

An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Greenbank, Darlington

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NORTH of the R. Tees pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are only conspicuous by their virtual absence; and, from the ten undoubted examples known,¹ both the quality and quantity of the objects recovered do little to illuminate the Anglo-Saxon element in the culture of Bernicia — a kingdom which probably owed much of its numerical strength to native British survival.² In view of the scant evidence available, it is surprising that the finds from Darlington, the richest cemetery N. of the Tees, have never been fully published before.³ This paper seeks to make good this omission.

THE DISCOVERY of the Greenbank cemetery at Darlington was made in 1876, during the construction of an estate on the western slopes of the Skerne valley. It was situated at the summit of a hill, at present lying between Dodds Street and Selbourne Terrace (NZ 28621507). The aim of this note is to reconstruct as far as possible the original composition of the discovery and trace the subsequent dispersal of the finds.

In January 1876 the necessity of providing the services for the estate had led to drain digging, during which graves were discovered. Suspicion was aroused and a police enquiry was held, leading to additional discoveries; there was established a total of six skeletons of males, females, and a child.⁴ Leaving the skeletons in the

¹ Besides Darlington these include Castle Eden, East Boldon, Benwell, Corbridge, Barrasford, Capheaton, Howick Heugh, Galewood and Yeavinger. Those less certain are omitted.

² As first demonstrated by J. E. A. Jolliffe, 'Northumbrian institutions', *English Hist. Review*, xli (1926), 40-2.

³ By far the most thorough account is that by R. Scarr in the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 20 Oct. 1862. Additional reports are to be found in the *North Eastern Independent*, 1 Feb. 1879; *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 22 March 1905; *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newcastle*, 3rd ser., iii (1907), 34, 36; *Victoria County History, Durham*, 1 (1905), 205; Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, iv (London, 1915), 811, pl. xxxi, no. 4; E. Wooler, *Historic Darlington* (London, 1913), 38; A. Meancy, *Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London, 1964), 83-4.

⁴ Unfortunately police records have not preserved the report, by Supt. Rogers.

ground, the grave-goods were removed to the police station, where they were soon identified as being of the Anglo-Saxon period, probably by Canon Greenwell who, on hearing of the discovery, arrived within a few days and secured at least two shield-bosses for his collection.⁵ It was perhaps also at his instigation that, prior to reburial, the skulls of the skeletons were sent to Dr Smith-Woodward, at the British Museum of Natural History, who pronounced that "one may have belonged to an earlier Briton".⁶

Almost three years later, the following account by 'J.T.A.' appeared in the local *North Eastern Independent*, 1 February 1879:

The following particulars respecting a find of Saxon skeletons etc. at Greenbank Darlington in the year 1876 may probably be interesting to your readers, as they are about 1,500 years old and a very great addition to our local history, as no such discovery has been made previous and our present annals commence with the Saxon Thane who gave his lands to St. Cuthbert some centuries after.

(1) Six male and female and child's skeletons buried with the feet to the east, at the head of each a small urn or vase of native burnt clay, evidently a rude copy of the classical Greek vase; both were preserved and another destroyed. The skeletons were left in the ground except the skulls.

(2) Several beautiful bronze fibulae, large and small, the larger ones evidently intended for the soldier's belts; they have been gilt.

(3) Two circular brooches either for a man or woman, a pair of bronze tweezers for the ladies to pull away superfluous hair out of their faces or noses.

(4) Broken brooches and bodkins, all bronze, two crucial (*sic*) brooches.

(5) A large necklace, composed of amber, glass and stone beads and a chalk talisman or charm which may have been round the neck of one of the skeletons.

(6) Two swords, one very perfect and several spearheads.

(7) Two iron bosses from ancient shields and an iron key.

As noted by Canon Greenwell some little time since, the most eminent authorities concur that they have belonged to very early Saxon Angles, very likely Christian Angles.

The vases were empty and probably had contained burnt bones as the people were in a transitional state from Heathenism to Christianity and had not got rid of their superstitious ideas which is not to be wondered at as we have scarcely done so in our time.

'J.T.A.' was J. T. Abbott, a local chemist and keen antiquarian who possessed a minor collection of coins and objects to which had been added the bulk of the Greenbank material. Although doubtless substantially correct, the lack of clarity about the number of urns (three or six?) hardly inspires full confidence in his account. It is now impossible, furthermore, to reconstitute the individual grave groups, since the objects had clearly been separated into kinds before the spoils were divided.

In order to establish what in fact was discovered it is necessary to give some account of the division and subsequent history of the objects as they passed through several successive hands. Eleven years before his death Abbott sent his collection of coins and antiquities to Sotheby's where they were sold on 20 July

⁵ Reginald Smith who wrote the account in *Victoria County History, Durham*, attributes Greenwell with possession of the shield-bosses.

