

Archæological Notes

Cave Lion from Goatchurch Cavern, Burrington Combe, Somerset. In 1962 an incisor tooth of cave lion was found on the spoil heap left by Boyd Dawkins and Sanford (1865) in the Dining Chamber at the head of The Traverse (*Fig. 6*, p. 33). This is a new species from this cave. Cave lion might have been expected to occur here in view of the other fauna from this particular part of the cave (Baker, 1924; Browne, 1925). See also p. 32.

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Sun Hole Cave, Cheddar, Somerset. Pleistocene Fauna. There have been several reports on the Pleistocene fauna from this cave (Davies, 1955; Jackson, 1955; Tratman, 1955; Bramwell, 1957). The material has recently been re-examined by Dr. R. J. G. Savage, who has identified two additional species from the 6th-ft. level of the Pleistocene, namely beaver and wild cat. In view of the variety of the reports a recapitulation seems necessary. Briefly, the remains from the Pleistocene levels were very scanty. The richest level was the 6th ft. Remains ceased to occur altogether below the 7th ft. and down to the 18th ft., the bottom of the sounding. Down to the 8th ft. the deposits were a solifluction deposit of angular gravel with comparatively little admixture of fine earth. The 8th ft. marked a fairly abrupt transition to a deposit with a considerable content of fine red earth, and the relative quantities of this increased fairly evenly with increasing depth.

Man was represented in the 5th ft. by a canine tooth of an old adult and a radius of a younger individual. Flint implements of Creswellian, now called Cheddarian (Bohmers, 1956, p. 24), type came from the 5th and 6th ft. Though few in number, they were quite typical (Tratman, 1955, p. 69, *Fig. 10*).

The table on the opposite page summarizes the fauna and details will be found in the reports quoted.

The presence of beaver in the 6th ft. shows that there must have been some development of woodlands, at least in the more sheltered valleys, and presumably the reindeer associated in the same layer would be the forest type. The mollusca suggest "a calcareous soil . . . and tall scrub vegetation" (Davies, 1955, p. 71) and the birds conditions with "some bushes and scrubland in sheltered valleys" (Bramwell, 1957, p. 39). Ollier (1955) found a very high proportion of silt grade, 0.1-0.01 mm., particles in soil samples, especially in the 6th ft. This suggests conditions suitable for the development of loess. On the other hand hyæna, mammoth and rhinoceros are all absent. On this evidence it is suggested that from the 8th ft. to the top of the Pleistocene the deposits were formed in late Glacial times from the Allerød Interstadial and on through the Younger Dryas. Most of the deposits, because of the local Cheddarian flint industry in the 5th and 6th ft., must belong to the Younger Dryas stage (cf. ApSimon *et al.*, 1961, p. 102). The fairly abrupt transition in the nature of the deposits at the 8th-ft. level suggests some erosion of an older deposit, but unfortunately there are no faunal remains to assist in dating these lower levels, though they are not likely to go back beyond the Younger Würm. This would be in accordance with the large amount of frost-shattered rock found when the west wall of the cave, near the mouth, was exposed. The shattering was most severe from the 6th to 18th ft. of the excavations. Only the west wall was exposed.

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Burrington Camp, Somerset. An unoccupied site. (O.S. 6 in. to 1 mile, Som. ST 45 N.E., N.G.R. ST 478588.) (*Fig. 3*.) The camp lies on the northward-facing slope of Burrington Ham. Its west side abuts on the east side of Burrington Combe. There are quite a number of references to the camp though only that by Allcroft (1908, p. 582) need be mentioned. He puts the camp into the nondescript group of religious and defensive structures, basing his view on the existence of a ditch inside

the single bank as well as outside, the inside ditch being regarded by him as analogous with those at religious monuments such as Avebury. The camp covers only 2 acres.

The ground on which the camp lies has a general slope down from south to north, the slope being even and not steep. From east to west the slope is gentle as far as the eastern edge of Burrington Combe, where it becomes very steep indeed. To the south and east the camp is dominated by rising ground, which culminates in the south-east in a high outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone, known as the Long Rock. The top of this rock is scarcely 100 yd. from the south-east corner of the camp and its summit is at least 50 ft. higher. The site is obviously not a good one tactically, though it might be regarded as defending a route through Burrington Combe. There is no water supply. The defences are rather feeble.

