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## *Summary*

During the summer drought of 1996 Mrs Ann Hearle photographed what appeared to be an ephemeral cropmark in the grounds and fields surrounding the Old Vicarage, Mellor, Stockport. After consultation between Mrs Hearle, Dr Peter Arrowsmith and Graham Eyre-Morgan of UMAU a geophysical survey of the site was undertaken and following the results of the survey, an evaluation of the site by trial trenching during the summer of 1998.

The evidence from the evaluation confirmed the presence of a large fortified ditched enclosure suggestive in style of an Iron Age hillfort of similar proportions to the neighbouring hillforts in Derbyshire. The single sherd of Iron Age pottery and the abundance of fire cracked pebbles tended to support this suggestion. It appeared from the artifacts discovered in the upper fills of the ditch that the site was also occupied during the Roman period.

In total ten trenches were excavated across the site covering 140m<sup>2</sup>. Nine of the trenches were excavated across the ditch surrounding the site. The remaining trench was positioned within the enclosure to identify an anomaly present on the 1998 geophysical survey, originally thought to be a ditch type feature. On excavation this was not apparent however at the eastern end of this trench a linear feature and a possible hearth was identified. In light of these findings, the trench was expanded to an area of open excavation and variety of features including postholes, layers and linear gullies from a variety of periods were revealed.

The results of the excavations across the ditch suggest that the fortified enclosure could be much larger than previously anticipated, possibly up to an area of fifteen or sixteen acres. This would make the site comparable to, or possibly even larger than the largest Derbyshire hillfort at Mam Tor. Clarification of the overall dimensions should be confirmed during the following season (summer 2000).

The artifacts discovered in 1999 included: a number of Iron Age pottery sherds many of which are of high quality opposed to the VCP (Very Coarse Pottery) that is generally found on North West sites, a marked increase in the amount and quality of the Roman pottery sherds, two possible Late Bronze Age flints, a bronze boss (possibly a piece of horse furniture) and most surprisingly an assemblage of Mesolithic flint work from features that may relate to a Mesolithic dwelling.

In addition to the prehistoric and Roman discoveries a moderate amount of Late Medieval pottery and a single piece of jewellery were also discovered during the 1999 season of excavations.

## ***1. Introduction***

- 1.1 A second season of archaeological excavation has taken place at the Old Vicarage and the adjacent fields in Mellor, Stockport, Cheshire during June, August and September 1999.
- 1.2 The excavation strategies were formulated to confirm the suggestion that the remains discovered during the 1998 season of archaeological evaluation are in fact those of an Iron Age hillfort.
- 1.3 The excavation comprised a total of ten trenches, nine locating the perimeter ditch. Six of these were in the field to the north of the Old Vicarage, two were within the Old Vicarage gardens and one in the church car park. The remaining trench was excavated within the gardens over anomalies identified on the 1998 geophysical survey. Further geophysical survey work was undertaken in the field adjacent to the church car park.
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the excavation, and gives an account of the archaeological finds, features and deposits revealed.

### ***Acknowledgements:***

*This report was written by Graham Eyre-Morgan with additional text and illustrations by Stuart Holden. The project was directed by Graham Eyre-Morgan and supervised by Stuart Holden. Many thanks to all the people who have donated their time and energy-the number of names being too long to list. Special thanks go to Stockport Borough Council, Norman Redhead, Assistant County Archaeologist GMAU, John and Ann Hearle for their continuing support, Peter and John Hodgson for their help with the mechanical excavation, the people of Mellor and the surrounding area.*

*University of Manchester Archaeological Unit  
December 2000*

## 2. Location and Topography

- 2.1 The site of Mellor Church and the Old Vicarage is centred around the National Grid Reference SJ 9818 8890, in the parish of Mellor, approximately six miles southeast from the centre of Stockport.
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area was revealed as Westphalian A Sandstones from the Late Carboniferous Period, overlaid in places by Boulder Clay.
- 2.3 The site lies on a promontory of land that descends quite sharply on three sides, while the rear of the site gently rises up towards the Pennine uplands to the east. Within the perimeter of the site lies the Parish Church and associated graveyard; the Old Vicarage, outbuildings and gardens; the new Vicarage and gardens and Glebe Cottage and gardens. Part of the access road to these dwellings and the Church also lies within the site, as does the field belonging to Knowle Farm which is presently under pasture.

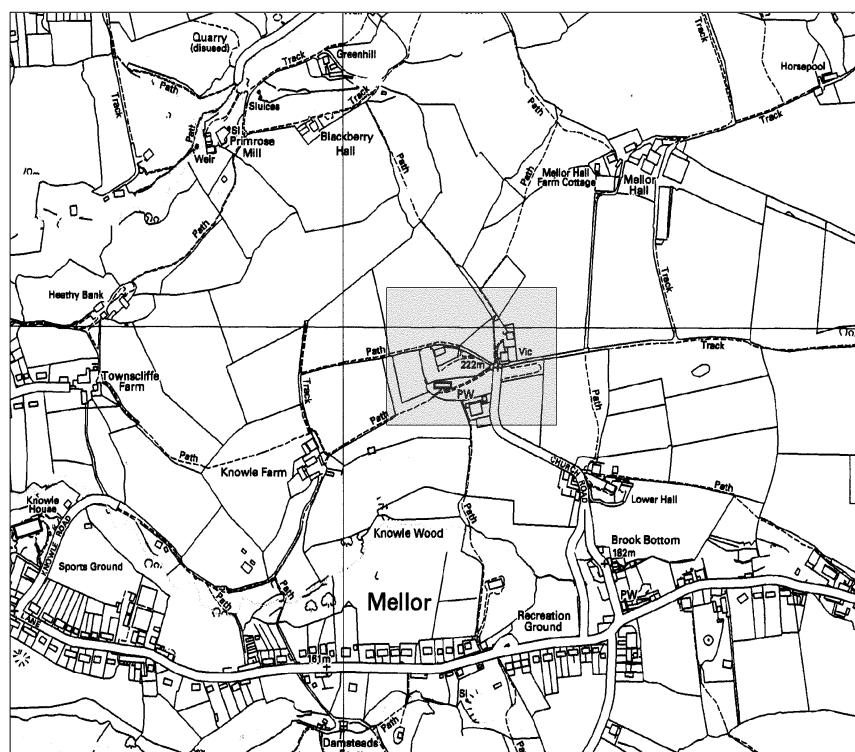


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the site. Reproduced from OS 1:10,000 SJ 98 SW. Crown copyright reserved.

### ***3. Archaeological Background***

- 3.1 Prior to the 1998 evaluation, there has been no previous evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity at the site. The closest prehistoric sites are the recently excavated Bronze Age cairn situated at Cobden Edge (GMSMR 421) and the Bronze Age barrows at Brown Low(5) and Ludworth Intakes(6). Evidence for the Iron Age/Romano-British period in the Stockport Borough is virtually nonexistent, with only scant poorly recorded remains coming from the Bramhall area. In fact excavation has identified very few native settlement sites in the Greater Manchester area. Two of the best known being Castle Steads, Bury(78) and Great Woolden Hall Farm, Salford(1907), both of which are fortified enclosures. It has been suggested that there could be an early enclosure site on the hill known as Werneth Low, just a few miles to the north however recent excavations have failed to gather any evidence to support this.
- 3.2 Roman evidence in the area has been restricted to the site of the fort and vicus at Melandra Castle near Glossop, approximately five miles from the site at Mellor. It has not been confirmed whether the Roman presence at Mellor was civilian or military, however considering the strategic location of the site and the period of occupation, it is likely to have been military.
- 3.3 The place name of Mellor (meaning bare hill) is of pre-English origin as is Werneth and Cheadle and all three may have had a long history of settlement. Apart from these names there is little evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the area. Features and artifacts from this period are also sporadic with an Anglo-Saxon cross at Cheadle and the twin cylindrical shafts, known as Robin Hoods Picking Rods, on Ludworth Moor which are very similar to the Bow Stones located in Lyme Park. It has been suggested that the font within Mellor Church is of Anglo-Saxon origin; however this is yet to be confirmed.
- 3.4 It was recorded by the Reverend Marriot in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that ‘some years ago’ digging in the churchyard for the construction of a vault revealed what appears to have been the remains of an infilled ditch. He also reports that ‘many years before’ the same feature was found during the sinking of the foundations of the extension to the house now known as the Old Vicarage. “*A deep fosse was constructed originally, for the inclosure of the position. In subsequent ages it had the fate to be filled up, and the name and place of it passed into oblivion*” (Marriot, 1810, *The Antiquities of Lyme and its Vicinity*).