⁶ The British Museum (Natural History) has no records of his report and the material was not accessioned.

1888. The sale catalogue, describing the lots under the heading *Anglo-Saxon Antiquities found at Greenbank, Darlington in 1876*, allows a reconstruction of his portion of the find, although the fact that lots 465, 466 and much of 463 fit rather uncomfortably into a pagan Anglo-Saxon context emphasizes the mixed nature of Abbott's collection by this date:⁷

- Lot 458 Large Bronze Fibula, richly ornamented. (Bought by Rollin for £2.10.od.)
- Lot 459 Another of different design. (Bought by Rollin for £19.od.)
- Lot 460 Another and two smaller. (Bought by Rollin for £2.5.od.)
- Lot 461 Three round bronze fibulae, tweezers, pin, buckle, and an ornamented chatelaine. (Bought for Ready £1.1.od.)
- Lot 462 A string of amber and glass beads. (Bought by Ready 15/-d.)
- Lot 463 Pair of iron bracelets, iron spear head, bronze celt, stone celt, four stone arrowheads, portion of an iron pot, three lower jawbones etc. (Bought by Rollin for £2.15.od.)
- Lot 464 Two Anglo-Saxon earthenware vases, each about 7" high. (Bought by Ready for £4.15.od.)
- Lot 465 Pair of fine old brass Belt Pistols, mounted with silver, the butts engraved with ostrich feathers springing from an earl's coronet; belonged to the last Emanuel, Lord Scrope and Earl of Sunderland (temp. Charles I); found at Bolton Castle.
- Lot 466 Pair of brass Blunderbuss Pistols, with wooden stocks and spring bayonets (tem. 1780-90).

Except for one urn, the Greenbank objects purchased by Ready (the amber, glass and stone beads, *three* 'round fibulae', tweezers, pin, buckle, chatelaine and one of the urns) then disappeared from view. The identifiable Greenbank material purchased by the dealers Rollin and Feuardent consisted of two great square-headed brooches, one of the two cruciform brooches, and two small-long brooches. The subsequent disappearance of the iron spearhead bought by Rollin as part of lot 463 allows only speculation as to the suggestion that it may have been one of 'several' Greenbank spearheads. Amongst the companion pieces which shared this lot number—including bronze and stone axes, stone arrowheads, etc.—the iron 'bracelets', subsequently credited with a Greenbank provenance, here make their first appearance.

It was from Rollin that Sir John Evans acquired the Greenbank finds, together with some of the other objects included in lot 463. These passed in turn to his son Sir Arthur Evans, one time keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, to which they were donated in 1908 as part of the Evans collection. Before leaving this particular thread of ownership it is surprising to see, amongst the Greenbank finds at present in the Ashmolean, one of the two urns bought by Ready, because this lay outside the line of direct descent into Evans's hands. Either Rollin and Ready agreed to an exchange after the 1888 sale or, perhaps, upon purchasing Rollin's share, Sir John attempted to consolidate the Greenbank collection by a further purchase from Ready.

⁷ In the British Library Reference Division. The bracketed information concerning purchasers are manuscript additions to the catalogue text.

Having traced the objects obtained by Abbott it is necessary to follow a second group of objects owned at the turn of the century by George Hastwell.⁸ His share of the Greenbank finds amounted to three spearheads, the second cruciform brooch, and an iron key. By 1905 these were in the possession of Edward Wooler, F.S.A. (London), chairman of the Darlington Education Committee, who exhibited the finds at the Darlington Naturalists' Field Club in that year, and also published a plagiarized version of Abbott's original account in both the *Darlington and Stockton Times* for 22 March 1922, and the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle*.⁹ After referring to the discovery once more in his book, *Historic Darlington*,¹⁰ the finds in his possession were donated in 1922 to the Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington.

Of the objects attributable to the Greenbank cemetery three cannot be traced beyond the earliest account — the chalk 'talisman' (spindle whorl?) and the two iron swords.

INVENTORY

1. *Great square-headed brooch* (PL. VII, A). Bronze. Max. length 12.5 cm. Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.368. Great square-headed brooch of Leeds's type C2.¹¹ Each of three outer panels to head-plate filled by central outward-facing mask flanked by bird-heads; in centre of head-plate, two bull's eye circlets. Upper foot-plate with further bull's eye circlet; lappets composed of beaked animals. Lower foot marked off by broad transverse collar with central ridge; beneath, a prominent, carefully modelled mask with small side-locks, surmounting a plain zone bordered by zoomorphic detail. At lower corners of this detail, immediately above a small crescentic tongue, are bird-heads, their curled beaks enclosing perforations. Punched ornament has been applied. Traces of tinning(?) survive on tongue.
2. *Great square-headed brooch* (PL. VII, B). Bronze. Max. length 8.9 cm. (incomplete). Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.366. Great square-headed brooch of Leeds's type C2 (lacking most of lower foot).¹² Outer panels of head-plate as on complete example described above though much more coarsely presented. Lappets of simple, hooked bird-head form. Collar as on complete example and part of mask.
3. *Cruciform brooch* (PL. VII, C). Bronze. Max. length 12.7 cm. Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.367. Cruciform brooch of Group IVa.¹³ Knobs half-round in section and cast in one with head-plate, each with nipple at tip; large, rectangular collar at base of each knob. Head-plate with everted wings. Square stud on bow. Lappets flanking upper foot-plate, each composed of two bird-heads, one with beak curling down to meet upward-facing second bird-head. Collar of two transverse bands marks off lower foot. Flat, simply presented animal-head surmounts large scroll nostrils and moderately developed triangular tongue. Punched

