TWO PERFORATED QUARTZITE MACEHEADS FROM DERBYSHIRE

By T. D. FORD AND R. G. HUGHES

UARTZITE pebble maceheads with hour-glass or countersunk perforaions are fairly common as chance finds in south-east England and East Anglia, but in the Midlands and the north of England they are relatively rare. This type of macehead was made from selected natural quartzite pebbles found in outcrops of Bunter pebble beds. The perforation was achieved by working the pebble from both sides and the result, in section, is an hour-glass shaped hole through the pebble. These perforated pebbles seem to have their origin in the Mesolithic period, though the form seems to have lasted a long time; they could have served a variety of purposes from digging-stick weights, net-sinkers to hammerstones. In the main, from the evidence of the bruising at the ends of the pebbles, it is likely that they were used as hammerstones. Rankine has shown in his register of maceheads with hour-glass perforations that they vary in length from $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. to $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; and in weight from a few ounces to about $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.¹

Known finds in Derbyshire of this type of macehead are extremely rare. In fact only two are known, one found at Chellaston, Derby, about 1956, and the other recently found by Dr. Ford, near Hopton. Both are chance finds and have no associated materials. They have been deposited in Derby Museum.

The Chellaston specimen was found in 1956 in an area under excavation by the Chellaston Brick Works (SK 385302). This is a medium size macehead of I lb. $6\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight and is unusually thick for a length of $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. It has slight peripheral bruising and some signs of wear around the crater. Measurements are: width $3\frac{3}{4}$ in., thickness $1\frac{3}{4}$ in., crater (oval) $1\frac{3}{4}$ -2 in., neck (oval) $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 in.

The Hopton pebble was found 200 yds. west of the Magnesium Works near to the Hopton crossroads (SK 255547), where surface clearing was taking place for an extension for quarry working. Since Dr. Ford's discovery, a further search has been made of the area by members of the Society, but no other artifact was found. This macehead is a small specimen, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. in length and $9\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight. The neck of the aperture shows a great deal of wear, but the bruising at the ends of the pebble is slight. Other measurements are: width $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., thickness $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., crater (round) 1 in., neck (round) $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The pebbles from which these maceheads were made are typical of those in the Bunter pebble beds of the Triassic age which outcrop over a wide area of the Midlands, ranging from Nottingham westwards along the Trent Valley into Staffordshire and south Cheshire, and southwards around Birmingham

¹ Archaeological News Letter, vol. 4, no. 4.

towards the Malvern Hills. Separate outcrops are to be found along the Devon-Dorset boundary, and outcrops with much smaller pebbles only are much more widespread. In general, pebbles large enough to be used for maceheads would not be expected north of the latitude of Mansfield-Macclesfield, but to the south of this, apart from the parent outcrops, the pebbles were widely distributed by ice action during the Pleistocene period, and are common in some or all of the boulder clays from the Severn Valley to East Anglia as far south as the Thames Valley. These latter ice-transported pebbles could account for the more frequent finds of maceheads in south-east England and East Anglia. The Hopton find appears to be the only one in the Peak District, where pebbles are rare except that pebbles derived from the Bunter beds are found in silica sand pits around Brassington and Friden. The Hopton macehead was found only half a mile from the nearest silica sand pit and thus may have been made, used and lost in the Brassington area.

A ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY KILN AT Shottle Hall, Derbyshire

By S. O. KAY AND R. G. HUGHES

URING 1963, the East Midlands Gas Board was responsible for laying a section of pipeline, for the Sahara Methane Gas Project, from Alrewas in Staffordshire through Derbyshire to Penistone in Yorkshire. Through the excellent co-operation of their officials we were able to examine a plan of the route and to point out certain areas where archaeological materials might be encountered. We are particularly grateful to their Project Engineer, Mr. F. Gosling, and his Assistant Engineer, Mr. W. Prosser, for reporting that the excavator had "cut through some burnt material containing fragments of pottery", near Shottle Gate. On visiting the site we found that the 5 ft. deep trench had cut through a typical Romano-British "updraught" pottery kiln leaving about one-third of the kiln sectioned in the side of the trench. After the 18 in. diameter pipe had been laid in position at the bottom of the trench, the engineers agreed to delay the filling in until an investigation had been carried out on what remained of the kiln structure.

The kiln was unearthed in a field (SK 34/314475) belonging to the Chatsworth Estates on their Shottle Hall Farm, tenanted by Messrs. Mathews and Son (Fig. 20). It had similarities in construction with the kilns at Holbrook and Hazelwood.¹ The Hazelwood site is less than one mile to the E.S.E. and that at Holbrook a further $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles in the same direction. Examination of a length of open trench showed a considerable area of sand with pockets of clay. As at Holbrook, the kiln walls were lined with puddled clay which

¹ D.A.J., LXXXII (1962), 21-42.