## ***4. Aims and Methodology of the Excavation***

- 4.1 The excavation was designed to expand and develop the results of the 1998 evaluation, to confirm the state of preservation, date and extent of the Iron Age hillfort and to clarify the extent of the Roman occupation of the site and to locate any further archaeology related to the area.
- 4.2 Six trenches(T4, T6-10) were excavated to locate the perimeter ditch to the north and establish its direction and dimensions(Figure 2). One trench(T5) was excavated within the church car park to locate a return in the ditch towards the church. Within the Old Vicarage gardens, trenches C and D opened in 1998 were joined to give a full profile across the ditch(T1) with a second trench(T2) positioned to establish where the ditch entered into the churchyard. Also within the gardens a trench(T3) was opened across an anomaly which showed up on the geophysical survey. This was later expanded into an area of open excavation.
- 4.3 Where the ground and environmental conditions were suitable a mechanical excavator was used under archaeological supervision to remove the overburden, all other excavation was performed by hand. All contexts were recorded individually on UMAU context sheets, sections drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at a scale of 1:20. A full photographic record was undertaken in both colour slide and print mediums in a 35mm format. The site was surveyed using a Digital Total Station Theodolite and the results processed using an AutoCAD programme.
- 4.4 The finds were recorded by context and where considered necessary, plotted 3-dimensionally. All artifacts have been retained/stabilised for analysis before subsequent deposition at the discretion of the land owners and members Mellor Archaeological Trust.
- 4.5 A programme of experimental tomographic resistivity survey was undertaken across the site by Professor DH Griffiths and Dr RF King, Geophysics, University of Birmingham.
- 4.6 The work was monitored by the Assistant County Archaeologist for Greater Manchester.
- 4.7 Throughout the excavation all the current Health and Safety requirements were upheld.



Figure 2: Trench location plan.

## ***5. Trench by Trench Results***

- 5.1 The first work to be undertaken during the 1999 season, was the re-excavation of the trench across the perimeter ditch in the Old Vicarage garden (recorded in 1998 as trenches C and D). This trench will now be discussed as trench 1. The north section of this trench was straightened and the lower fills excavated to give a full profile, a further two distinct layers of silting were identified before encountering the base. This concluded that the feature was cut through the solid natural bedrock measuring 4m at its widest point and 2.1m from the present ground level to the base of the ditch.

The fills, cuts and layers were subsequently re-numbered and re-contexted to suit. The numbering sequence now runs from (1001) onwards, with (1000) being the natural ground formation. Fill (1012) was a mid-greyish brown silt lying in the lower third of the ditch containing an abundance of charcoal flecks and stains together with frequent small and medium sandstones. Artifacts discovered within this fill include frequent fire-cracked pebbles, a single sherd of Iron Age pottery and two possible Late Bronze Age flint tools. The primary fill (1019) which was a pale yellowish brown silt with frequent small sandstones and occasional charcoal flecks. Artifacts recovered from this layer were a conical bronze boss (possible horse furniture from either Late Bronze Age or Iron Age), four fragments of possible slag/furnace waste and a two ferrous object of unknown use. Fill (1020) revealed four sherds of Iron Age pottery and several fragments of a ferrous material, the remainder of objects discovered in this section of the ditch were five sherds of Iron Age pottery from the fill (1011) and a single sherd of Iron Age pottery from fill (1008).



Plate 1: Profile of the ditch in trench 1



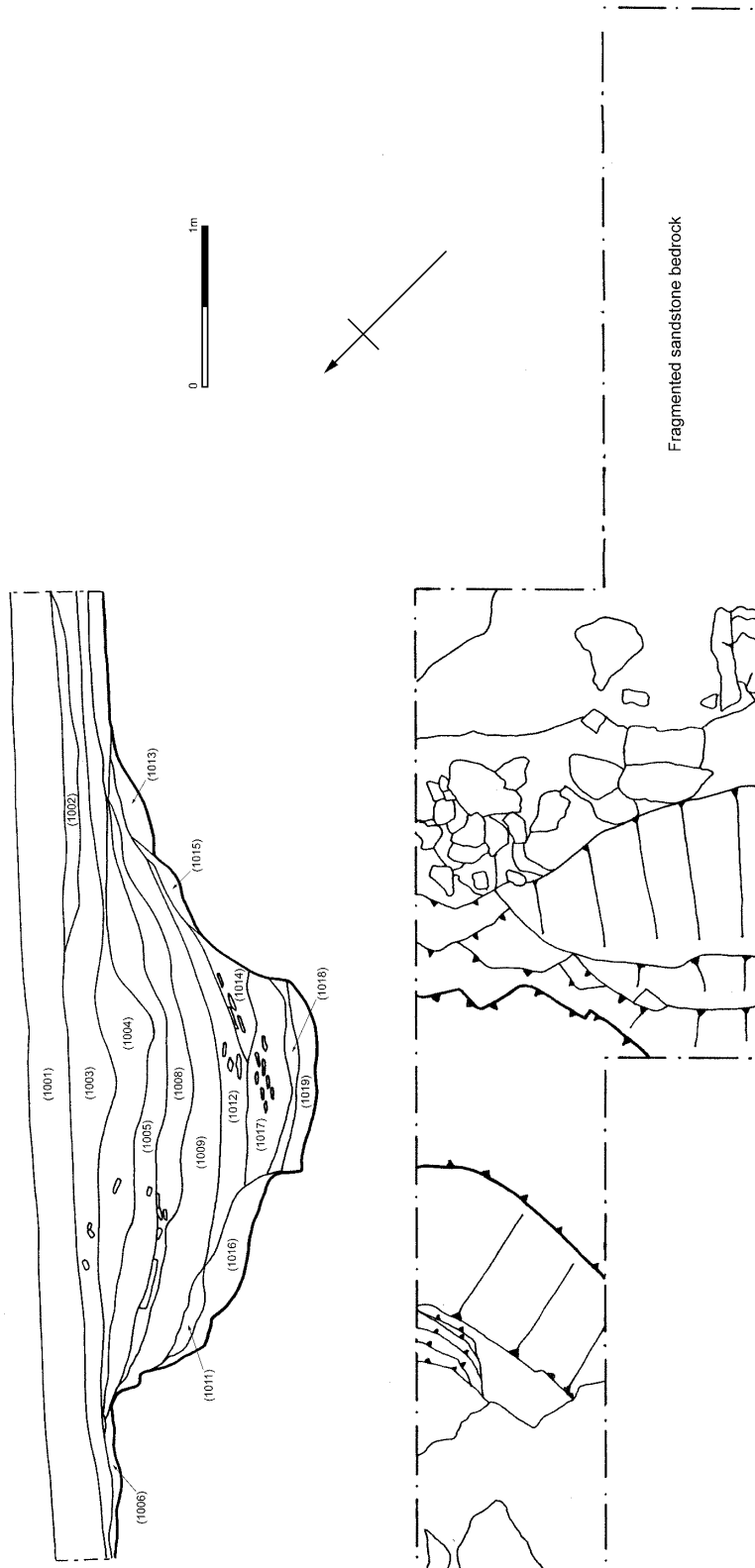


Figure 3: Southwest facing section and plan of trench 1 showing the ditch post-excavation