⁸ In the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, 22 March 1905; this does not necessarily imply that they had been in his possession since 1876.

⁹ For refs. see note 3.

¹⁰ Wooler, op. cit. in note 3, 38.

¹¹ E. T. Leeds, *A Corpus of Early Anglo-Saxon Great Square-headed Brooches* (Oxford, 1949), no. 135.

¹² Ibid., no. 134.

¹³ This classification follows the typology of the English cruciform brooches proposed by Nils Åberg (*The Anglo-Saxons in England* (Cambridge and Uppsala, 1926), 28–56) and adapted by E. T. Leeds ('The distribution of the Angles and Saxons archaeologically considered', *Archaeologia*, xci (1945), 69–73), though I prefer to restrict Group IVb to brooches with plate, or mask and bird-head, additions to the knobs.

decoration of triangular depressions along borders of brooch (also employed on upper band of collar on foot to leave zig-zag in relief).

4. *Cruciform brooch* (PL. VIII, A). Bronze. Max. length 14.1 cm. Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington. Cruciform brooch of Group IVa. Knobs half-round in section and cast in one with head-plate; collar at base of each knob rounded and laterally grooved. Head-plate with everted wings. Lappets flanking upper foot-plate, each with rounded contour on upper side and shaped beneath. Collar of two transverse bands marks off lower foot. Flat, simply presented animal-head (with forehead slightly furrowed) surmounts large, round nostrils and spreading triangular tongue. Edges of brooch punched with double contoured triangles, a group of which is also punched in centre of each nostril. Ridge of nose-piece also embellished with punched motif.
5. *Small-long brooch* (PL. VIII, B). Bronze. Max. length 8.2 cm. Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.364. Small-long brooch of Leeds's cross-potent type.¹⁴ Simple triangular foot.
6. *Small-long brooch* (PL. VIII, C). Bronze. Max. length 5.6 cm. (incomplete). Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.365. Small-long brooch of Leeds's cross-potent type (lacking most of foot). Surviving portion similar to no. 5, and presumably foot also triangular. Punched ornament.
7. '*Two circular brooches*'. All authorities, apart from Sotheby's catalogue which records the sale to Ready of *three* circular brooches, are unanimous in attributing only two to the Greenbank cemetery. Sold to Ready and subsequently lost.
8. *Bronze tweezers*. Now lost.
9. '*Bronze bodkins*'. The history of all except pin sold to Ready and subsequently lost is unknown.
10. *Buckle*. First appears in Sotheby's catalogue under lot 461. Sold to Ready and subsequently lost.
11. *Ornamented chatelaine*. First appears in Sotheby's catalogue under lot 461. Sold to Ready and subsequently lost.
12. *String of amber, glass and stone beads*. Sold to Ready and subsequently lost.
13. *Chalk talisman*. Probably a spindle whorl. This cannot be traced beyond Abbott's original account.
14. *Iron key* (FIG. 28). Length 12.7 cm. Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington. Iron key with tubular stem, designed to operate a one-way tumbler lock with central projecting pin. Simple bit with tothing along each edge.
15. *Two iron swords*. One considered to have been 'very perfect'. These cannot be traced beyond Abbott's original account.
16. *Two shield-bosses*. Passed to Greenwell within a few days of their discovery. Not identifiable in Greenwell collection in British Museum and presumed lost.
17. *Two iron bands* (PL. IX, B). Ave. diam. 7.3 cm.–7.5 cm., width 1 cm., thickness 3 mm. Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1927.3350. Two bands fashioned from oval-sectioned iron strips, their ends turned out at right angles and hooked together.¹⁵
18. *Iron spearhead*. Not necessarily from Greenbank cemetery. First mentioned in Sotheby's catalogue as part of lot 463.
19. *Iron spearhead* (FIG. 28). Length 27.6 cm. (incomplete). Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington. Incomplete and exhibiting no diagnostic features.
20. *Iron spearhead* (FIG. 28). Length 39.5 cm. (incomplete). Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington. Well-known type C3,¹⁶ largest of pagan Anglo-Saxon leaf-shaped blades. Greatest width in lower part of blade, close

¹⁴ Leeds op. cit. in note 13, 14–22.

