

◆ Hamsey near Lewes, East Sussex

THE IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT FINDS OF LATE ANGLO-SAXON METALWORK FOR ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE PRE-CONQUEST PERIOD

by Gabor Thomas

Items of Late Anglo-Saxon metalwork discovered from a site in the parish of Hamsey are described and the implications of the finds discussed. The dates attributed to the metalwork allow activity on the site to be assigned to the 9th to the 11th centuries AD. Comparative evidence suggests that the metalwork may be associated with a precursor of the later medieval manorial curia of 'Hamme' (Hamsey), comprising the parish church of St Peter and the adjacent site of a medieval manorial residence. It is concluded that metal-detected finds represent a neglected source of evidence, with the potential to advance our understanding of settlement and of the regional economy of Sussex during the Mid-Late Saxon period.

The six items, which are all of copper alloy, were discovered by Mr Jeff Isted of Landport, Lewes, in the winter of 1999 whilst using a metal-detector in a field close to the parish church of St Peter, Hamsey (TQ 141122).¹ The finds were subsequently brought into Barbican House Museum, Lewes, for identification and detailed recording.

The finds can be divided into two functional categories. The first, personal accessories, consists of three strap-ends and a pair of tweezers (Fig. 1:1–4) and the second, equestrian equipment, is represented by two horse-harness fittings (Fig. 1:5–6). Detailed descriptions of each of the objects can be found in the Catalogue of finds (*see below*), leaving discussion to concentrate upon the their date and cultural affiliations.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDS

The three closely related strap-ends from Hamsey belong to one of the most ubiquitous classes of ornamental metalwork from the Late Anglo-Saxon period. While strap-ends of a form closely related to those described here also with split attachment-ends and zoomorphic terminals have been discovered in Sussex,² the Hamsey finds are among the first representatives of a separate morphological group, characterized by a wedge-shaped split-end and parallel-sided shaft, to have been discovered in the county. The only other Sussex example known to the author was discovered during excavations

undertaken within Balsdean Chapel, Rottingdean, in a ditch (ascribed on the basis of pottery evidence to the beginning of the 12th century) sealed beneath the foundations of the south wall of the nave (Norris & Hockings 1953, 61, fig. 5).

Research has indicated that this group enjoyed a longer period of currency than its 9th-century relative; securely stratified finds supply a date-range spanning the 8th to 11th centuries (Thomas 2000). As is demonstrated by the Hamsey series, this group is less ornate than its convex-sided counterpart, decoration often being restricted to groups of parallel grooves at the top and the bottom of its shaft, a factor which often precludes closer dating on stylistic grounds. The small percentage of examples invested with more elaborate decoration, as in the case of Hamsey no. 1, nearly always bear simplified interlace, zoomorphic or foliate motifs drawn from the repertoire of the Trehiddle style sometimes in conjunction with a fan-shaped field of decoration at the split-end. These stylistic attributes allow a more refined 9th-century dating. Strap-ends of this form are otherwise common in south and central England, the concentration of findspots within and around Late Saxon towns such as Winchester and Canterbury suggesting that from the 10th century at least they may have been subject to a level of serial production. As to function, they were probably attached to straps belonging to a variety of items of dress and other personal accoutrements such as bags and satchels.

CATALOGUE OF FINDS**Finds descriptions** (Fig. 1)*1) Copper-alloy strap-end: L. 39 mm; W. 10 mm (Fig. 1:1)*

The piece has an expanded, sub-triangular split end originally attached by a pair of iron rivets of which only the corroded vestiges survive. The borders of the split-end, which are notched in imitation of beading, enclose two fields of decoration. The uppermost, which is fan-shaped, bears an engraved trilobed foliate motif whereas the lower sub-rectangular field displays a panel of interlace consisting of a simple two-strand knot with a plant-like basal swelling. The shaft of the strap-end below the split-end is parallel-sided and lightly incised with three transverse grooves. The shaft terminates in an animal's head seen from above with sub-rectangular ears, internally engraved with lunate incisions, notched eyes and nostrils, the latter enclosing a lightly incised diagonal cross and chevron which occupy the brow and snout. The reverse bears diagonal tooling marks.

2) Copper-alloy strap-end: L. 47 mm, W. 12 mm (Fig. 1:2)

This is furnished with a split wedge-shaped attachment-end nicked at its upper edge and pierced through both plates by a pair of rivet holes. The front of the split-end is decorated with an incised outer border with obliquely incised notches in imitation of beading. A raised transverse moulding marks the junction between the split-end and a plain parallel-sided shaft. The latter terminates in an animal head seen from above with large oval ears, engraved internally with lunate incisions, lentoid eyes and a squared-off snout. On the reverse of the terminal a hole has been lightly drilled into the metal.

