

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LV

JANUARY 1961 TO DECEMBER 1961

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DEIGHTON BELL

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

M. D. CRA'STER, GRACE BRISCOE, C. F. TEBBUTT
AND D. F. RENN

AN IRON AGE BRIDLE CHEEK-PIECE FROM ASHWELL, HERTS

In October 1961 Mr L. J. Barratt kindly gave the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology a bridle side-piece (Museum no. 61.217), which he had found in the fields. The site was near Mob's Hole, Ashwell (Nat. Grid 262438), on land belonging to Mr Murphy.

The object is the cheek-piece of a horse's bit, of an uncommon Iron Age type peculiar to Britain (Pl. VII). It is of bronze, with the outer face decorated in champ-levé enamel. Only two of the sunken compartments still retain their enamel filling, which is red; probably the same colour was used throughout. The design has been emphasized by incised lines, marking out the forms of the pattern.

Another bit cheek-piece of comparable form (also in the Museum, no. 1901.182) was found in Cambridge itself in 1898; but this has very uninspired decoration, consisting of two attachments, presumably to hold circular enamel studs.

Sir Cyril Fox comments that the formal design on the Ashwell example is neatly suited to the narrow outline of the object; he would date it, on stylistic grounds, to the first century A.D.

A comparison can be made with the somewhat similar piece from the large hoard of horse-trappings and other ornamental pieces found at Polden Hill in Somerset.¹ But the style of decoration here is much more lively than that of the new Cambridge-shire example. To quote Sir Cyril again:² 'There certainly is a parallel to the "knob-touching-a-curve" in the Polden Hill piece, but all the vigour and movement is lost' in the Ashwell pattern.

M. D. C.

SOME ROMAN SITES NEAR LAKENHEATH, SUFFOLK

In 1952 a list of six recently discovered Romano-British sites in the neighbourhood of Lakenheath, Suffolk, appeared in the Archaeological Notes of these *Proceedings* (vol. XLV). Since then six more habitation sites have been revealed by deeper ploughing. Locations have been marked on the O.S. 6-in. maps and the finds preserved in the Mildenhall Museum. Otherwise they have not been explored.

¹ C. Fox, *Pattern and Purpose* (1958), pp. 125, 131, nn. 18, 26, and pl. 72a. For a list of the twelve known cheek-pieces of similar type, see Stuart Piggott, 'Three Metal-work Hoards of the Roman Period from Southern Scotland', *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.* LXXXVII (1952-3), p. 21.

² Letter to the author.

One large site on Lakenheath–Eriswell Warren was revealed by rabbits and an exploratory trench dug across an occupation floor. Another site at Wangford has been explored and published in these *Proceedings* (vol. LI).

Lakenheath–Eriswell Warren; grid 780798

In 1953 an Elveden gamekeeper reported that he had found a large number of potsherds, brought up by rabbits, on an unploughed portion of the warren, and also a coin which proved to be a *sestertius* of Hadrian.

Inspection showed that the scatter of sherds extended over a wide area—4 to 5 acres—and included ‘Samian’, black and grey ware, pieces of glass and tile, and oyster shells.

At one point, in the most prolific area, a sherd of ‘wall-sided’ ‘Samian’ with part of a lion head (form 45, late second century) was found on the surface. A trial trench across this spot showed a firm black occupation layer, 1½–2 ft. thick, between the sandy topsoil and the solid chalk. This trench had to be extended to a length of 60 ft. before the occupation layer petered out.

From this layer came numerous sherds of pottery, some decorated with barbotine; a ‘Samian’ base with a potter’s mark, AV-RI; many pieces of painted wall plaster—these chiefly at the north end of the trench; a third brass of ? Tetricus I, a bronze bracelet and a bone pin; angular lumps of chalk, burnt stones and bones and charcoal; lumps of reddish clay or unbaked pottery; teeth, oyster-shells, tiles and nails.

Icklingham: Mitchell’s Farm; grid 779721

The Elveden Estate Office informed me that the plough had brought up a large spread of sherds on a field just to the east of the site of the Roman villa, explored in 1877 by Henry Prigg (*Icklingham Papers*, p. 72).