¹⁵ Sotheby's catalogue is the earliest attribution of these objects to the Greenbank cemetery.

¹⁶ M. J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (London, 1973), 55–9.

- to cleft socket which occupies only relatively small proportion of entire length. This type is characteristically accompanied by shield-bosses of low-cone and sugar-loaf varieties, triangular-plated belt buckles and objects decorated in Style II.
21. *Iron spearhead* (FIG. 28). Length 31.4 cm. (incomplete). Edward Pease Public Library and Art Gallery, Darlington. Angular type E3,¹⁷ largest of pagan Anglo-Saxon straight-sided angular forms. Tapering blade accounts for up to three-quarters of entire length, and separated from cleft socket by short solid neck. Well-dated examples are rare but are characteristically found with shield-bosses of low-cone and sugar-loaf varieties, triangular-plated belt buckles and, in Kent, with rouletted pottery bottles of Frankish type.
 22. *Pot.* Destroyed on removal.
 23. *Pot.* Sold to Ready and subsequently lost.
 24. *Pot* (FIG. 28; PL. IX, c). Height 14.2 cm. Ashmolean Museum, accn. no. 1909.369. Myres Corpus no. 2090. Small bossed sub-biconical vessel with short everted rim in thick coarse dark grey ware. Decorated with plain flat collar, demarcated above by four lines and below by two lines and a row of stamps. Three vestigial solid bosses on maximum diameter interrupt chevron design. One stamp, possibly produced by quill or fine hollow stick impressed diagonally, is used.

DISCUSSION

THE BROOCHES. *By Michael Pocock*

Great square-headed brooches

The common feature of the great square-headed brooches brought together by Leeds in his type C2 is a form of head-plate closely derived from that found on the florid cruciform series at about the stage of development represented by the brooch found at West Stow, Suffolk.¹⁸ The finest example of the C2 type is undoubtedly the brooch from Kenninghall, Norfolk.¹⁹ However, the type won especial popularity in the Humbrenian areas, where the majority of examples has been found.²⁰ The foot-plates of the latter examples differ from that on Kenninghall, having, for the most part, a large, panelled nose-piece beneath the mask that is considerably more evolved than the equivalent on Kenninghall. A few of the northern brooches vary from this pattern. Among these is the complete brooch from Darlington, which finds a very close parallel in an unpublished brooch from Fonaby, Lincs. (PL. IX, A).²¹ The detail on Fonaby is less finely executed than on Darlington and the openwork on the lappets and foot of the latter brooch is absent; the tongue does not project beyond the contours of the foot as it does on Darlington.²² But, generally, the resemblance between the two

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-7.

¹⁸ The late E. T. Leeds and M. Pocock, 'A survey of the Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooches of florid type', *Medieval Archaeol.*, xv (1971), pl. ii, e.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.* in note 11, no. 130.

²⁰ Recent finds have been summarized in *op. cit.* in note 18, 32-3.

²¹ Scunthorpe, Borough Museums and Art Gallery. I am very grateful to Mrs S. C. Hawkes for permission to illustrate this brooch.

²² In this respect Darlington is particularly reminiscent of a series of Group IVa cruciforms, all with bird-head lappets, on which the nostrils of the animal-head on the foot have been replaced by upturned bird-heads above a moderate crescentic tongue. The brooch from Holywell Row, Suffolk, gr. 99 (T. C. Lethbridge, *Recent Excavations in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk* (Cambridge Antiq. Soc., 4th publ. n.s. III, 1931), fig. 20, no. i) stands as a good example of this well-defined series which is distributed throughout the Anglian areas as far N. as Yorkshire.

brooches is very strong indeed. Another curious brooch, which I have published elsewhere²³ and which, sadly, is of unknown provenance, has a foot which in many details closely resembles the Darlington and Fonaby type. The quality of this brooch is much coarser than Darlington or Fonaby, though the head-plate, representing a transitional stage between that of the florid cruciform and great square-headed types, belongs to a typologically anterior stage. The second, imperfect, Darlington C2 brooch (no. 2) is clearly a much inferior production, markedly coarser in detail than the complete example, and has the look of a clumsy attempt at copying the latter brooch.

