

Fig. 1. Silver brooch, outside diameter 1·2".

Inscription—"IESUS NAZARET/HUS REX Iudeo". c. 1300



Fig. 2. West end of house showing wall thickness outlined by fallen burnt thatch (foreground) and burnt material on floor inside. The charred stump of a roof support can be seen beside the white peg in the floor area

## VII.—WEST HARTBURN 1965. SITE “C”

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Work continued at West Hartburn in the early summer of 1965 upon a building outlined by turf banks and first noticed during the previous excavations. Known as site “C” it lies inside the walls of the croft belonging to site “A” (*A.A.* 4, Vol. XLII (1964), pp. 187-206), parallel to the village street but some yards behind the first long house. Complete excavation revealed the ground plan of a wattle and daub hut which, having been destroyed by fire, left a print of its outline in the ground.

A first section across the site showed the presence of the usual two long clay banks, the collapsed walls, having between them a thick layer of burnt material 11' wide. This layer contained fragments of burnt wood from the roof, much fine burnt material thought to be thatch, and large pieces of brick red clay from the interior faces of the walls. Many of these clay pieces bore the impression of the framework, presumably wattle hurdles, on which the clay had been plastered, some carried pieces of burnt wooden posts, others showed wattle impressions on one side and marks as of a smoothing tool on the other, suggesting that an inner clay face in places 3" thick had been mounted upon a wattle framework.

Following the initial section the site was completely stripped, revealing a building of long house proportions, external measurements 41'×17', standing on a slightly larger clay platform. As with site “A” turf and topsoil had been removed and a level clay platform made which had been reinforced at the corners of the east end with very large stones set in clay. The top layers of turf, topsoil (in which a silver sixpence of 1570 was found), fallen clay walls and

