

## A BEAKER BURIAL AT ASTON ON TRENT

By D. REANEY

**A**ERIAL photographs of this area show a complex of archaeological features, of which the most important are:

1. A concentric double ring ditch (Aston 1).
2. A smaller ring ditch to the N.W. of Aston 1.
3. A large single ring ditch about 200 yds. N. of Aston 1.
4. A small D-shaped enclosure cut by a linear ditch.
5. A cursus some hundreds of yards in length. The exact dimensions are yet to be determined. The other features mentioned above are all within this cursus.

In view of the close grouping of these sites, it is possible that they are contemporary and related to the beaker culture.

Excavation of the most important site (Aston 1) has revealed three phases:

- (a) Pre-barrow Neolithic.
- (b) Primary barrow (bell beaker).
- (c) Secondary enlargement (necked beaker).

There were also secondary burials, although these are represented only by fragments of pottery (food vessel and overhanging rim urn). Phases (b) and (c) had beakers associated with them.

The primary barrow was about 102 ft. in diameter, subsequently enlarged to about 115 ft. The primary burial was accompanied by a comb-impressed bell beaker, a polished stone wristguard and a flint arrowhead. After the barrow had been enlarged, a new ring ditch was dug. Associated with the secondary burial was a necked beaker. Underlying the barrow were traces of Neolithic occupation. Although the pits were mostly sterile, one appeared to be a "hearth", and carbonized grain was recovered from the sides and nearby. The grain has been provisionally identified as emmer and a sample submitted for C14 dating. Fragments of hazel nut were also present. The pottery included pieces of several Neolithic bowls and is most closely paralleled by material from Yorkshire.

EXCAVATIONS AT LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY,  
IN 1966

By MALCOLM TODD

**W**ORK at Little Chester in 1966, carried out by the Archaeological Research Group of the Society and other volunteers, was concentrated upon clarifying the relationship of Rykfield Street with the Roman defences. The road was shown to run approximately parallel to the eastern defences, making a junction with the Roman predecessor of Old

Chester Road immediately outside the presumed position of the east gate. The siting of the road does not therefore respect the later defences, and may have been related not to them but to the earlier military posts. Opportunity was taken of examining the ditch of the eastern defences. It measured about 17 ft. wide and at least 6 ft. deep at the point investigated. The ditch-diggers had evidently revetted the soft sand of the sides with clay to prevent collapse. The ditch had been left to fill up with rubbish, the final stages of its obliteration being dated by pottery in the upper filling to the later 4th century. The precise date at which the ditch was originally cut was not ascertained, but is likely to have been before the 4th century. Features antedating the defences, including a pit and traces of light timber structures dating from the Flavian and Antonine periods, were recorded and these should be regarded as part of the successive forts located in 1960. Among the more interesting small finds, there was recovered a number of samian vessels in a fabric which indicates an origin in Central Gaul before the major export period commenced, and, from the post-medieval levels, a large quantity of salt-glazed stoneware, much of it waster material, from Derby kilns.

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Later in the summer, Mr. Marjoram has reported that the Research Group carried out a separate excavation at Little Chester. A section, 65 ft. long, cut on the southern boundary of Darley playing fields, east of Stukeley's enclosure (35453260), revealed two Roman road surfaces, one about 11 ft. wide and the other a little wider. Between these roads were two ditches, one cutting the other. The earlier ditch was U-shaped, about 5 ft. wide and cut 2 ft. deep into the natural subsoil. The later ditch of a distinctly military V-shape was 9 ft. wide and 4 ft. below natural level. This most interesting section has raised questions which it is hoped further excavations may solve.

## A PAINTED ROOM IN ASHBOURNE

By KATHLEEN M. HOLLICK

**I**N January 1966, when Mr. Wood, occupier of 37 St. John Street, Ashbourne, was preparing a bedroom in his house for redecoration, he found that the walls were adorned with paintings. A darkened dado covered much of the lower part, the upper part being filled with pictures.

On one of the longer walls — the room measures 15 by 9 ft. — is a hunting scene. Across a landscape of fields and hedges streams the hunt with one lady rider. A grotto, a windmill and a church add interest to the landscape.

On the shorter wall containing the window, a woman in a poke bonnet takes a large dog for a walk along a waterside. A river with three small sailing-boats winds away into the distance. A classical temple-like building of the type sometimes seen in large gardens and parks laid out in the 18th