Cruciform brooches

The feature which distinguishes the cruciform brooches of Group IV from those of Group III is the presence of lappets flanking the upper foot-plate. These lappets are often in the form of a bird-head,²⁴ which varies in detail. One version is fairly naturalistic, with rounded forehead passing into a curled beak. Another is in the tradition of Kendrick's 'Helmet Style'²⁵ and has, surviving from some anterior stage in the evolution of the motif from Roman sources, a projection above the eye of the bird. Garbled presentations of both these two main versions are common. The particular interest of the first Darlington cruciform brooch (no. 3) is that here both versions occur in a combination which is difficult to parallel on other cruciform brooches. The square stud on the bow is also unusual on Group IVa cruciforms.²⁶ These features apart, the brooch is a fairly unexceptional example of its type. It is worth noting, though, that among the various Group IVa cruciform brooches with bird-head lappets of any form, from East Anglia, Cambridgeshire, the Midlands and the North, it is possible to draw a general distinction between on the one hand those which can be assigned to sub-groups defined by recurring significant detail,²⁷ and, on the other, the many rather more anonymous productions for which it is difficult to find close parallels. However, even among the latter brooches it is possible to discern certain regional characteristics. The surface finish, for example, of many of the later Group IV cruciforms from northern sites, however flatly or simply the detail may be executed,

²³ *Yorks. Archaeol. Jnl.*, XLII (1970), 407-9, pl. i, a.

²⁴ It is tempting, against the background of bird-associations in pagan Germanic thought (for convenient summary see P. Gelling and H. E. Davidson, *The Chariot of the Sun* (London, 1969), 174-6), to speculate whether the bird-head lappets may have held a symbolic force. Another, perhaps more fundamental, aspect of the cruciform type may also be considered in this light. The faithful adherence to a prominent animal-head foot-terminal throughout much of the long life of the type in England conveys the, admittedly subjective, impression that it was intended to have more than a decorative effect. The animal-head is most readily understood in the earlier and more realistic presentations as that of a horse, a symbol in Germanic paganism of considerable significance, among whose associations were fertility concepts including the fertility god Freyr (Gelling and Davidson, 167-72). In this context it is worth noticing the phallic appearance of the foot on many earlier cruciforms (examples are the brooches of Åberg, op. cit. in note 13, figs. 61, 62, and of Lethbridge, op. cit. in note 22, fig. 12, nos. 1-4). This aspect is often masked (though not invariably: compare the brooch of Åberg, op. cit., fig. 75) by the increasing stylization of the later brooches of Groups III and IV; but is it possible, if the earlier cruciforms were in some sense symbolic, that the later examples although much developed in form may nevertheless have retained traditional religious associations for their wearers?

²⁵ T. D. Kendrick, *Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900* (London, 1938), 74-81.

²⁶ It is not uncommon, however, on cruciforms of Group IVb.

²⁷ Such as, for example, the sub-group described in note 22.

is often rather smoother than many of the equivalent brooches known from the midlands which are frequently strikingly angular and rough in finish. Again, the tongue which appears regularly on the foot of many Group IV cruciforms, while evolving into a spreading crescentic or triangular form in the north, rarely there developed into the unwieldy, often rectangular, forms common in the midlands. In the context of these remarks, it would seem that the closest general parallels to the first Darlington cruciform (no. 3) are to be found in the pair of brooches from Londesborough, E. Yorks.²⁸ The latter are less heavily executed than Darlington (the animal-head on the foot of Londesborough, for example, is more sensitively modelled with furrowed brow). In turn, a slightly anterior form to the Londesborough pair is the fine brooch from Benwell, Northumberland,²⁹ the latter with detached side-knobs (now missing) and lappets in a rather earlier form of the 'Helmet Style'.

The lappets on the second Darlington cruciform (no. 4) are presumably the outcome of much copying, over a period of time, of what was originally a bird-head design. There is little especially remarkable about this brooch. Group IVa cruciforms with lappets reminiscent of this kind are common enough throughout the Anglian areas, although no exact parallel is available. Even so, as with the first Darlington cruciform, the general finish of this brooch and the proportions of the foot share the character of other northern finds. Brooches which in this sense are generally akin to Darlington, without being exact parallels, are known from Sancton³⁰ and Kilham³¹ (both sites in E. Yorks.), while a further brooch from Londesborough³² offers a greater degree of similarity. Even this, though, is no more than a 'family' resemblance.

Small-long brooches

The origin of the cross-potent type, the relationship of the earliest examples found in England to those known from the continent, and questions of dating all require fresh study in the light of material which has come to hand since Leeds published his general classification of the English small-long brooches in 1945.³³ It is clear, however, that the Darlington examples belong to a quite early stage within the subsequent development of the type in this country. The rounded angles between the arms of the head-plate which occur on the earliest examples of the type are here replaced by regular stepping, but the foot retains a simple triangular shape, distinct from the evolved crescentic form which characterizes later productions. It may be, however, that the simpler form lingered on longer in the N. than further S.; and, in the absence of an adequately illustrated *corpus*

²⁸ M. J. Swanton, 'An Anglian cemetery at Londesborough in east Yorkshire', *Yorks. Archaeol. Jnl.*, xli, (1964), fig. 6, no. i.

