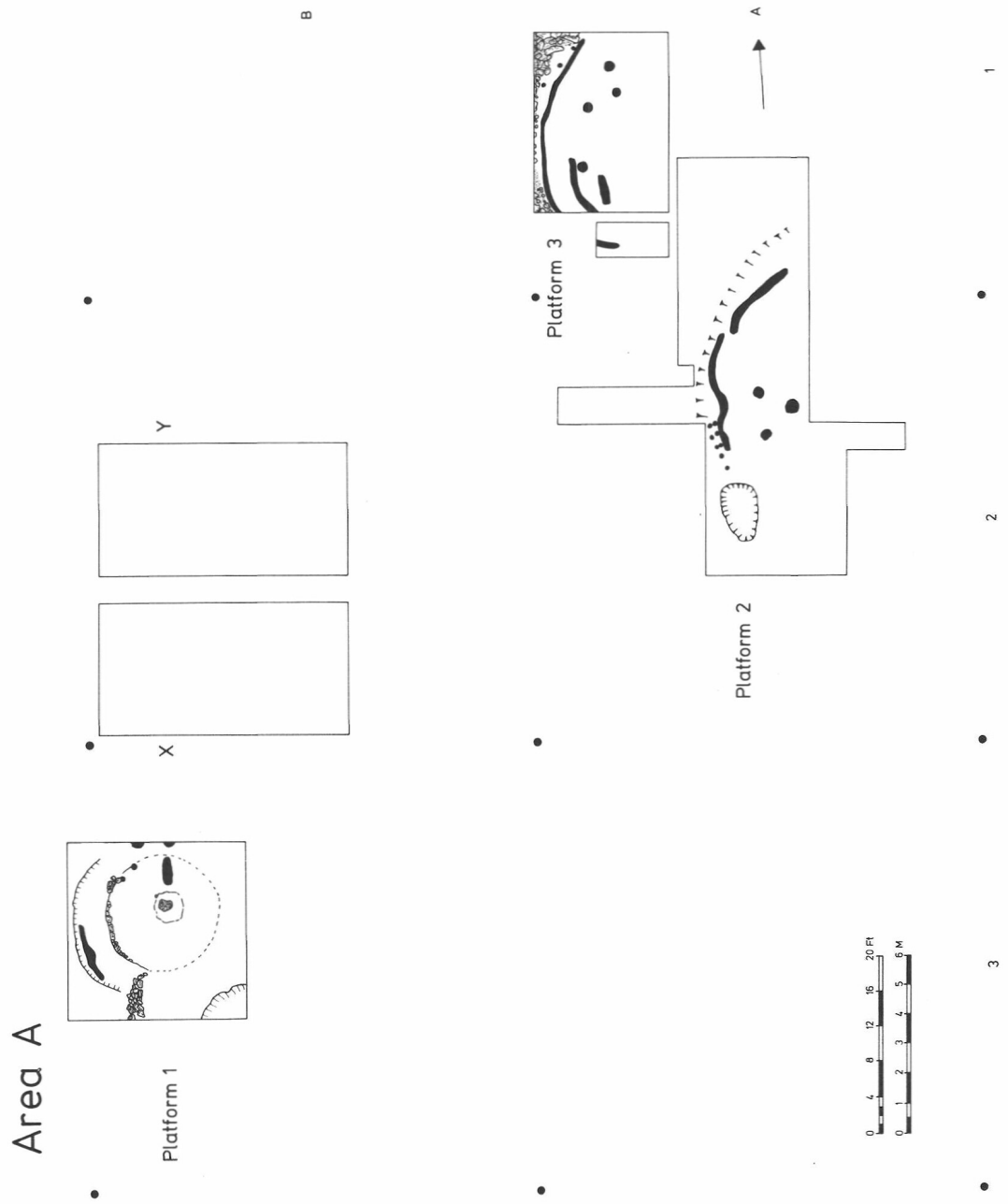



Fig. 6 Mam Tor: general plan of cuttings, 1966–8. Hut platforms 1–3

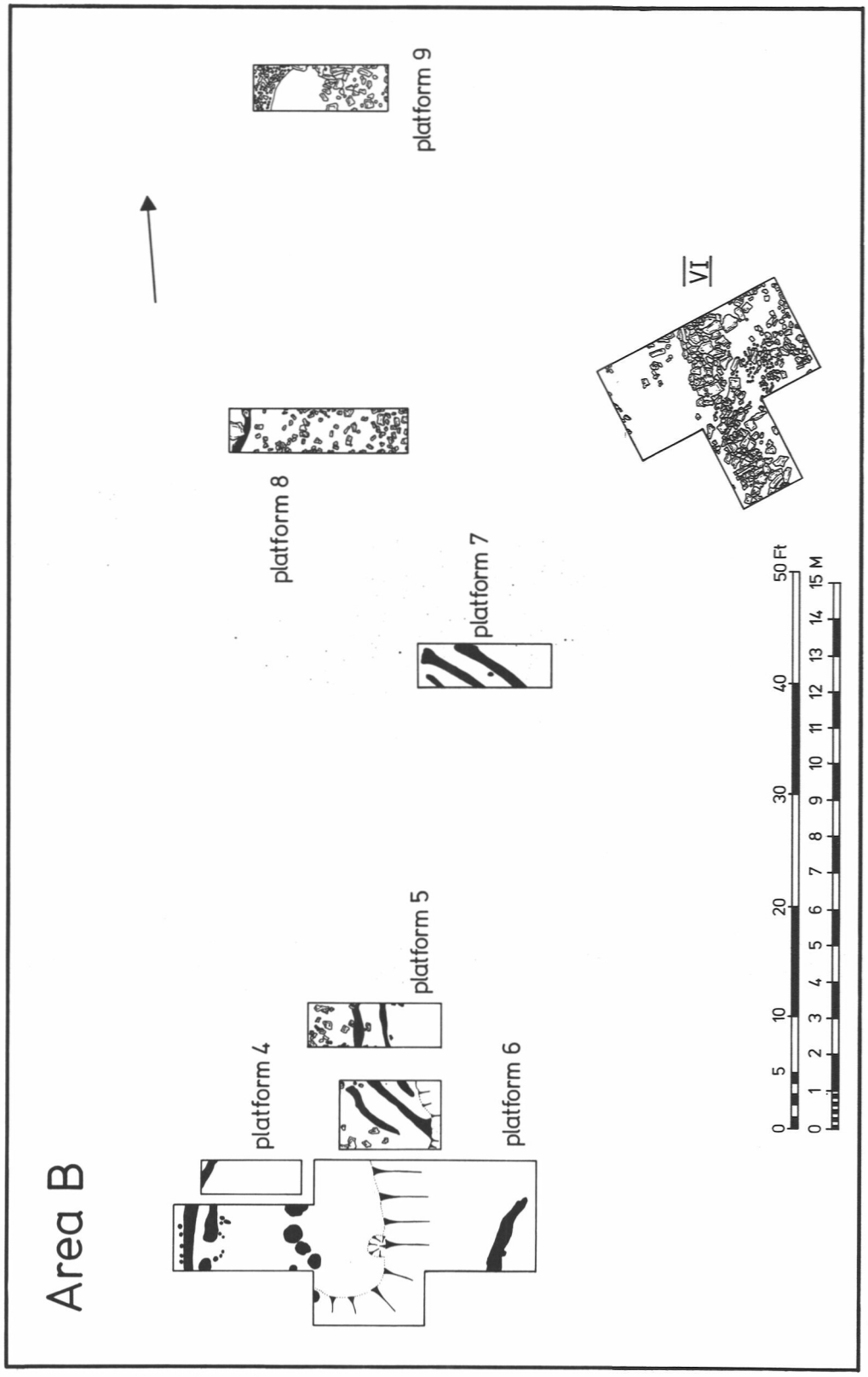



Fig. 7 Mam Tor: general plan of cuttings, 1969. Hut platforms 4–9 and VI

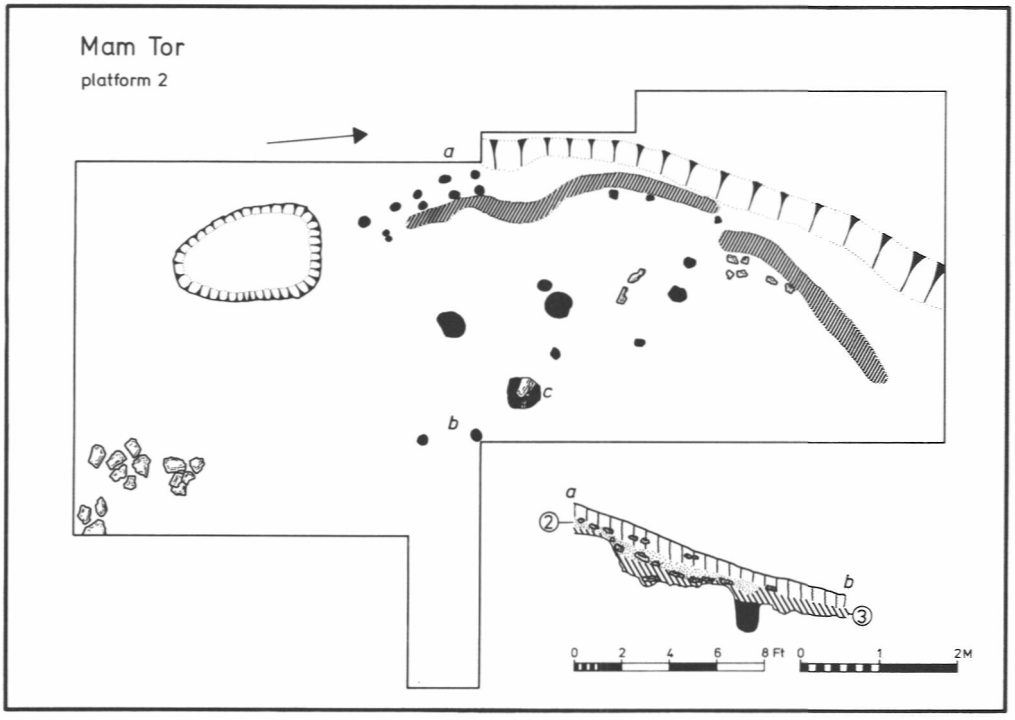



Fig. 8 Mam Tor: plan and section of hut platform 2

Basically the platforms all contained similar features; a fairly level surface was formed by excavating back into the slope of the hill. The level surface contained an arrangement of gullies, post and stake holes. In nearly every case the stratigraphy was very simple; turf and topsoil (1) over a mixture of earth and stones (2) which overlay a yellow-brown clayey soil with charcoal flecks (3); this was directly on the natural grey shale. Material remains came from (2) and (3) and from the gullies and post-holes. Due to the acidic nature of the soil only a few scraps of unidentifiable bone survived. There was no build up of occupation layers on the platforms. Charcoal, when it occurred, was in the form of very small fragments scattered over the platforms.

*Platform 2* (Figs. 6 and 8 and Pl. 6b)

Towards the back of the platform was a discontinuous sinuous gully, 9 in (22·8 cm) wide and 3–4 in (7·6–10·2 cm) deep, following the line of the back of the platform and forming a vague arc of a circle. In one area, between the gully and the back of the platform was a short length of paired stake holes 6 in (15·24 cm) in width and depth. Their arrangement here might suggest that a similar patterning might have existed the whole length of the back of the platform but was overlooked during excavation.

On the platform was a scatter of small stake holes and larger post-holes, one of which had substantial stone packing (11 in, 27·94 cm, deep and 17 in, 43·18 cm, in diameter). At the southern end of the gully, though not touching it, was a sterile oval pit.

*Platform 3* (Figs. 5 and 9, Pl. 7b)

A large part of this platform, which was to the north-west of platform 2, was excavated.

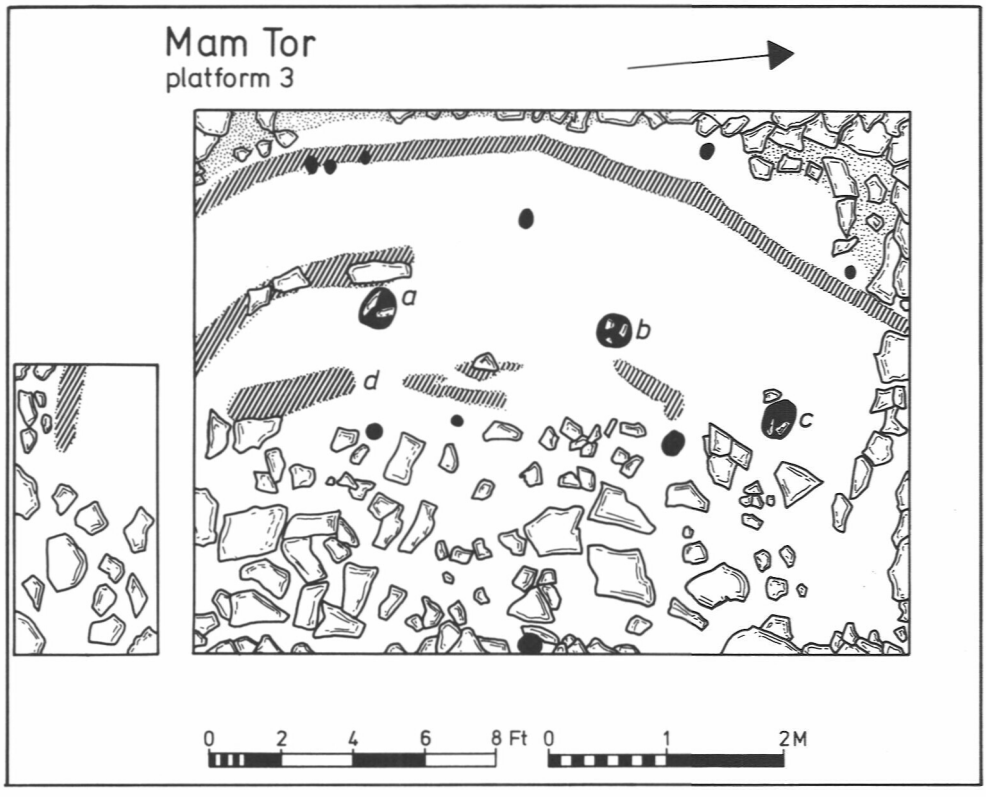



Fig. 9 Mam Tor: plan of hut platform 3

At the back of the platform was a curved gully of width 6 in (15·24 cm) and depth 4–5 in (10·16–12·7 cm). In places small stake holes had been set into the gully and there were other stake holes between it and the back of the platform. The stake holes had a diameter of 6 in (15·24 cm) and a depth of 3–6 in (7·6–15·2 cm).

On the surface of the platform were odd lengths of gully of which *d* must be singled out as this contained the pottery group (Figs. 20·4., 21·1., 22·1., 2.) which covered the stone axe (Fig. 28.8.).

There was also a scattering of post holes on the floor of the platform of which three had stone packing (all 12 in, 30·48 cm in diameter and widths 9 in, 22·9 cm, 15 in, 38·1 cm, and 9 in, 22·9 cm). These three post holes formed a rough arc concentric with the line of the gully. To the front of the platform the ground sloped away quite rapidly and was covered with large stones. The gully terminated where the slope commenced. One post hole was found at the front limits of the excavation, 9 in (22·9 cm) in diameter and 1 ft (30·5 cm) in depth.

*Platform 4* (Figs. 7 and 10)

Platform 4 was perhaps the best defined of all the platforms excavated as it had a clear front edge.

At the back of the platform, next to the natural sloping shale face, was a shallow, 6–8 in (15·2–20·3 cm) deep and 10 in (25·4 cm) wide, gully running roughly north to south across the trench. At the back of the gully were set, at an angle, a line of small stake holes of 3 in (7·6 cm) diameter. Possible stake holes were also found on the platform.