- 5.2 In total a further seven trenches were excavated to confirm the alignment of the ditch (T4-10). Trench 4 was excavated in the southeastern corner of the field to the north, across the suspected ditch alignment. Unfortunately no evidence for the ditch or any other features was discovered in this trench, although two pieces of white lead and a lead spindle whorl (possibly Roman) were recovered along with several fire cracked pebbles. An abundance of charcoal flecks were spread across the excavated area. To firmly establish the alignment of the perimeter ditch, five trenches were excavated within this field, located from the known position discovered in the 1998 evaluation and one trench was excavated in the car park of the church towards the east.
- 5.3 Trenches 6-9 revealed essentially the same, steep sided v-shaped ditch profile cut through the natural sandstone bedrock (as trench E had shown during the 1998 evaluation). The dimensions of the ditch within each trench varies between 0.9m deep and 1.6m deep and between 1.5m and 2.4m wide. The fill of the ditch in each trench revealed the same abundance of broken sandstone fragments within a light brown sandy loam.
- 5.4 Artifacts recovered from the fill of the ditch within these trenches included: a cache of small round pebbles from trench 8 which could possibly be interpreted as sling shot, a single sherd of Roman pottery from trench 7 and a sherd of Roman/Iron Age? pottery from trench 6. Also recovered from the fill of the ditch in all the trenches was a moderate to frequent amount of fire cracked pebbles and a moderate amount of charcoal.
- 5.5 From the subsoil layer directly above the ditch in trench 6, an abundance of post-medieval and early post-medieval pottery and clay pipe stems and bowls were found. These later artifacts could possibly have been discarded over the wall of the Old Vicarage when used as the Church Inn.
- 5.6 Trench 10 proved to be an exception, for here the ditch was cut through natural boulder clay, it is possible that this reflects a change in the geology of the area. However the shape of the ditch was consistent with where it was cut through the bedrock. In this trench the ditch was 2.3m wide and 1.40m deep, the fill consisted of redeposited mid-brown clay loam with occasional small to medium sandstone fragments. Within the fill a few small sherds of Roman pottery were recovered along with a moderate-frequent amount of fire cracked pebbles and a moderate amount of charcoal flecks.
- 5.7 The excavation of trenches 6-10 revealed that the ditch enclosed a much greater area than previously considered. Rather than turning into the corner of the field it appears that the ditch runs outwards to the bridle path, the existence of the ditch in the field beyond the path is yet to be established.
- 5.8 Trench 5 was excavated along the grassed area on the north side of the car park, aligned east-west in front of the Vicarage. Approximately 0.6m of topsoil and subsoil

was removed by machine down on to the fragmented sandstone bedrock, however no archaeological features were identified during the excavation. Due to the time constraints it was not possible to continue excavation to locate the ditch in an alternative position. Further work is intended in this area following the results of a later geophysical survey that took place later in the summer after the excavation had taken place.

5.9 Trench 2 was excavated in the southwestern corner of the Old Vicarage garden where the projected alignment of the ditch ran into the graveyard associated with the church. Trench 2 was 5.8m long by 1.5m wide excavated to within 0.5m of the perimeter garden wall. At a depth of 0.6m and 0.82m from the east end of the trench cut [2004], a narrow slot was revealed. This cut spanned the width of the trench and was 0.4m wide by 0.3m deep. The fill (2003) consisted of an orangey brown sandy loam with a moderate amount of medium sandstone fragments and small pebbles. The only finds from this fill were two small burnt bone fragments and a small sherd of possible Roman pottery. This could represent a foundation for an internal building or a defensive structure.



Plate 2: Trench 2 showing the slot in the foreground and the ditch towards the rear of the trench.

5.10 The cut for the ditch [2005] was located 3.25m from the outside edge of the small slot, towards the garden wall. Due to its location only the cut for inside edge of the ditch was uncovered, this ran into the bottom corner of the excavation at a depth of 1.5m below the ground surface. Two distinct fills were observed within the cut, fill (2006) consisted of a light brown clay loam with a moderate amount of medium to large sandstone fragments, from within this fill a moderate-frequent amount of fire cracked pebbles, a moderate-frequent amount of charcoal flecks, a sherd of Roman pottery, several small fragments of burnt bone and piece of possible copper ore were found. This fill overlaid fill (2007), little of this fill was actually excavated due to the narrowing depth of the excavated ditch. The fill consisted of a yellowy orange sandy loam with an abundance of fine gravel and occasional medium sized sandstone fragments. No artifacts were located within this fill.

- 5.11 Within the garden area between the entrance drive and the church wall trench 3, a 17m long by 1.5m wide was hand excavated across an area where it was considered internal features may have existed. The trench was aligned east-west, positioned along a lawned area avoiding the flower beds and shrubberies.
- 5.12 The excavation revealed a posthole [3004] cut into the bedrock 3.1m in from the western end of the trench, this feature was 0.4m in diameter with a depth of 0.13m. The fill of this feature comprised a medium to dark greyish brown loam (3003) within a setting of large angular inset upright packing stones. Artifacts discovered within this feature included a single sherd of Roman pottery and a frequent amount of charcoal flecks. Other artifacts discovered in the vicinity of the post hole included a number of flint tools and waste flakes.
- 5.13 As the excavation progressed towards the east, further flint work and occasional sherds of Roman and Iron Age pottery were found. Due to this increase in finds and features it was decided to expand the eastern end of this trench into a larger open area excavation, 6.6m long and 5m wide. The excavation revealed a complicated series of stratified layers with intersecting features dating from the Mesolithic period to the Romano-British period. Discovered in association with these features were a frequent amount of flint tools, flint flakes and flint cores from the Mesolithic period, pottery sherds both Roman and Iron Age and an abundance of fire cracked pebbles.
- 5.14 The features comprised a linear slot [3015]/[3019] almost east-west in alignment c.0.35m wide by 0.25m deep, its length was undefined due to the limit of the excavation. Within the fills (3014) and (3018) of this feature were a frequent amount of stones set upright and on edge within a grey silt with an abundance of charcoal flecks and stains, occasional small pieces of burnt bone and occasional Mesolithic flints. A possible interpretation for this feature is that it was a slot cut into the ground and packed with stones to hold a cover in place for a temporary dwelling.
- 5.15 This feature was truncated twice by other ditch/gully features. The first of these was a 1.15m wide flat bottomed ditch [3009] that was 0.2m deep by an undefined length limited by the edge of the excavation, the ditch was aligned on a northeast-southwest axis. The fill of this feature (3008) comprised a mid-brownish grey loam with occasional small flat sandstone fragments, finds from within this feature included an abundance of fire cracked pebbles, frequent charcoal flecks and occasional Romano-British pottery sherds. It is therefore postulated that the ditch relates either to the Late Iron Age or the Romano-British period, the purpose of this ditch remains uncertain.
- 5.16 The second ditch [3017] ran in a north-south direction, truncating feature [3015] yet terminating before feature [3009], this feature was 0.35m wide narrowing to just over 0.2m wide at its termination point by an overall depth of 0.2m, the length of this feature was undetermined due to the limitation of the excavation. The fill of this feature comprised a dark greyish brown silty loam with an abundance of charcoal flecks, occasional fire-cracked pebbles and the occasional sherd of Roman pottery and

single flint flake. The purpose of the ditch remains unclear although it does seem to relate to the Late Iron Age/Romano-British periods.

- 5.17 Further excavation of this area should help clarify the purpose of these features. The area within which these features were located is particularly important, archaeologically, with various periods being represented within the tightly layered stratigraphic sequences.