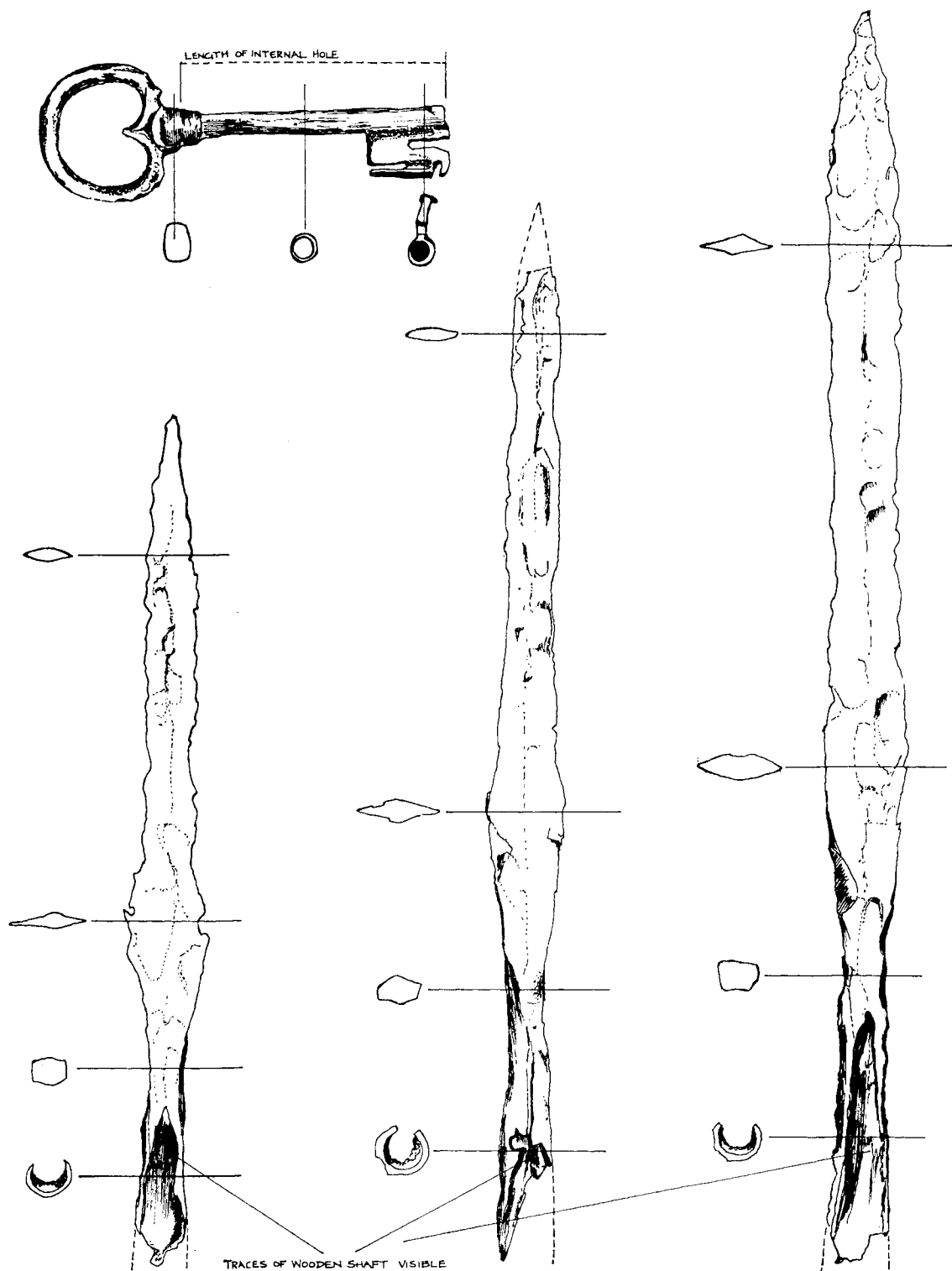
²⁹ In his publication of the brooch (*Archaeol. Aeliana*, 4th ser., xiii (1936), 117-21, pl. v) Parker Brewis noted its similarity to the Londesborough pair.

³⁰ J. N. L. Myres and W. H. Southern, *The Anglo-Saxon Cremation Cemetery at Sancton, East Yorkshire* (Hull, 1973), fig. 42, no. 24.

³¹ H. Schetelig, *The Cruciform Brooches of Norway* (Bergen, 1906), fig. 126.

³² Op. cit. in note 28, fig. 6, no. 4.

³³ Leeds, op. cit. in note 13, 1-106.