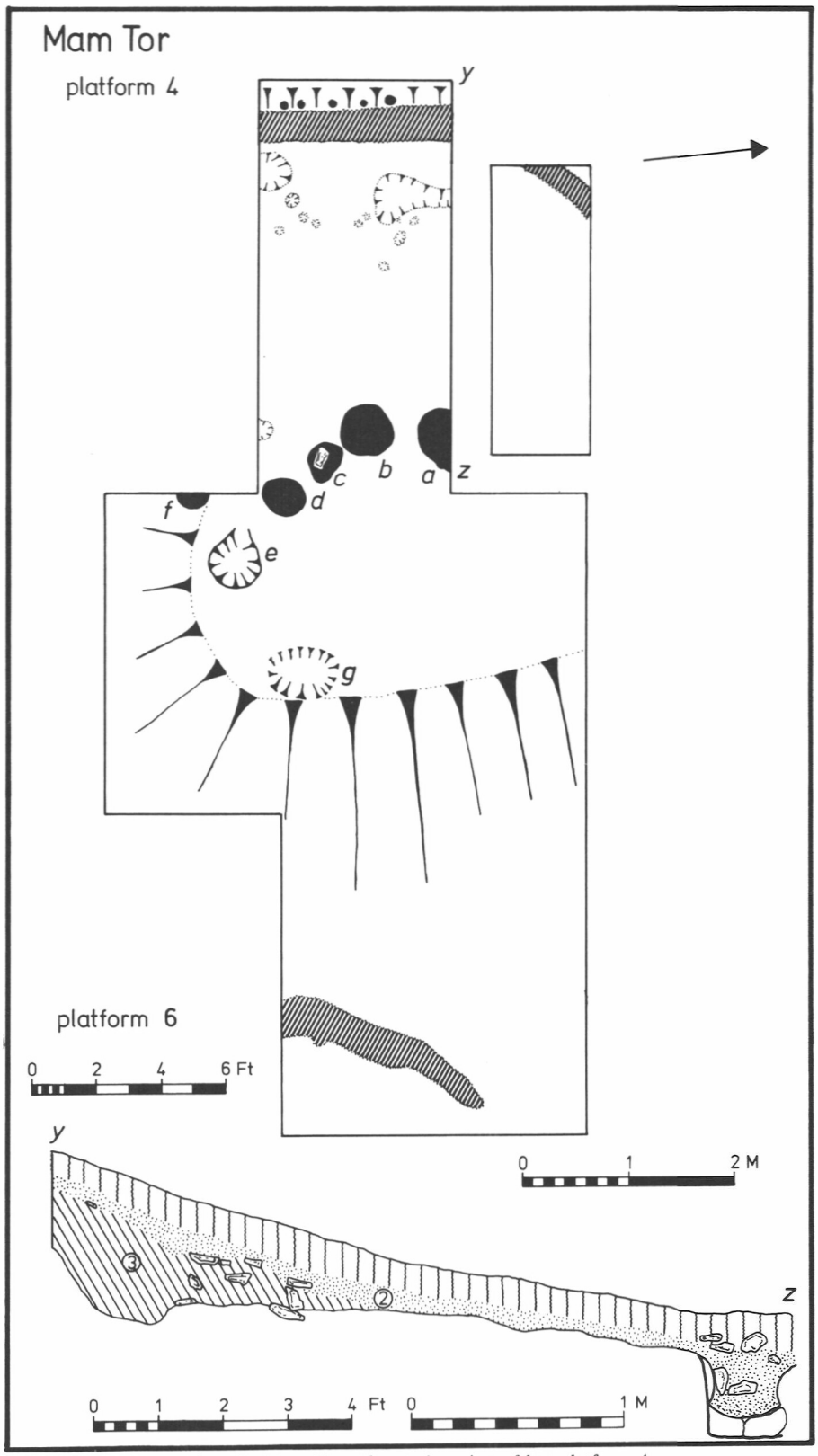



Fig. 10 Mam Tor: plan and section of hut platform 4

More definite features occurred towards the front of the platform in the form of five large pits, forming a rough arc:

(a) Pit, partly in section. Width at section 22 in (55·9 cm) and 17 in (43·2 cm) deep from the level of the platform. Within the fill of the pit was a clear outline in charcoal of a bell shape; there was also a scattering of charcoal throughout the pit. It appeared that an organic container had been burnt *in situ* in the pit. Lumps of yellow clay were found beneath and to the side of the charcoal outline. In the fill of the pit were minute fragments of bone and lumps of sandstone.
(b) 20 in (50·80 cm) in diameter and 19 in (48·3 cm) deep with vertical sides.
(c) Shallow depression, diameter 16 in (40·64 cm) and 6·5 in (16·5 cm) deep.
(d) 14 in (35·56 cm) diameter and 6·5 in (16·51 cm) deep.
(e) 22 in (55·88 cm) diameter and 3 in (7·62 cm) deep.

Between d and e was a burnt area which extended in part over d.

(f) Pit or post hole, half in baulk and not fully excavated. Diameter and depth 1 ft (30·5 cm).
(g) Large pit at the front of the platform filled with numerous sherds which reconstruct into two vessels (Fig. 25.1.2.). Diameter 15 in (38·1 cm) and 1 ft (30·48 cm) deep.

All of the pottery from this platform came from east of a–d and was found on the surface of the platform, the slope at the front of the platform and concentrated in e, f and g. The position of the sherds suggested that the occupation area was kept clean of debris unlike the huts in area A. The bronze axe fragment came from an area to the east of a–d.

*Platform 5* (Figs. 7 and 11)

The platform contained two gullies 20 in (50·8 cm) apart. The gully at the back of the platform was 10 in (25·4 cm) wide and 4 in (10·2 cm) deep. Again the line of the gully formed part of an arc of a circle.

The second gully was much slighter 6 in (15·2 cm) wide and only 3 in (7·6 cm) deep, roughly concentric with the first.

A short length of a third gully was also located, 6 in (15·2 cm) wide and 4 in (10·2 cm) deep. Two body sherds only came from this excavation.

*Platform 6* (Fig. 7 and 10)

Small length of gully to the east of platform 4, presumably the rear of another hut.

*Platform 7* (Figs. 7 and 12)

Only a small area excavated. Trench contained three parallel lengths of gully and one stake hole.

*Platform 8* (Figs. 7 and 13).

Platform with single length of gully, 6 in (15·24 cm) wide and very shallow. Four small stake holes were also found. Feature sherds (Fig. 26) and a small number of body sherds were the only finds.

*Platform 9* (Figs. 7 and 14)

Definite platform but in the area excavated lacked features.

*Trench VI* (Figs. 7 and 15)

Trench placed immediately behind the rampart. Excavation revealed a concentration of large stones, lying haphazardly but forming a line parallel with the back of the rampart. There is a possibility that this feature represented the collapsed back revetment of the rampart.

