

Roman Lead Smelting?

Having read the article by Lynn Willies on Carsington Pasture (*Bulletin.PDMHS* (1995) Vol. 12, No. 5, p.19-23), I was reminded of an article in the *Derby Mercury* (18 May 1853, p.3. Col. 2), which reads as follows:

ANTIQUÉ MILLSTONES.- A pair of very ancient millstones or "querns" were recently discovered near Hognaston, by workmen employed by Mr Alfred Allsop, lead smelter and merchant, of the Via Gellia, near Matlock. The stones are about 16 inches in diameter, and grooved in horizontal lines from centre to circumference, but do not possess the transverse, or rather diagonal lines of grooves used in modern millstones. They are of a hard and sharp gritstone, and so compact, as to emit a ringing sound when struck . . . The stones, together with a Roman coin, are in good preservation, they are at the Via Gellia Lead Works, and Mr Allsop, would, we have no doubt, permit an inspection by any one curious in such matters. There were fully nine feet of covering of rubbish and lead slag, over the spot where the querns were found.

This might possibly be interpreted as suggesting there was a Roman lead smelting site near Hognaston.

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