

Minor Monuments and Lesser Antiquities of Derbyshire.

By THOMAS L. TUDOR.

There has been a great deal of trouble during the summer season over malicious damage to the Riley Graves and Mompesson's Well at Eyam. Correspondence from several sources has reached me on the subject. Eyam has always been the centre of this kind of mischief owing to its situation, convenient for the weekly exodus from Sheffield, Stockport and Manchester. The "Come to Derbyshire" agitation, largely a traders' affair, has not conspicuously improved the County's amenities. In trying to get these objects scheduled I was met by the rejoinder that the Department is already congested with the business of protecting many thousands of Ancient Monuments of the first class. It afterwards transpired that the Derbyshire County Council had decided to step in under a provision of the Act of 1913 (section 21) and to constitute themselves a Local Authority under the Act. This means a closer watch on local antiquities. In reply to a question, why more such means had not been taken, the reply was 'local apathy.' It is to be hoped that more of our antiquities, especially in isolated parts, may be taken into this local protection.

The Buxton Archaeological Society have promised some assistance in getting the Five Wells Tumulus under better protection and to get the wall altered as suggested in last year's notes.

The two-arched seventeenth century bridge at Derwent (scheduled) is to be re-erected a few miles further up the

Derwent as a memorial to John Derry who wrote "Across the Derbyshire Moors," a little book of great usefulness to walkers, and a real *multum in parvo* for its topographical information on the finest Derbyshire routes across country. This is a good scheme to save the bridge, which will be demolished (along with the Hall) as the construction of the third dam proceeds. The bridge is a finished piece of architecture, and although its style is in marked contrast to the wild natural character of the high moors, it is better to rebuild it there than to lose it altogether.

The first mention of it as a County Bridge is in 1681-2. It probably replaced an older bridge as the crossing was always important and a ford uncertain. It appears to have owed its origin to the Balguys of Derwent Hall and there is evidence of Catholic influence in the half-way pedestal on the parapet for a lamp or crucifix. The Catholic faith survived strongly in this part of Derbyshire. The appeal for funds by the Memorial Committee at Sheffield should receive sympathetic response.

An object of much interest in another vein is at Tansley, near Matlock. In the midst of the village there is a butcher's shop converted from a Nonconformist Chapel of many years ago. The chapel in its turn was converted from a cock-pit, eight-sided, and its form remains. You can also trace the lay-out inside, the gallery-surround, and the stairs to it. Cock-fighting was in great vogue among 'gentlemen in High Life' as Blackstone puts it, and as a consequence, in bad repute in many directions. It was not really made illegal until 1849. No doubt the 'gentlemen' who frequented Matlock for their health, found it just the thing to patronise the sport in country retirement, and away from squeamish members of the public. Perhaps Lord Byron was not above going there as a change from writing gushing things about Matlock scenery. But this is by-the-way. The cock-pit went out of business about 1810 and came into the hands of the

Methodists, who made much of this salutary change and inscribed over the door "See what God Hath Done Here." The exhortation can still be seen over the entrance, but is hidden by the shop sign, and is difficult to photograph. The Methodists used it for about 20 years, I believe.

A Bronze Age find, indeed several, have been made in the Willington gravels near Derby. Their special interest lies in the scarcity of such finds in South Derbyshire, probably owing to agriculture. The late Mr. John Ward suggested this explanation many years ago. The principle object is a cinerary urn, decorated in the usual simple way with lines, zig-zag and such like, but they are pricked in and not drawn as is most usual in other local types. The urn is reddish in colour, about seven inches high, and was unearthed quite entire, though slightly crushed in on one side.

It was due to my grandson, Maurice Tudor Shenton, that this urn was brought to the notice of Mr. F. Williamson, Director of our Museum, who now has it on view in the Museum. The manager of Willington Gravels allowed it to be brought into town for inspection. We took it to the Director who at once approached Mr. Hesketh, explaining its archaeological value and suggesting its addition to the Museum. The same messenger took the letter back which was successful, as we see.

Lesser finds have been made. A piece of another urn with criss-cross ornament shows a rubbing down of the detail. This indicates movement of the surface soil and agriculture is again the most probable explanation. These deposits of gravel date from long before the Bronze Age, and disturbances of settling down cannot explain this partial obliteration of ornament. No doubt many such objects have disappeared among the lowlands of Derbyshire from the same cause. It may be added in relation to this question, that the Ancient Monuments Board some years ago consented to schedule the Swarkeston Lows in

response to the argument that such mounds, although probably not tumuli in the archaeological sense, might nevertheless contain some prehistoric remains. This being so the excavation of these hillocks, no doubt also of gravel, should be controlled.