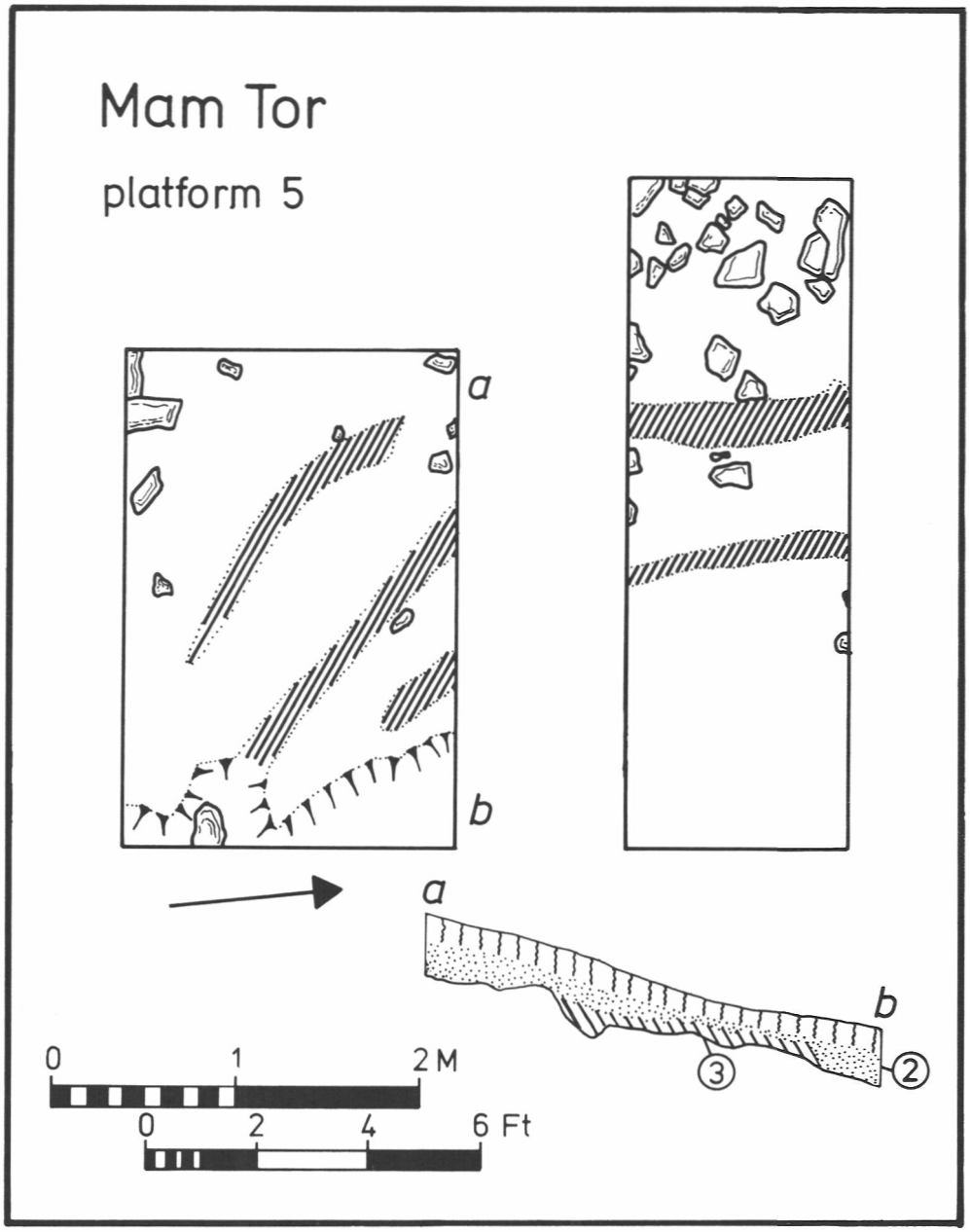



Fig. 11 Mam Tor: plan and section of hut platform 5

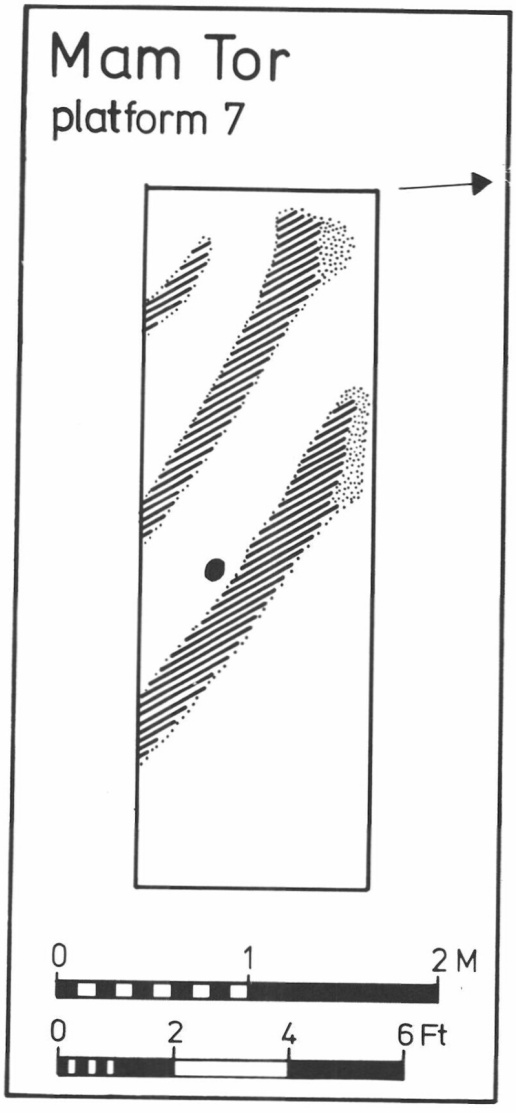



Fig. 12 Mam Tor: plan of hut platform 7

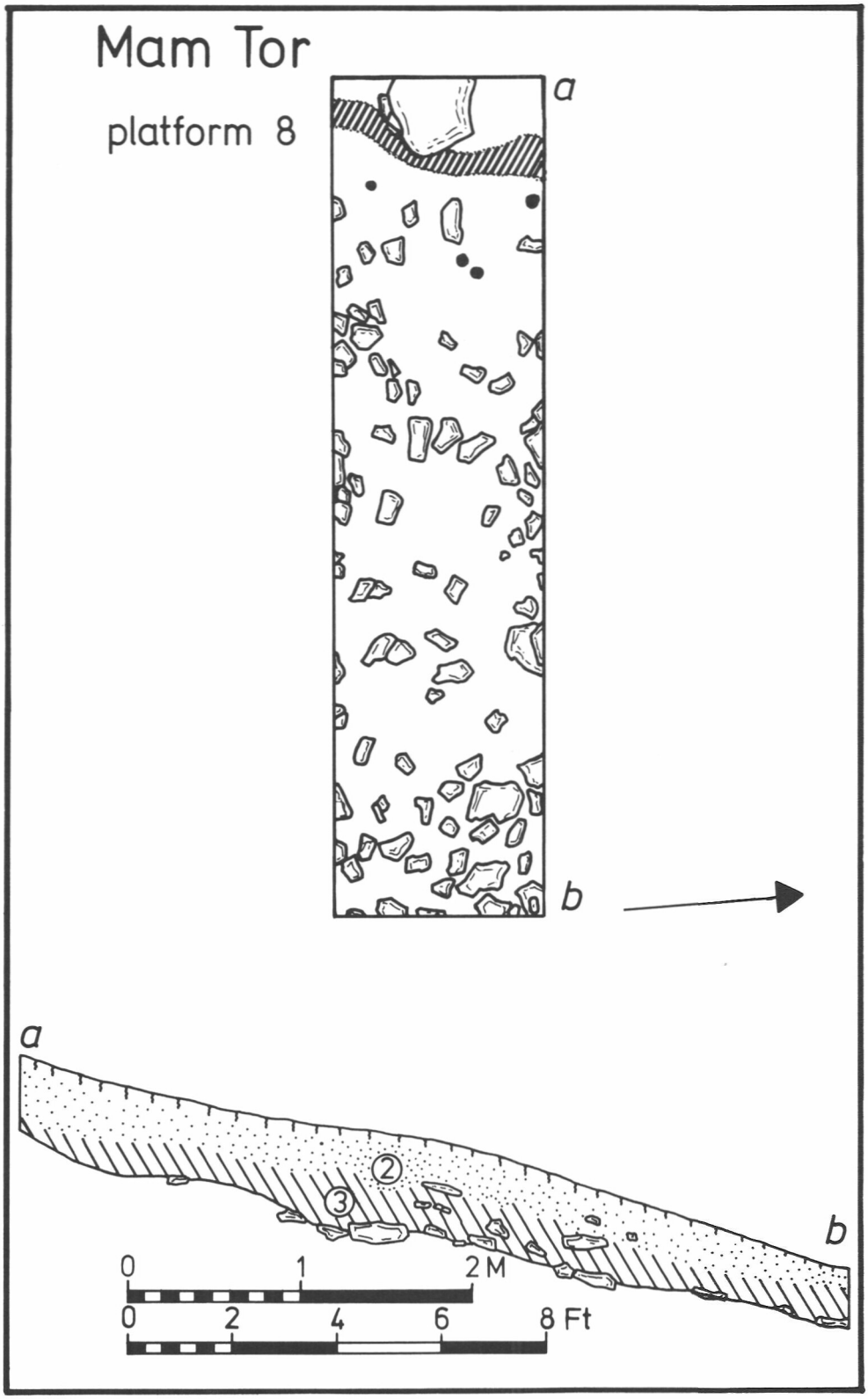



Fig. 13 Mam Tor: plan and section of hut platform 8

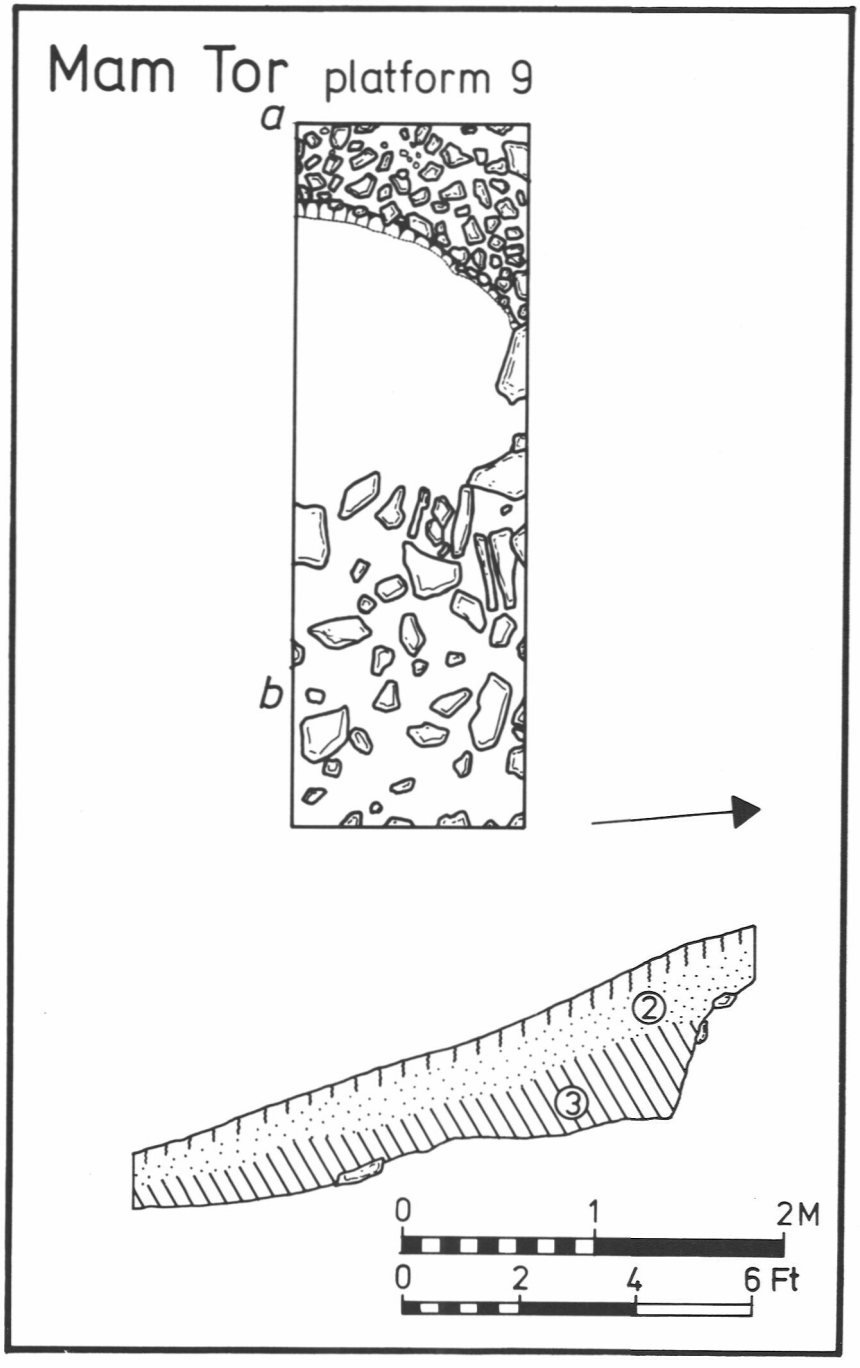



Fig. 14 Mam Tor: plan and section of hut platform 9

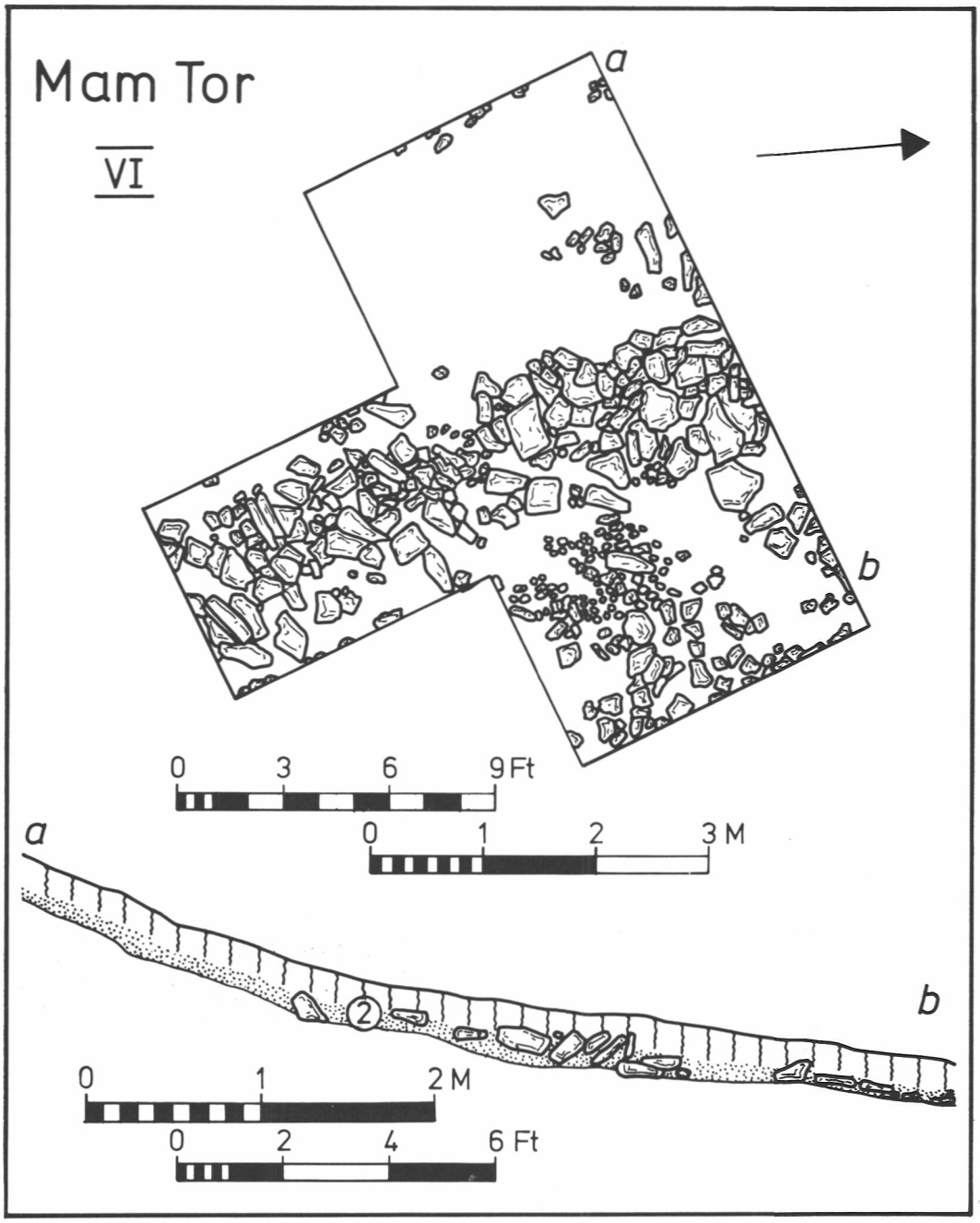



Fig. 15 Mam Tor: plan and section of cutting VI

## FINDS

### *Pottery*

The bulk of the finds from the fort consisted of pottery sherds in large numbers; the majority of the sherds are from the body and are without features.

*Platform 1*

*Fig. 16*

1. Rim with near vertical neck, rim flattened and squeezed out. Black outside, black/brown inside. One or two large grits.
2. Rim fragment, bevelled rim. Black inside, buff/black outside. Large grits but these only break through the outer surface in one small area.
3. Rim sherd, pink on the inside, buff/black on the outside. Rim fairly upright with thinning on the outside towards the top.
4. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot with out-turned rim. Very heavily gritted with grits breaking through both surfaces. Pinkish inside, outside, mottled, red, black and pink.
5. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Browny/grey inside and out.
7. Rim sherd, pinky buff inside, black/dark pinky brown outside.

*Fig. 17*

1. Large body and rim sherd. Hollow neck with fairly flat rim, from large situlate vessel. Bright pink/red inside, dark pink outside. Very large grits break through both surfaces. Finger smearing on the outside.
2. Rim fragment. Black outside, buff/pink inside.
3. Rim fragment, upright rim, black inside and out.
4. Small fragment of base. Pink outside, black inside.
5. Rim fragment. Pinky/buff inside and out.
6. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Black from the rim to the belly on the outside then buff/pink; black inside. Large sandstone grits break through the surface especially on the belly.
7. Rim fragment from straight upright rim. Pinky/brown inside and out. Finger smeared on the outside.
8. Rim fragment from small bowl. Black outside, black/dark red inside.
9. Base fragment. Slightly squeezed out foot. Black inside, dark pinky/brown outside.
10. Base fragment. Red outside, black inside. Large grits break through the surface.
11. Rim fragment from closed mouth bowl. Black outside, pinky/buff inside.
12. Base fragment. Buff/brown outside, pink inside.
13. Rim fragment. Upright rim, black outside, inner surface missing.

*Fig. 18*

1. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Black inside, outside black from rim to belly then dark pinky-brown. Finger smearing on the outer surface and slight finger tip impressions on the belly.
2. Rim fragment. Slight hollow below the rim, thin fabric. Pinky brown outside, black inside.
3. Base fragment, pinky brown interior, pinky-grey exterior. Very large grits.
4. Base fragment. Pinky-brown exterior, black interior. Very large grits break through both surfaces.
5. Rim fragment. Fairly upright neck with very flat rim. Thin walled, dark buff inside and out.

*Platform 2*

*Fig. 19*

1. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot with finger-pinched decoration on the belly. Black/brown inside and out.
2. Rim from closed mouth vessel. Buff inside, black outside.
3. Base, probably from the same pot as Fig. 19.1. Slightly squeezed out base.
4. Situlate vessel in thin fabric. Largely black interior, mottled red, black and buff exterior. Vertical finger smearing on the exterior.
5. Rim sherd, buff inside and out. Sandstone grits break through both surfaces.
6. Fragment from belly of pot Fig. 19.1 showing finger pinching.
7. Rim sherd. Fairly upright rim, black inside and out.
8. Rim and belly sherd possibly from same vessel as Fig. 19.1.
9. Belly sherd from same pot as Fig. 19.1, showing finger pinching.
10. Rim and belly sherd probably from same pot as Fig. 19.1.
11. Upright rim, buff/brown inside, red/black outside.
12. Rim fragment, buff outside, black inside.
13. Rim fragment. Pinky buff outside, black inside.
14. Base fragment from situlate vessel Fig. 19.4. Buff outside, black inside. Squeezed out foot. Fine fabric, sandstone grits break through both surfaces.
15. Base fragment, dark pink outside, pink inside. Sandstone grits break through both surfaces.

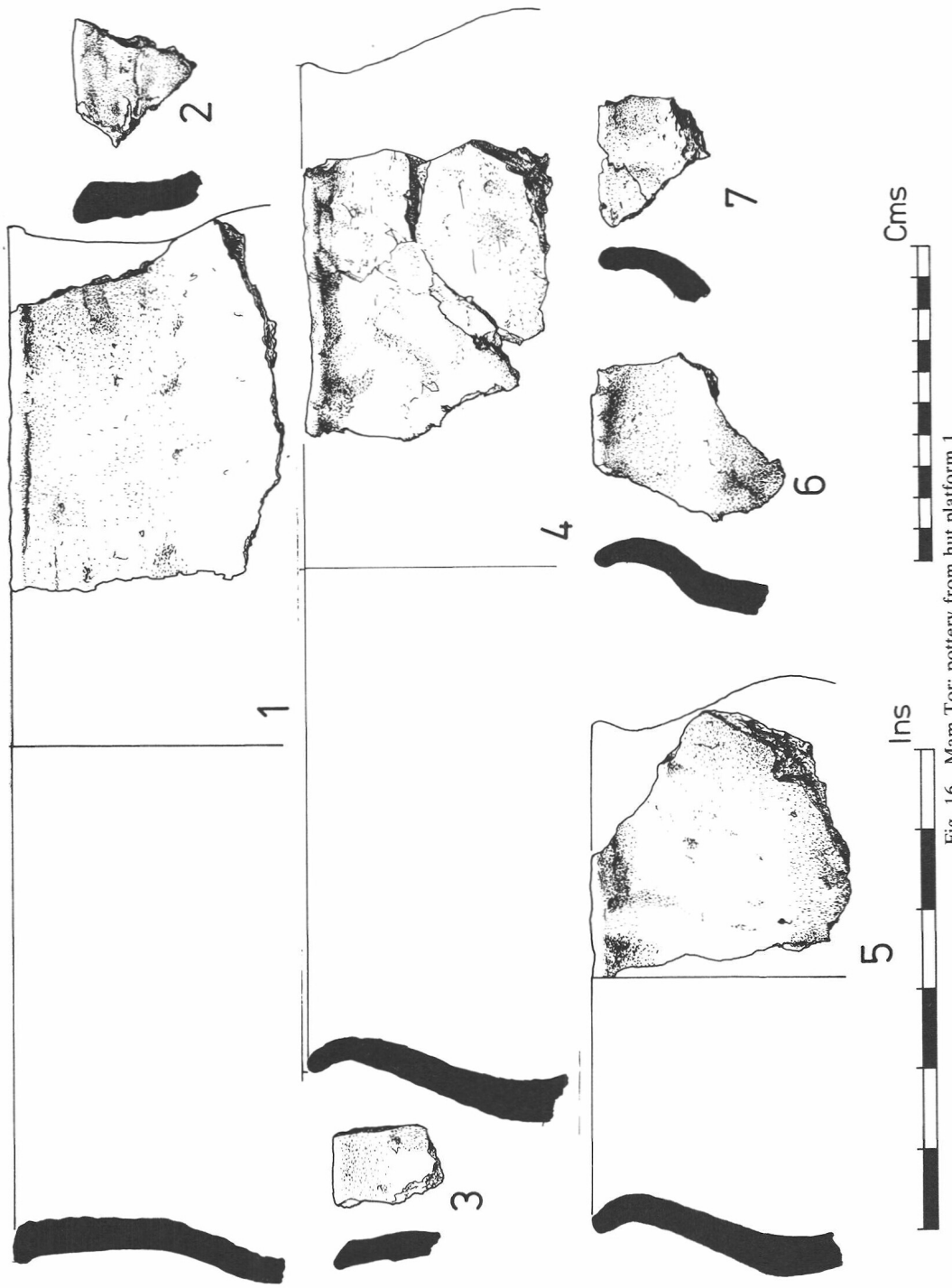



Fig. 16 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 1

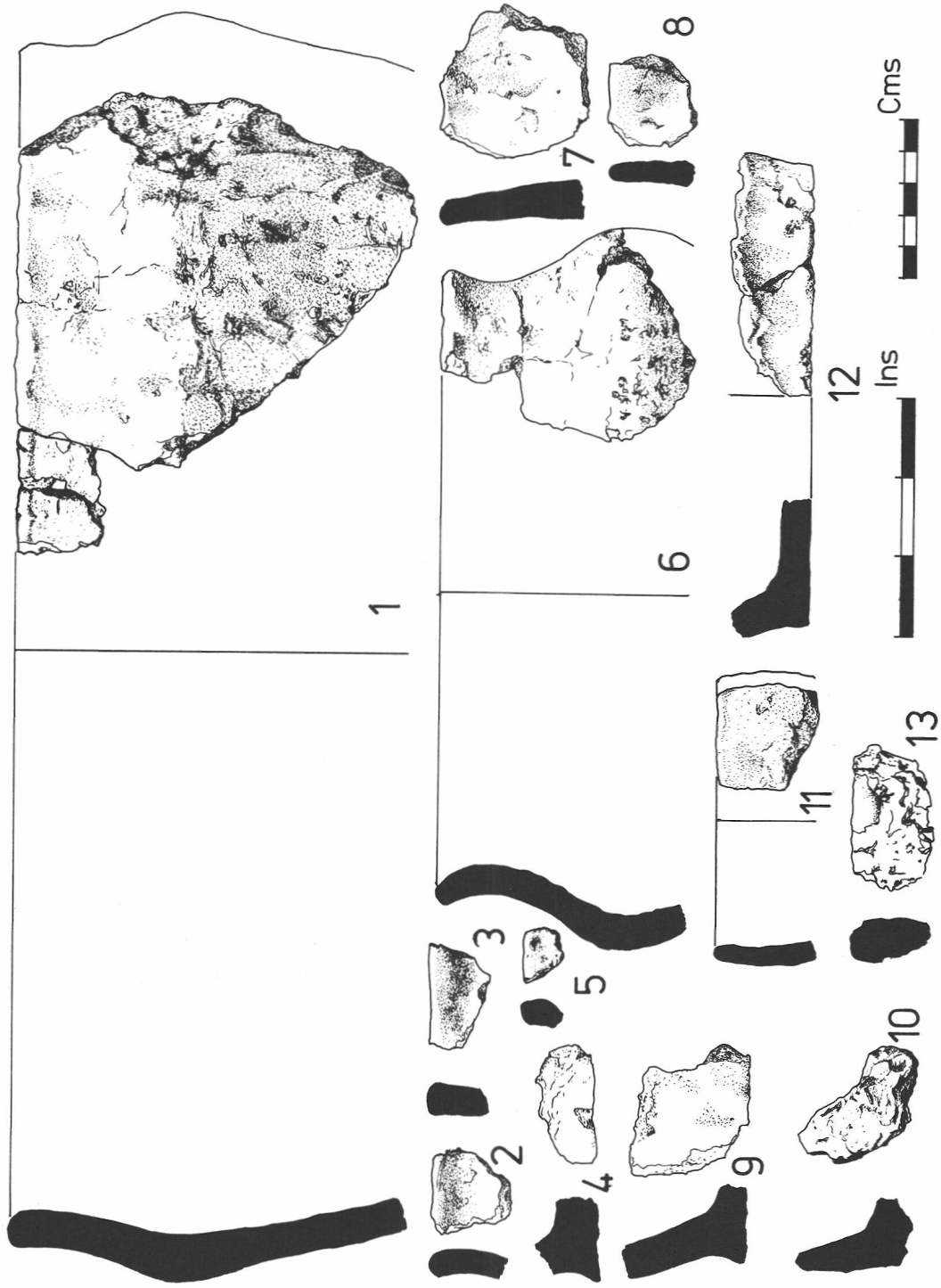



Fig. 17 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 1

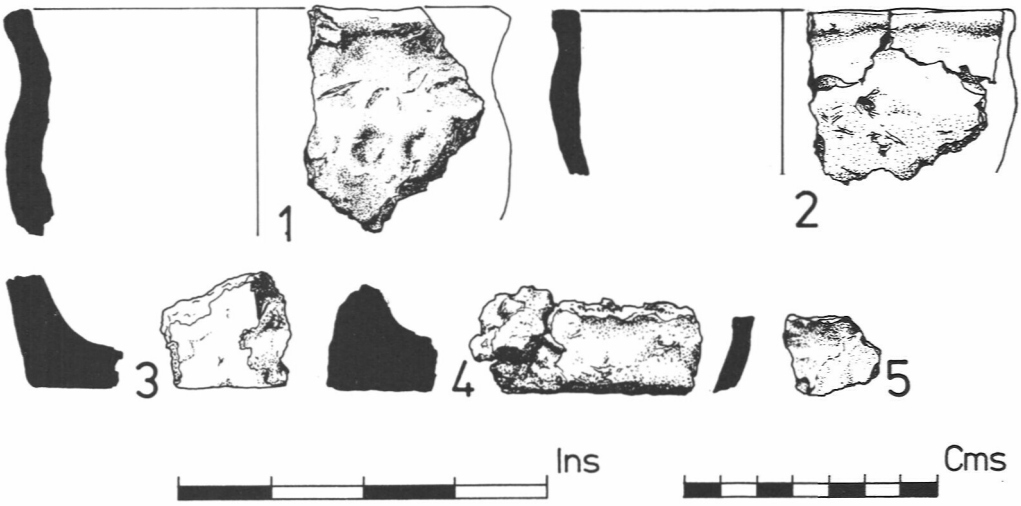



Fig. 18 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 1

*Platform 3*

*Fig. 20*

1. Large fragment of rim and belly from globular pot. Outside black down to the belly then pinky-brown. Black inside.
2. Shoulder, possibly from same pot as 7 below.
3. Rim fragment. Upright neck, flat topped rim. Black outside and in. Vertical finger smearing on the outside. From small pit in the north-east corner of the trench.
4. Base fragment with squeezed out foot. Brown inside and out. From gulley d.
5. Fairly upright rim with flat top, black outside and buff inside.
6. Upright rim with flat top. Outside buff, inside buff/pink. Traces of finger smearing on the outside.
7. Rim fragment. Black outside, buff/pink inside. Brush marks on the outside. Sandstone grits break through both surfaces.
8. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Black outside, buff inside.