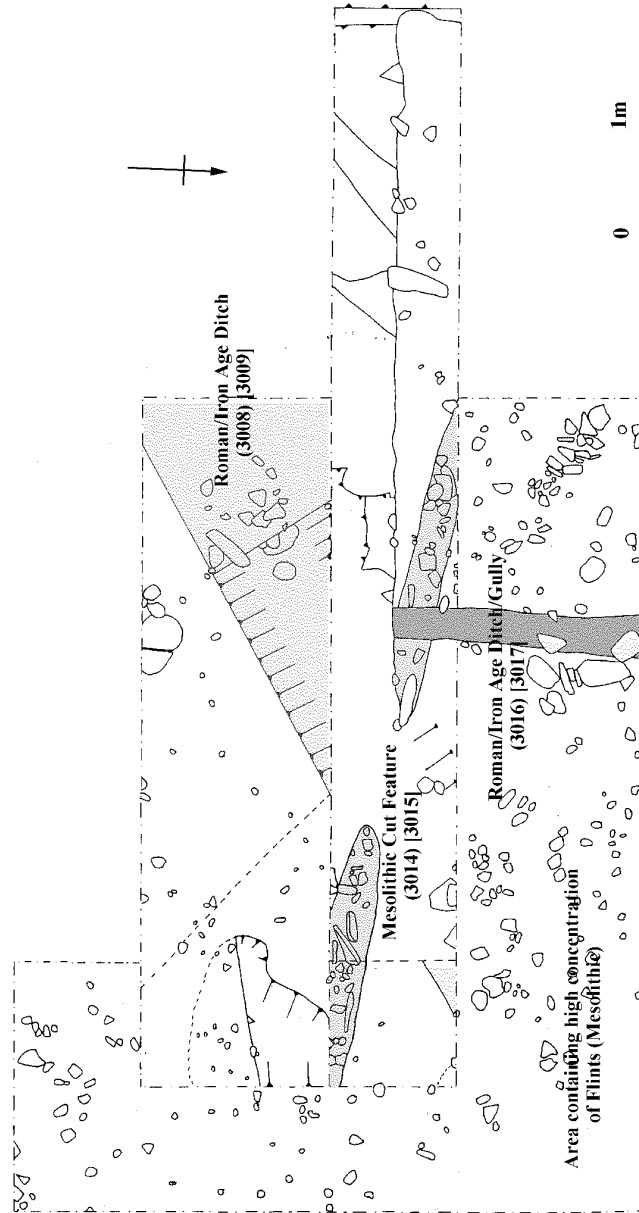


Figure 4: Plan of trench 3 with the main features highlighted

## ***6. The Artifacts***

- 6.1 1999 proved to be an excellent year for the discovery of artifacts, with many further sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery being recovered, including fragments of former fine wares such as Samian Ware that had been imported from the Continent. A variety of metal objects and metal slag were discovered including: a bronze conical boss from the Late Bronze /Early Iron Age (possibly a piece of horse furniture), several pieces of lead waste, a lead spindle whorl, several ferrous objects and a fine Late Medieval trefoiled brooch. The most surprising discovery from the excavation was the assemblage of Mesolithic flints which came in the form of tools, cores and waste.
- 6.2 In excess of 600 fire cracked pebbles, weighing over 110kg were found across the site and have been retained for future analysis as well as a substantial amount of charcoal flecks.
- 6.3 The flint artifacts from this years excavation have been analysed by Dr Andrew Myres, his report follows this page. The pottery and metal work however have been retained until further excavation can provide a substantial assemblage for comparison.



Plate 3: Clockwise from top left; Roman orange ware base sherd(T1), Bronze boss (possibly horse furniture)(T1), Romano-British sherd (T3), Two spindle whorls from field to the north of the Old Vicarage, Iron Age rim sherd (T1).



## Report on the Lithic Assemblage from Excavations at Mellor Hillfort Dr Andrew Myres

A total of 39 worked lithic artefacts were analysed from the excavations at Mellor hillfort. Each artefact was numbered and located as to the context from which it came. A listing of each artefact analysed is provided (Appendix 1). It can be seen (table 1) that a significant proportion of the assemblage came from contexts 3011 (n=24) and 3002 (n=9).

Context	No.
1012	1
2005	1
3002	9
3010	1
3011	24
3014	2
3016	1

Table 1: numbers of artefacts analysed from each context.

### Raw Materials

The identification of raw materials used is based purely on visual inspection and provides a general overview. The assemblage appears to be dominated by varieties of flint (table 2). No chert or other material could be definitely identified in the assemblage.

	1012	2005	3002	3010	3011	3014	3016	Total
translucent & semi-translucent flint	1		5	1	15	2		24
opaque flint		1	4		6		1	12
uncertain					3			3
total	1	1	9	1	24	2	1	39

Table 2: raw material analysis of the assemblage by context.

The assemblage is dominated by varieties of good quality translucent or semi-translucent brown, or grey-brown flint showing gradations between levels of

translucency. The cortex tends to be smooth and nodular, displaying a sharp transition to the non-cortical material. Sources of translucent and semi-translucent material of this kind exist both to the west and east of the Pennines within boulder clay deposits. Within the opaque flint identified are a small group, from context 3002, of quite distinctive mottled grey flint. This material has its parent source in the Cretaceous limestone in the wolds of Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire but has workable secondary sources in the boulder clay deposits along the Trent Valley in Nottinghamshire.

### Typology

The assemblage (table 3) contains just two retouched pieces, neither of which can be regarded as being particularly chronologically sensitive. The debitage does however provide a number of useful observations as to the probable age and character of the assemblage.

	1012	2005	3002	3010	3011	3014	3016	Total
lumps/ nodules		1			2			3
flakes	1		4	1	11		1	18
blades			3		6	1		10
notched flakes					1			1
retouched flakes					1			1
core rejuvenation flakes/ blades			2		2			4
cores					1	1		2
total	1	1	9	1	24	2	1	39

Table 3: typological analysis of the assemblage by context.

The first point to be made is that the assemblage contains a relatively high number of blades to flakes (1.8 flakes for every blade). The small sample size limits what can be done statistically, but an analysis of the dimensions of the complete unretouched flakes and blades (table 4) does indicate that the assemblage contain a high proportion of relatively 'bladed' pieces (Pitts and Jacobi 1979) possibly indicative of a Mesolithic date.

Breadth / Length	0 – 0.2	0.2 - 0.4	0.4 – 0.6	0.6 – 0.8	0.8 – 1.0	>1.0
No.	0	1	1	3	3	3

Table 4 : analysis of breadth / length for complete unretouched flakes and blades

The 'bladed' character of the assemblage is reinforced by the presence of two blade cores (no's 17 and 22), weighing 27.9gm and 25.5gm respectively. Both of these would also fit easily into a Mesolithic assemblage. To these we can also add the four core rejuvenation flakes/ blades identified in the assemblage. These include a typical platform removal ('core tablet') (no. 3), a platform edge removal (no.35) and a plunging blade (no. 6) – all indicative of a core and blade technology.

	1012	3002	3010	3011	3014	3016	Total
Primary (>50% cortex)		1		4			5
Secondary (<50% but >0% cortex)		3	1	7			11
Tertiary (no cortex)	1	3		6	1	1	12
Total	1	7	1	17	1	1	28

Table 5 : stage analysis of all unretouched flakes and blades by context

Stage analysis of the unretouched flake and blade assemblage (table 5) reveals that a high proportion is corticated, with primary and secondary pieces accounting for c. 57%.

## Discussion

Although the assemblage of 39 pieces is a small one, the evidence represented is quite informative. The assemblage contains evidence for quite a range of flaking activity including the maintenance, use and discard of blade cores along with the production of blades and flakes including a significant number of cortical pieces. The bladed character of the unretouched flake/ blade assemblage, along with the blade cores and core rejuvenation material may be indicative of a Mesolithic date. In contrast, it is not possible to point to any clear indications of activity relating to the Neolithic or Bronze Age periods.