3) Copper-alloy strap-end: L. 43 mm, W. 9 mm (Fig. 1:3)

The split end of this example is wedge-shaped, pierced through both plates by a pair of copper-alloy rivets, and decorated with an outer border of oblique hatching in imitation of beading. Two pairs of parallel grooves mark the top and bottom of a parallel-sided shaft where it meets the split-end and a highly stylized animal-head terminal respectively. The latter lacks clearly identifiable ears although has a pair of eyes defined by the interstices of a diagonally engraved cross.

4) Copper-alloy tweezers: L. 45 mm, W. 14 mm (Fig. 1:4)

Fabricated from a single folded strip of metal with expanded triangular terminals and inturned grips. The outer surfaces are decorated with lightly incised grooves immediately below the central loop and punched ring-and-dots on the arms, occurring as single columns on their narrow portion and in random clusters on the expanded terminals.

5) Copper-alloy harness link/bridle cheek-piece fragment: L. 46 mm, W. 23 mm (Fig. 1:5)

Of cast construction comprising two elements: a domed boss and a projecting arm of D-shaped section with a terminal loop, the junction between the two being marked by a raised collar. Both elements are furnished with projecting ornamental knobs, a diametrically opposed pair on the boss and a trio on the loop.

6) Copper-alloy zoomorphic stirrup terminal: L. 29 mm, W. 13 mm, Th. 15 mm (Fig. 1:6)

Cast in the form of an animal's head with a curved hollow casing at the reverse. The animal head has an upturned 'beak-like' snout with a pair of grooves representing jaws and two bossed eyes. The back of the head is marked by a pair of raised collars decorated with oblique notches. The inside of the curved reverse retains an application of lead-alloy solder.

Simple folded-metal tweezers such as Hamsey 3 enjoyed a long period of use extending from the Romano-British to the medieval periods and are notoriously difficult to date, especially if discovered in isolation without a secure archaeological context. The expanded terminals belonging to the Hamsey pair, however, represent one of the few datable typological features displayed by the series, as is suggested by its exclusive association with Mid-Late Saxon sites such as Whitby and Wharram Percy, Yorks (Peers & Radford 1943, 62, fig. 13:13), Hamwic (Hinton 1996, 44–6; fig. 18) and North Elmham and Middle Harling, Norfolk (Margeson 1995, 62, fig. 43). The punched ring-and-dot decoration which characterizes many of these examples was common throughout the Anglo-Saxon period as is attested by its frequent use on the typologically longer-lived variety with evenly expanded arms (*see*, for example,

Hinton 1996). On the basis of the form and decoration an 8th- to 9th-century attribution seems most likely.

As a result of artefactual research based upon an expanding number of recent metal-detected finds from both England and southern Scandinavia, Hamsey 5 and 6 can be firmly identified as Anglo-Scandinavian horse-trappings (Pedersen 1997; Graham-Campbell 1992; Leahy & Paterson 2001; Williams 1997). Much of this material consists of standardized copper-alloy fittings for harness, bridles and stirrups, although as the corpus continues to grow, other types of object such as spurs are being added to the repertoire (Williams forthcoming). The majority of these finds can be dated within the 11th century, primarily on comparison with examples from Scandinavian grave-assemblages and on stylistic grounds: a large percentage are decorated