*Fig. 21*

1. Rim sherd in thin fabric. Very sharp rim with internal bevel. Black outside and in. A few sandstone grits break through both surfaces, From gulley d.
2. Rim and belly sherd from globular vessel. Hard, rough, sandy fabric. Pinky/buff inside and out. Vertical finger smearing on the outside. Sandstone grits break through both surfaces.
3. Small fragment of base. Pinky/red inside and out.
4. Same as Fig. 20.3.

*Fig. 22*

1. Large rim and belly sherd from closed mouth pot with rounded shoulder. Outside mottled black/pinky brown, inside black. Finger smearing on the exterior. From gulley d.
2. Fragment from closed mouth pot. Black/brown inside and out. From gulley d.
3. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Hard sandy fabric, pinky buff outside, dark brown inside. Finger smearing on the outside.

*Platform 4*

*Fig. 23*

1. Rim and belly sherd from large globular pot. Hard fabric. Decorated with a raised circle or semi-circle. Outer surface bears either a slip or slurry which has been fairly constantly oxidised in firing and also burnished. From pit f.

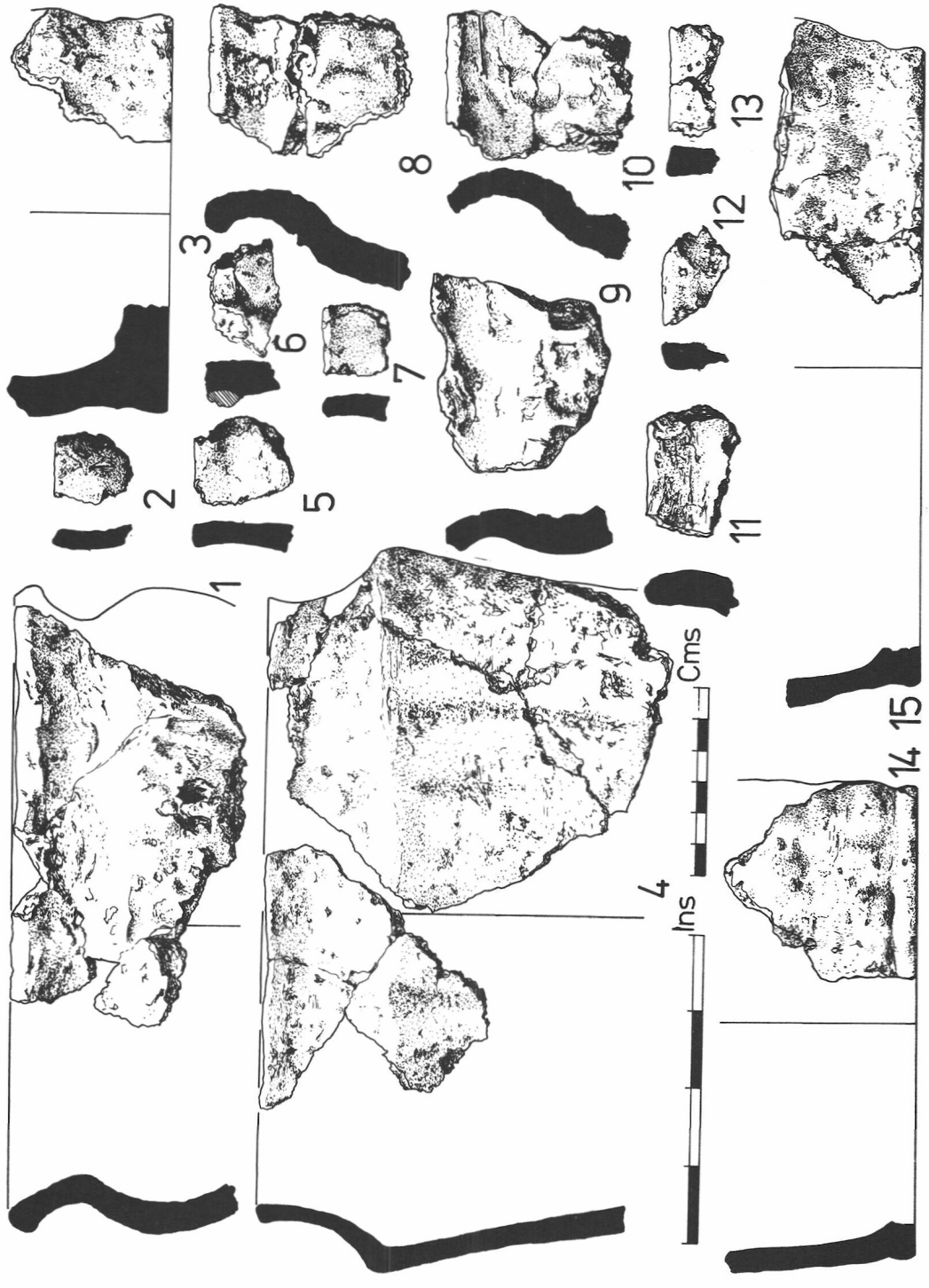



Fig. 19 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 2

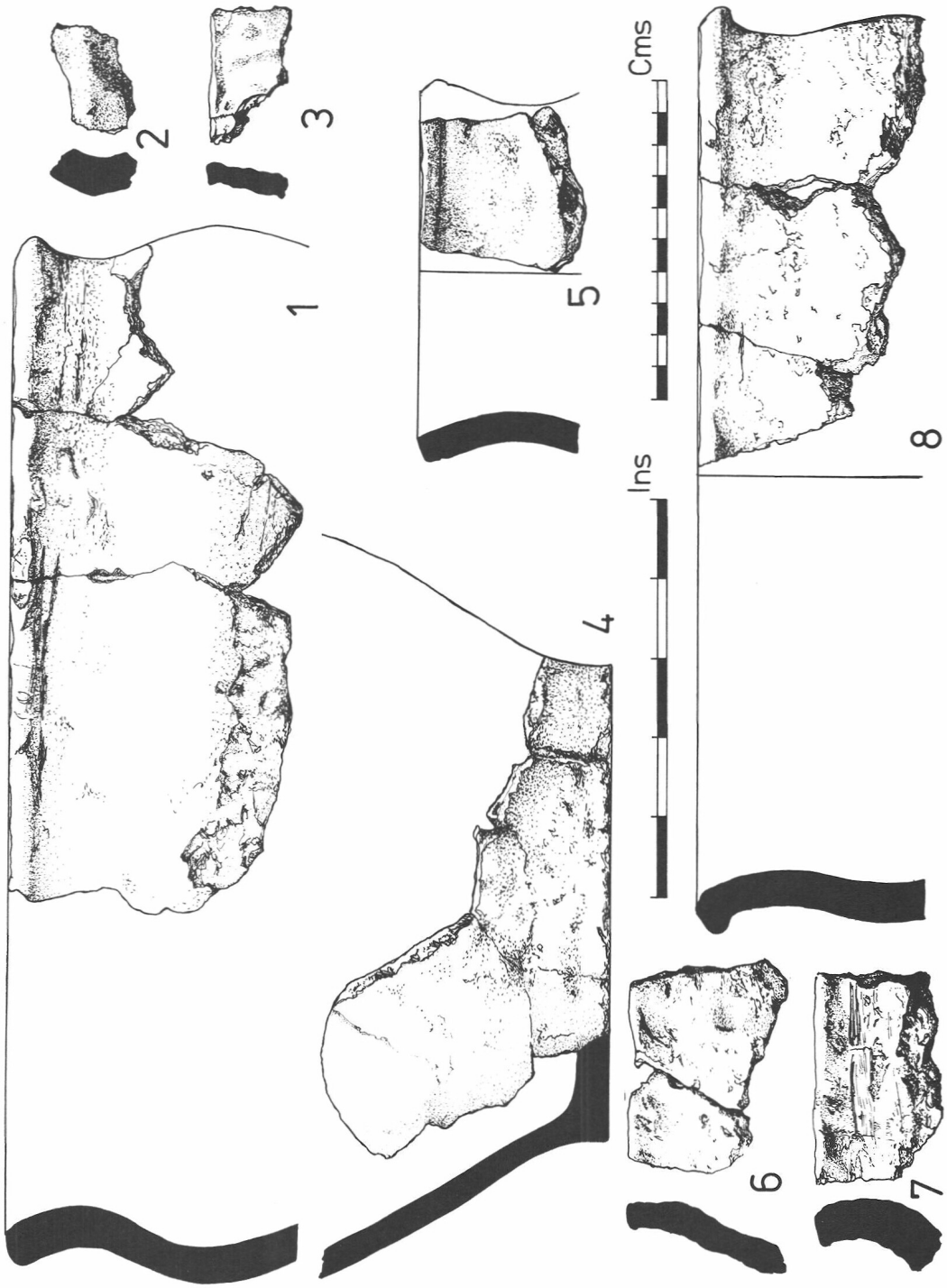



Fig. 20 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 3

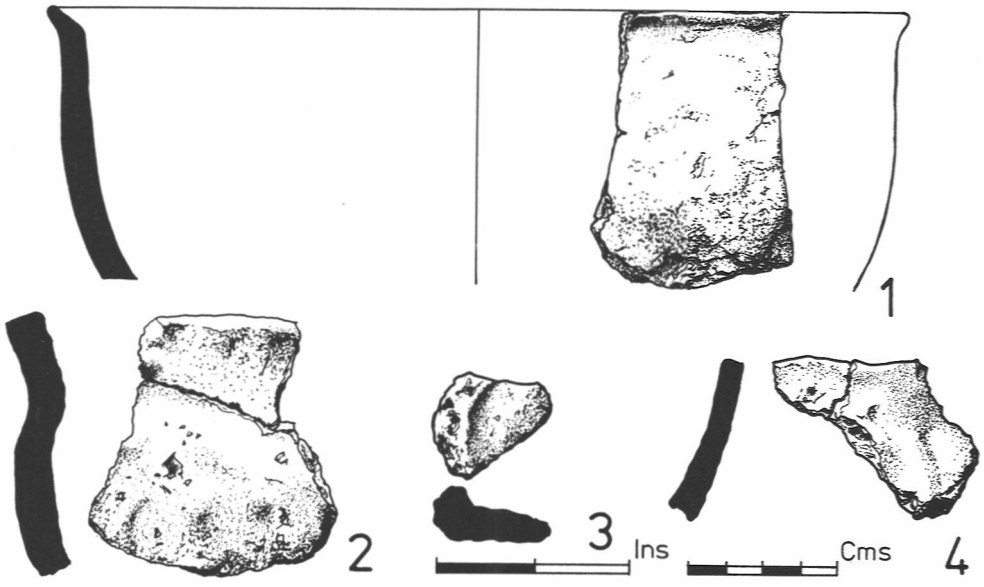



Fig. 21 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 3

2. Sherd bearing arc of raised circle or semi-circle. Buff on the outside, black inside, burnished, From pit f and (2).
3. Fragment of base with squeezed out foot. Buff/pink inside and out. From pit f.
4. Rim and belly as Fig. 23.1. From pit f and (2).
5. Rim sherd. Black inside and out. From pit e.
6. Upright rim. Pink outside, black inside. Small grits.
7. Sherd as Fig. 23. 1, 2, 4. From pit f.
8. Rim and belly sherd from globular pot. Flattened rim. Black outside, buff inside. Finger smearing on the outer surface.
9. Base fragment. Buff/pink outside and in. From pit e.
10. Rim from closed mouthed vessel, black outside and in.
11. Base fragment, buff outside, black inside. Finger smearing on the outer surface.

*Fig. 24*

1. Sherds with internal thickening of the rim. Black outside, pink inside. Large grits seen in section. From pit e.
2. Three rim fragments from the same pot. Hard black fabric with sharp edged rim. A line of holes were punched through the body after firing. From pit e.

*Fig. 25*

1. Bucket-shaped vessel in thick fabric. Finger smeared on the outside. Buff outside, black inside. Large sandstone grits break through the surfaces. From pit g.
2. Large barrel-shaped vessel with out-turned rim in hard fabric. Black/pink outside, black inside. The base of this vessel was found upright at the bottom of the pit. From pit g.

*Platform 8*

*Fig. 25*

1. Base fragment, black inside and out.
2. Base fragment, black inside and out.
3. Rim fragment, slightly hollow neck. Black inside and out.
4. Rim fragment, pink inside, black outside.

