

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The second season of archaeological excavations at Mellor has confirmed the site to be an Iron Age hillfort. Trenches excavated in the field to the north of the Old Vicarage verified the presence and alignment of the perimeter ditch. It now appears that the area enclosed is much larger than originally thought following the 1998 evaluation, however the overall size of the site is still to be confirmed.
- 8.2 Many sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered, adding to the single sherd found during the 1998 evaluation, confirming the site to be Iron Age. Recovered from the lower fills of the ditch, entrenched within the Old Vicarage garden, were possibly two Late Bronze Age flints which could reflect the origins of the site. This would suggest that the site is contemporary with the likes of Mam Tor (the largest hillfort in the Derbyshire Peak District, close to the village of Castleton) whose origins are also in the Late Bronze Age as discovered during the limited excavations of Thompson in the 1960's and later Coombs. It should be noted that no Iron Age pottery sherds have been discovered as of yet at any of neighbouring Derbyshire hillforts with which the Mellor site must be associated. In addition to the Iron Age pottery, the assemblage of Roman pottery also increased. Other finds included a variety of metal objects with dates ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the Medieval period including spindle whorls, a conical bronze boss and a trefoiled brooch.
- 8.3 The most amazing discoveries of this seasons excavations came from the southeastern area of the Old Vicarage garden, where a large trench was excavated revealing a variety of features relating to differing periods truncating each other in a fairly shallow subsoil. Discovered within this trench were a series of small gullies and ditches relating to the Roman and Iron Age periods. These truncated a linear feature, the fill of which yielded a moderate assemblage of Mesolithic flint work. It is possible that the feature represents the remains of a foundation for a shelter from this period. The rarity of such shelters would make this site unprecedented in its importance. It is possible that the Mesolithic element to the site relates to the nearby cairn from the same period on the adjacent side of the valley at Cobden Edge.
- 8.4 The excavations undertaken at Mellor this season have confirmed that the site is of the utmost archaeological importance, with Mesolithic, Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval activity taking place. The site could be seen as one of the most interesting areas of archaeological research currently being undertaken in the North of England. A hillfort with such a rich variety of archaeological periods being represented is rare not only regionally but also nationally. In view of these points it is imperative that archaeological research continues in the forthcoming years to confirm the overall dimensions of the hillfort, to identify the relationship of the hillfort with the Roman occupation and to establish the size, nature and length of the Mesolithic occupation of the site.
- 8.3 It should be expressed that the people of Stockport, who numbered almost 2000 in their visits to the site this season, have revealed their enthusiasm and support for the project, realising its importance to their community, for that we thank them. Finally many thanks to Stockport Borough Council whose support has made the project possible.

9. Sources

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