TWO PERFORATED STONE IMPLEMENTS FROM DERBYSHIRE

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The two stone implements published here were both brought to my attention by members of an extra-mural class at Winster. Both have been identified macroscopically by Dr. Cummins of Nottingham University, and the first one has also been thin-sectioned as part of the Implement Petrology Survey of the Council for British Archaeology, with the help of Dr. Patricia Phillips. I am grateful to Dr. Cummins for permission to publish the results in advance of his own publication. The drawings of the implements are by Mr. Richard Whinney.

The Pebble Mace-head (Fig. 2 : 1)

The pierced pebble was found by Mr. Smelt of Two Dales, Matlock, who has since donated it to Sheffield Museum. It was discovered during pipelaying in Chatsworth Park, near the village of Edensor, some six to seven metres south of the garden wall of the outlying cottage south of the Baslow-to-Rowsley road, Grid Reference SK 2532 6991 (Fig. 1a). Here there is a small dry valley which runs eastwards down to the River Derwent. The ground has been greatly disturbed, presumably during the landscaping of the park. Beneath the humus was a layer of redeposited soils and rocks, about one metre thick, above a buried surface on which the implement was lying.

It is made from a natural pebble which weighs about 455 grams/1 lb. (after sectioning and refilling). The perforation has been made by pecking from both sides producing the characteristic hour-glass profile, and subsequently ground. There is no sign of wear in the hole. One end looks like a cutting edge, as though it were an adze, but no attempt has been made to sharpen it and in its natural condition it is extremely blunt. Two flakes removed from the 'sharp' end seem to be accidental or due to striking against a hard object. Dr. Cummins reports that the stone belongs to group XV, a micaceous sub-greywacke perhaps from the southern part of the Lake District.

It falls into the class of 'perforated mace-heads' which are often made from natural pebbles and have the pecked perforation. The examples from Derbyshire have recently been listed and discussed by Roe and Radley (1968) and to their list is to be added the example from Brassington (Radford 1969). That from Edensor assists neither with the question of their date (Mesolithic, Neolithic or Early Bronze Age) nor the function (loom-weights, net-sinkers). Examples in sandstone are not uncommon, including greywackes, and Cummins and Moore (1971) list an example belonging to group XV (Lincolnshire 353).

The Axe-hammer (Fig. 2 : 2)

The second implement was found by Mr. Bown of Green Farm, Hognaston, who still retains it in his possession. It was found as long ago as 1953, but does not seem to be published. It was reported to me by Mr. Martin Wildgoose. The find position at SK 2407 5084 is marked on Fig. 1b, a site shortly to be covered by the dam wall for the Carsington Reservoir. It was discovered during field drain digging, and the trench is still visible on the surface. The field is still very damp in places, and immediately to the east there is a hollow with some rush growth. The land then slopes gently to the east down to a brook.

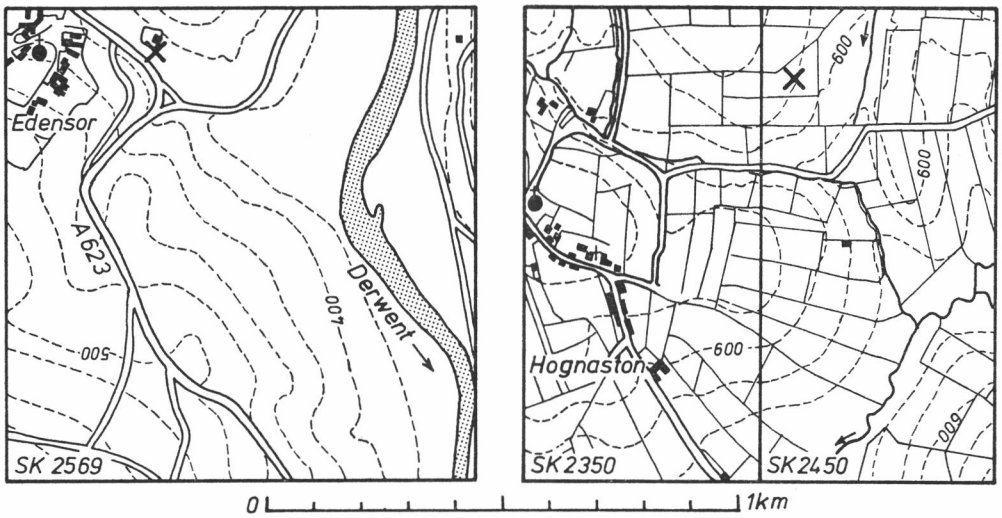

Fig. 1 Find spots, marked with an X for the Edensor *(a)* and the Hognaston *(b)* implements.

The basic outline of the axe-hammer has been formed by pocking, and generally the surface has been left rough. Along the sides, and especially near the cutting edge there are plentiful signs of polishing, but this seems more likely to be evidence of wear rather than of deliberate grinding. There are other signs of use, notably deep pock marks on the butt end. This evidence, coupled with the weight (2525 grams/5 lb. 6 oz.) suggests a functional rather than a ceremonial object. Possible uses which can be suggested include a pick, or a wedge for splitting timber. Another feature worthy of note is the groove on one of the surfaces (see section C–D). Mr. K. Connock has suggested to me that this may be a functional feature, perhaps some sort of an anchor for a wedge, which would stop the implement rotating on its handle. The axe-hammer has not been thin-sectioned, without which positive identification is not possible, but Dr. Cummins has given the following macroscopic description: 'A light-coloured crystalline rock, very little weathering'.