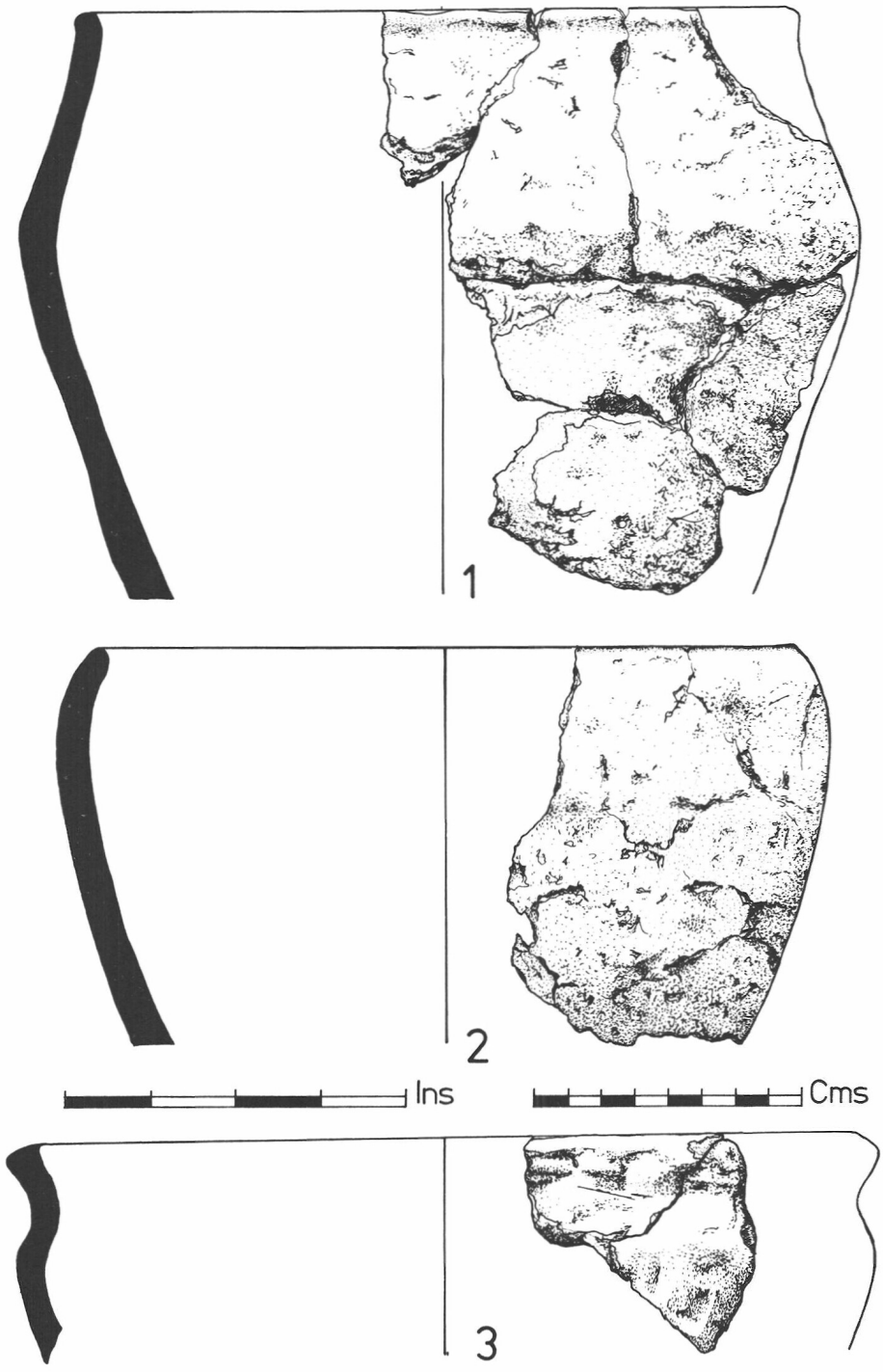



Fig. 22 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 3

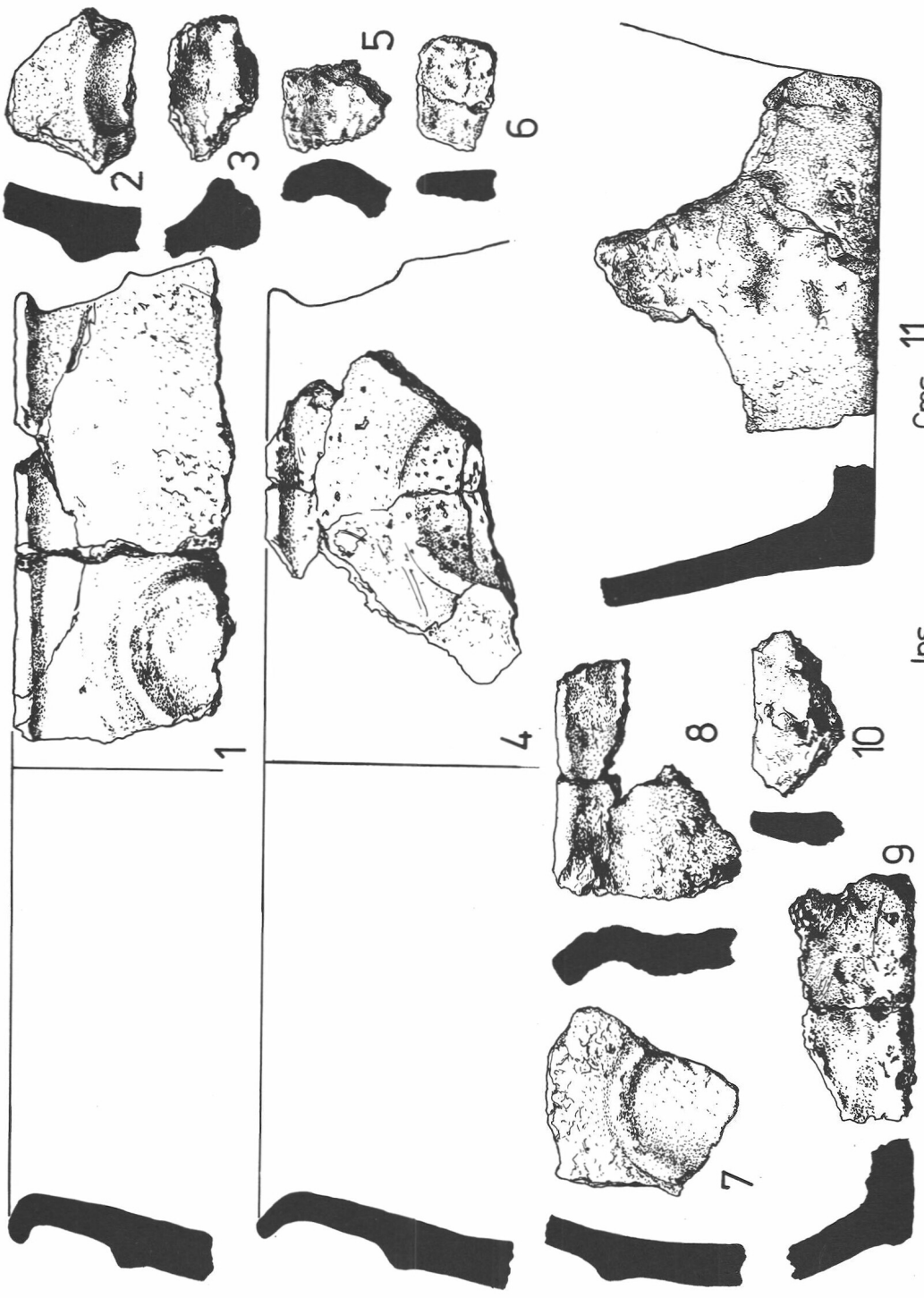



Fig. 23 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 4

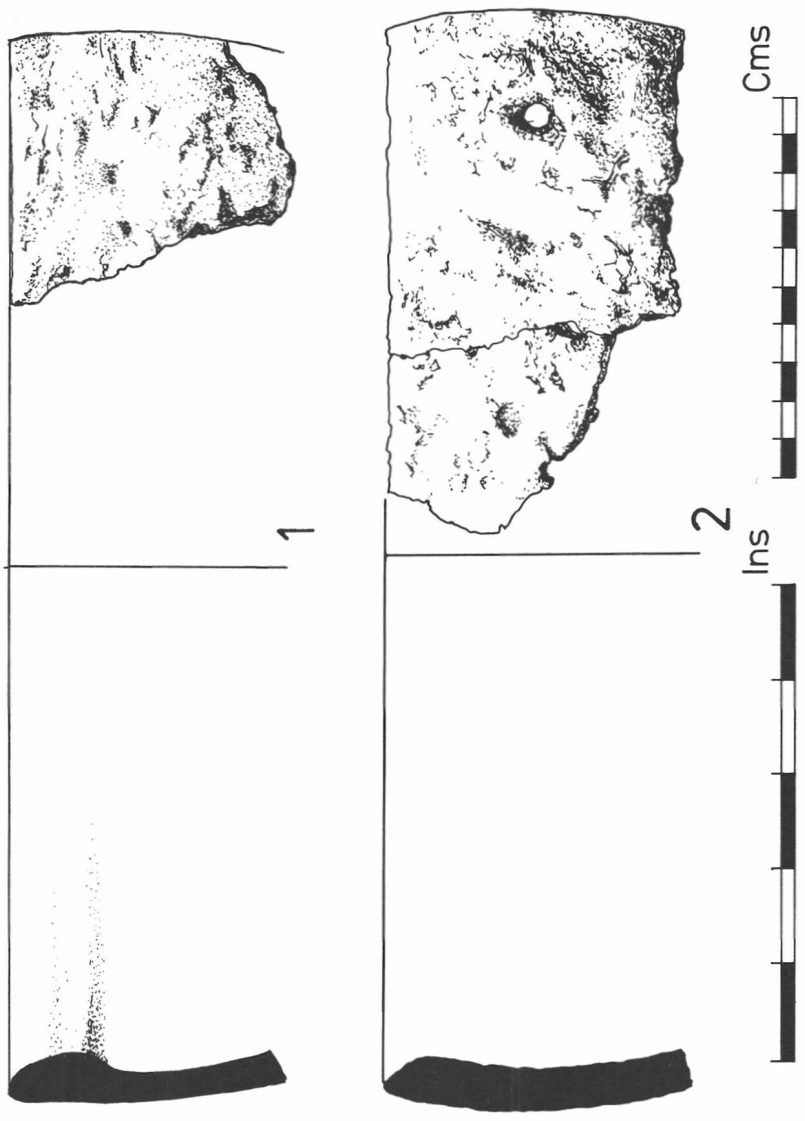



Fig. 24 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 4

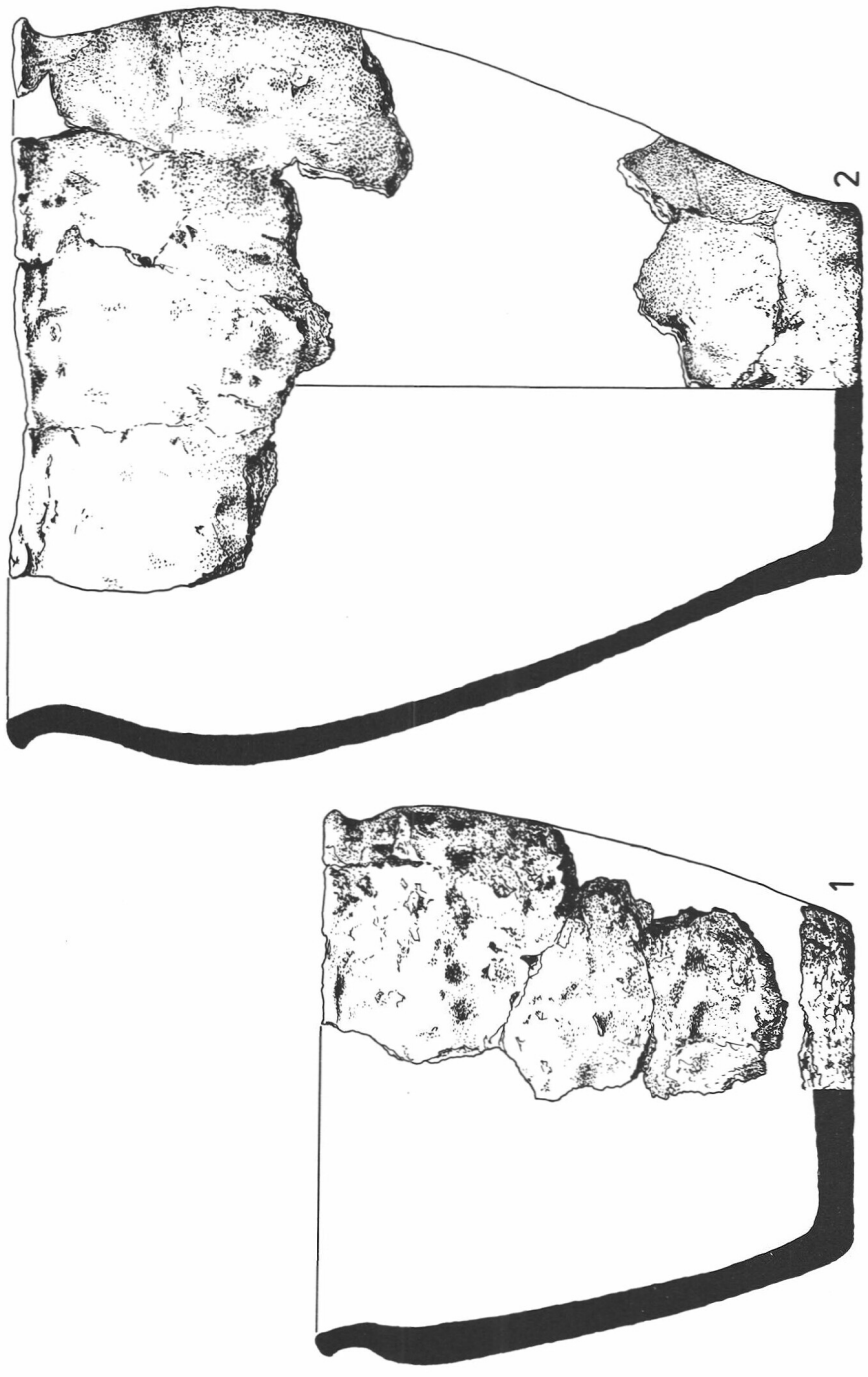



Fig. 25 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 4

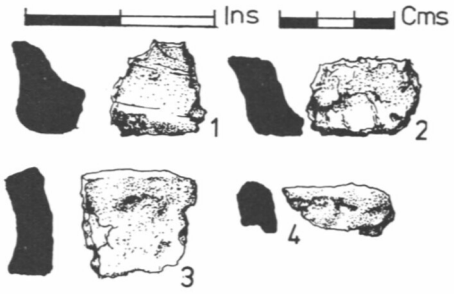



Fig. 26 Mam Tor: pottery from hut platform 8

*Pottery from the anomalies*

*Fig. 27*

1. Sherds from a globular vessel with upright rim. Black on the outside from the top to the beginning of the belly then buff/brown below, black inside. Large grits break through on the outer surface. From anomaly A1/2.
2. Rim sherd. Sharp shoulder below slight hollow neck. Outside surface black between shoulder and rim, pinky/buff below. Inside pink. Small grits showing through the surfaces. From anomaly B1/2.
3. Base fragment with massive grits breaking through both surfaces. Black inside, pinky-grey-blue outside. From anomaly A1/2.
4. Large body sherd with upright neck. Inside black and dark red, outside buff. Heavily tooled outer surface with ill-defined finger tip impressions along the shoulder which smear down the body of the pot. From anomaly C3/1.
5. Rim and part of the belly from globular pot. Black outside, pink inside. From anomaly C3/1.
6. Rim fragment probably from the same vessel as 5 above. From anomaly C3/1.
7. Sherd from closed mouth vessel. Grey/black outside, pink inside. From anomaly C3/1.

*Small finds*

*Stone*

*Stone axe* (Fig. 28.8)

Polished stone axe found in gulley d, Platform 3 beneath sherds (Figs. 20.4, 21.1, and 22.1 and 2).

It is of triangular shape 2·75 in (7 cm) long, width at edge 1·94 in (4·8 cm), thickness ·87 in (2·2 cm). The sides are convex in outline and the edge is blunt. There are signs of hammering at the pointed end and along one edge. It is possible that originally the axe was much longer.

The axe was kindly analysed by the late Dr. S. E. Ellis of the British Museum (Natural History) and the following is based upon his report.

The rock of the axe is a much altered fine grained quartz-bearing dolerite. The alteration is due partly to weathering but mainly to post-magmatic action and depth metamorphism. So far as the feldspar forming more than half the rock is determinable it seems to be a rather sodic variety (oligoclaseadesine). Although the rock is of a general type not uncommon in the Lower Palaeozoic and Pre-Cambrian of North, North Central and South West Wales and also (though less typically) in the Pre-Cambrian and Devonian of Cornwall, the feldspar in particular suggests a source in the Welsh Ordovician. The closest comparison that Dr. Ellis could find was with the rock of the summit of the Breiddin Hills in Montgomery, but it is not identical with this mineralogically. He suggested some other source in that region. It has no resemblance to any of the numbered types established by the South-West Museums Axe Petrology Group.

*Whetstone* (Fig. 28.1)

From platform 4. Sandstone type material, worn upper surface. D shaped section and broken at one end.

*Whetstone* (Fig. 28.2)

From platform 8. In hard rock with signs of hammering at either end and on one surface. Very smooth areas on both faces; asymmetric wear has produced a wedge shaped section.

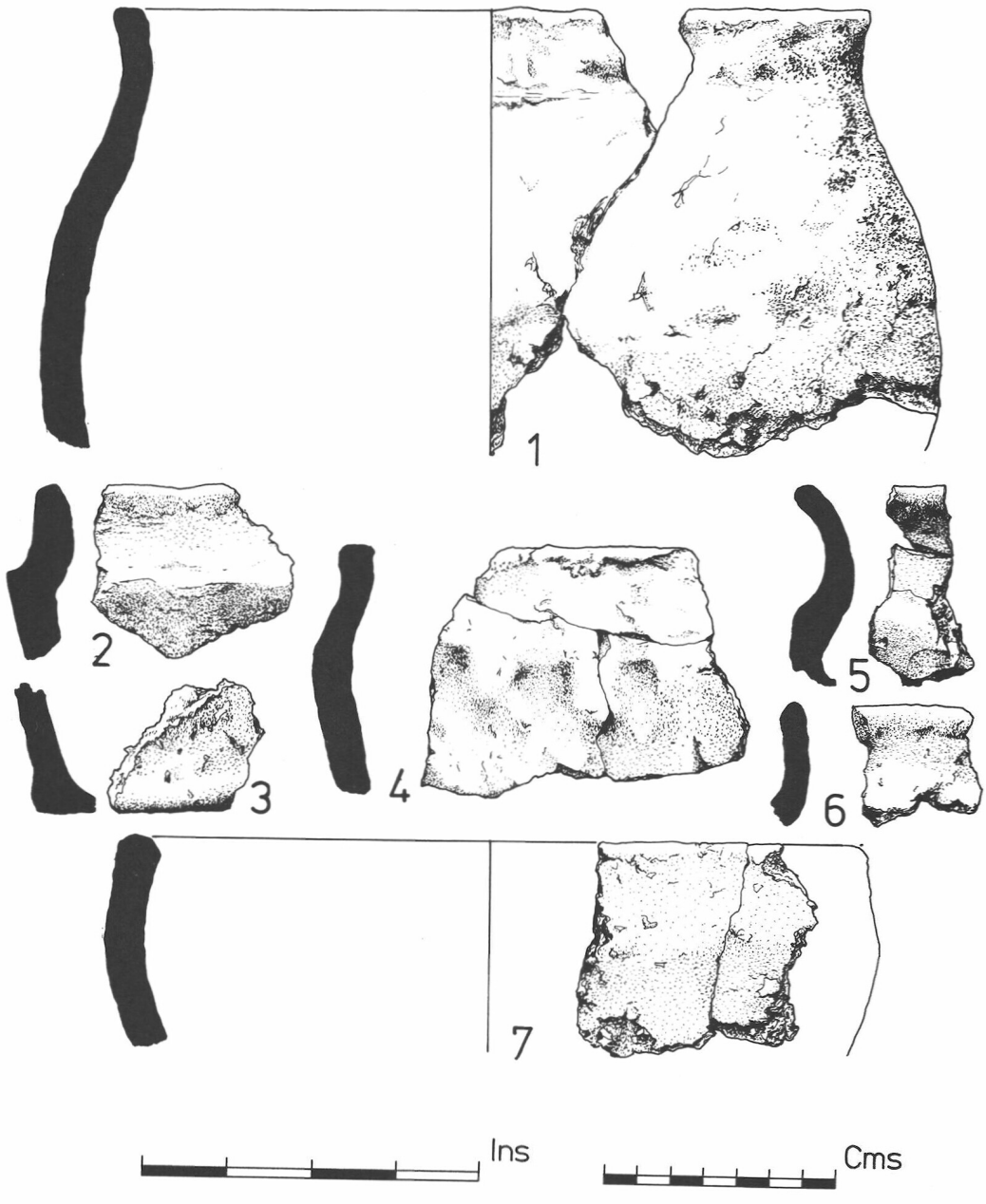



Fig. 27 Mam Tor: pottery from the anomalies

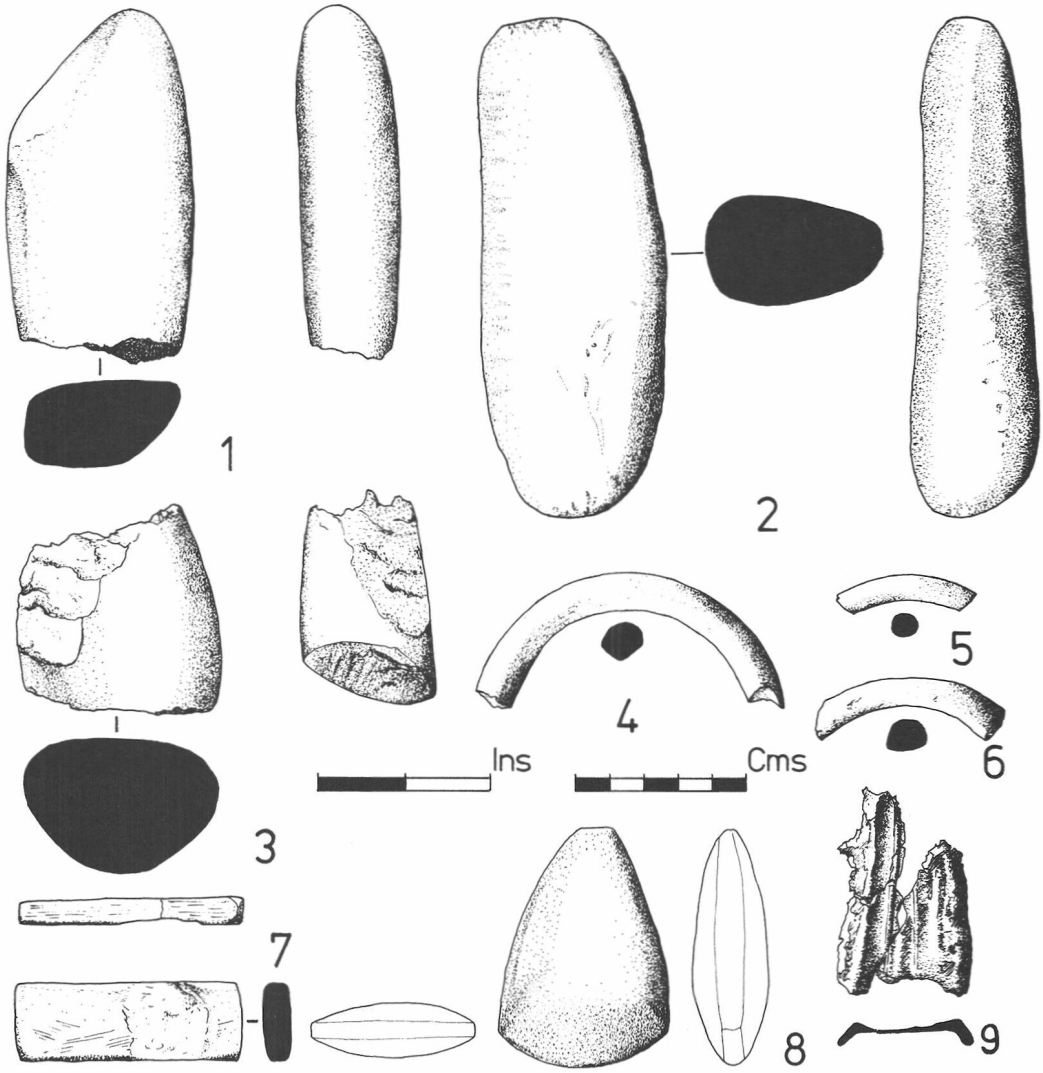



Fig. 28 Mam Tor: stone and bronze objects.

