

## Note on a Bronze Dagger found at Hungry Bentley.

By Prof. V. GORDON CHILDE.

THE bronze dagger described below was dug out of a rabbit burrow at Hungry Bentley recently, and is of interest not only as being a rare find for this part of Derbyshire, but also as being without parallel, so far as the present writer is aware. It is the owner's intention to place it in the Derby Museum.

The blade is much corroded, one face being almost entirely covered with copper rust that has eaten into the metal and formed blisters.

One edge has been entirely corroded away, but on the other side two sections of the original edge, 1·7 and 0·7 cm. long are intact and still quite sharp.

The blade has been something over 20·5 cm. long and is still ogeval in outline. The edge is hollow ground on both faces, the blade is strengthened with a broad tapering midrib. This is now 0·8 cm. thick 13 cm. from the point but allowance has to be made for the coating of oxide on one face while a larger deduction must be made from the figure 0·55 cm. the measured thickness 1 cm. from the point since both sides are here corroded.

Inside the bevel, that marks the hollow ground section of the edge, the blade is 0·2 cm. thick and on the hilt-plate the midrib itself disappears, the metal being only 0·4 cm. on its line 19 cm. from the point.

The hilt of wood or horn was attached by three rivets of which two are still in place while the third was found separate. (A small segment of the hole which held this rivet is still visible). The rivets are 1·9, 2·2 and 1·7 cm.

long and all about 0.9 cm. in thickness at the perforation. The large heads have been formed by hammering down—traces of the hammer-marks are just discernible. In the two side rivets the distances between the under-sides of the heads are over 0.15 cm. greater on the insides than on the outsides (1.45 and 1.50 cm. respectively) while the heads of the central rivet are symmetrical and 1.6 cm. apart. These discrepancies mean that the hilt tapered sideways along its shoulders. The marks of the usual crescentic indentations in the centre of the hilt's base is clearly visible on the metal of the hilt plate.

The blade is "decorated" on both faces with two converging bands of four grooves parallel to the edges and starting from the side rivet-holes. (These grooves may have been cast on the blade). The inner margins of the grooves have been subsequently enhanced by very finely engraved hatched triangles on the base of the mid-rib. The inner margins of the bands of triangles are delimited by double rows of punched dots. It looks as if the whole surface of the midrib between these rows was filled in with similar dots. Its ogeval outline, stout mid-rib and large rivets mark the weapon as a typical product of the Middle Bronze Age. But I can cite no exact parallel either to its form or to its decoration among daggers from the British Isles. (The nearest seems to be Chippenham, Cambs. *Proc. Camb. Antiquarian Soc.*, xxxvi, 134 ff.).

Of course rivets like ours were used for the attachment of Irish halberds and the designs and techniques adorning our dagger recur on pottery and metalwork, notably on decorated flat axes, of the Early-middle Bronze Age in the British Isles—they were in fact current throughout western and central Europe. Still I feel that the nearest relatives to this blade should be sought among weapons of Kraft's Rhone culture in Switzerland, south-eastern France and Upper Italy (cf. *Anzeiger Fürschwiz, Altertumskunde*, xxix (1937), plates iii-vi).