## WEST HARTBURN

## CROFT ENCLOSURE I

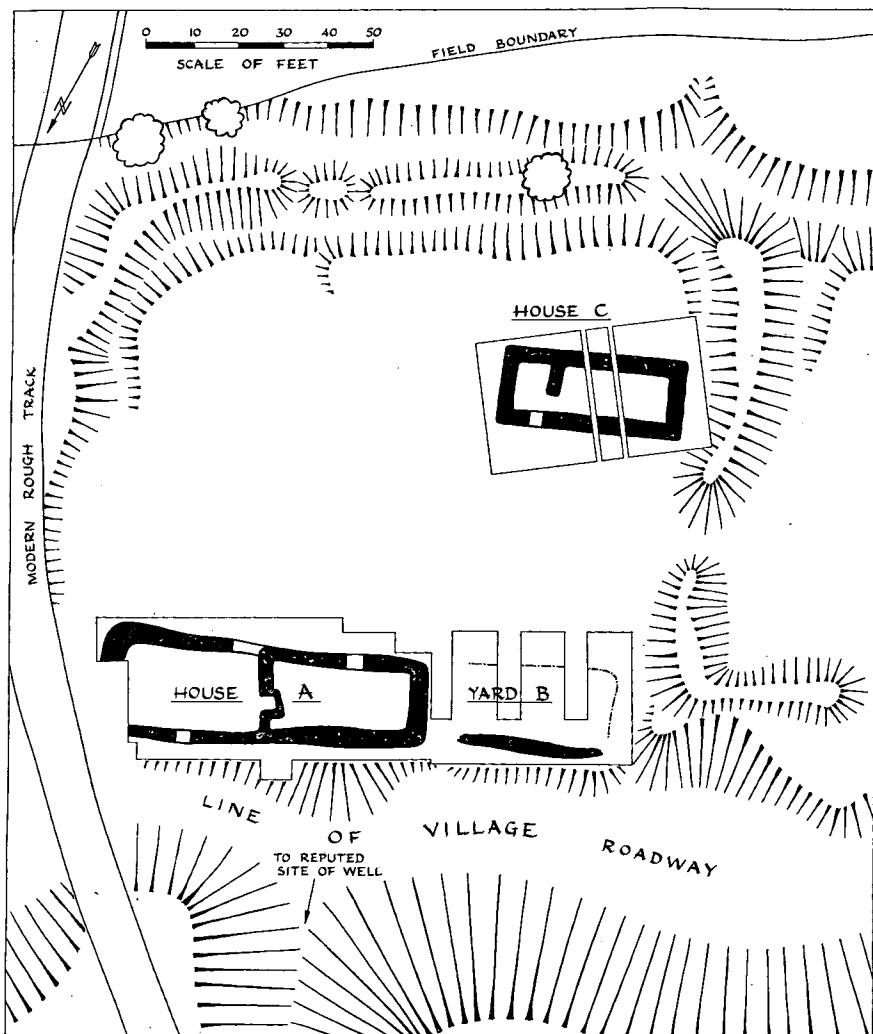


FIG. 1. PLAN SHOWING ENCLOSING CROFT WALLS AND THE RELATIVE POSITIONS  
OF THE TWO HOUSES

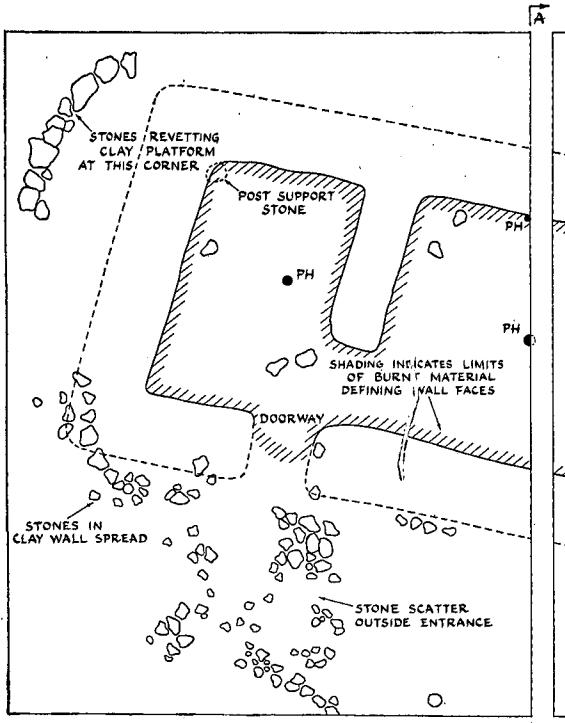
burnt material were successively removed until the building was left almost as a print upon the ground. The interior of the structure was outlined in black ash contained between yellow clay walls whose edges could be determined with certainty. In particular the west end of the house showed both outer and inner faces of the wall very clearly as well preserved clumps of burnt thatch, falling from the roof, had lain along the outer wall edge, remaining as a thick black layer. All walls were 3' thick at the base and contained surprisingly few stones, and those few were located mainly in the north wall; no real wall footings of stones were seen and it must be concluded that these walls were of clay only, reinforced on the interior by a wattle framework. No evidence was seen of any straw binding having been added to the clay.

The doorway was situated 5' from the east end of the north wall; 3' wide, it was marked by an absence of the clay wall and by the outward spread of the burnt material from the interior of the house. The charred remains of the wooden door and door frame were found inside the house, complete with a pair of iron hinges. This doorway led into a small end room, 11'×7', separated from the remaining large room by a cross wall projecting 7' into the building from the south wall, leaving a 4' gap as a doorway into the main room; there was no trace of door or doorframe here.

In the centre of the floor but near the west end of the main room lay a circular fire place which at some later date had been covered by a clay floor. Beneath this clay filling the hearth was distinguished by the presence of some of the stones which had been used to form a circular fire place and by a lower stratum of black filling. A small silver brooch was found beside the hearth; covered with clay it had survived the final fire intact.