*Whetstone* (Fig. 28.7)

From anomaly A1/1. Small rectangular whetstone with convex top and bottom edges. Possibly shale, scratch marks on both faces.

*Polisher* (Fig. 28.3)

From anomaly C3/1. Hard stone broken at both ends. Of D shaped section with rounded edges. Very smooth and polished on the flat face, smooth, but not polished on curved surface as well.

*Shale bracelet fragments* (Fig. 28.4, 5, 6)

From platform 3. Two of the fragments are possibly from the same bracelet although the pieces do not join. The estimated diameter of this bracelet is 3·5 in (7 cm). It is a pointed oval in section.

The third fragment is from a bracelet of oval to nearly circular section. Bracelets of jet or shale are known from a number of Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age sites but the evidence from Eldons Seat, Dorset (Cunliffe and Phillipson 1968) suggests that the different cross sections have no chronological value as all different types were found associated there.

*Flints*

*Fig. 29*

1. From platform 2. End of scraper in black flint.
2. From trench Y. Blade in black flint with extensive working along one edge from one side only.
3. From platform 4. Leaf-shaped flake in black flint with sharp keel section. Extensive flaking on edges and tip.
4. From anomaly C1/1. Grey-black flint flake with shallow working on one edge only.

*Bronze Axe fragment* (Fig. 28.9)

From platform 4. The axe fragment is in a very corroded state and consists of part of the face and sides of what can with some certainty be identified as coming from a socketed axe. There are three vertical thin ribs on the face. The original axe appears to have been rather narrow faces with square sides. The use of vertical ribs as decoration is a common feature on Late Bronze Age socketed axes and distinctive regional types can be isolated (i.e. Yorkshire, South-Welsh, Irish and Scottish). The narrowness of the face and the thin long ribs might place the Mam Tor axe within the Sompting class (Burgess 1969) best seen in the hoards from Sompting, Sussex (Curwen 1948) and Figheldean Down, Wilts. (Coombs, forthcoming). Sompting type axes can be firmly placed within the Hallstatt C period (after 650 B.C.) on associations and thus belong to the Final Phase of the Bronze Age. Nearer at hand the Mam Tor axe might be compared with the examples from Brough and Peak Forest, Derbyshire (Howarth 1899).

If, indeed the fragment is from a Sompting type axe then the Hallatatt C date suggested by it, although at variance with the C14 dates need not be a cause for alarm as the latter refer to platforms 2 and 3, whereas the axe is from platform 4 which is a completely different area.

## *Radiocarbon dates*

The C14 dates were kindly carried out by the University of Birmingham through Prof. F. W. Shotton, Department of Geology (*Radiocarbon* 13, no. 2, 1971, 153–4).

The samples consisted of small pieces of charcoal collected from the floors of platforms 2 and 3. The 5570 half life was used in the determinations.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Birm–202 | 3130 ± 132 B.P. | 1180 b.c. | Platform 2. |
| Birm–192 | 3080 ± 115 B.P. | 1130 b.c. | Platform 3. |

One must emphasise that the dates apply to the platforms and not the defences. Excavation of the defences produced no datable evidence.

Coles and Jones (1975) have commented that the dates seem too early on expected archaeological grounds and that it is quite possible that wood from aged trees could explain the anomaly. However a study of the pottery suggests an early date within the first millennium.

## *The pottery—discussion John Barrett*

Any discussion of pottery belonging to the later Bronze Age/Early Iron Age is often seen to be accompanied by an obligation to indulge in an exercise of random trait paralleling. Although often part of an attempt to date material, this process rarely gives any fuller understanding of the ceramic traditions under examination.

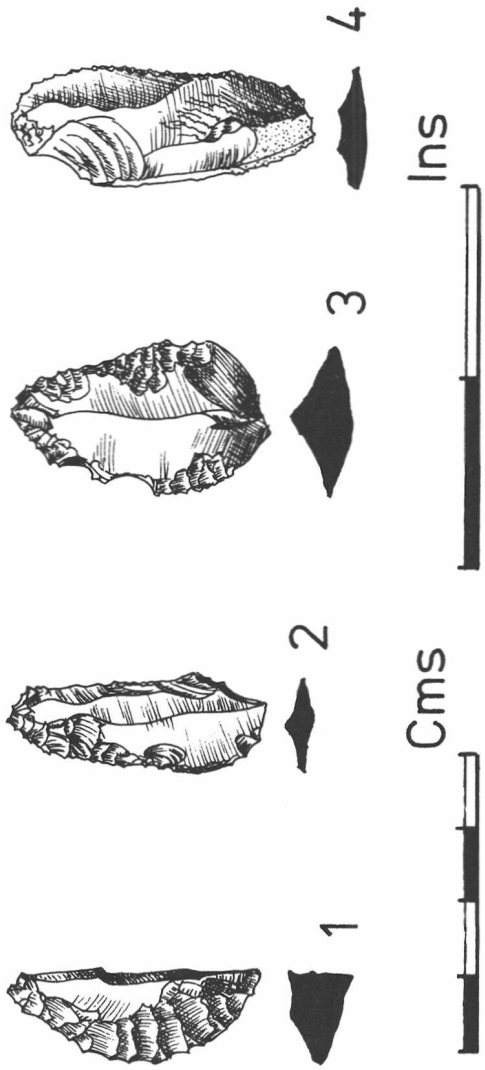



Fig. 29 Mam Tor: flint objects. Scale 1:1

The pottery from Mam Tor belongs within a tradition of pottery manufacture which was practised in the earlier part of the first millennium B.C., a tradition which would now seem to cover much of central and southern Britain. This tradition encompasses common methods of manufacture and a common repertoire of vessel types. The occurrence of other specific traits such as vessel form is important in emphasising the unity of the tradition but is a point which need not be laboured here.

A general characteristic of manufacture is the surface treatment of many of the vessels which has often resulted in leaving clear traces of finger moulding below the rim or on the shoulder, as well as traces of rough tooling and smearing. Vertical smearing has been recognised elsewhere as characteristic of certain later Bronze Age assemblages (Alcock 1972), as well as the use of heavy finger moulding (Bradley and Ellison, 1975, Fig. 3.5:13). These techniques are in fact widespread in southern Britain and are perhaps best known from the pottery recovered at Ivinghoe Beacon, Buckinghamshire (Cotton and Frere 1968, Figs. 16–20). A more northerly extension of these techniques is implied by the Mam Tor material as well as by a small group of unpublished pottery from Hartshill, Warwickshire and the pottery from Epperstone, Nottinghamshire (Challis and Harding 1975, Fig. 6.4, 5).

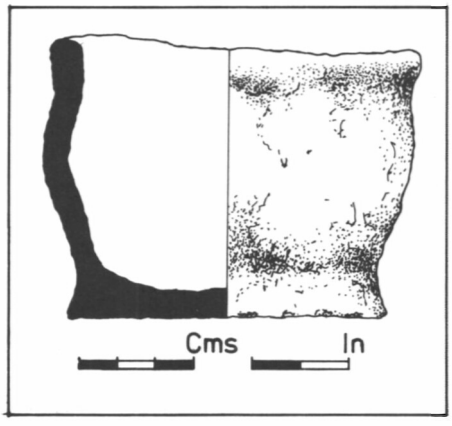



Fig. 30 Pottery vessel from Back Tor

The range of pottery from Mam Tor is mainly jars, many with simple 'S'-shaped profiles with rims which are slightly thickened and occasionally flattened. These are in coarse fabric, often with a slip or slurried coating on the surface. Decoration is rare although finger tip impressions sometimes occur on the shoulder of a vessel. Although of a very generalised nature it is perhaps worth noting that this vessel form occurs amongst later Bronze Age assemblages in Britain. In the south it is again found at Rams Hill (Bradley and Ellison 1975, Fig. 3, 5; 14: Barrett 1975, 105) and amongst the pottery from Chastleton Camp, Oxfordshire (Leeds, 1931: pottery in Ashmolean Museum). Other jars from Mam Tor include vessels with slightly out-turned rims, sloping necks and rounded shoulders. These occur again in later Bronze Age assemblages in the south: unpublished examples come from Cadbury Castle, Somerset; Snarehill, Norfolk; and Aldermaston, Berkshire and may also be recognised from amongst pottery found below Barrow 2, Ampleforth Moor, Yorkshire (Wainwright and Longworth 1969; Challis and Harding 1975; Fig. 45; 12). The wide distribution of similar vessel forms at this date is further demonstrated by the plain, concave-sided jar with a hooked-over rim from Mam Tor, a form which has been discussed in connection with the pottery from Rams Hill, Berkshire (Barrett 1975, 103). The Mam Tor example

and the finds from Ball Cross, Derbyshire (Challis and Harding 1975, Fig. 3; 5), Ellis Knowe, Northumberland (Challis and Harding 1975, Fig. 53; 1) and Huckhoe, Northumberland (Jobey 1959; Challis and Harding 1975, Fig. 53; 2) imply that a northerly distribution for this vessel form may be sought. Bevelled rims are also a feature of later Bronze Age assemblages in the south, for example Cadbury Castle, Somerset; Snarehill, Norfolk; Green End Road, Cambridge (all unpublished) and Plumpton Plain B, Sussex (Hawkes 1935). Challis has recently discussed the importance of bevelled rims to the pottery repertoire of the later Bronze Age in northern England (Challis and Harding 1975, 35) and these are represented at Mam Tor.

In discussing the later Bronze Age pottery of northern England Challis has suggested that the coarse, heavily gritted wares are typical of the period with denser, thinner and better fired wares occurring in later phases (Challis and Harding 1975, 33). These thinner wares, which are mainly undecorated, occur widely; Challis cites the pottery from Grimthorpe, Yorkshire (Stead 1968) and similar material comes from Kingston Buci, Sussex (Curwen and Hawkes 1931) and Puddlehill, Bedfordshire (Matthews 1976, 48). Whilst admitting that certain assemblages contain only one or other of these two classes of pottery a chronological distinction between them remains difficult to demonstrate. Both seem to be represented amongst the major group of pottery recovered from the settlement site excavated by Richard Bradley at Aldermaston, Berkshire and such variation in the pottery may be due to functional determinates rather than simply to chronological developments. Thinner wares are represented at Mam Tor and the finely produced jar with applied 'horse shoe' motifs should perhaps be seen as a vessel used for domestic service. Although unparalleled in itself this vessel falls within the range of a series of fine jars which were produced at this time and formed a tradition which lasted into the 'Iron Age' with the decorated jars of the early part of that period (e.g. Harding 1972, Pl. 47; F). The role of 'service' vessels in this period has been discussed elsewhere (Barrett 1975, 114) and another vessel represented in these assemblages is the small, undecorated bowl (e.g. Cotton and Frere 1968, Fig. 17; 26). This is a vessel which is only present as a small percentage of these assemblages and this may explain its rarity at Mam Tor.

The Mam Tor assemblages belongs to a pottery tradition which produced a range of jars, many coarse but some which were quite finely made and some plain bowls. This tradition encompasses a number of distinctive features in manufacture and a number of common vessel forms. Although now clearly recognisable in southern Britain, assemblages such as that from Mam Tor and the work of Challis (1976) imply that it is a tradition which may extend into central and northern England. This tradition follows upon the urn traditions at least, of southern England (Barrett 1976), sometime after *c.* 1000 B.C. and comes to an end with the production of the decorated wares of the late Bronze Age, *c.* 800 B.C. These decorated wares may be typified in northern Britain at least by the material from Castle Hill, Scarborough (Smith 1928).

*Hillforts in the north-west*

General surveys of the hillforts in the north-west of England have been published by Preston (1954, the Peak District) and Forde-Johnston (1962, Lancashire and Cheshire) and have received considerable attention in the work of Challis and Harding (1976). The regional surveys have been concerned with describing the external features of the forts and not really with the results from excavations. Since the publication of the surveys there have been excavations on the forts at Portfield,[2] and Castercliff,[3] Lancashire; Kellsborrow,[4] Cheshire and Mam Tor, with further work being carried out at Almondbury (Varley 1976) along with the publication of the excavations at Ball Cross, Derbyshire (Stanley 1954) and Skelmore Heads, Lancashire (Powell 1963). Of the 31 hillforts plotted on Fig. 31 about half have had some form of excavation carried out upon them, ranging from large area excavation to a single trench. However in trying to find any common denominators in the cultural artefacts, internal structures and