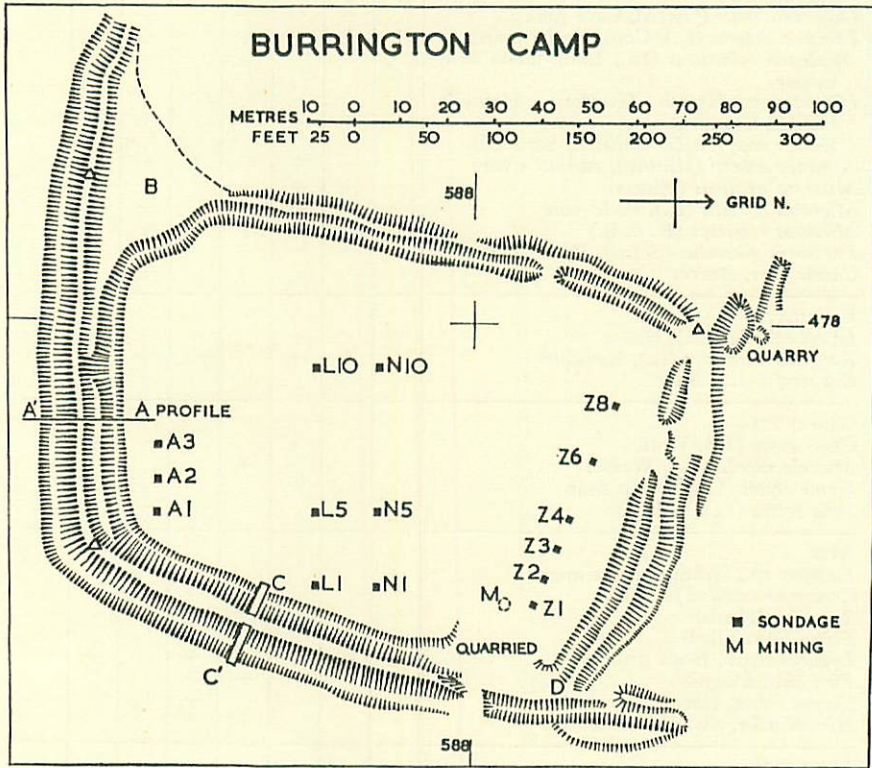


Fig. 3.—Based on survey by J. Crickmay.

The site was studied in detail in March 1956, when all the undergrowth had been burnt off. The earthwork is roughly rectangular, with rounded angles. The defences consist of an outer ditch, a bank and an inner, but shallower, ditch. The defences are strongest along the south and east sides. On the south the bank has a profile suggesting the intention to build a rampart walk behind the outer and higher part of the bank, but this is probably a fortuitous feature. The profile across the defences is shown in Fig. 4, A. The top of the bank on the south must have stood originally at least 10 ft. above the bottom of the outer ditch, but the ground slope is such that at about 20 yd. beyond the ditch the ground would be level with the top of the bank. At the south-east corner is a low, small mound on the top of the bank. At its west end the southern bank and its outer ditch continue straight to the edge of Burrington Combe, though reduced in size because there is no spoil from the inner ditch to maintain this. The

inner ditch takes a sinuous course on its turn south, and the spoil has been heaped on the inner side to form a very low bank. This leaves a triangular area, B (*Fig. 3*), with practically no defences.

Along the west side the defences consist of the inner quarry ditch with the spoil forming a feeble bank on the outside, which is on the lip of Burrington Combe, where the slope is almost precipitous and was, presumably, considered to be sufficient defence. There is a small break in the continuity of the defences, but the discontinuities are not opposite each other and are likely to be of recent origin.

On the east side the defences are very similar to those on the south, and the profile, with its incipient rampart walk, is the same as far as the cutting, C (*Fig. 3*), made in 1948. The northern end of the east side has suffered greatly from stone robbing and mining activities and there is a substantial gap through the defences. The gap seems to be entirely modern, but without excavation cannot be proved so. Beyond the gap the outer ditch continues north to end as an open cutting where the ground slope steepens, and there is a small outer bank here as well as the main bank. Neither the outer ditch nor the bank of the northern defences quite meet the eastern ones, and the narrow gap, D, looks ancient. The eastern outer ditch could have served as a protected sunken way to a postern gate.

Along the north side the defences are much feebler than on the south and east, and there is no very steep slope to supplement them. The plan (*Fig. 3*) shows a somewhat complicated structure towards the western end. It seems as if the original major entrance was here, though its exact nature cannot be determined without excavation. The break in the outer ditch and the manner in which the two parts of the ditch overlap are the chief indications that the main entrance was here. Further west the defences have been interfered with by quarrying, but these defences do not run out to the edge of Burrington Combe as shown on the old O.S. Maps.

In 1948 this Society cut a trench through the outer and inner ditches at C. The cuttings were extended partly through the bank. No report was published. The only artifact found was a small slab of Old Red Sandstone, which must have been brought to the site. It had been crudely shaped to serve, perhaps, as a pot cover. In April 1960 a series of trial pits, each 4 ft. square, were dug, A, L, N, Z (*Fig. 3*), in an attempt to obtain datable material. Not a single ancient object was found. Not even a sherd of Roman pottery. There were minor variations in the sections exposed in the pits, but the typical stratification was:

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| 1. Turf and top soil | 0-10 in. |
| 2. Brown earth with some weathered limestones | 10-16 in. |
| 3. More clayish material in the interstices of the weathered limestone surface | 16-20 in. |

There was no evidence whatsoever of any occupation, not even a trampled layer, which might have been developed from the use of the site as a cattle pound.

