

# Archaeological Reports

## EXCAVATIONS AT MAM TOR AND BROUGH-ON-NOE, 1965

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THE Iron Age hill-fort on Mam Tor and the Roman fort at Brough-on-  
Noe (*Navio*) have been chosen by the writers as training sites for  
students of prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology from Manches-  
ter University; their hope is also that a long-term campaign of excavation  
will yield evidence for the Iron Age and Roman military occupation of this  
area. Work during late June and early July 1965 took the form, at Mam  
Tor, of a section through the defences and investigation of anomalies revealed  
by the proton magnetometer survey of a limited area and, at Brough, of two  
sections through the defences: a more detailed description of the work at  
each site follows.<sup>1</sup>

### MAM TOR

It was decided to section the eastern defences at a point not far short of  
the northern entrance where the rampart, ditch and counterscarp bank were  
apparently well preserved. Here, as throughout most of the circuit, the  
defences run well below the ridge, which affords some protection against  
westerly winds; it was thought that occupation might consequently have been  
concentrated on this side. The trench, 85 ft. long by 6 ft. wide, was completed  
within the fortnight available, but the rampart proved more massive than  
anticipated and the trench was narrowed to 2 ft. on the outer face in order  
to complete the section; this meant that little of the old ground surface was  
available for examination, e.g. for timber features, and a fresh section will  
be cut through the rampart only in 1966.

The rampart itself proved to be 18 ft. in width and still standing to a  
height of 10 ft.; it rested on an artificial platform cut into the steep hill-slope  
and defined on its outer edge by a low turf bank. The core consisted of  
alternating masses of mixed clay and stone and loose rubble; originally, there  
seem to have been stone revetments at front and rear, but the front face had  
collapsed or been demolished. Turf-lines were noted in the rampart at 1 ft.

<sup>1</sup> Grateful acknowledgement for permission to excavate is made to the National Trust and Mr. T. H. Eyre (Mam Tor) and to G. & T. Earle Ltd. and Mr. W. Eyre (Brough); our thanks are also due to Mr. R. W. P. Cockerton and to Mr. and Mrs. J. Eyre and family for their interest and practical help, which were much appreciated.

and 5 ft. above natural, but these probably represent stages in construction rather than different periods. On the other hand, there was an indication that an earlier, smaller rampart had been cut away, except for its tail, in the construction of the present bank.

The inner lip of the ditch lay 24 ft. down the steep slope from the rampart front (12 ft. lower vertically), adding to the strength of the defences. The rock-cut ditch was in fact not large, 8 ft. wide between the lips and 8 ft. deep (Plate VIIIa). It was very irregular in profile, having been cut in step-like fashion through the rapidly alternating layers of shale and sandstone of which Mam Tor is composed (Plate VIIIb). The lower fill of the ditch included fairly massive stone blocks, probably part of the original revetment. No finds were recovered from the ditch nor from the section as a whole. The material from the original cutting of the ditch had evidently been thrown outwards to form a spill of stone slabs, producing the effect of a low counterscarp bank. The rampart itself must have been derived from quarry pits inside the defences.

A short distance south of the section an area 200 ft. long from north to south and 150-200 ft. wide, between the eastern defences and the stone wall which bisects the hill-fort, was gridded into 50 ft. squares and systematically surveyed with the proton magnetometer by Dr. Michael Tite of Leeds University. In all, 14 anomalies were noted of which 11 were subsequently investigated by test-pits. In every case but one distinct traces of occupation were found: structurally, these took the form of gulleys, post-holes, hearths, etc. (Plate IXa), and in most cases pottery was recovered in varying quantities. Some of these features can be seen to coincide with platforms cut into the hill-side, presumably the sites of huts; the air-photographs and ground observation show these platforms to be widely distributed inside the defences on both west and east slopes of the ridge, implying a sizeable population. It is hoped to excavate completely a well defined hut-site in 1966.

An important result of this preliminary magnetometer survey is to confirm the absence of storage-pits in one area of occupation. If this holds good for other areas of the hill-fort, it will reinforce the hypothesis of a largely pastoral economy, utilizing the rough grazing of the surrounding hills. In this connection the pottery may be of some importance: with its rough, heavily gritted fabric, simple forms, and lack of decoration it compares closely with the pottery from the small hill-fort at Ball Cross Farm, Bakewell, excavated in 1952.<sup>2</sup> This has been likened to the pottery from Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire,<sup>3</sup> but the lack of scored decoration makes this unlikely, and a closer parallel seems to be the crude native ("Brigantian") ware from Stanwick<sup>4</sup> and other northern sites. At Stanwick, it was dated to the third quarter of the 1st century A.D., and it might be argued that Mam Tor was also built in this period, when dynastic quarrels among the Brigantes and the threat of Roman attack might have led these hill-farmers to take concerted action for their self-defence. But this sort of pottery is notoriously difficult

<sup>2</sup> *D.A.J.*, LXXIV (1954), 85-90.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. Leics. Arch. Soc.*, XXVI (1950), 25.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Mortimer Wheeler, *The Stanwick Fortifications*, 38, pl. XXIIIb and figs. 12 and 13.

to date, and, in the absence of metal objects and imports of Roman wares, it might seem desirable to opt for an earlier date.