Certainly, the use of translucent and semi-translucent brown and grey flint for Later Mesolithic assemblages in the region is well documented, as at Red Rafter (Stonehouse 1976), and at Dunford Bridge A and B (Radley et al., 1974). It is also interesting that context 3002 also produced a small collection of mottled grey, opaque Wolds flint. This material is usually associated with Earlier Mesolithic activity in the area (Jacobi, 1978; Radley and Mellars 1964; Myers 1989), and may be related to the presence near-by at Shaw Cairn, Mellor Moor, of further probable Earlier Mesolithic material (Myers nd).

In conclusion, the evidence may suggest the presence of a Later Mesolithic site at which a fairly broad range of knapping activities were undertaken. There may also be hints of an Earlier Mesolithic presence in the assemblage.

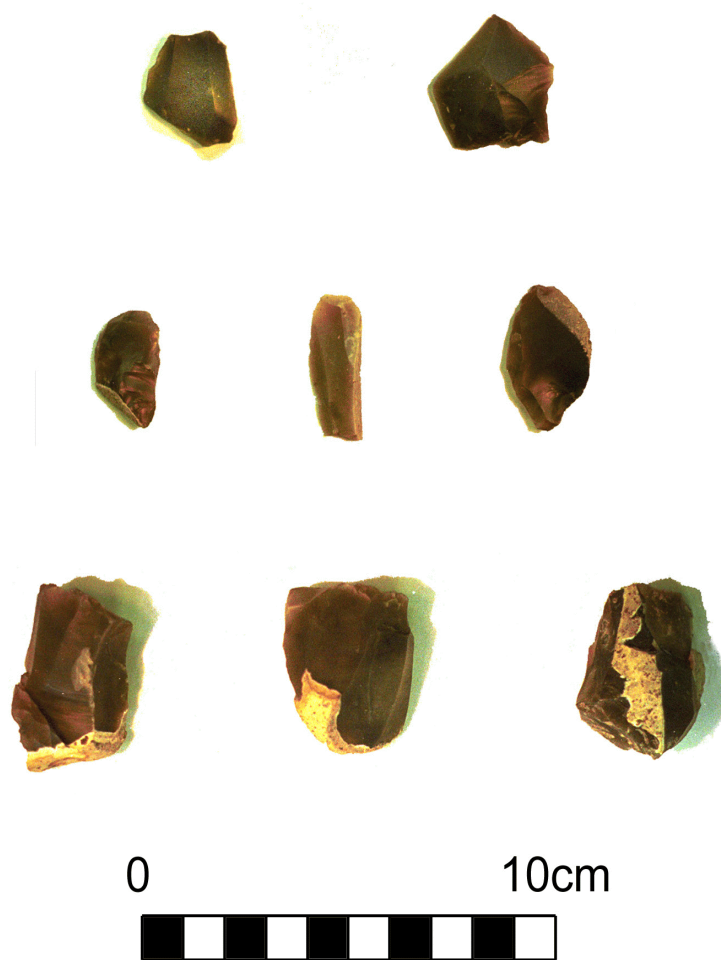


Plate 4: Some of the flint artifacts recovered. Top; Blade fragment and scraper(T1)  
Middle; Blade (centre) and scrapers (l and r) (T3) Bottom; Cores (T3)

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# Tomographic Resistivity Survey

By Professor DH Griffiths and Dr RF King

During August 1999, Professor DH Griffiths and Dr RF King, Geophysics, University of Birmingham, carried out a resistivity survey across the site of the Iron Age hillfort at Mellor. For each test, the method consisted of placing 50 electrodes along a line at 1 metre intervals (0.5m for one test). Resistance measurements between electrodes at different distances were collected on a portable PC, analysis by appropriate software then gave a vertical resistivity section below the surface of the line.

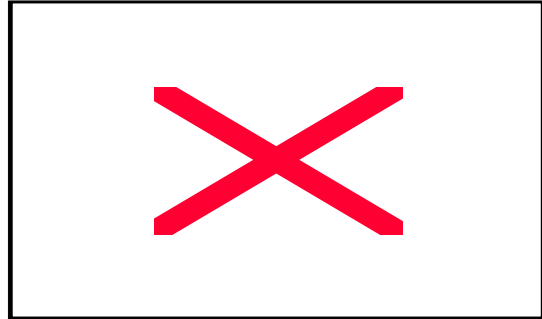
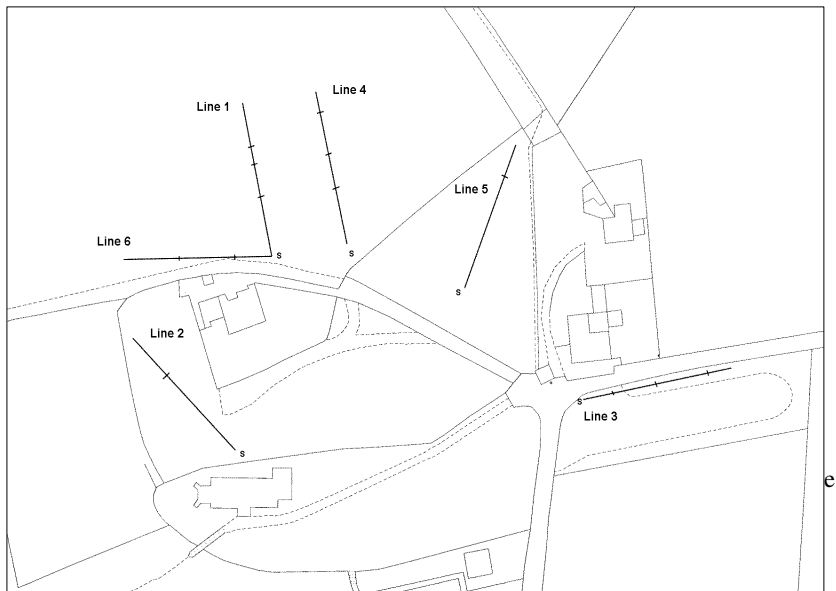