Post holes with large stones at the bottom to prevent the post sinking were found in two corners of the building; at a third corner the post hole was replaced by a post socket made of a ring of small stones with a large flat stone under-

# WEST HARTBURN

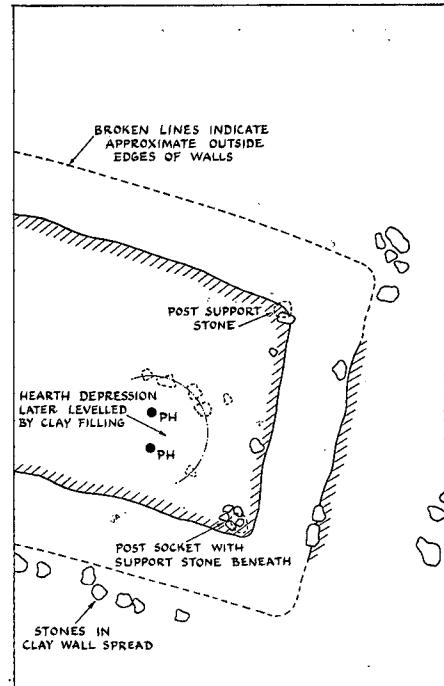


A

A

0 5 10  
SCALE OF FEET

# HOUSE "C"

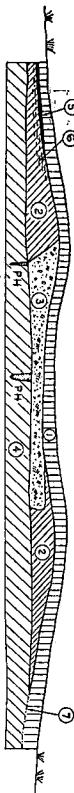


PH INDICATES POST HOLE

KEY TO SECTION:-

- ① TOPSOIL
- ② CLAY WALL SPREAD
- ③ CURTAIN MATERIAL
- ④ NATURAL CLAY
- ⑤ THIN LAYER OF BURNT MATERIAL
- ⑥ COAL & CHARCOAL INCLUSIONS
- ⑦ FINE SCATTER OF BURNT MATERIAL

SECTION A-A ACROSS HOUSE



neath. No post hole was found in the fourth corner. Small post holes in the interior of the house no doubt relate to internal fixtures, the three post holes in a straight line along the centre of the house probably supported a ridge pole. The most westerly of these three posts remained as a burnt stump in the centre of what had been the earlier hearth. This points to a re-roofing after the hearth had become disused, the earliest form of roof structure must remain conjectural.

The clay walls were cut back at floor level but no holes for posts which could have supported the wattle frameworks were seen. That such a framework existed is certain and it must have been incorporated in the wall without the aid of large fixed uprights. The clay walls were free of small stones and gravel but small body sherds of unglazed buff pottery were included in the wall clay.

#### *Summary*

This small building is interesting in that it represents a quite different form of structure from that of the long house (site "A") immediately in front of it, which had walls faced with stones, a cross wall dividing the house into two almost equal parts, and possibly, from the great number of iron nails found there, a more complex roofing structure. The building under consideration is much more primitive—wattle and daub walls, a simple thatched roof (the absence of all but a very few iron nails suggests a lashed framework) and very little use of stone, and that more to support the platform than the walls. It may be typical of early construction in this area; certainly a hearth, later covered over, suggests that a dwelling place may have become a barn. The silver brooch found beside the hearth has been dated as c. 1300. The likelihood of long survival on the part of the brooch and lack of knowledge of early pottery from this area prevents any attempt at a date of origin for this building but the date of destruction can reasonably be assumed to have been in the latter years of the sixteenth century. The reasons for saying this are—

1. A silver sixpence of 1570 was found immediately above a clay spread from a collapsed wall. This proves nothing other than that someone lost a sixpence after 1570 but taken in conjunction with points (2) and (3) can assist in the assumption of the destruction date.

2. Sherds of imported stoneware were found on the floor of the small eastern room where the fire had been less intense. No other recognisable post-medieval pottery was found on the site.

3. No clay pipe fragments occurred at other than grass root level. This was also the case in site "A". In an area where every ploughed field can yield a good quota of pipe fragments this is significant.