Such large axe-hammers are not common in museum collections. In the card index of implements from Yorkshire held by Dr. Phillips of the collections at Hull, Leeds, Doncaster and Scarborough there are only five examples: three in Scarborough (Council for British Archaeology serial numbers Yorkshire 489, 491 and 515); and two at Hull (421 and 422). Two of the Scarborough examples possess the groove on one or both surfaces, as presumably does that illustrated by Cummins and Moore (1971, Fig. 11, Lincolnshire 297), but often sections of these implements are not drawn, except across the perforation, and the groove cannot be detected. With the exception of an example from Scarborough in coarse greywacke, all the parallels listed above are of Whin Sill quartz dolerite (group XVIII), for which the evidence points to a Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date, and presumably this is the date of the Hognaston example.

From what has been said above it is clear that some of the drawings being made for the Implement Petrology Survey are inadequate for typological discussion, and it would be helpful to have sections of perforated implements. Also the recording of weight of complete implements would make discussion of their function easier.

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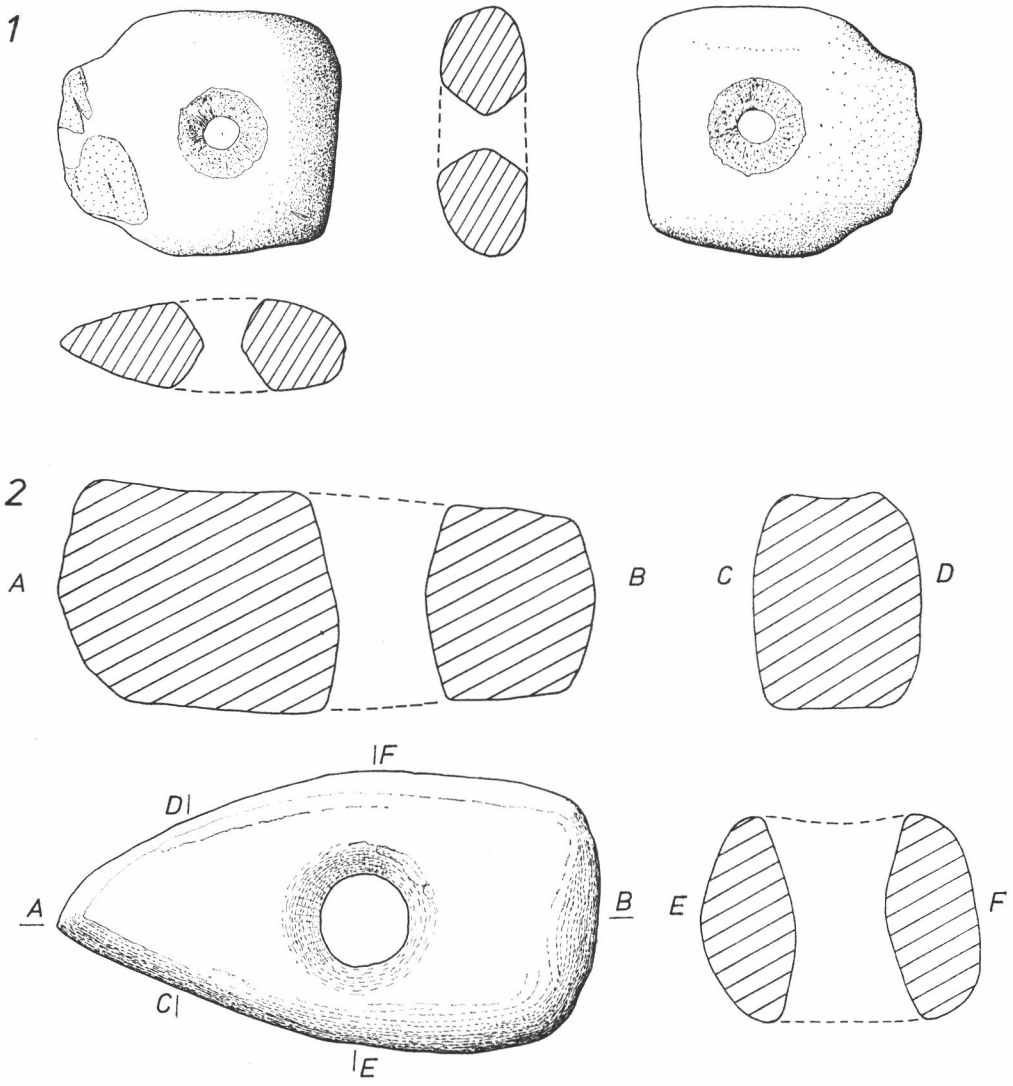

Fig. 2 (1) Pebble mace-head from Edensor; (2) Axe-hammer from Hognaston. Scale approx 1:3.