Plate 5: Prof. Griffiths and Dr. King setting up the survey

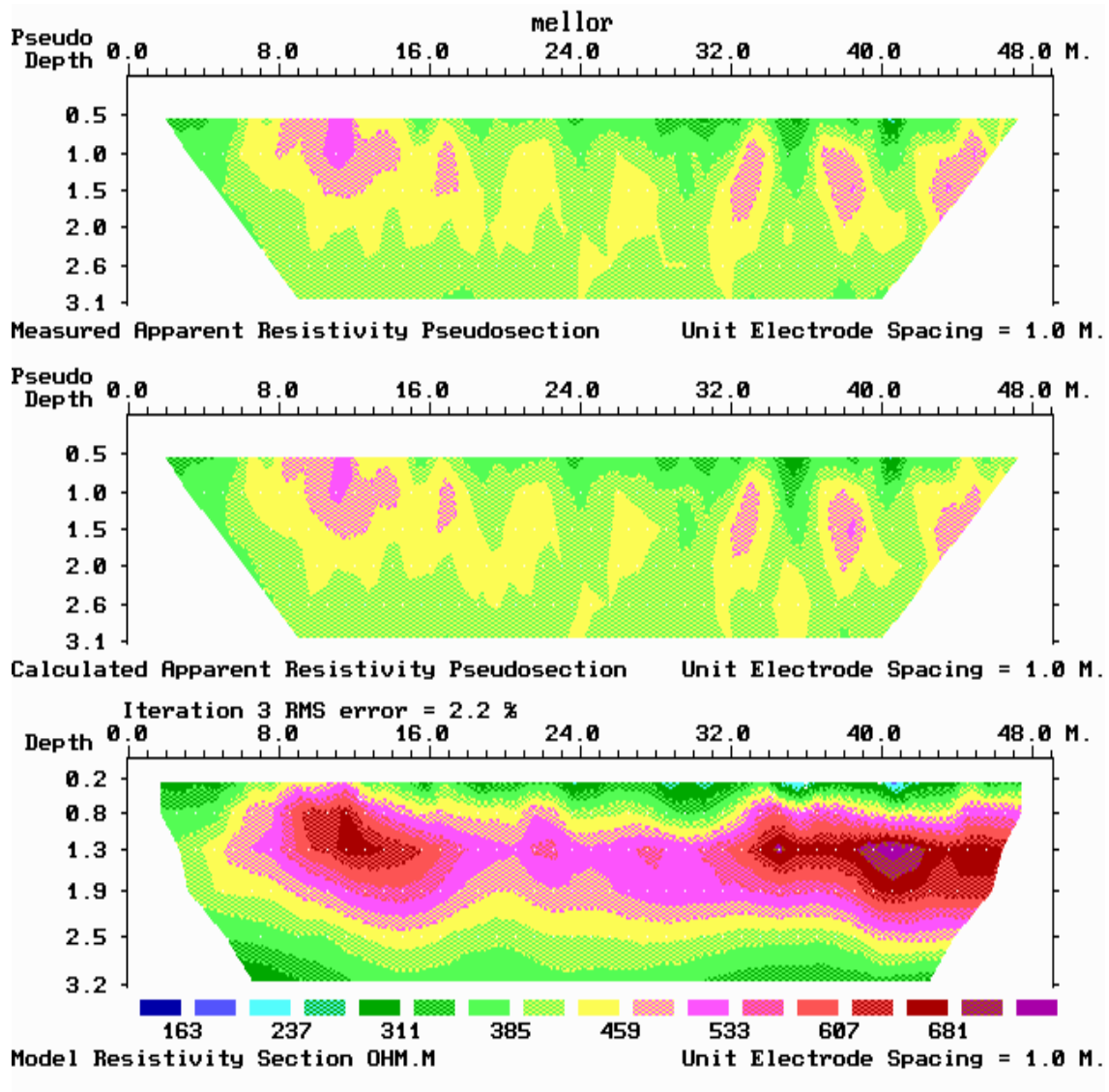
Within the following plots the top diagram shows a direct record of measurements, the bottom plot shows the calculated estimate of the actual resistances as functions of lateral position and depth, which gives the calculated plot of measurements in the middle diagram. Iterations are used to produce the bottom plot so as to minimise differences between the middle and top plot (note error value). Some colour differences however, which are clear on screen, are not clear on prints.



Mellor 1

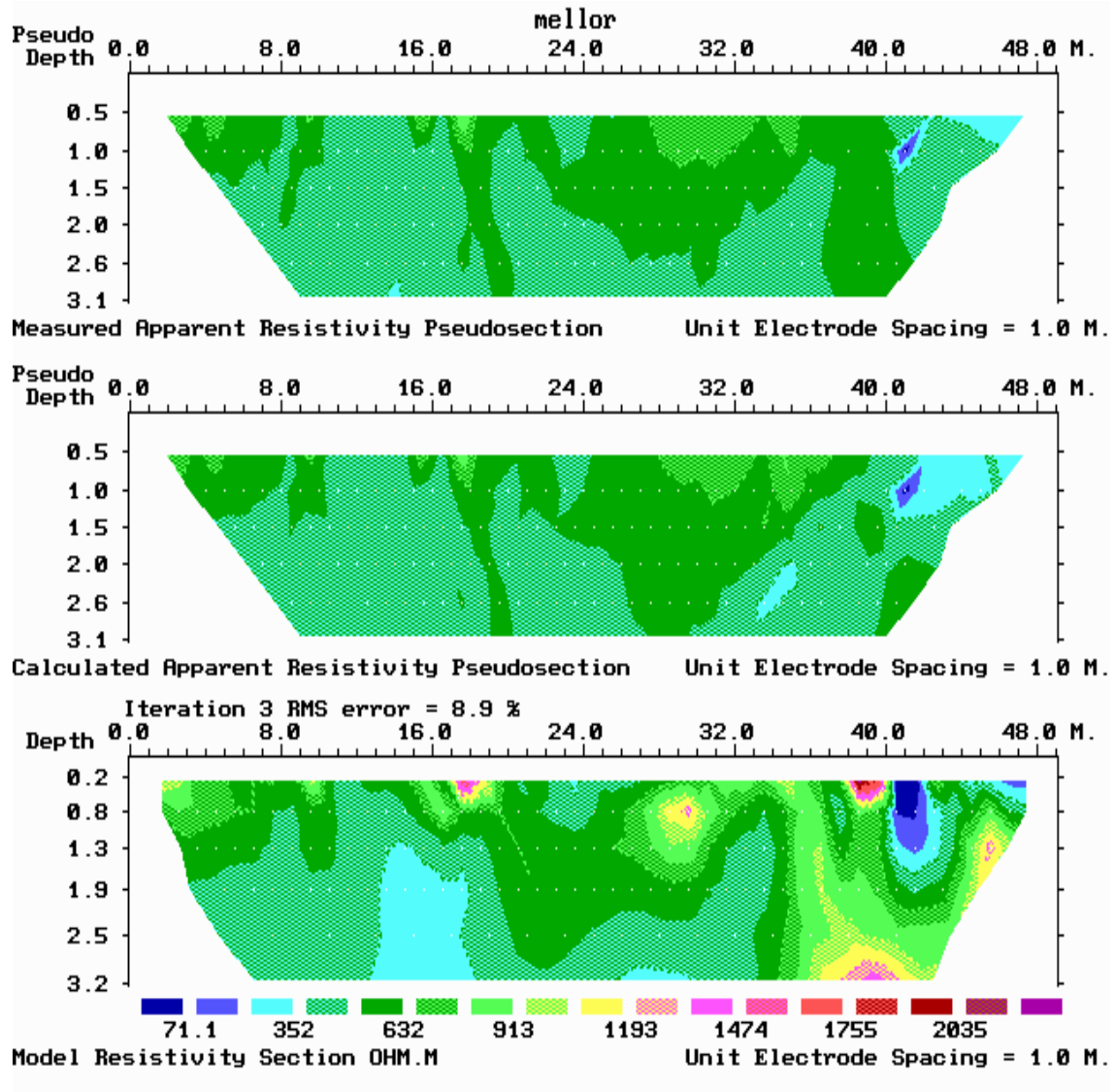
Located within the field to the north of the Old Vicarage and orientated approximately north-south.

Anomalies at (15 ½), 18 ½, 24, 29-31, 35, 40 ½



Mellor 1b

Along line of Mellor 1 but with electrodes spaced at 0.5m intervals. Line starts 18m from start of Mellor 1.  
Anomalies consistent with those showing on Mellor 1.