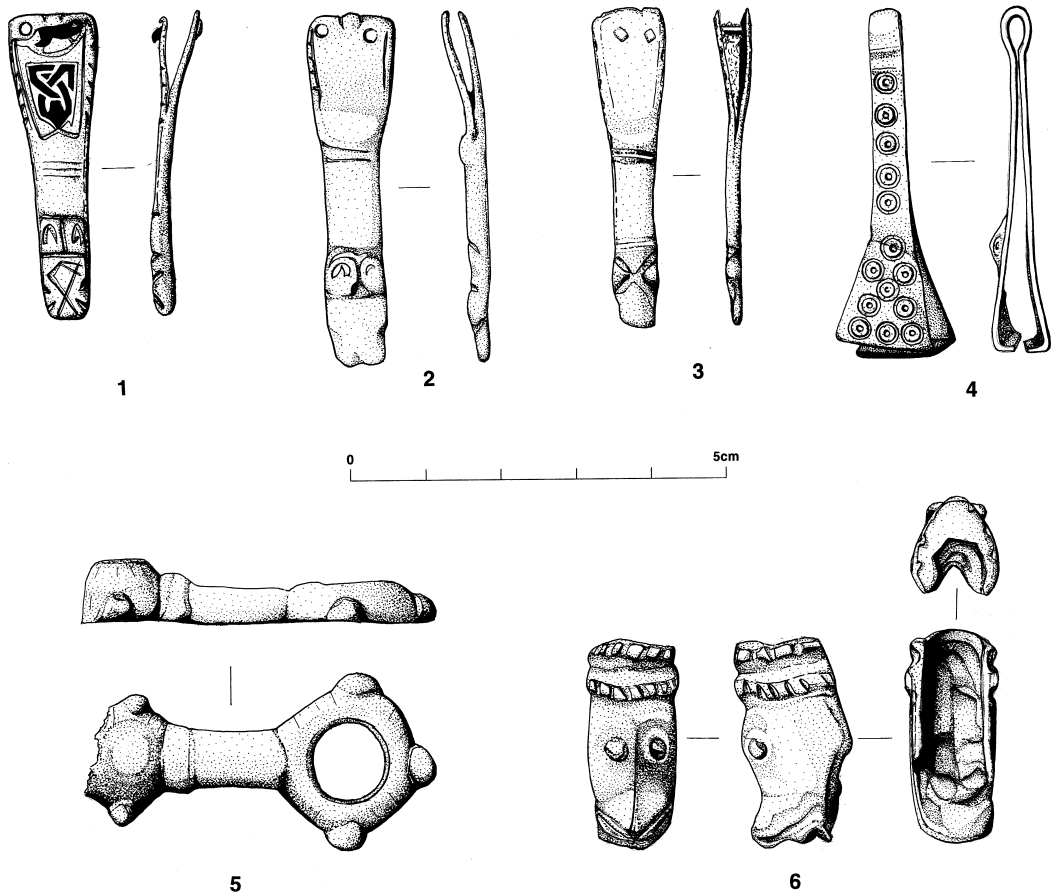


Fig. 1. Recent finds of Late Anglo-Saxon metalwork from Hamsey. See Catalogue of finds for descriptions.

with motifs derived from the two latest phases of Viking art, the Ringerike and Urnes styles (Pedersen 1997).

Although fragmentary, Hamsey 5 with its loop, central raised boss and ornamental knobs, combines the three elements which are diagnostic to Anglo-Scandinavian cheek-pieces, harness-links and strap-distributors. In the case of the Hamsey example, the position and size of the breakage-point on the central boss suggests that it was originally furnished with a pair of attachment-loops and thus would have functioned as one of the side-links used to attach a harness-rein to the mouthpiece of a bit. A number of close English and Scandinavian parallels exist for this find, including the pair deposited as part of a suite of harness-fittings in a burial from Kvalsta, Västerland, central Sweden (Williams 1997, pl. 1).

Hamsey 6 belongs to a common class of decorative fitting designed to embellish iron stirrups (Williams 1997, fig. 4). The Hamsey example, with its rather peculiar duck-like head, is not as diagnostic in stylistic terms as some of the more elaborate examples of its class, including an example from Bishopstone, East Sussex,³ which in the execution of their head details betray the influence of the Viking Urnes style (Owen 2001, 216, pl. 11.7), although it has a close Scandinavian parallel from Gjøl Mark, Hjørring County, Denmark (Pedersen 1997, fig. 25b).

While recent research has shown that these trappings were first introduced into England under strong Danish influence, during a period when both England and Scandinavia were jointly ruled by Cnut as part of his North Sea Empire (Pedersen 1997, 153–