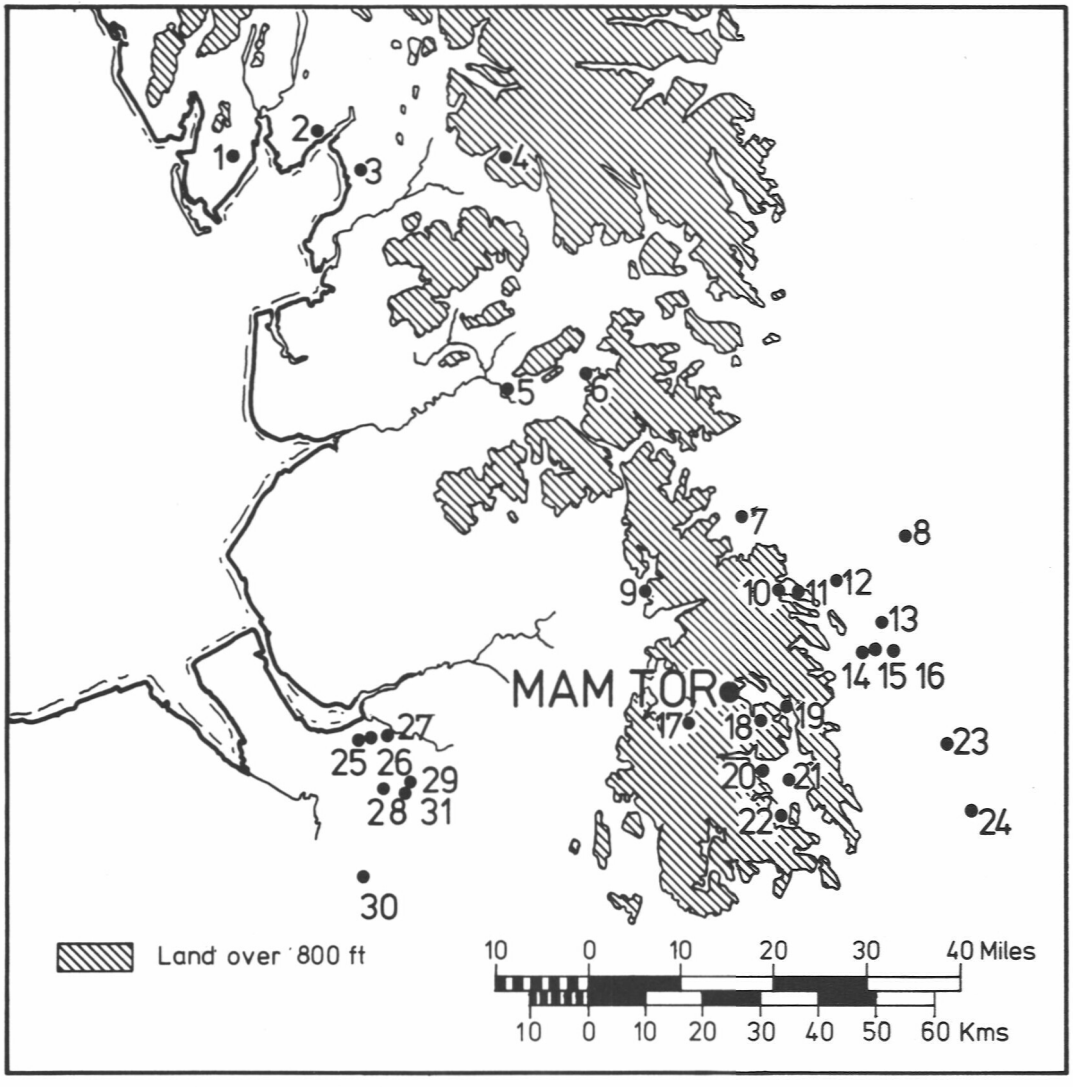
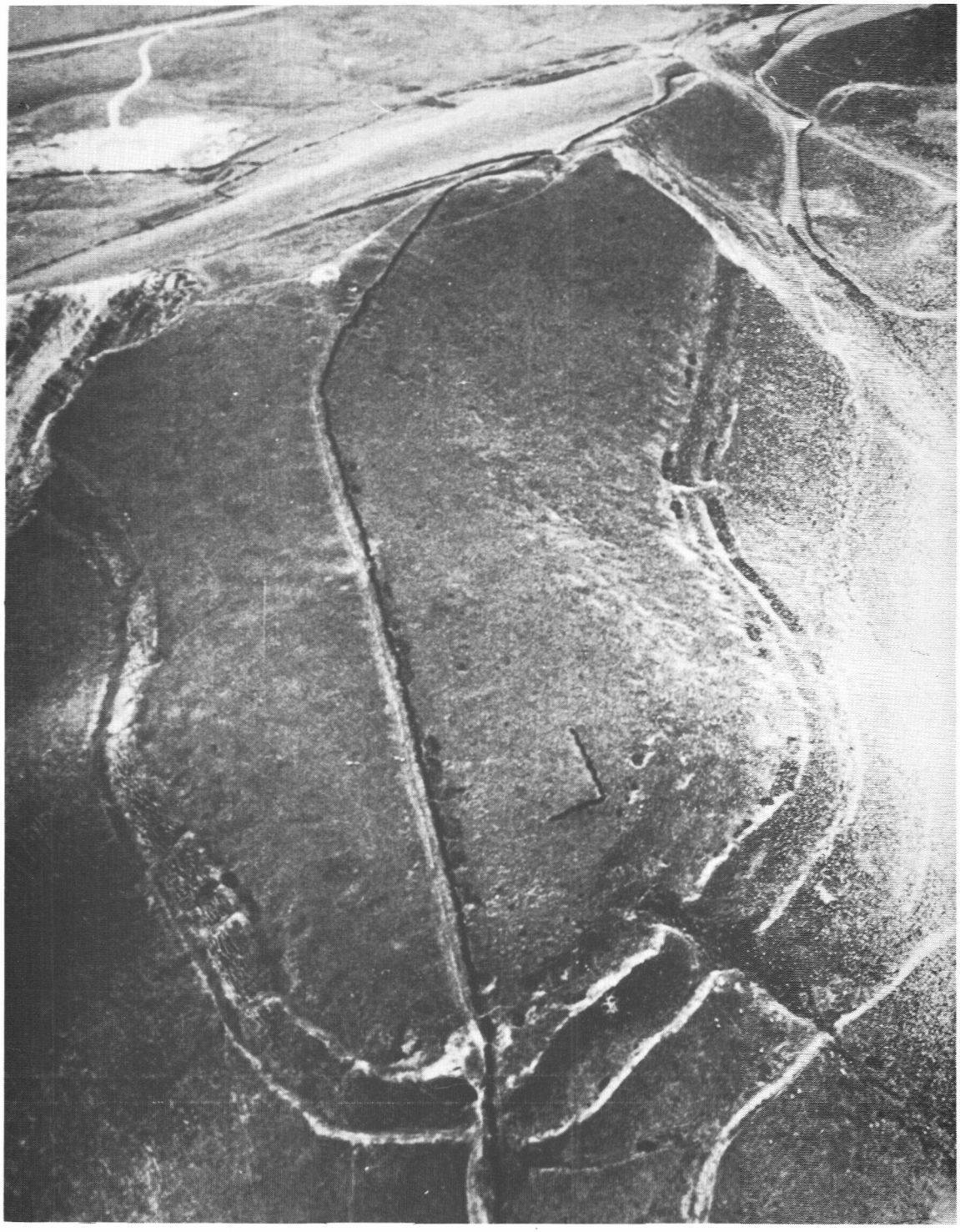
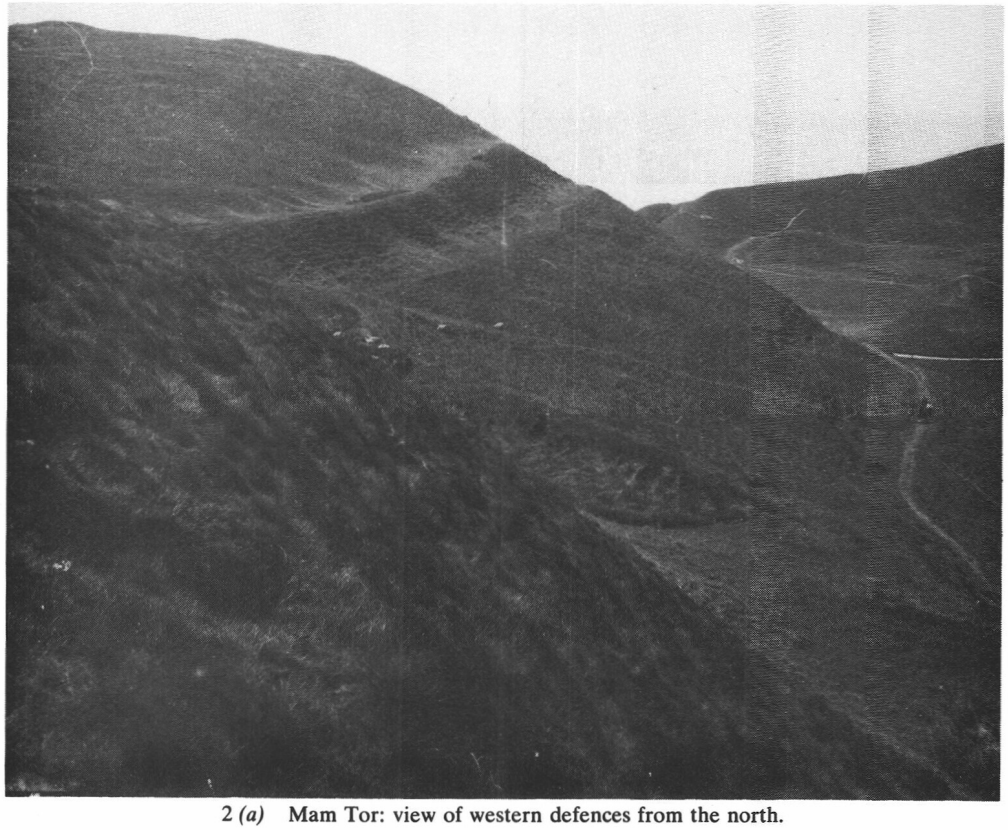



Fig. 31 Map of hillforts in the southern Pennines and north west England

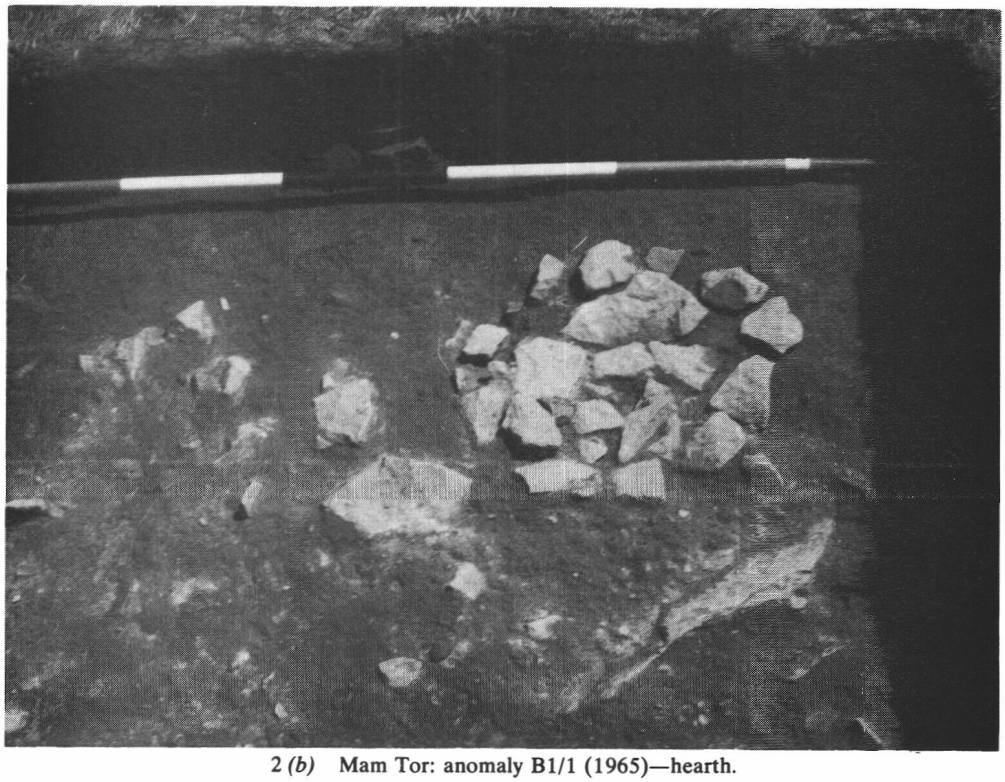
1. Skelmore Heads
2. Castle Hill
3. Warton Crag
4. Ingleborough
5. Portfield
6. Castercliff
7. Almondbury
8. Brierley Common
9. Buckton Castle
10. Gilbert Hill
11. Roughbirchworth
12. Stainborough
13. Scholes
14. Roewood
15. Wincobank
16. Canklow
17. Combs Moss
18. Burr Torr
19. Carl Wark
20. Fin Cop
21. Ball Cross
22. Castle Ring
23. Markland Grips
24. Whinny Hill
25. Helsby
26. Woodhouse Hill
27. Bradley
28. Kellsborrow
29. Eddisbury
30. Maiden Castle
31. Oakmere



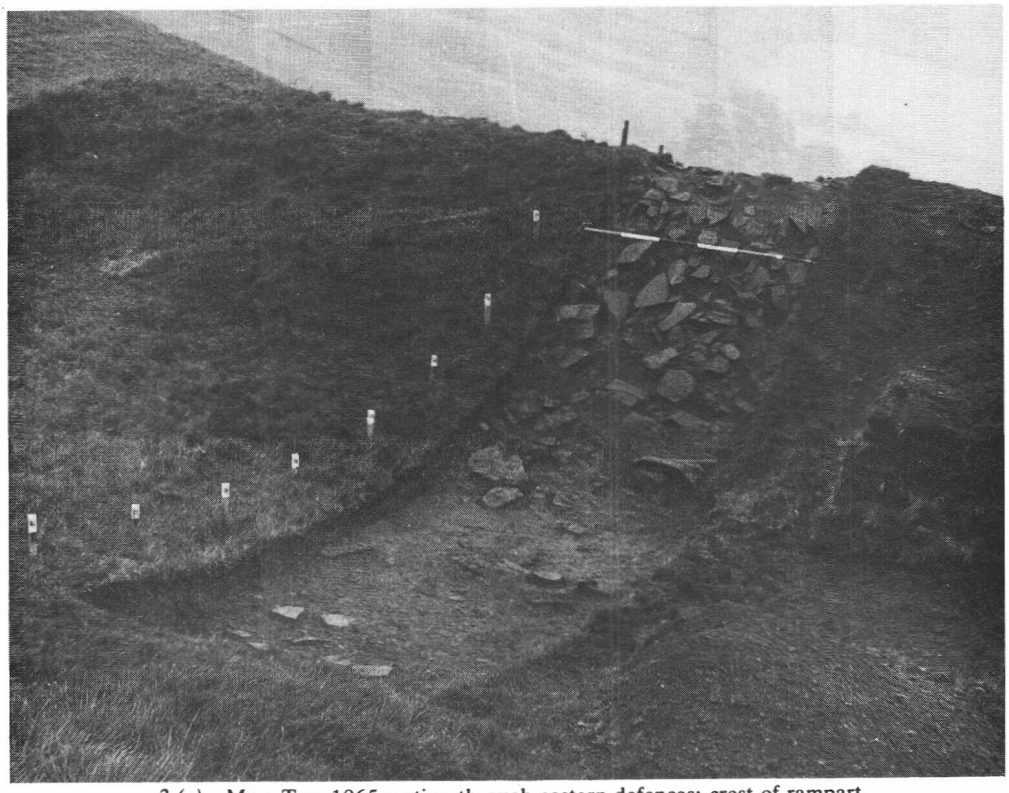
1 Mam Tor: aerial view from the north east. Photo: J. K. St. Joseph.



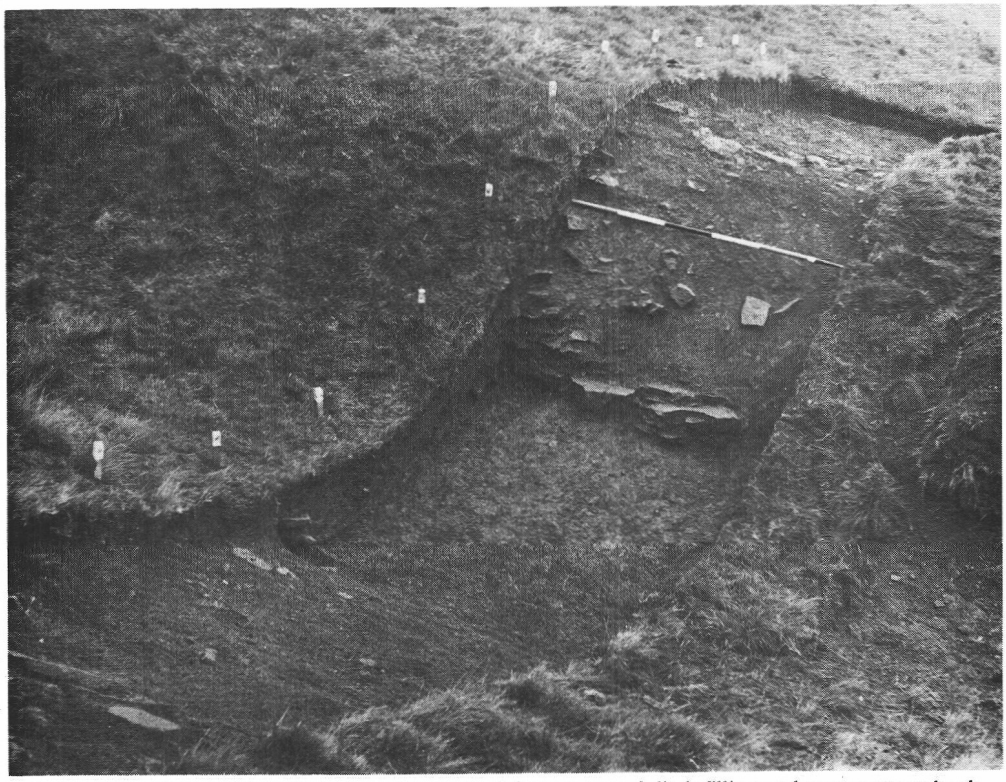
2 *(a)* Mam Tor: view of western defences from the north.



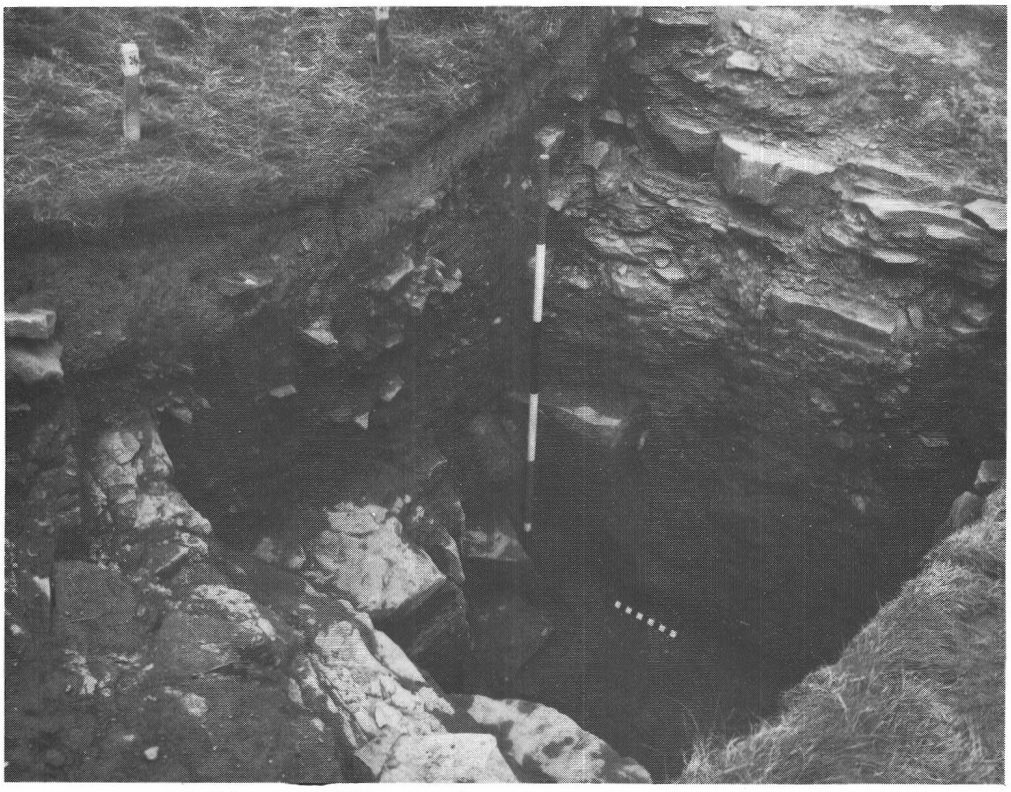
2 *(b)* Mam Tor: anomaly B1/1 (1965)—hearth.