Mellor 2

University of Manchester Archaeological Unit  
December 2000

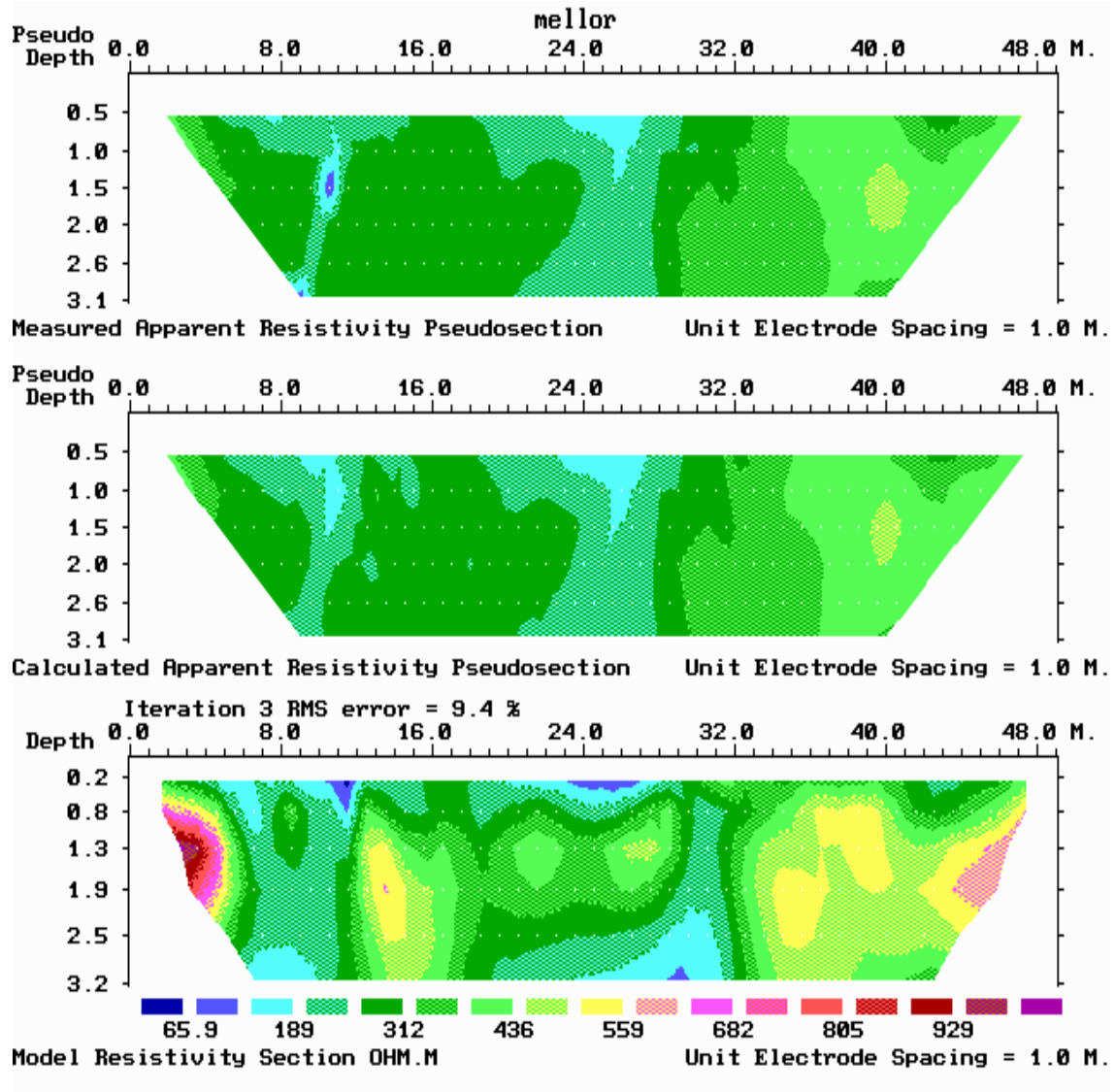


Within the Old Vicarage gardens aligned southeast-northwest, approximately parallel to and 4m to the south of trench 1. Bad contact problems were encountered with this line therefore it was repeated as Mellor 2b. Better results were obtained however there appears to be a problem showing up with electrode 41.

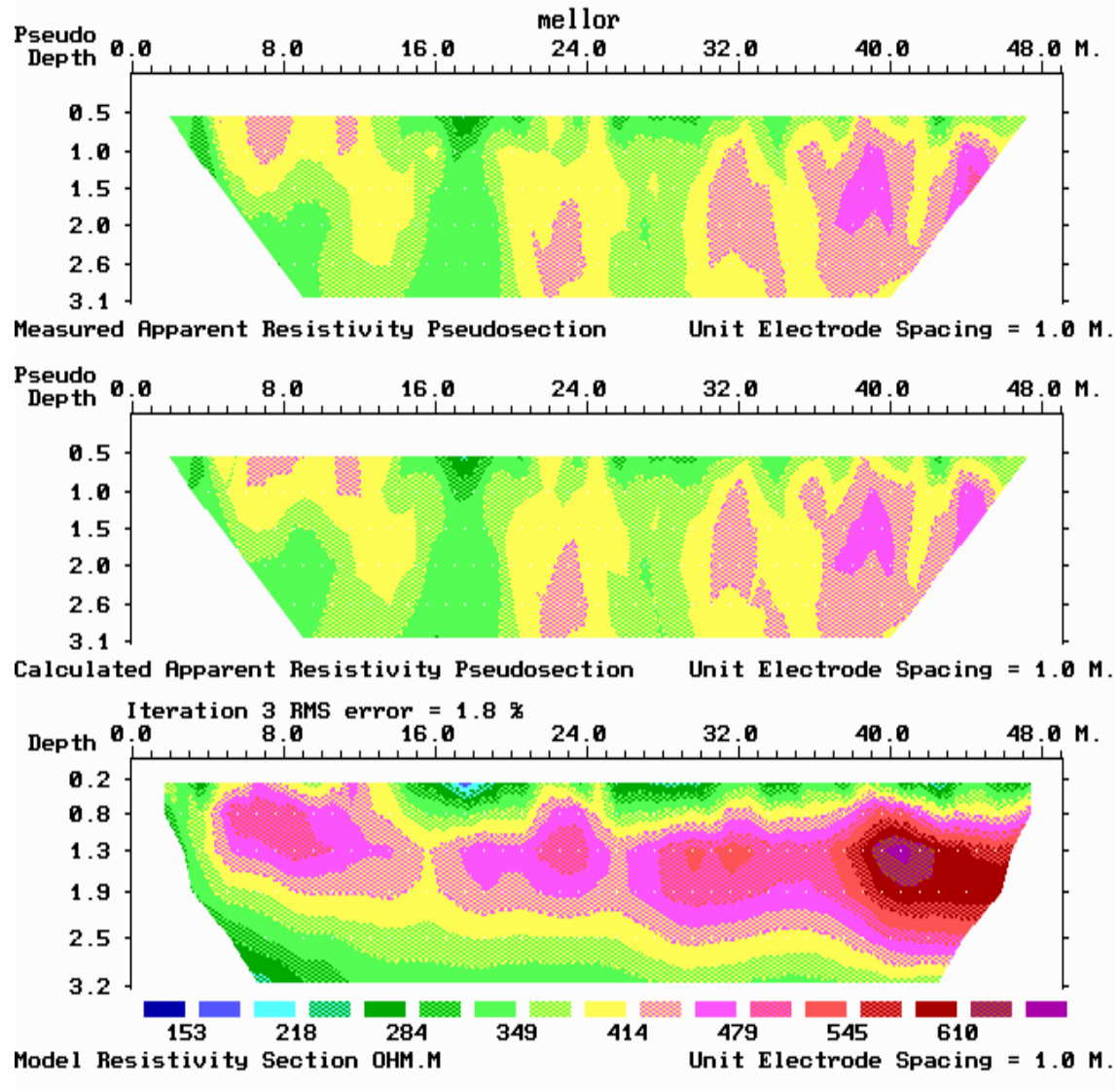
Mellor 3

Located along the grassed strip to the north of the car park, approximately 11m to the south of the Vicarage wall. With the centre of the line corresponding with a section of subsidence visible in the drystone wall.

Anomalies at 10 ½ (off-line?), 23-27, 33, 40-47(not extending laterally?)