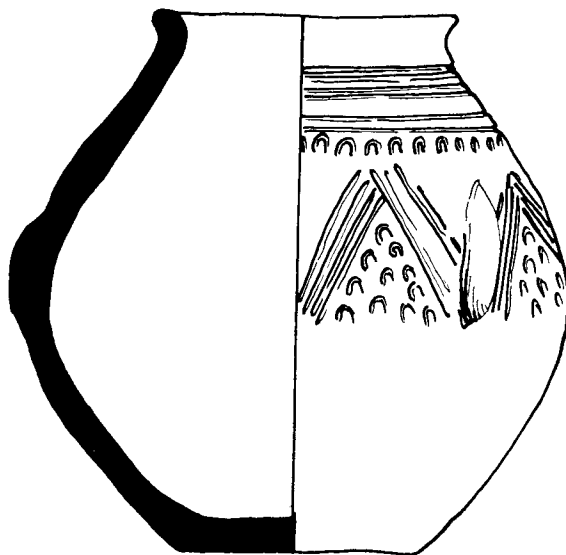


FIG. 28

ITEMS FROM ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY, DARLINGTON

Facing page. Three iron spearheads (inventory nos. 19–21) and iron key (inventory no. 14). Sc. 1:2; *above.* Pot (inventory no. 24). Sc. 1:4 (drawing by J. N. L. Myres)

of the type, it is probably best to regard the Darlington examples as falling within the 6th century but not to attempt a closer dating. In the N. a close parallel to Darlington comes from Nunburnholme, E. Yorks.³⁴ The distribution of cross-potent brooches similar to Darlington is widespread. Darlington marks the northern limit while the form reaches as far W. as Long Wittenham, Berks., though the main focus of distribution falls in S. Cambridgeshire.³⁵

Elsewhere I have suggested that during the later pagan period the leading brooch types worn by the settlers in the northern kingdoms began to assume an increasingly localized character, perhaps reflecting the emergence of frontiers, in contrast to the rather earlier material which, finding significantly close parallels as far S. as East Anglia and Cambridgeshire, seems to suggest a period of more open contacts.³⁶ These remarks I illustrated from finds in the important, though haphazardly excavated, cemetery at Londesborough, and, indeed, the later cruciforms from this cemetery have been cited above as general parallels for the Darlington cruciforms. The great square-headed brooches from Darlington, for which a date late in the pagan period is indicated by their relationship with the florid cruciform series, though ultimately deriving much from models originating in the S. of the Anglian area, do so in a localized interpretation, and along with

³⁴ W. Bowman, *Reliquiae antiquae Eboracenses* (Leeds, 1855), pl. xii, no. 3.

³⁵ Leeds, *op. cit.* in note 13, 16.

³⁶ *Op. cit.* in note 18, 34–6.

the two cruciform brooches from Darlington they fill out the picture of Humberian characteristics emerging among the northern material of the later 6th and 7th centuries. In this connexion the close similarity noted between the complete C2 brooch from Darlington and the example from Fonaby is a valuable reflection of the strong links between the early settlers in N. Lincolnshire and those to the N. of the Humber.³⁷

THE SPEARHEADS. *By* M. J. Swanton

See generally the remarks on p. 66 f., inventory nos. 20 and 21. Neither of these two types of spearhead had discernible pre-migration period antecedents. Both seem to have developed only in the second half of the 6th century, and to have found favour in the 7th, presumably as a result of plentiful materials becoming more readily available with the settled economic conditions of the established heptarchy. Such evidence as exists suggests that these types strongly survived the abandonment of pagan funerary customs. Both types are found scattered widely over the entire area of pagan Anglo-Saxon settlement. Parallels from the Deiran area come from burials at Driffild I and II, Sancton II, Sewerby, Staxton and elsewhere,³⁸ although all these examples await full publication. The two shields and two swords suggest strongly that there were at least two warrior-graves in the Greenbank cemetery. If there were only two adult male burials, it is probable that two spearheads came from one grave. In such cases the spearheads commonly are of the same size, although by no means always of the same or similar types.³⁹

THE POT. *By* J. N. L. Myres

Vessels of this type are not likely to be earlier than the 6th century, when stamped ornament was popular on chevron designs, and bosses were going out of fashion — in this case remaining only in inconspicuous solid form as random interruptions to the chevron pattern. The rough grey fabric also suggests a relatively late date.

The closest parallel on record to the shape and design of the Darlington pot is 2292 Sancton (Hull Museum 1957. 98a).⁴⁰ This however is about twice the size, and its decoration is correspondingly more elaborate, with a raised collar, numerous necklines, and two stamps. It too has small solid bosses on the maximum diameter, six in number, separating panels with a random arrangement of linear chevrons and vertical lines. Another rather similar example of the style is a fragmentary urn, 3908 Newark (Newark Museum 306). This also is larger but has similar solid bosses (five?) and rough grey fabric, with one stamp used in at least two rows on the neck, most of which is missing, above empty chevrons.