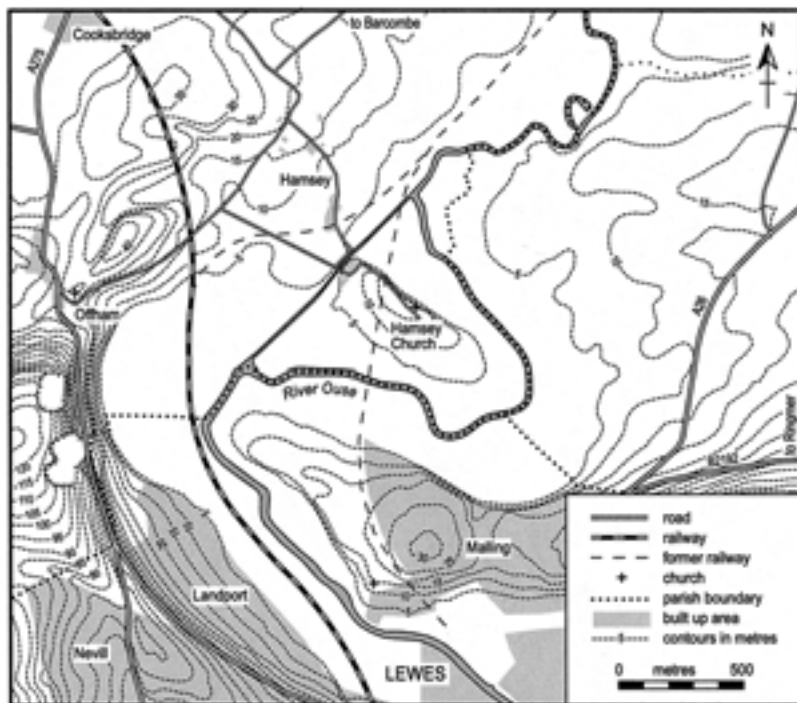


Fig. 2. General location context of recent Late Anglo-Saxon metalwork finds from Hamsey.

4), the large number of English finds, together with their frequent display of debased or hybrid Anglo-Scandinavian motifs, is clear evidence for production within English workshops. The distribution of these English finds, which comprises a relatively high proportion of southern (including Sussex) find-locations in relation to the spread of ornamental metalwork of the preceding two centuries, accords with the heartland of Cnut's political regime and the influence of its political, cultural and administrative centres at Winchester and London (Thomas 2001; Leahy & Paterson 2001, 198).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In reviewing the significance of this assemblage, it is of no little interest to find that Hamsey, specifically St Peter's churchyard,⁴ has already entered the archaeological annals as the purported site of the discovery, in 1856, of a Late Anglo-Saxon gold finger-ring (Dalton 1912, fig. 1857). Its hoop of three plaited wires, tapered and beaten to form a thin linking bar at the reverse, places this find amongst

a common class of late Saxon finger-ring clearly influenced by the twisted and plaited-wire jewellery which was *de rigueur* in Scandinavia and its colonies during the Viking age (Webster 1976; Graham-Campbell 1980, no. 238). The chronology of the Anglo-Saxon series appears to centre upon the 11th century and there are indications — including the Soberton coin-hoard find which has a terminal date of c. 1068 (Graham-Campbell 1980, 234) — that the series may have outlived the Conquest. The series has a predominantly southerly distribution, with a strong Sussex and Hampshire concentration.⁵

On the basis of the above attributions, the Hamsey metalwork positively defines

pre-Conquest activity on the site spanning the 9th to the 11th centuries; but what, if anything, can it reveal about the nature and status of this activity? Any attempt to attribute items of Late Saxon metalwork to a particular social rank must be sensitive to the economic vicissitudes of the period and in particular to the influence which fluctuations in the availability of precious metals may have had on jewellery fashions (Hinton 1975, 180). Items such as copper-alloy tweezers and strap-ends are not much use in this task since they are represented on a broad range of contemporary sites and settlements. The gold ring, on the other hand, represents one of the few recognizable classes of high-status Anglo-Saxon personalia from the 11th century, a period which is otherwise characterized by the growing influence of mass-produced base-metal jewellery (Hinton 1975, 176).

Similarly, while it is difficult to reconcile the poor quality and widespread distribution of the horse-trappings with the recent suggestion that they might represent 'the fashion of an elite cavalry group with Scandinavian pretensions' (Richards 2000, 113), they certainly denote higher than peasant status.

Likely consumers of this material were lesser *thegn*s, and perhaps the 'economically superior' members of the peasant aristocracy who owned riding-horses in fulfilment of a range of administrative and military services (Faith 1997, 96–8, 107–8). Indeed, given that by the 11th century, entry into the '*thegnly*' ranks could be secured through the accumulation of the requisite material insignia, the timing of these objects' introduction into the repertoire may partly explain the imitation, on such a large scale, of the prestige horse-trappings alluded to in wills and law codes (Davies 1987, appendix).

Other than the metalwork, the only material of a comparable date to have been discovered near Hamsey church consists of two sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery (Biggar 1978, 3), a small tally which is more likely to be a reflection of the limited scale and nature of the fieldwork undertaken previously on the spur. In seeking a context for this material one must turn to comparative sources of evidence; the first to be considered, given its crucial influence over human settlement, is the site's topographic location.

