

## Notes and News

### AN ANGLO-SAXON BUTTON BROOCH FROM LANCING, WEST SUSSEX (Fig. 1)

In 1988 an Anglo-Saxon button brooch was found near Lancing by a metal-detector user. The finder has not been willing to give a precise findspot for the brooch. In 1989, with the landowner's agreement, the brooch was donated to Worthing Museum and Art Gallery and given the accession number 1989/45.

The brooch is made of copper alloy, cast in one piece with secondary, punched, decoration. The front of the brooch is gilded and in good condition although some of the gold has worn away. The brooch is 19 mm in diameter with a shallow rim, damaged in several places. The hinge-lug and catchplate are damaged. The pin is missing but would have been aligned horizontally. There is a flat band 2.5 mm wide with punched decoration, between the rim and the main area of ornament. Two punches have been used; the larger being a ring and the smaller a triangular notching punch. The ring punch was used on the helmet and on the plain band between the rim and the face. The triangular punch was used on the eyebrows, eyerings, moustache and mouth.

A typology of button brooches was established by Avent and Evison<sup>1</sup> in 1982 using 120 examples. Two more brooches were found in Brighton in 1985.<sup>2</sup> Avent and Evison identified twelve main classes, some of which were subdivided. This brooch has a number of features in common with Avent and Evison's largest group, Ai; the pointed helmet, flared nose, moustache doubling as upper mouth element, curved eyerings and punched decoration on the helmet. Like them it is of high quality workmanship and its diameter is close to the mean for class Ai brooches. It does, however, have features which do not conform. The eyes are not

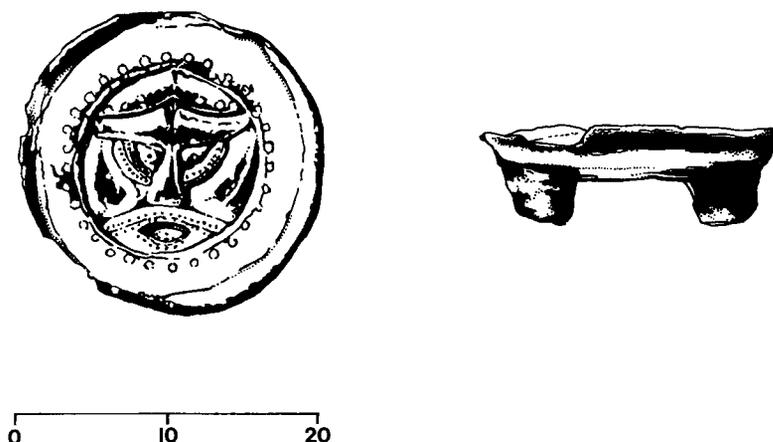


FIG. 1

Button brooch from Lancing, West Sussex. Scale 2:1

round, the cheeks are fairly flat and the mouth is well rounded. It also has an unusual central furrow in the forehead. These differences are great enough to suggest that this brooch belongs not to Ai but to the closely related group A Miscellaneous. Groups Ai and A Miscellaneous make up almost one fifth of known button brooches.

Avent and Evison suggested a late 5th to mid 6th century date for Ai brooches and early 6th century for the A Miscellaneous group. Welch's arguments<sup>3</sup> that button brooches did not appear before the late 5th century need not upset the dating of this brooch as early 6th century. Class Ai and A Miscellaneous brooches have hitherto been found mainly in Kent with outliers in Essex, Hampshire and Frankish Gaul. Only one Ai example has been found in Sussex, in grave 26 at Alfriston.<sup>4</sup> Early Anglo-Saxon material is scarce in this part of West Sussex with finds limited to the cemetery at Highdown and the recently discovered settlement at Botolph's near Bramber.<sup>5</sup> The Lancing brooch is, therefore, a small but useful addition to our information about the early Anglo-Saxon period in this area.

SALLY WHITE

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> R. Avent and V. I. Evison, 'Anglo-Saxon Button Brooches', *Archaeologia*, 107 (1982), 77-124.

<sup>2</sup> P. S. Smith 'Early Anglo-Saxon burials from Stafford Road, Brighton, East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeol. Coll.*, 126 (1988), 31-51.

<sup>3</sup> M. G. Welch, 'Button Brooches, Clasp Buttons and Face Masks', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 29 (1985), 142-44.

<sup>4</sup> Avent and Evison, *op. cit.* in note 1, 79, Fig. 3.

<sup>5</sup> M. F. Gardiner, *Medieval Archaeol.*, 31 (1987), 162-63 and 32 (1988), 278-79.

## TWO EARLY MEDIEVAL MOUNTS FROM THE CROSTHWAITE MUSEUM, KESWICK (Pl. VIII)

The purpose of this note is to draw attention to two copper alloy decorated mounts, a flat enamelled escutcheon and a cast, gilt disc, which were formerly in the Crosthwaite Museum, Keswick, and are now on display in the British Museum. Neither piece has as yet been adequately published: the enamelled mount has been occasionally listed in discussions of early medieval metalwork<sup>1</sup> but never illustrated; the disc, which has likewise never been illustrated, has been referred to in passing.<sup>2</sup> Although they cannot be correctly provenanced the mounts are of considerable intrinsic interest and merit a fuller publication.

Their circumstances of discovery are entirely unknown. The first written record of their existence which could be traced by the writer is found in the Accessions register of the British Museum, which acquired them, with other objects from the Crosthwaite Museum, in 1870. This material was purchased from one Bryce M. Wright, presumably a London dealer, who had in turn purchased it from the sale of the Museum's contents. Other finds acquired in this transaction included the well-known Iron Age sword from Embleton and some Roman metalwork from the forts of Papcastle and Brough under Stainmore. Most, but not all of the material acquired from the museum sale (a total of 35 items) was provenanced, and all of these were of Cumbrian origin with the exception of a group of Roman material from Kingsholm, Gloucester. The probability is therefore reasonably strong that the two mounts were found locally in Cumbria, and as such they represent important additions to the small corpus of early medieval metalwork from North-West England.

### THE ENAMELLED MOUNT (Pl. VIII, A)

The mount is a flat, circular disc, of the type usually interpreted as a hanging-bowl escutcheon (Pl. VIII, A). The diameter is 43 mm, the thickness 2 mm, and the weight 22.8 g. It is decorated on one surface only with a pattern of spirals, inlaid with red enamel. The surface is pitted and the enamel is now very dark and dull, but the background colour appears to be green. The disc is pierced near the edge by a single hole. The pattern consists of a circlet of six trumpet spirals around the perimeter, which are in turn linked to a central spiral. The mount