

Thus the burial 54 or 55 is likely to be of this lady. No doubt other such institutions are to be found.

Yorke summarises³⁰ the situation at Nazeingbury. Her suggestion that the lands of the house passed to Barking abbey and may have been used to endow Ilford Hospital is interesting.

If the arguments that Nazeingbury was a double-house are accepted, then the skeletal material, being the largest group known from such a community, and painstakingly and expertly studied by Glenys Putnam³¹, must serve as a model for future comparison. The picture which emerged was of an unusual population with 86 women and 32 men. Although there were 17 children and 10 adolescents, there was a lack of evidence of child rearing in the women. There were a lot of adults, particularly the women, living past 45 years perhaps to a ripe old age, with even the pathological cases well cared for. There was the evidence that the men were hard working whereas few women were. There was the evidence of a high standard of nutrition with the expected diseases of malnutrition, scurvy and rickets, being absent.

The feeling that the evidence was of a nunnery with the nuns caring for a few invalids from the local population in a hospice, and taking in a few children at the age of 7 to the community, is reinforced by the knowledge of the *Nasyngum* charters. However, the present analysis leads to the suggestion that the community was technically a double-house under a royal abbess.

At Barking, Bede recorded, selectively from other

30. *Op cit* fn 5 (1990) 54-5.

data to hand, that the abbess had asked the nuns where they wished to be buried; however, it was left to a heavenly light to decide on a separate place of their own. At Nazeingbury there seemed no separation of the cemetery into female and male areas. Of the 32 male graves, 24 were considered primary and six were thought secondary from the use of the cemetery a second time round. Of the primary graves 32% were of men, but of the secondary graves only 17% were of men, suggesting perhaps that the male component of the community was reduced in the latter part of its existence, perhaps in the 8th or 9th centuries they were preferring a men-only monastery.

If the two primary female burials in Church 1 are of *ffymme* and her colleague, it is not impossible that the male burial 100 and the female burial 52, both of which were inside the church outline, might be other members of the East Saxon line, the female even being a royal successor. DNA testing of these burials, for comparison with known members of the Frankish dynasty, or the East Saxon royal line, if they ever become available, might be worth while; at the present time this is considered not to be a fruitful avenue of research.

Conclusions

The importance of the site has increased due to the discovery of the copy documents. It now seems to fit nicely into the 7th-century system of double-houses under a royal abbess. If others are excavated in the future, the burial evidence will form a valuable comparison. The bones are in the Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge.

31. *Op cit* fn 1, 54-63.

Book

The Lewis Chessmen and what happened to them, by Irving Finkel, illustrated by Clive Hodgson. *British Museum Press*, 1995. 48 pp., £6.99.

THE IVORY chessmen from the Isle of Lewis, beautifully carved little characters, were found somewhere on a beach on the north side of the Island in 1831. For many years they have been divided between the British Museum in London and the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, where they have delighted thousands of visitors with their wonderfully detailed carving, their solid, dependable shapes, and surprisingly expressive faces.

In this delightful little storybook Irving Finkel tells the tale of their adventures from that moment on the beach until September 1993, when all 78 pieces were re-united temporarily for a special exhibition of chessmen at the British Museum.

Clive Hodgson's many charming illustrations serve to enhance the character given to these little pieces of walrus ivory by an anonymous craftsman around eight hundred years ago. I am not sure what age group this book is aimed at, but it does make delightful light reading for children from 8 to 80!

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