The church occupies the crest of an asymmetrical spur of Lower Chalk which outcrops from the north escarpment of the South Downs into a broad U-shaped meander of the river Ouse, 2 km upstream of Lewes (Fig. 2). Rising to a height of nearly 10 m above the alluvial floodplain, by which it is almost fully encircled, save for an equally low-lying spit of periglacial 'Head' to the west, this easily defensible 'island' eminence would have at once afforded protection against the regular inundations of the river Ouse, which is generally accepted to have formed a tidal inlet for the duration of the early medieval period (Bell 1977, 4; Bleach 1997, 131), and provided direct access to the river and its rich alluvial brookland.

The site is located in the south-eastern corner of the medieval manor and parish of Hamsey that fans out from the Downland escarpment into the Low Weald and the valley gap. Along with woodland pasture supplied by its detached Wealden holdings, the manor was perfectly situated to exploit the combined ecological potential of these three distinctive habitats, upon which the integrated agrarian regime of the Ouse Valley economy was sustained (Bell 1978a, 68). Evidence contained within Domesday Book confirms that the manor's wealth was principally derived from its agricultural assets and, in particular, its large apportionment of meadow which amounted to 200 acres in 1086

(Morris 1976, 12, 49). That point is further highlighted by a comparison of its resource-base with that of the hundredal manor of Barcombe to the north, which was in possession of three water mills, and 18 closes in the borough of Lewes by 1086 (Morris 1976, 12, 49).

Turning to the place-name evidence, the substantive *hamm*, which in Hamsey's topographic context may be generally taken to denote 'land hemmed in by water or marsh', could apply to one of two more specific senses 'land in a river bend' or 'river-valley promontory', although the former has been preferred (Mawer & Stenton 1929–30, 315; Dodgson 1978, 82; Gelling & Cole 2000, 46–55). These senses connected with river-valley and marsh locations are believed to represent early forms of the word's usage (Gelling 1984, 42) and this attribution is borne out by the discovery of two Early Anglo-Saxon sites within the vicinity of Hamsey. The first is the potentially large pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery at South Malling, located at the head of promontory on the east bank of the Ouse to the south of the suggested route of the London–Lewes Roman road (Welch 1983, 404–5).⁶ The second, rather more tentative, site, is that of a group of possible primary and secondary barrow-burials located in the west of the parish above the chalk escarpment of the South Downs (Welch 1983, 418–19).

Discussion of the place-name evidence brings into focus the one possible pre-Conquest reference to Hamsey, contained within a diploma of c. AD 961 (Sawyer 1968, 1211), which refers back to a meeting of a *witan* or royal council held, in the presence of King Athelstan (AD 924–39), at 'Hamme wi<th> [by, over against] Laewe' (Mawer & Stenton 1929–30, 318).⁷ Whereas the grounds for equating modern-day Hamsey with this historical reference is less than certain,⁸ the philological evidence remains as yet unchallenged; Hamsey is the only major settlement in the Lewes area which was consistently referred to by the simple uncompounded form of the place-name element *hamm* (and its variants) from the Late Saxon through into the post-Conquest era. The modern version of the name first appears as recently as the 14th century, the affix arriving from the De Say family who are first recorded in connection with the manor in 1222 (Mawer & Stenton 1929–30, 315).

Armed with the knowledge that by the 10th century such gatherings of 'the cream of the political

nation' (Wormald 2001, 434) were frequently held in royal countryside residences equipped with indoor seating (Loyn 1984, 100–106), the selection of Hamsey, if we choose to accept this attribution, opens up some interesting implications for an assessment of its Late Saxon status. The most detailed study of pre-Conquest legislative practice to date suggests that one of the primary considerations underlying the selection of such assembly sites was accessibility (Wormald 2001, 438). Hamsey would have certainly fulfilled this criterion lying, as it does, in close proximity to a navigable river, at a potential fording point⁹ providing access to a major N–S Roman road and to significant 'central places' including the pre-Conquest burgh of Lewes and the promontory of South Malling, which was in all probability the home to a collegiate minster church and an archiepiscopal residence by the Late Saxon period (Jones 1976, 26–35).