The 1948 cutting through the ditches was refurbished and extended part way through the bank on both sides. The primary turf layer under the bank could not be detected, though it was looked for carefully. The bank showed no structural features and was just a pile of material thrown out of the two ditches. In the outer ditch the cutting had extended down into the Carboniferous Limestone, and stone from this had been piled up on the outer side of the bank producing the higher zone already noted, so that the presence of an embryonic rampart walk may easily be fortuitous. The inner ditch had not been cut down into the rock, so there was no stone from that side to throw onto the bank to equalize that from the outer ditch. There was little stone in the lower silting of the ditch, and in the upper silting the stones had clearly slipped in at a late stage. There had obviously been a berm between the edge of the ditch and the bank. No finds were made.

It is concluded that Burrington Camp was never occupied, and a number of features suggest that it was never completed. The date of its construction must remain undecided in the absence of datable material. Its tactical position, especially on the south, is poor. It is of small size. It appears to have been the product of hurried defensive measures against a threat that never developed or which developed so quickly and disastrously that there was no time to complete the site before the makers were overwhelmed.

The single rampart of dump construction, with a berm between it and the rather flat-bottomed outer ditch, has a resemblance to the form of construction used

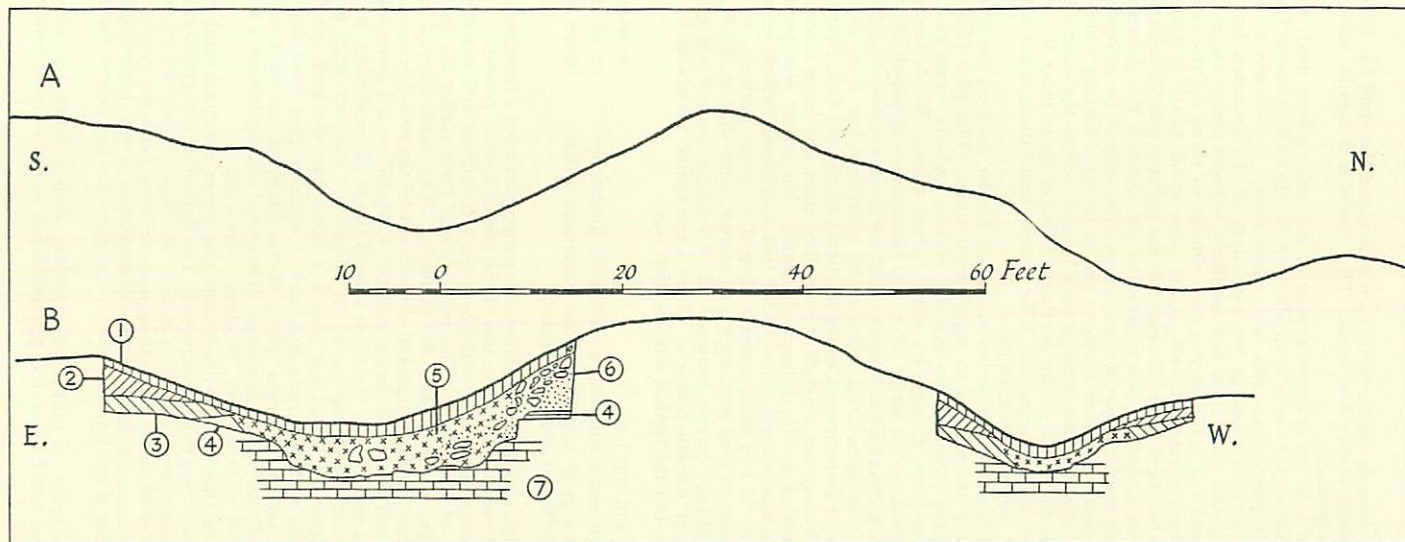


Fig. 4.—Burrington Camp. A, Profile across defences on south side. B, Section of ditches and profile across bank on east side: 1, Top soil; 2, Brown sub-soil with a few stones; 3, Stony layer with clayish material merging into, 4, Weathered rock surface; 5, Silting of ditch, mixed towards bank, with, 6, Bank slip; 7, Carboniferous Limestone of hill.

by the Iron Age, Third Western B, people, and the camp could be of this date. On the other hand, its small size and the total absence of finds hint at an earlier, and perhaps Bronze Age, date. It must antedate the introduction of the sling and even the javelin, for if the attackers had these weapons they would have been able to command the south and east defences and the interior of the camp from the higher ground outside the camp.

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