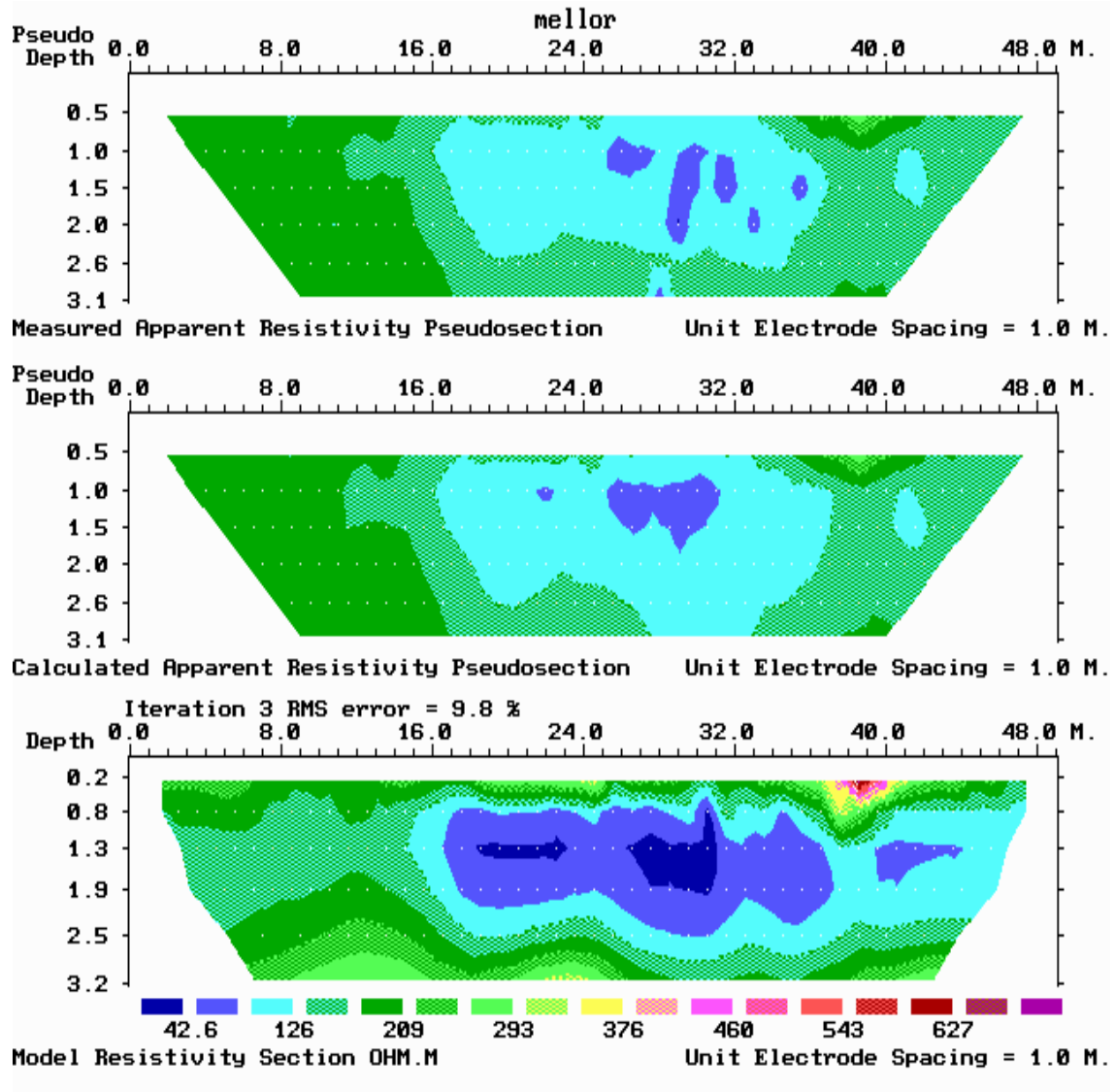
Mellor 4  
 Parallel to Mellor 1, 25m to the east.  
 Anomalies at 3?, 17 ½, 25-30, (34), (37 ½), (42 ½).



Mellor 5

Located within the triangular field to the west of the Vicarage and Glebe Cottage, aligned approximately south, southwest-north, northeast extending towards the stile in the northern corner.

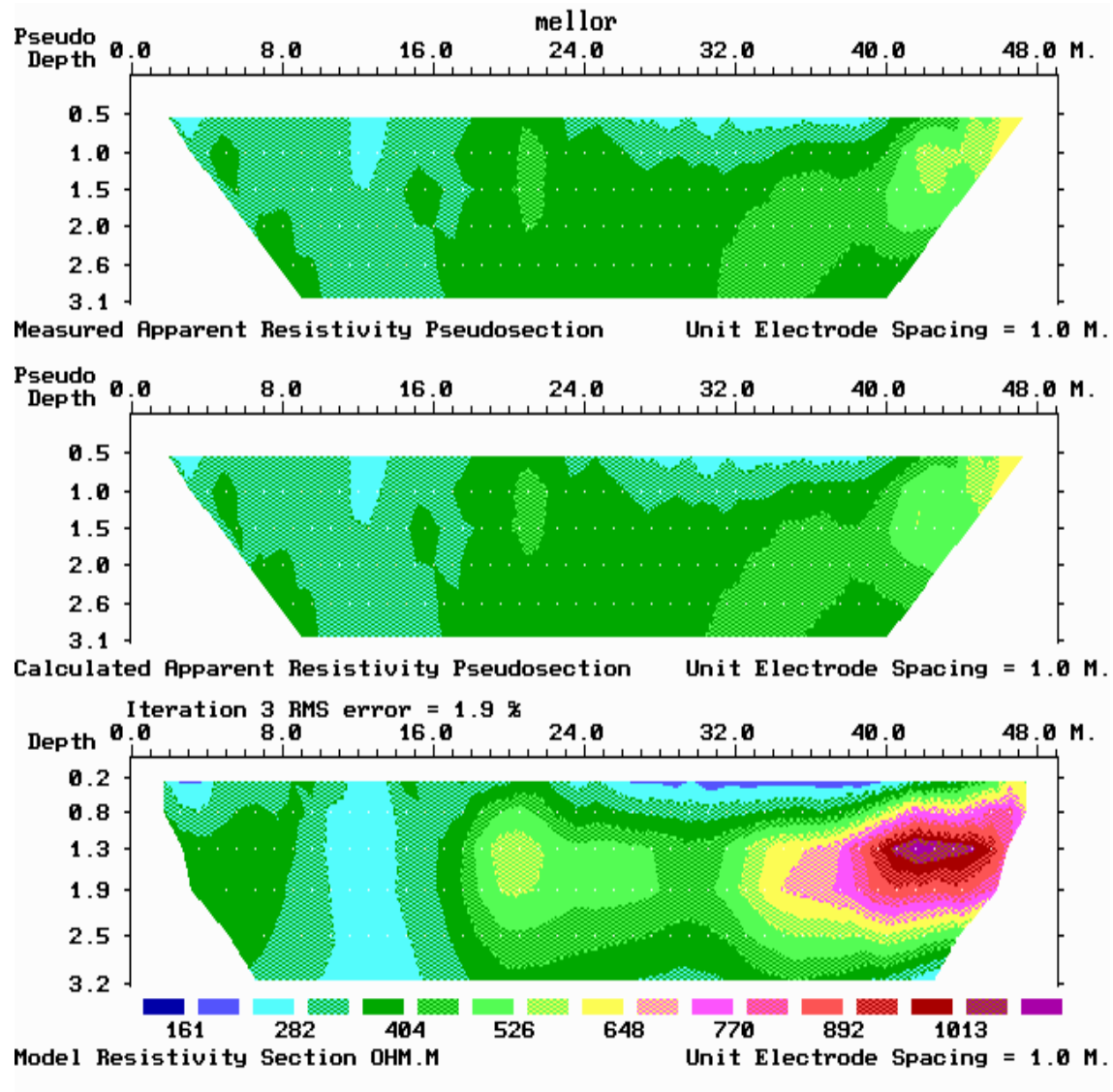
Anomalies present at a depth of 1-2m at 17-35m and on the surface at 36-41m



Mellor 6

Beginning from the start of Mellor 1, aligned east-west and extending to the west.

Anomalies at 3?, 11-14, 26-41.



## 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  
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*December 2000*



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.



Plate 6: Don Reid explaining the excavations during the open day



Plate 7: Ken Denham demonstrating the art of flintknapping during the open day.

## ***9. Sources***

**Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record-** Held and maintained by Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, 2000

**Tameside Before 1066-** UMAU, Mike Nevell, 1992

**The Antiquities of Lyme and its Vicinity-** Reverend Marriot, 1810

**Stockport- A History-** Peter Arrowsmith, 1997