If the term *long house* is to be defined as meaning a single storey dwelling with proportions of more than 2 to 1, inhabited by both humans and animals and divided by a cross wall, then this building could be included in the category although the two parts of the building are very unequal. A beast could have been kept in the small east room and if so this building conforms to P. Smith's (Carmarthenshire) definition of a long house, i.e. it must be entered through the byre.

## THE FINDS

### 1. Pottery

All fragments except nos. 14 and 15 are from the clay floor of the building below the burnt layer.

1. Heavy rim of vessel in hard pinkish fabric, "wavy" design. No glaze. Aperture 11".
2. Bifid rim in soft buff fabric, possibly lid seated. No trace of glaze. Aperture 11".
3. Rim of vessel in gritty buff fabric, lid seated. No glaze. Aperture 8½".
4. Bifid rim in hard pink fabric, no glaze. Indications that rim was brought up and turned outwards to produce double thickness. Aperture 8".

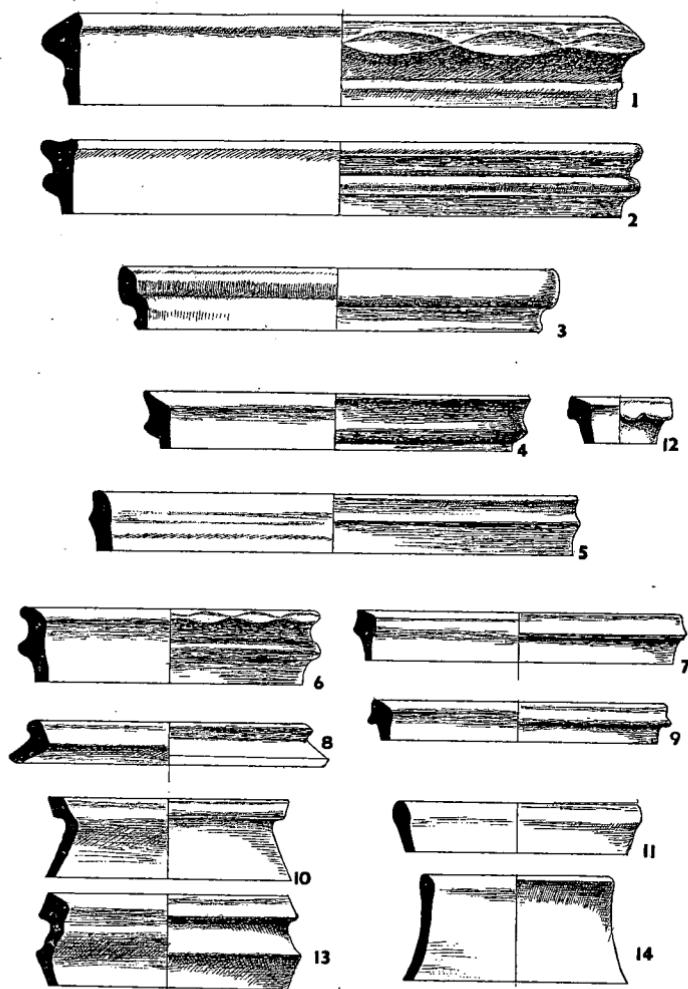


FIG. 3. POTTERY RIM SECTIONS ( $\frac{1}{4}$ )