Hamsey does not appear to have been in royal hands just before the Conquest, unlike the majority of other rural *witan* sites (Sawyer 1983, 227). Nevertheless, Domesday reveals that the manor was a 25-hide holding in the same league as, for example, the episcopal estate of Bishopstone, similarly positioned to take advantage of the rich brookland resources flanking a potentially navigable tidal inlet (Bell 1978b, 37–44). Unfortunately *Wulfgifu*, its pre-Conquest female owner, belongs to the category of dispossessed English landlords for whom we have no further evidence,¹⁰ although she must have been of some standing, (or married to somebody of standing) to have been in possession of manor of this rank. One further piece of evidence contained in Domesday suggestive of above average pre-Conquest status is the unusually wide geographic spread of the manor's outlying holdings which, following the Conquest and the rationalization of the rapal divisions, were subsumed within the rapes of Pevensey, and exceptionally for an Ouse Valley manor, Arundel.¹¹ While Domesday does not allow the full extent of these outliers to be mapped, it may be of consequence that the horse connection evident in the trappings discovered at Hamsey is repeated in the prefix of the place-name Horsted Keynes 'place where horses are kept', where seven hides of the manor were held in 1066 (Morris 1976, 12, 49; 1978; Mawer & Stenton 1929–30, 337). A similar theme is recorded in the Domesday entry for the Borough of Lewes where an explicit reference is made to horse-trading (Morris 1976, 12, 49); taken

together these fragmentary pieces of evidence may allude to an activity of some importance within the early medieval economy.

These indications of high-status occupation/activity may be elucidated further through the scrutiny of later evidence; during the medieval period the chalk spur was almost certainly home to the seigneurial centre or *curia* of the manor of *Hamme*, comprising the lord's residence and church. The origins of the ecclesiastical component of this *curia* can be taken as far back as 1086, as a church is listed under the Domesday entry for *Hamme* (Morris 1976, 12, 49). Like the majority of rural parish churches, St Peter's retains within its fabric the core of a small two-celled edifice redolent of the small proprietorial foundations or *Eigenkirche* of the 'Great Rebuilding' programme attributed to the period c. AD 1050–1150 (Gem 1988). As the parameters of this date-range suggest, however, it is impossible to establish on architectural grounds alone whether this building represents the original Domesday church or a later replacement.¹² Taking into account the frequent discovery of first-phase Anglo-Saxon antecedents beneath the foundations of medieval churches, such as those excavated at Pagham and Angmering in West Sussex, one cannot discount the possibility that the building listed in 1086 was itself a replacement for an earlier pre-Conquest church (Drewett *et al.* 1988, 316–17).

The residential component of this manorial complex first comes into view during the 14th century, when an imposing stone hall was built (or probably rebuilt) for the de Say family next to the church on a site now partly occupied by an eastern extension of the churchyard.¹³ This aggrandizing campaign also extended to the church, where substantial 14th-century alterations have been identified (Wood 1940, 86). It is unlikely that this manorial unit provided a focus for more extensive medieval settlement as has been previously suggested (Burleigh 1973, 66), a conclusion which is supported by a re-evaluation of the fieldwalking evidence (Allen 1984) and more recent advances in our understanding of the dispersed nature of medieval settlement, particularly within the Weald and its fringes (*see*, for example, Gardiner 1997).

Given the antiquity of the church and the evidence for Late Saxon activity within close proximity, it is tempting to push the origins of this manorial complex back into the pre-Conquest era. Numerous excavations across England have

demonstrated a close physical link between 'the^{gnly}' residences of 10th- to 11th-century date and small estate churches (Morris 1989, 227–74; Reynolds 1999, 119–35). Furthermore, the church/residence arrangements laid down during this period often survive as nodal points within the post-Conquest seigneurial landscape, as reflected in the high percentage of examples discovered beneath Norman castles or on sites adjacent to medieval manor houses (Morris 1989, 227–74; Williams 1992, 231–3).

Fragmentary evidence from a site at Old Erringham near Shoreham, West Sussex, has come closest to providing Sussex with its first Late Saxon *the^{gnly}* residence (Holden 1980). Here, small-scale excavations to the south of a medieval manor house targeting the site of a 'chapel' and a complex of associated earthworks confirmed the existence of a Saxo-Norman church and 20 metres to its south, a portion of a substantial banked and ditched enclosure, the latter comparing closely with the dimensions of the pre-Conquest fortifications of the manorial residence excavated at Goltho, Lincs. (Beresford 1987). Frustratingly, the dating evidence recovered precludes other than a broad Saxo-Norman attribution for this occupational phase, although a number of pre-enclosure finds and features, including two pennies of Aethelred II, testify to significant Late Saxon activity on the site.