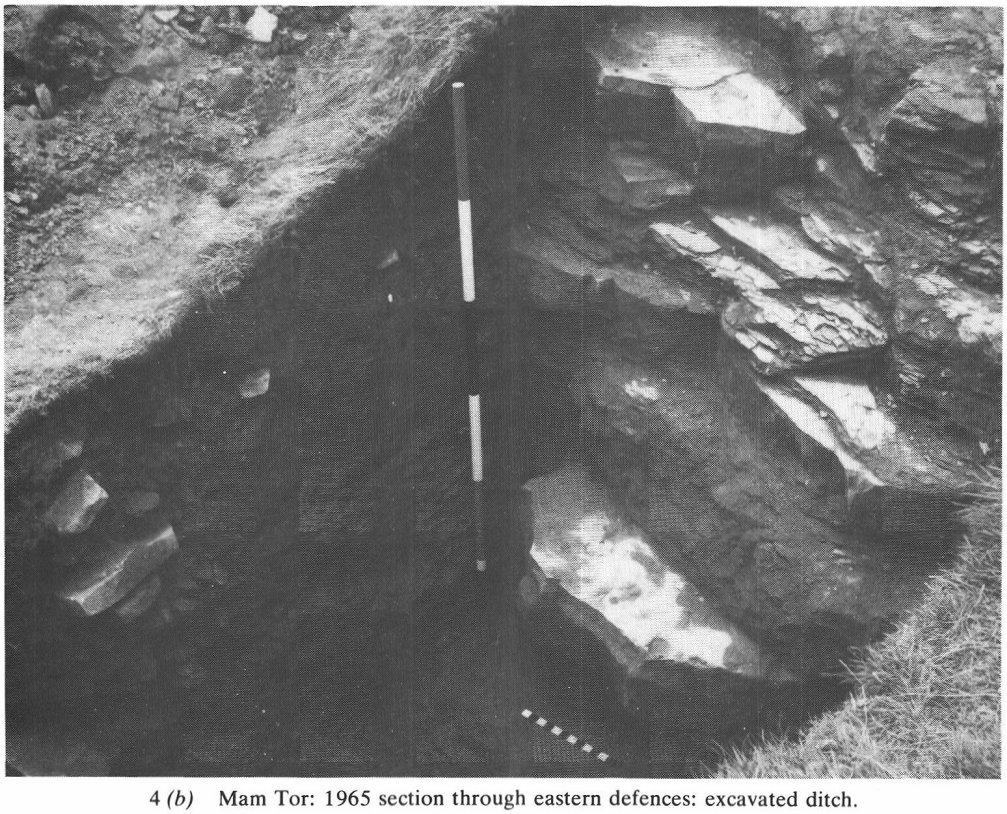
3 *(a)* Mam Tor: 1965 section through eastern defences: crest of rampart.



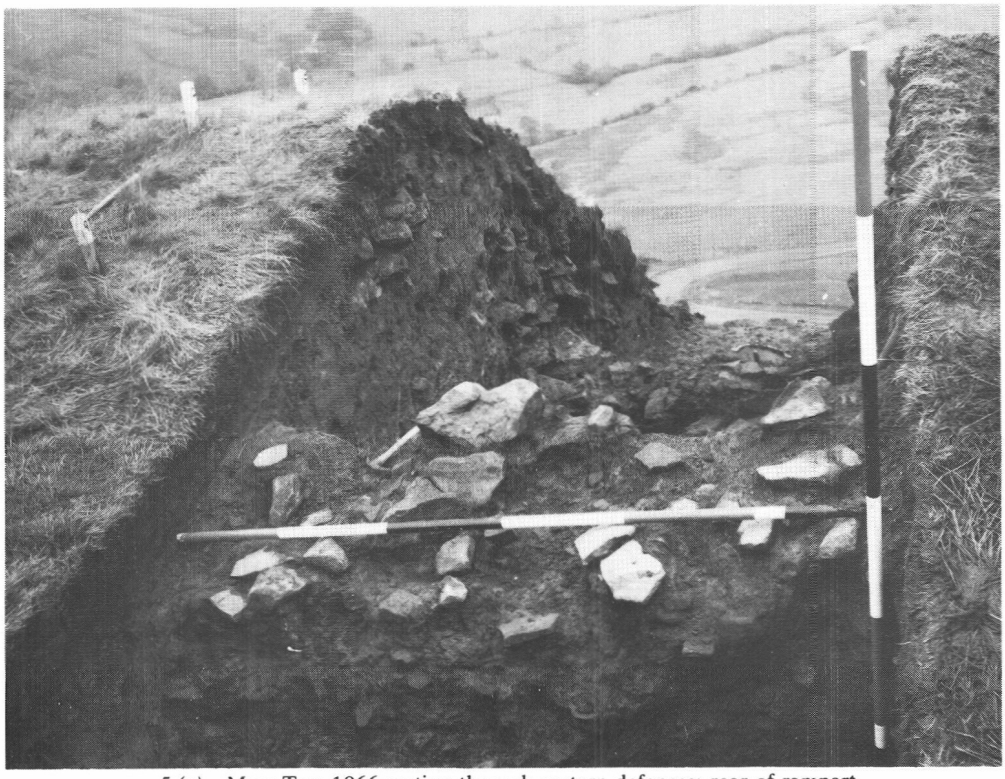
3 *(b)* Mam Tor: 1965 section through eastern defences: top of ditch filling and counterscarp bank.



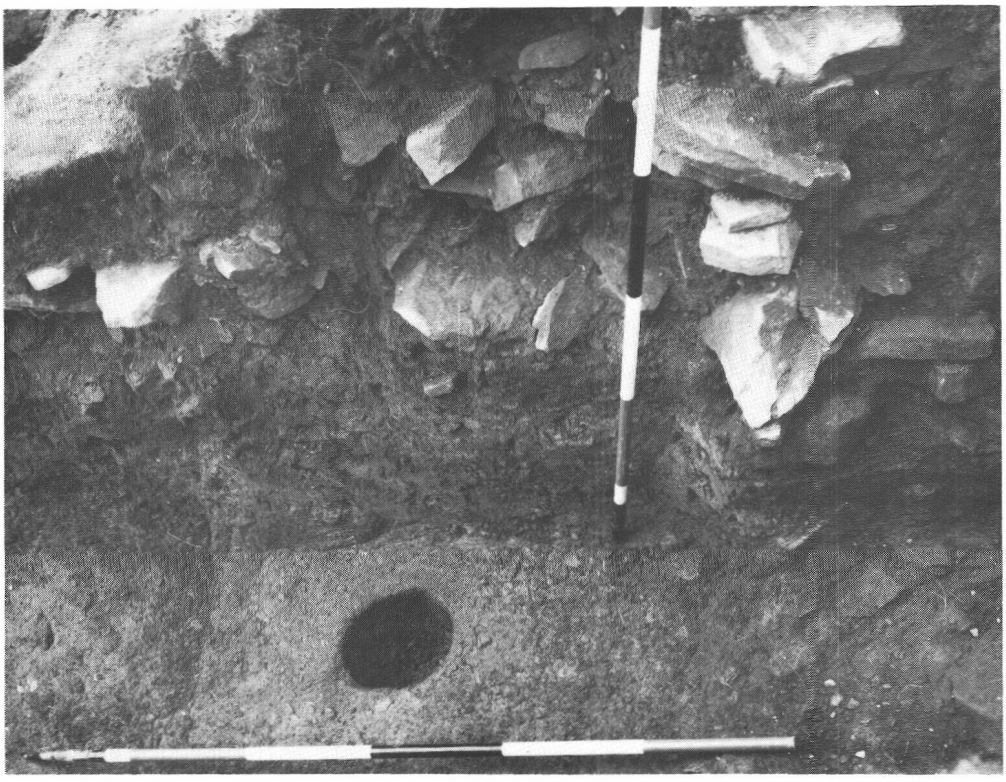
4 *(a)* Mam Tor: 1965 section through eastern defences: excavated ditch.



4 *(b)* Mam Tor: 1965 section through eastern defences: excavated ditch.

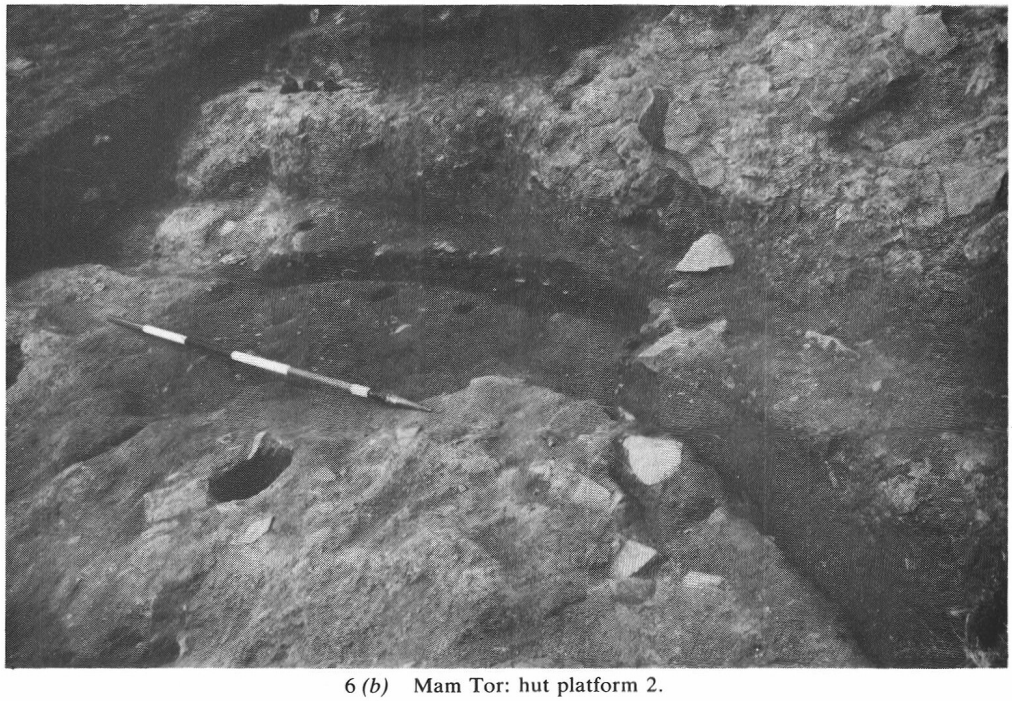


5 *(a)* Mam Tor: 1966 section through eastern defences: rear of rampart.

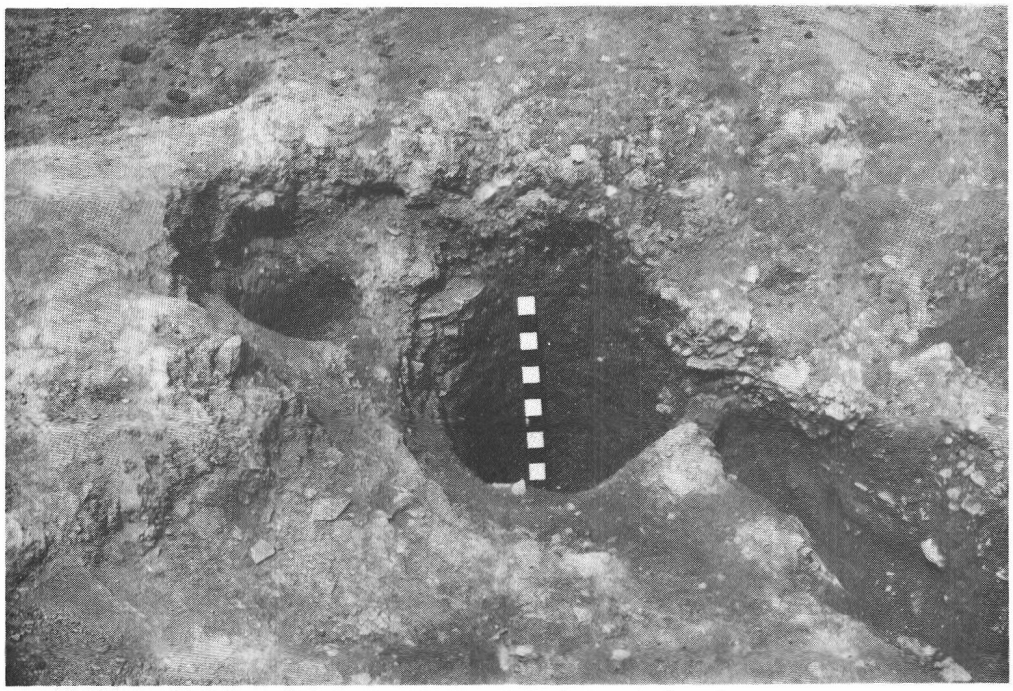


5 *(b)* Mam Tor: 1966 section through eastern defences: post hole and front of rampart.

6 *(a)* Mam Tor: hut platform 1.



6 *(b)* Mam Tor: hut platform 2.



7 *(a)* Mam Tor: post holes in hut platform 2.

7 *(b)* Mam Tor: hut platform 3 from the north.

defence construction in the forts one is hampered by the lack of really large scale open area excavation as at The Breiddin (Musson 1976), Moel-y-Gaer (Guilbert 1976) or Danebury (Cunliffe 1971, 1976). Furthermore, apart from the excavations at Mam Tor, Ball Cross and Almondbury the other forts have only produced meagre or no finds at all.

Of the excavated features there are only vague unifying factors; some of the published pottery from Ball Cross is reminiscent of that from Mam Tor and a few sherds from Portfield are in a similar fabric. The pottery from Almondbury, most of which came from the hearths inside the inner revetment and which can be assumed to be contemporary with the bivallate extension or the multivallate fort (Varley 1976) has been compared by the excavator to the pre-La Tène pottery from the East Riding of Yorkshire and appears to have nothing in common with Mam Tor.

In size the forts in the area range from one-third of an acre (0·135 of a hectare) to 16 acres (6·47 hectares) and in elevation from 300 ft (91·44 m) to 2,373 ft (723·29 m) with univallate, multivallate, contour forts and promontory forts represented. Challis and Harding (1976) attempted to describe the forts in the area in terms of their rampart construction e.g. (a) fence, (b) wall and (c) dump. However such a classification can only be attempted when the defences have been excavated on a large scale. In the area two hill forts, Skelmore Heads and Eddisbury (Varley 1951) and possibly Mam Tor had a palisade phase preceding the construction of the ramparts.

Box ramparts with timber revetment are known from the second rampart at Castercliff and possibly Skelmore Heads. The first rampart at Castercliff was stone-revetted and timber-laced with extensive signs of vitrification. The Cheshire forts of Eddisbury and Maiden Castle also had stone-revetted timber-laced ramparts with evidence of burning in the former. Wincobank, Sheffield was also probably stone-revetted and timber-laced with evidence of vitrification and finally timber lacing and vitrification were in evidence at Almondbury. Stone-revetted ramparts are also in evidence at Portfield, Helsby, Woodhouse, Mam Tor and Ball Cross.

At the moment Mam Tor is unique in the area, not only because of its size and position but also because of the bulk of pottery and other finds that it produced. Further work is obviously needed at the site with large scale area excavations, and other forts in the area must be excavated and domestic sites located. Until this has been done questions regarding use, economic base and social organisation cannot begin to be answered.

*Chronology of the forts*

The lack of datable artefacts from the forts makes any overall chronology difficult to arrive at and we have to rely on C14 dates. Besides Mam Tor two other forts in the area have C14 dates.

*Castercliff, Lancs*

Using the 5570 half-life.

S 286 2460 ± 70 B.P. 510 b.c.

Rampart I. Stone-revetted and timber-laced inner rampart with evidence of vitrification. Charcoal sample from beam on old ground surface under the rampart, presumed part of the timber lacing.

S 287 2460 ± 60 B.P. 510 b.c.

From charred end of post forming part of the back timber revetment of Rampart 2, the outer rampart. Presumed that the end of the timber had been charred before insertion to prevent decay.
(*Radiocarbon* 16, 1974, 184–185)

*Almondbury, Yorks.* (Varley 1976)

*Radiocarbon* 14, 1972, 132 and *Radiocarbon* 16, 1974, 181.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| HAR 182 | 2100 ± 130 b.c. | Charcoal underlying the earliest defences |
| I 5931 | 590 ± 95 b.c. | Part of sample dated as HAR 84 |
| I 4542 | 555 ± 100 b.c. | Carbonised oak beam from uppermost of series of rampart features |
| HAR 183 | 530 ± 110 b.c. | Charcoal from timber—inner rampart of Iron Age defences |
| HAR 84 | 520 ± 130 b.c. | Charcoal from inner rampart (penultimate Iron Age defence) |
| HAR 83 | 460 ± 110 b.c. | Charcoal, ash—occupation floor behind inner rampart, sealed by destruction layer |
| HAR 135 | 450 ± 110 b.c. | Another sample as HAR 83 |

*Notes*

[1] For Mam Tor thanks are principally due to the National Trust which owns the east side of the hill-fort and to Messrs. Eyre and Wilson, who farmed the east and west sides respectively. Thanks must also go to Mr. J. Barrett for supplying the report on the pottery; the late Dr. S. E. Ellis for analysing the stone axe; Prof. F. W. Shotton for arranging the C14 dates; the British Museum for conserving the shale bracelet fragments and to the North-West Museums Conservation Service for treating the bronze axe.

[2] Portfield, Lancashire. Excavations have taken place at different times and by different people over a number of years. There is a summary of the early excavations edited by John Hallam in the County Records Office, Preston; see also Beswick, P., 1970 Portfield Excavations; 1970 Site 5. Interim Report Unpublished typescript. One of us (DGC) also excavated part of the site in advance of pipe laying. Final report forthcoming, Beswick and Coombs.

[3] Castercliff, Lancashire. Excavations were undertaken by the late Rev. Plummer in 1958–60, typescript in the Public Records Office, Preston. Excavations also undertaken by one of us (DGC) in 1970 and 71, report forthcoming.

[4] Small scale excavations consisting of a single trench across part of the defences by DGC in 1973.

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