L

5. Simple rim in buff fabric, oxidised yellow lead glaze. Aperture 10".
6. Rim of vessel in gritty buff fabric, no glaze. Finger pressings along upper rim to produce "wavy" effect. Aperture 5½".
7. Simple square rim form in reduced grey fabric re-oxidised to pink on cooling. Aperture 6".
8. Simple rim in pinkish fabric, no glaze. Aperture 5½".
9. Angular rim in buff fabric, no glaze. Aperture 5½".
10. Well thrown pot in gritty buff fabric, slightly reduced, highly fired compared with other pieces from this site. No glaze; aperture 4½".
11. Very simple rim in pink/buff fabric. No glaze. Aperture 4½".
12. Rim of small vessel with "wavy" decoration along lower edge. Yellow lead glaze below rim. Aperture 1½".
13. Rim of coarse buff fabric, rim brought up and reversed. Patchy oxidised yellow lead glaze. Aperture 5".
14. Rim in coarse grey fabric, completely reduced. Blistered lead glaze on exterior. Aperture 3½". From burnt layer in west end of building.
15. Rim and base fragments of grey and brown mottled stoneware were found on floor of eastern end of building. Not illustrated.

## 2. Metal Objects

### (a) Iron

All objects of iron illustrated here were found on the clay floor of the house below the burnt material.

1. Two simple iron hinges found adhering to the charred fragments of the door.
2. Iron hayfork.
3. Iron buckle.
4. Iron knife.
5. Cheek-piece of snaffle-bit, iron.
6. Small iron key.
7. Two iron nails.

### (b) Silver

1. From the soil over a collapsed wall, a rather worn silver sixpence, Queen Elizabeth, 1570.
2. From beside the hearth and covered with a second layer of clay flooring—a small silver brooch. Approximately 1" in diameter, it is a simple flattened ring, one sixth inch in cross section, with a narrow segment where the pin, now missing, must once have been fitted. Both sides of the brooch bear roughly incised letters making the phrase IESUS NAZARET/

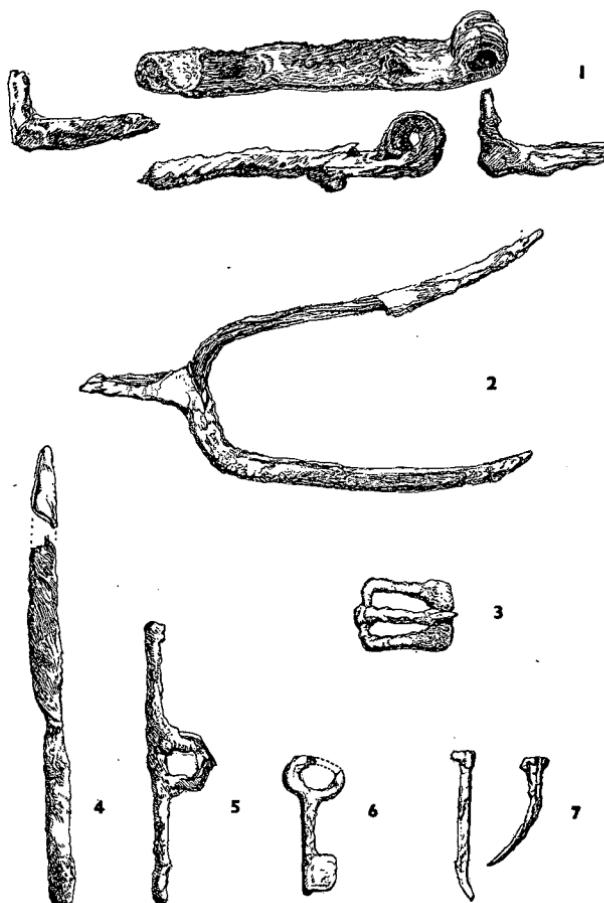


FIG. 4. METAL OBJECTS (1/4)

HUS REX IUEDEO. Dr. Kent informs us that this is a talismanic inscription of a kind found from time to time on brooches and purse frames of thirteenth to fifteenth century dates and that he would suggest c. 1300 for this specimen. This adds little to the dating of the site, a presumably valued object could have a long life.

Once again the authors would like to express their gratitude to Mr. G. Pattison who allowed the excavation to take place on his land, to Miss E. Cannon for her drawings of pottery and ironwork, to Dr. J. Kent for his examination of the brooch, and of course to all those who worked with them on the excavation.