### BROUGH-ON-NOE (*NAVIO*)

Here the ultimate intention is to explore in detail the unexcavated northern quarter of the fort, much of the remainder having been investigated since the original work of 1903.<sup>5</sup> The work in 1965 was, however, confined to a section (trench 1), 160 ft. long, through the north-western defences immediately south of the north-west gate (*porta principalis sinistra*) and a second section (trench 2), 85 ft. long, through the north-eastern defences a short distance west of the north-east gate (*porta praetoria*).

In trench 1, the three ditches observed by the late Sir Ian Richmond at the western angle<sup>6</sup> were found to continue as far as the north-west gate, the only difference being that ditch 2 had changed from a shallow W to a shallow V profile. Inside them the lowest course of the fort wall, 5½ ft. thick, survived with a front face of gritstone slabs (Plate IXb), forming the revetment of the (presumably) Antonine rampart, a clay bank 18 ft. wide. The surface of the rampart showed a post-trench 7 ft. long with seven post-holes, *c.* 6 in. in diameter, running from the rear of the fort wall and at right angles to it. The feature is undated but is probably post-Roman since most of the rampart and wall must have been thrown down into ditches 1 and 2 before its construction. A short length of timber beam with a mortise-hole, found in the lowest filling of ditch 1, will undoubtedly relate to an earlier structure. To the destruction phase must belong a finely worked cornice-slab in gritstone (Plate Xa), found embedded in the surface of the levelled rampart, which once defined the base of the parapet. The Antonine bank was found to seal the tail of the levelled Agricolan rampart, extending 8 ft. back from the rear face of the fort wall; this approximate coincidence of the Agricolan and Antonine defences on the north-west side must mean that the Agricolan ditches were removed by or incorporated in the later system. Beyond the rampart the intervallum road appeared, having a total width with side-drains of 17 ft.; running from its eastern edge, a stone wall was traced for 26 ft. in the trench (Plate Xb) and probably marks the northern limit of the building of which other walls, running at right angles, were located in 1938-9. Time did not permit excavation down to natural in order to recover evidence for earlier structures.

Trench 2 disclosed a similar sequence, at least for the later fort: only ditch 1 fell within the limits of the trench and proved to be clay-lined, having been cut in the dark silt deposited by the river Noe in periods of flood; it was separated by an 8-ft. berm from the fort wall, represented by a foundation-course (Plate XIa); the associated rampart was only 12 ft. wide and was followed by the intervallum road, 16 ft. wide with drains; beyond

<sup>5</sup> *D.A.J.*, XXVI (1904), 177; for 1938-9 excavations, cf. *D.A.J.*, LIX (1938), 53 and *J.R.S.*, XXX, 168; for 1958-9 excavations, cf. *J.R.S.*, XLIX, 108 and L, 216.

<sup>6</sup> *D.A.J.*, LIX (1938), 53, figs. 1 and 2.

this, the trench was crossed by two walls of a stone building with an internal width of 10 ft. and associated hearth (Plate XIb) — the second wall was probably internal since a stone-flagged floor appeared on the far side.

Sealed beneath the Antonine rampart was a possible beam-trench, 30 in. wide, of an Agricolan building, and 5 ft. farther north a possible drain of the same period. This suggests that, originally, the Agricolan defences on this side lay farther north and were probably subject to erosion by the Noe after the fort was abandoned. When occupation was resumed *c.* A.D. 158, it proved necessary to pull the rampart back on this north-east side and consequently to advance it beyond the Agricolan rampart on the south-west side so that there it rested on the filled-in early ditches. But the net effect was that the fort remained the same size as previously.

A detailed analysis and description of the finds will be deferred until the final report. Here it is only necessary to state that the fill of ditch 1 contained pottery running well into the 4th century and including much Derbyshire ware. This confirms that the fort was occupied until a late date, but it is still not possible to speak of more than a brief Agricolan occupation followed by a 2nd-century rebuild; the possible subdivision of the later occupation must depend on the discovery of stratified pottery groups in future years. As in the earlier excavations, lumps of lead-ore (galena) were found in the later levels. An interesting find from trench 1 was a small bronze lid with enamelled decoration, possibly from a box; it came from the area of the building wall and occurred in the general rubble extending the full length of the trench, presumably to be interpreted as a demolition or destruction layer.

## A RING-BANK ON BEELEY MOOR

By JEFFREY RADLEY

### *Introduction*

IN 1963 the writer, assisted by A. Miller, L. Cooper and F. Hepworth, excavated a ring-banked enclosure on Brown Edge, Totley Moor. It was hoped that it would be a Bronze Age hut-site, but it proved to be a flat cemetery containing five cremations which were accompanied by Middle Bronze Age pottery. Field-work and examination of the literature on the Peak District revealed 35 such monuments, clustered on the uplands to the east and west of the river Derwent.

Few of the circles have been properly excavated, but analysis of form revealed several problems. On Eyam Moor, the Wet Withens ring-banked circle is about 100 ft. overall, with records of a Middle Bronze Age urn being found at its centre. This is a large ring-bank by Pennine standards. The Totley circle is 45 ft. overall, and in the Pennines there are small ring-banks 10 to 20 ft. overall which are probably hut circles; the main problem was