In the south-west corner of the field were many Romano-British sherds. I was told that the field had been deep-ploughed two years ago, when large sherds had been seen. Subsequent ploughing had caused them to be broken up. The sherds included third- and fourth-century rims, a few pieces of ‘Samian’ and colour-coated ware, bases and sherds of large, grey, Horningsea-type pots; also oyster-shells and bones, pieces of metal, pewter, tiles and bricks. In one spot the soil looked whitish, with lumps of chalk and flints, and building materials scattered about, probably being the remains of some structure.

These finds are deposited in the Elveden Estate Museum.

Mildenhall Fen

In the vicinity of Holywell Drove, Mildenhall, traces of five habitation sites—including one noted by Gordon Fowler and rediscovered by Colonel Kelly—have been discovered within a mile of each other.

Holywell Drove (Morley); grid 690788

A large spread of Romano-British material was found on a newly ploughed field, including: sherds of black and grey pots; a decorated 'Samian' sherd, and a base stamped FIRMVS; colour-coated, barbotine and 'dotted' ware; sherds of *mortaria* and thick storage vessels; nails, tiles, bricks, horns and oyster-shells.

Holywell Drove (Hammond); grid 684-7 795-6

After ploughing, a wide scatter of sherds was reported on a field to the west of Holywell Drove. The finds included 'Samian'—one piece decorated and one portion of a cup; a large everted rim of Horningsea type; the base of an amphora handle; many grey sherds, some with decoration; bones, and pieces of quern—both quartzite and puddingstone.

Near Holywell Drove; grid 687787

A scatter of sherds was collected by Colonel Kelly, U.S.A.F., after ploughing, on the field originally discovered by Gordon Fowler. Amongst them were bases of small lamps, both colour-coated and Castor-ware; grey bases and rim sherds, and two red, flanged rims; rim sherds of two *mortaria* of white pipe-clay with traces of colour-coating, both flanged; rusticated sherds, a 'Samian' rim from a flat bowl, and the neck of a colour-coated flagon; the rim of a small pipe-clay pot with remains of a handle; portions of tiles, and oyster-shells.

Beck Row, near Rookery Farm; grid 690785

After ploughing, a scatter of Romano-British sherds, late in type, made its appearance. Grey bases, an amphora handle, a large colour-coated sherd with bold barbotine decoration of circles and stripes, teeth of horse and cow, and a portion of red deer antler—possibly a rough-out for a tool—were among the chief finds.

Beck Row, near Sewage Farm; grid 682786

A large scatter of Romano-British potsherds was discovered on a newly ploughed field—mainly of fourth-century types. The finds included colour-coated and grey rims, some flanged; bases of small colour-coated lamps, portions of flat grey bowls, and of a Castor-ware bowl and lid with rouletting; 'dotted' and 'pink-gritted' ware; large grey bases with rilling; a sherd of a large, white pipe-clay *mortarium* with wide flanges and rouletting, and a sherd of a large, grey *mortarium* with flint grit, collared and flanged; yellowish tiles, both of the flat and the roof varieties; oyster-shells, and a large iron hook and ring.

Worlington: Bargate Farm; grid 682-4 742-3

The site is on the south side of the River Lark and showed a spread of dark soil with numerous Romano-British sherds of large vessels, mostly rough grey; also a

large 'Samian' base, the base of a 'Samian' cup with part of the potter's signature, bases of Castor-ware lamps and pots, sherds of low black bowls and of a white *mortarium* with reeded rim. Oyster-shells, pieces of tile and brick, bones and rounded quartzite stones were also present.

G. B.

A ROMAN KNIFE HANDLE FROM CROXTON, CAMBS

This Roman pocket-knife (Pl. VIII) was found by a young amateur archaeologist, Colin Daines, of St Neots, in spoil from a field ditch on the west side of the road from Croxton Kennels to Abbotsley (Nat. Grid Ref. 52/245 593). The handle is of bronze, ornamented with the greyhound-and-hare motif and slotted to receive the hinged iron blade, as in a modern pen-knife. Part of the blade can in fact still be seen in the slot.

For comparison, three other folding knives of this pattern are illustrated on Pl. VIII; these are in the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. All have had iron folding blades and an iron hinge rivet.

C. F. T.

SOME SAXO-NORMAN POTTERY FROM HERTFORD

Being outside East Anglia, Hertfordshire makes a very poor showing in Mr J. G. Hurst's corpus of Saxo-Norman pottery.¹ The three sites listed (Ashwell, Long Marston and Sandon) are on the very border, near the Icknield Way, as are the subsequent finds from Therfield.² However, the pottery from Hertford described below suggests that the archaeological blank may be fortuitous.

