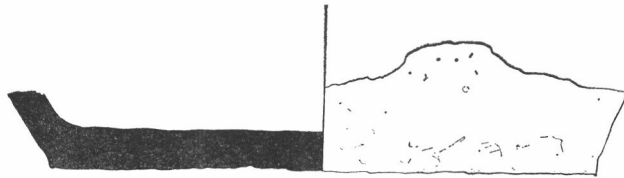


THE BASE OF AN URN FROM TOTLEY MOOR

By JEFFREY RADLEY

MR. C. Gregory of Pilsley discovered numerous fragments of pottery on a burnt patch on Totley Moor in spring 1964 (SK 282788). The sherds appear to be similar to other finds of the Middle Bronze Age from the same moor. The fragments belong to one base. It seemed probable that the rest of an inverted urn might still be in the ground, representing an unmarked grave or cemetery, and so the site was excavated at Whitsuntide 1964, with the kind permission of the North Derbyshire Water Board. Fourteen square yards were dug to a depth of one foot, but although the total number of sherds was increased to 38 the rest of the urn was not recovered. The base, measuring 5.8 in. across, has been reconstructed (see Fig. 10), and traces of grass impressions remain on the exterior. The fabric is a brown coarse clay with large quartz inclusions. Thumb impressions can be seen in three places.

FIG. 10. Base of an urn, Totley Moor ($\frac{1}{2}$).

Within a radius of 50 yds. several other finds have been made. A flint site (Totley 8) yielded Mesolithic flints and Neolithic remains including three transverse arrowheads, a large flint knife, numerous scrapers, and a little flint and chert debris. Nearby, there are traces of a shale-working floor, the only one known outside Wessex (unpublished). North-west of the sherds there are several small mounds; one measuring 16 x 10 ft. and 10 in. high was sectioned. It contained numerous flaggy stones standing on end in yellow soil and may have been produced by solifluction processes.

A LEAD HORN-BOOK FROM BRASSINGTON

By R. G. HUGHES

THE accompanying illustrations (Plate XIX) show the obverse and reverse sides of a rare lead primer or horn-book recently found by Mr. E. Nightingale of Wirksworth in the Tudor House, Brassington, during alterations. The owner of the house is Miss Warner. The horn-book is 2 in.



The Brassington Horn-Book.

in length plus $\frac{1}{2}$ in. handle; its width varies from $1\frac{3}{8}$ to $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. and it weighs a little less than 1 oz. It is cast in lead, a local material capable of being easily worked into such a form. This lead horn-book is of particular interest as the only known example of its kind found in Derbyshire.

Horn-books were until as late as the beginning of the 19th century in everyday use by children learning to read. They were not books in the accepted sense of the word, but a simple leaf on which was printed the alphabet for the child to learn. This precious leaf (for printing in its early days was costly) was applied to a wooden back and the printed letters covered with a thin sheet of transparent horn to keep the paper clean. The horn was fastened down by strips of brass along each side, held in place by brass tacks. Hence the name of horn-book. Most were made in this way, but others, like the Brassington example, were made of cast lead, and a few later on of inscribed ivory. All had a handle with a hole in it through which was threaded a tape or ribbon to hang the horn-book round the child's neck or suspend it from a girdle.

Although they must have been produced by the hundred, few remain today probably because their extreme commonness made them valueless to their owners, who therefore seldom passed them on or preserved them.

The earliest and simplest, like that from Brassington, show the letters of the alphabet alone. This one, in addition, begins with the "Christ Cross". When naming this, children were taught to cross themselves. After the Reformation, the meaning of this religious symbol was neglected and its name was corrupted to "criss-cross". It is interesting to note that two of the bands of decoration on the obverse of the Brassington horn-book form what might today be called a criss-cross pattern. The cross motif recurs on the handle, and the letter "X" has been turned into a cross.

"Battledore" horn-books printed on card, some with woodcut illustrations, were later widespread and were sold by chapmen or "flying stationers" for as little as a penny. These battledores were produced in Derby by a printer called Thomas Richardson and in Bakewell by G. Nall.

One very famous horn-book also had a Derbyshire origin. It was found at Middleton in 1828, like the Brassington one in the wall of an old house, and came into the possession of Thomas Bateman, the well-known archaeologist. This horn-book was printed in black-letter type on paper mounted on an oak board protected by a thin layer of horn. The back was covered with leather embossed with an equestrian portrait of Charles I with a celestial crown and a cherub above him. This suggests a date about 1650 soon after his execution. Unfortunately this valuable specimen has been lost as it was sold to a foreign collector at the Bateman sale in 1893.

The Brassington horn-book is made of cast lead, which indicates that there must have been a mould from which probably many were made. A stone matrix or mould of this kind was found at the beginning of this century at Eyam on the site of an old house at Shepherd's Flat. It was described and illustrated in this *Journal* by William Bemrose (XXX, 1908, 297-8). Undoubtedly it had been used to produce just such horn-books as the one

from Brassington. Made of incised gritstone (a rather coarse-grained material for this purpose) it yielded a lead impression far inferior in quality to the Brassington horn-book, although in many ways the two are very similar in style. I estimate that the Brassington horn-book and this matrix are roughly contemporary, though the former's matrix would have been of a finer-grained stone, possibly limestone, making for more delicate and precise workmanship.

A clue to the date is provided by the motif on the reverse: a Tudor rose surmounted by a crown and flanked by the letters "E.R.". Most probably it dates from the reign of Elizabeth I, rather than from the short reign of Edward VI. The style of the lettering appears to date from a time when the full impact of the Renaissance was being felt in England. The most interesting aspect of this specimen is in fact the mixture of Gothic and Renaissance lettering with the latter predominating. The letters "D", "H", "Q", "Z" hark back to the Gothic, but the rest are in a quite elegant and well-proportioned Roman style. The "E" and "S" correspond very closely in style with the same letters, the initials of Bess of Hardwick or Elizabeth Shrewsbury, surmounting Hardwick Hall. She was in the forefront of those who applied the Renaissance style to houses, furniture and fittings, as can be seen at Hardwick.

It is also interesting to see the difficulties encountered by the engraver of the mould in reversing the letters; "D" and "N" have come out backwards (though it is not unusual to find "N" written in this way in medieval manuscripts). The final symbol is an imperfectly understood ampersand (et) which has not been reversed, so that the "t" appears on the left and the "e" on the right.