

LOWER COURT FARM

The Deserted Medieval Village of Long Ashton. (ST 550707).

Visited on Thursday, 10th August 1978.

The excavation was directed by Dr. Roger Leech and assisted by Terry Pearson (Tel.No. Keynsham (027 56) 67286) who was in charge at the time of my visit.

The site lies just north of a stream with the hill side sloping up towards the main road running through the village. The stream has in the past provided water for at least one mill, virtually on the site. The site consists of red clay from the ubiquitous Keuper Marl of Somerset. It has suffered somewhat by hill-wash so that it has been covered since its desertion by an average 30 cm of red soil. Stone quarries exist high up the hill beyond the village and it is said that "seams" of iron ore outcrop from place to place along the contour between the site ^{and} of the village. However, a builder's trench going up-hill from the site has failed to show anything. In view of the patchy nature of the deposit I have suggested that another trench should be cut.

The slag, recovered from the uphill side of the site, is not all that plentiful and I have advised that it should be weighed. At the time of the visit a little "cinder" had been left in situ. After, this was removed and has yielded furnace bottoms below it. The slags were of two types - tap slag, and cinder. No smithing furnace bottoms were found. The pottery dating is 11-14th Century and it seems that the iron smelting was in the early period.

No furnaces were found and it would seem from the lie of the slag that they would be on the north (uphill) side of the site.

One knife blade was found and a heavy piece of bronze

which may be part of a cauldron.

Generally the site seems typical of the period when all local ore resources were used. I have suggested that an analysis of the slag and ore be made for phosphorus and manganese.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.F. Tylecote', with a horizontal line underneath.

19th August 1978.

R.F. Tylecote.