Mr Gordon Moodey, Honorary Secretary of the East Herts. Archaeological Society, tells me that the nucleus of the Hertford Museum (established in 1914) was the local collections of R. T. and W. F. Andrews, previously kept at their offices in Fore Street. Some pottery came from the site of the Turk's Head Inn, Railway Street, in 1900 and more from the Green Dragon Inn, Maidenhead Street, in 1903. In view of the earlier haphazard labelling and display of the exhibits, the particular findspot of each sherd is now uncertain; indeed the pottery itself has been mislaid recently. Most of it was of recognizable local thirteenth-century types, but four rimsherds were of quite different form and fabric (Fig. 1):

- (1) Complete cooking-pot rim, squared off with a corrugated body. Fairly hard grey ware with a little shell.
- (2) Similar ware to (1), the neck decorated with notched-stick impressions.
- (3) Out-turned clubbed rim in hard grey ware. Jar, or vertical-sided cooking-pot?
- (4) Spouted pitcher in buff ware with a grey-toned surface. Light thumb-pressings on top of the rim and on applied vertical strips on the body.

No. (1) may be paralleled at Carr Street, Ipswich, and (3) and (4) at Exchange

¹ *Proc. C.A.S.* XLIX (1956), pp. 43-70; L (1957), pp. 29-60; LI (1958), pp. 37-65.

² *Medieval Arch.* III (1959), pp. 307-8.

Street, Norwich.¹ The stamps on (2) are Saxon in origin, and while (3) has Saxon antecedents, it is a long-lived type, variants being made at Barnet in the thirteenth century.² Spouted pitchers are well known in Late Saxon East Anglia, and (4) appears to occupy an intermediate position between them and the eleventh-century London type.³

The position and extent of the two *burhs* founded at Hertford in 912 are uncertain but Maidenhead Street and Railway Street, its continuation, run from the motte-

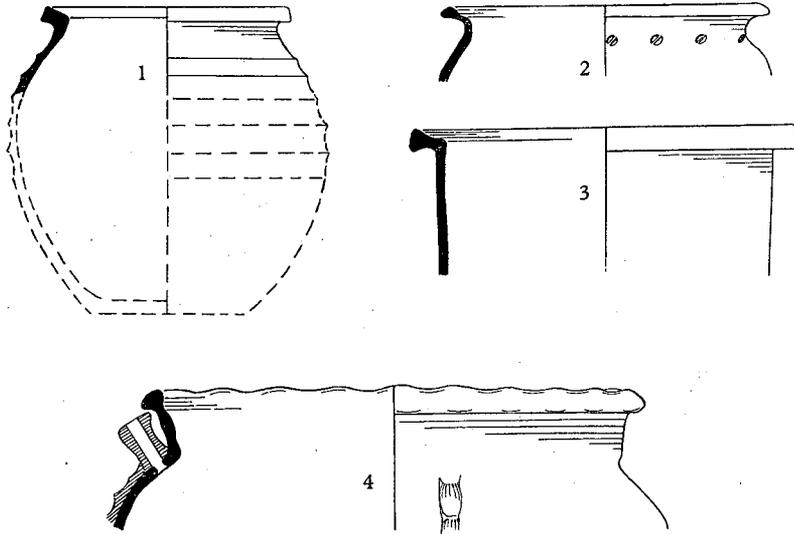


Fig. 1. Saxo-Norman pottery from Hertford. (Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.)

and-bailey castle to the site of the priory across the area usually accepted as the south *burh*, and are thus the probable successors of an early medieval road. The pottery described has strong 'Thetford' influences (i.e. mid-ninth to eleventh centuries) and a *terminus post quem* of 912 is supported by Mr Hurst's suggestion that the trade in this pottery expanded after the reconquest of the Danelaw. But Hertford is the most southerly site on which such material has yet been identified, and it may have been local imitation of the wares being traded along the Icknield Way.