³⁷ J. N. L. Myres has analysed the literary evidence for these links ('The Teutonic settlement of northern England', *History*, xx (1935), 250-62), and has indicated parallel ceramic evidence (*Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England* (Oxford, 1969), 129-30).

³⁸ M. J. Swanton, *A Corpus of Pagan Anglo-Saxon Spear-Types* (Oxford, 1974), passim.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* in note 30, fig. 30.

No close parallels to urns of the Darlington type have been noted in continental cemeteries. This is consistent with the probability that they date no earlier than the mid 6th century, when English fashions in pottery were developing independently of the continental prototypes.

THE IRON KEY

Out of any context this piece would present problems in deciding between a Roman or medieval date. However, as the original account places it firmly among the Greenbank finds, it must be included as part of that cemetery and therefore a Roman date is more likely.⁴¹

THE IRON BANDS

The earliest record of these objects is amongst the pages of Sotheby's catalogue. If this attribution is correct they are hard to parallel amongst known Anglo-Saxon equipment, and indeed it is difficult to suggest a function for them at any period.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the confusion and conflict in the early accounts, and the lengthy chronological gap between the discovery and initial mention of some individual items, the inventory is believed to represent all the objects discovered at Greenbank in 1876. Whereas it is now impossible to reconstitute the original grave groups associated with the six skeletons (including a child's), the identifiable male equipment (three spearheads, two shield-bosses, two swords) suggests a minimum of two male burials. The brooches conveniently fall into pairs of cruciform, square-headed, small-long, and now lost 'circular' brooches'. If the latter were annular brooches they often occur in combination with the former types and tentatively indicate a minimum of two females. Although Abbott's own confusion as to the number of vessels discovered is beyond solution, it is perhaps significant that the more reliably supported statement indicates that only three vessels were found.

The majority of the datable objects fall chronologically within the latter half of the 6th and first half of the 7th century A.D., though the small-long brooches may possibly be rather earlier.⁴² Anglo-Saxon material of the earlier pagan period is markedly rare in the areas which emerged as the territory of the Bernicians, comprising no more than two cruciform brooches found at *Corstopitum*, Northumberland, of late 5th or early 6th-century date;⁴³ burials of the later pagan and early Christian periods remain scarce. What is probably most significant about the Darlington burials is, first, the size and richness of this cemetery in comparison with the more northerly cemeteries already published; of the latter only the

⁴¹ Similar examples have been found at Saalburg (L. Jacobi, *Das Romerkastell Saalburg* (Hamburg, 1897), text fig. 76, nos. 24, 28, 35).

⁴² See pp. 69, 71.

⁴³ In *Archaeol. Aeliana*, 3rd ser., v (1909), 406-8, fig. 25.

Howick Heugh cemetery allows a minimum estimation of more than two individuals, and these were very poorly equipped indeed.⁴⁴ The second significant feature is the cultural links indicated by the Darlington grave-goods with Humbrenian settlers further S. in Deira and Lindsey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are extremely grateful to J. N. L. Myres for his report on pottery and to M. J. Swanton for discussing the spearheads. It is also a pleasure to thank Dr R. Bailey and Mrs L. Webster for their advice and encouragement, the Ashmolean Museum for permission to reproduce illustrations of objects, and P. D. C. Brown for his help and guidance. Finally, thanks are due to A. Suddes for his drawings of the spearheads and key, and to R. Jones for his photograph of no. 4.

⁴⁴ *Archaeol. Aeliana*, 4th ser., xvi (1939), 120-9. The objects associated with the fifteen skeletons are difficult to assign in cultural terms, although the rite and method of interment find ready parallels in other pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Unfortunately apart from the Greenbank brooches, none of the other brooch types discovered in Bernicia was directly associated with burials, precluding therefore any indication of other associations. The cruciform and great square-headed brooches found at Benwell were discovered much as stray-finds together with a glass vessel 'broken and discarded by the workmen' (cf. *Archaeol. Aeliana*, 4th ser., xiii (1936), 117-21, and *ibid.*, xxxv (1957), 282-3). The great square-headed brooch found at Whitehill Point, Tynemouth, is presumed to have been dredged from the R. Tyne (cf. *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newcastle*, 2nd ser., v (1893), 236). In addition to the pair of cruciform brooches from *Corstopitum*, a small urn and a string of Anglo-Saxon beads were also found, but no trace of Anglo-Saxon skeletal material unless the two unpublished burials discovered there in 1947 are of this date (in Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne, accn. no. 1956.2 (3-4). The small-long brooch, ascribed to Birdoswald by J. Collingwood Bruce (*Handbook to the Roman Wall* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1853), 251 and pl.), has been shown to have acquired a false provenance and an origin further S. should be sought (J. D. Cowen in *Archaeol. Aeliana*, 4th ser., xliii (1965), 12-14).