Old Erringham provides a striking topographic parallel for Hamsey, for it is similarly located on the crest of a defensible Downland promontory which projects into a broad alluvial floodplain, on this occasion, of the river Adur. Both sites conform to a trend, evident from the morphology and/or the topographic location of many pre-Conquest manorial residences, which suggests that defensibility, whether stemming from a genuine desire for safety or for increased prestige, was a consideration that was rarely ignored (Williams 1992, 237–40). Indeed, this factor has been advanced as a primary reason why so many churches, presumably attached to manorial complexes from their inception, stand isolated on hilltop and other elevated positions in the modern-day landscape (Morris 1989, 264–8).

To sum up, any conclusion as to a likely context for the Hamsey metalwork is likely to be speculative in advance of the discovery of more conclusive archaeological evidence. However, the strands of evidence such as they exist: the date and status of the metalwork, the early documentary history of

Hamme, the site's defensible position controlling the demesne's valuable meadowland and its attested occupation within the medieval period combine to suggest a pre-Conquest manorial complex. This attribution may at least stand as a useful working hypothesis to be tested by future fieldwork.¹⁴

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The significance and likely origin of the Hamsey metalwork is difficult to assess because Sussex lacks comparable metal-detected assemblages. Discounting 'special deposits' such as hoards, the metalwork under discussion here stands out from the predominantly dispersed spread of single finds of Late Saxon coins and ornamental metalwork discovered within the region. One naturally turns to excavated material for comparisons; even then, the only settlement to have produced a similar assemblage is the Late Saxon small town of Steyning, which to date has yielded two 10th-century coins, a pair of copper-alloy tweezers, a 9th-century inscribed gold ring and a 10- to 11th-century base-metal disc-brooch (Evans 1986, 93; Gardiner 1993, 47–50; Reynolds 1992, 66). Ultimately, comparisons of this nature merely serve to highlight just how few Mid–Late Saxon settlements have been excavated within Sussex.

Given that the county contained some of the richest and most heavily populated pockets of Domesday England, albeit alongside some of its most economically underdeveloped areas (Darby 1962, figs 168, 169 & 170), it is difficult to accept that the paucity of metal-detected assemblages, and, in particular, the lack of parallels for the so-called 'productive sites' of the artefact-rich zone of eastern England is a true reflection of the region-wide economic situation that prevailed during the period under scrutiny (*see* Ulmschneider 2000). It must be concluded, therefore, that this pattern is to some extent influenced by modern-day factors associated with recovery, reporting and research, the elucidation of which is beyond the scope of the present discussion (*see* Dobinson & Denison 1995; Ulmschneider 2000, 106–7). Suffice it to say, that interpretations based upon metal-detected evidence must be treated with extreme caution, especially when the intention is to gauge relative levels of economic activity between different regions. As has been demonstrated elsewhere (Ulmschneider 2000; Leahy 2000), the interpretative value of such

material comes into its own only when evaluated at an intra-regional or localized level and in conjunction with topographic, historical and traditional forms of archaeological evidence. Despite the paucity of find-clusters from the region, with over 100 single coin finds and a substantial and expanding corpus of ornamental metalwork already, or in the process of being recorded, the time is now ripe for similar research to be extended into Sussex.¹⁵

Author: Gabor Thomas, Sussex Archaeological Society, Barbican House, 169 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XH.

NOTES

- ¹ To protect the site from unsolicited metal-detecting the exact findspots cannot be advertised in print. All six objects are in the possession of Mr Isted.
- ² The eight other published Sussex strap-ends are from Selsey (Salzman 1912, 60, pl. V), Chichester (Anon. 'Bronze strap-ends in Chichester Museum' *Sussex Notes & Queries* 14, 1954–57, 214), Westmeston, Lewes (Graham-Campbell 1988), Bishopstone (Graham-Campbell 1989) and Plumpton, East Sussex (Butler & Funnell 1992, 18, fig. 8). During doctoral and more recent research the author has recorded a further five strap-ends from various Sussex locations, one of these, also from the parish of Bishopstone, is in the collections at Barbican House Museum, Lewes, acc. no. 1991.8.
- ³ In the collections at Barbican House Museum, Lewes, 1985.13. This piece has been previously recorded by Olwyn Owen (1979) in her catalogue of Urnes-style material from England, p. 219 no. 15.
- ⁴ Unfortunately the Hamsey provenance which accompanied the ring on its circuitous journey from the collections of the Lewes antiquarian and solicitor, John Tattersal Auckland (d. 1862), to its final resting place in the British Museum, cannot be established beyond doubt, for a note on one and the same ring by the local cartographer William Figg (1857), published only a year after its discovery, gives the provenance as 'parish of Ringmer, near Lewes'. That said, the discovery of further metalwork of a contemporary date from the vicinity of the churchyard must surely add weight to the more specific of the two attributions, especially given the paucity of Late Saxon ornamental metalwork from the Ringmer/Lewes area generally.
- ⁵ The other Sussex examples are from Balmer (Way 1849, 58, no. 15), Slinfold and Chichester (Webster 1976, 234, n. 3).
- ⁶ A further five graves (of 6th-century date) were excavated from this cemetery by the Sussex Archaeological Society in September 2001 following the recovery of a rich assemblage of grave-goods by local metal-detectorists.
- ⁷ A later, possibly 11th-century Latin copy of the same charter (Sawyer 1968, no. 1212) translates the name as 'Hamme juxta Laewes'.
- ⁸ A long line of historians have accepted the place-name