D. F. R.

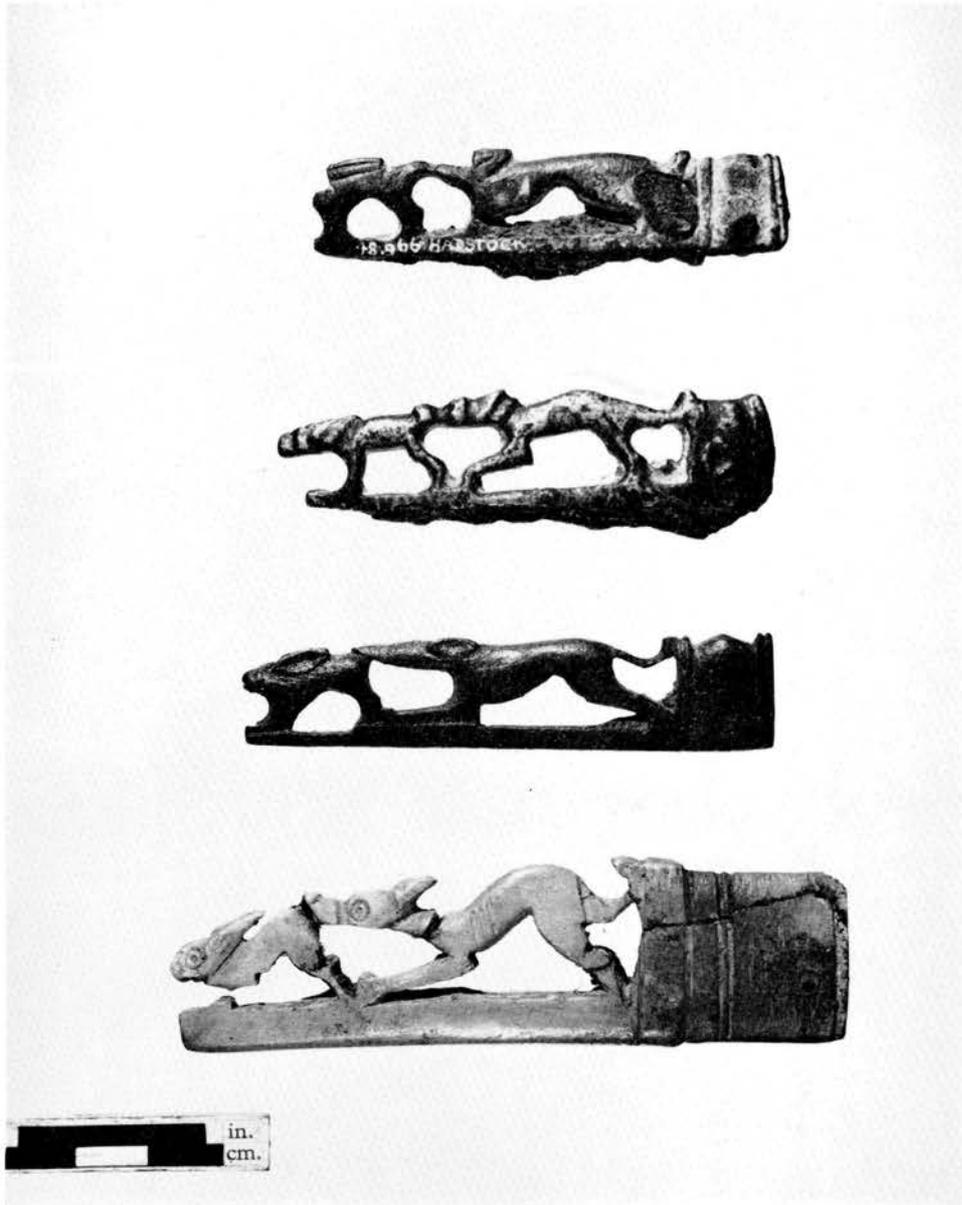
¹ *Proc. C.A.S.* L (1957), p. 33, fig. 1, no. 9; *Norfolk Arch.* xxx (1952), p. 304, fig. 9, nos. 4, 5 and 7.

² *Bull. of the Barnet and District Record Soc.* no. 12 (1960), fig. 6.

³ *Medieval Arch.* III (1959), pp. 42-3, fig. 18.



Iron Age bridle check-piece; Ashwell, Herts.



Roman folding-knife handles.

- (a) Harston, Cambs.: bronze; (b) Croxton, Cambs.: bronze; (c) Richborough, Kent: bronze;
(d) Great Chesterford, Essex: an example of the same design made in bone.

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