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- evidence *prima facie* and Hamsey appears in several lists and maps of *Witan* meeting places, (see, for example, Sawyer 1983, 294; Loyn 1984, 105, map 4; Wormald 2001, table 6.2, map on p. 436). Sussex has more *hamm* place-names than any other county (Gelling & Cole 2000, 47) and two potential alternatives present themselves. The first, in what is now Southover, is recorded in 'Ham field' and 'Ham Lane' (Mawer & Stenton 1929–30, 323). Excavations at the priory of St Pancras, Southover, have produced evidence for Mid–Late Saxon occupation possibly focused upon a pre-Conquest monastic complex and it has been suggested that this settlement could represent the predecessor to the 10th-century burgh (Lyne 1997, 1–2, 177). Another contender, given the preference for royal residences in the selection of *witan* sites (Sawyer 1983, 277), is the important pre-Conquest royal manor and minster of Beddingham downstream on the opposite bank of the Ouse (Kelly 1998, ixvii, 61).
- ⁹ Writing in the first quarter of the 20th century, Allcroft (1924, 9–11) describes this fording point as being still 'practicable'. Many thanks to John Bleach for bringing this reference to my attention.
 - ¹⁰ *Wulfgiftu* is a common pre-Conquest name (Von Feilitzen 1937, 420) although it appears only twice in the Sussex folios. Interestingly, although it may be no more than coincidence, the other holdings with which the name is associated are located in the same rapes as Hamsey's outliers, namely Warley (Pevensy Rape, East Grinstead hundred,) and East Preston (Arundel Rape, Poling hundred) (Morris 1976, 10, 100; 11, 69).
 - ¹¹ The unusually wide distribution of the manor's outliers has previously attracted comment; see Haselgrove (1978), 217.
 - ¹² In the *Victoria County History* entry for Hamsey (Wood 1940, 85–7), the fabric of the first-phase church is attributed to the early 12th century and in the *Buildings of England* series it is described as 'Norman' (Nairn & Pevsner 1965, 516). Gem (1988) discusses the difficulties in attempting to phase churches within the period 1050–1150.
 - ¹³ The main evidence for this hall is a remarkable contract drawn up in 1321 between the then lord of the manor, Geoffrey de Say and a mason of Offham, from which it may be established that the hall was built to the standard

'later medieval domestic plan' (Godfrey 1931; Gardiner 2000). The foundations had been visible during the lifetime of one Mr Elliot, who is quoted as saying, c. 1780, 'the area of the building (containing rather less than half-an-acre), is ploughed and sown by the tenant, who informed me that the plough had dragged up several parts of the old stone windows and door cases (now applied to other uses). The scite will always remain sufficiently marked out like a square fort of raised earth, with a steep descent and broad moat the whole length of the north side, and a more gradual declension to the south and east' (Horsfield 1824, 335). Medieval pottery, roof slate and tile (most of it 13–15th century in date) has been found, and indeed, is still to be found after ploughing, in

the field immediately to the east of the churchyard; Allen Papers Barbican House, Lewes 1982.37.

- ¹⁴ Hamsey is currently targeted within a Sussex Archaeological Society affiliated multidisciplinary project, which aims to trace the evolution of settlement within the medieval hundred of Barcombe. Planned fieldwork will aim to record the morphology of the site in detail to establish whether the spatial relationship of the manor house, church and churchyard has any further implications for the early development of the manorial complex.
- ¹⁵ An up-to-date list of Anglo-Saxon coins from Sussex can be accessed via the internet site *Early Medieval Corpus of Coin Finds* at <http://www.fitzwilliam.cam.ac.uk/coins/emc.htm>.

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