

The Viking burial, which was described by the workmen who uncovered it as being accompanied by two female 'sacrificial' burials, was located at the N. edge of the cemetery and was observed to be lying N.-S., with head to the N.<sup>17</sup> This burial was seen to have been undisturbed by any later burials, an indication that it had been inserted into a cemetery which had already been abandoned in the 9th century for adult burial by the local population.

The cemetery at Donnybrook, Dublin, can now be recognized as a secular or familial cemetery of the Early Christian period into which a single Viking burial was deposited, possibly accompanied by two female sacrificial burials. This practice of the deposition of pagan Viking burials in Christian cemeteries is well attested elsewhere in Ireland, the Isle of Man and Britain.<sup>18</sup>

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> W. Frazer, 'Description of a Great Sepulchral Mound at Aylesbury Road, Near Donnybrook, in the County of Dublin, Containing Human and Animal Remains, as Well as Some Objects of Antiquarian Interest, Referable to the Tenth or Eleventh Centuries', *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.* 16 (vol. 11, 1879-88), 29-55.

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Hall, 'A Viking-Age Grave at Donnybrook, Co. Dublin', *Medieval Archaeol.* 22 (1978), 64-83; H. B. Clarke, 'Gaelic, Viking and Hiberno-Norse Dublin', in A. Cosgrove (ed.), *Dublin through the Ages* (Dublin, 1988), 5-24, esp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.* in note 1, 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> E. O'Brien, 'Late Prehistoric — Early Historic Ireland. The Burial Evidence Reviewed', unpubl. M.Phil. thesis, University College Dublin, 1984; *Id.*, 'Christian Burial in Ireland: Continuity and Change', 130-37 in N. Edwards and A. Lane (eds.) *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, Oxbow Monograph 16 (Oxford, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Frazer, *op. cit.* in note 1, 52.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, fig. 7. Thanks to Ms Nessa O'Connor, National Museum of Ireland, for facilitating examination of this item.

<sup>13</sup> R. O'Floinn, National Museum of Ireland, pers. comm.

<sup>14</sup> W. Frazer, 'The Aylesbury Road Sepulchral Mound', *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.* 16C (1879-88), 116-18.

<sup>15</sup> M. Dunlevy, 'A Classification of Early Irish Combs', *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.* 88C (1988), 341-422, esp. 362, 393.

<sup>16</sup> O'Brien (1991), *op. cit.* in note 5.

<sup>17</sup> For a full description of this burial see Frazer, *op. cit.* in notes 1 and 14, and see Hall, *op. cit.* in note 2.

<sup>18</sup> E. O'Brien, 'Location and Context of Viking Burials at Kilmainham and Islandbridge, Dublin', in preparation, contains details of parallels.

### A NORTHAMPTON JEWISH TOMBSTONE, c. 1259 TO 1290, RECENTLY REDISCOVERED IN NORTHAMPTON CENTRAL MUSEUM (Fig. 6; Pl. IX, B)

The study of England's medieval Jews is beset by a major problem: the paucity of physical evidence for their existence and significance. The medieval Anglo-Jewry must be studied by largely documentary means. The rediscovery of a 13th-century tombstone is significant as it may be the only example of its kind in England; it also preserves perhaps one of only two surviving Hebrew inscriptions of the period in the country.<sup>1</sup> The tombstone was rediscovered by Mr Robert Moore of Northampton Central Museum in 1987 after it had lain forgotten in the cellars of the museum since the 1860s. He was able to re-identify it by reference to a sketch made of it by Northampton antiquarian Dryden in 1886.<sup>2</sup>

The tombstone is said to have been found in the early 1840s during the construction of Princes Street, Northampton. It shows evidence of having been incorporated in a wall.

Wetton states that 'Parts of a Hebrew inscription, said to be in memory of a Rabbi, have been dug up in St Sepulchre's parish. The last piece was discovered in Princes Street, but was unfortunately built up again in a cellar wall'.<sup>3</sup> A map of the period confirms that Princes Street was in process of development at the time, and that it lies just inside the S. boundary of St Sepulchre's parish.<sup>4</sup> It seems that the fragment in possession of the museum is the first of two pieces that were found on the site at separate times in the development. Dryden carefully annotates his sketch of the stone with the remark 'It is stated that 2 portions were found'.<sup>5</sup>

The tombstone at present is a large fragment of the original whole which was obviously of good quality. It represents the top right-hand corner of the complete tombstone. Its dimensions are 213 mm in width, 350 mm in length, and 107 mm thick, measured across the full edge. The most notable feature, excepting the inscription, is the pronounced sill projecting frontwards on the original margins of the tombstone. This is the remnant of a prominent framing that would have surrounded the tombstone and the inscription with the possible exception of the base. This vertical sill is square cut and is 27 mm across and projects 18 mm from the inscribed surface. The horizontal sill at the top of the tombstone is larger and more sophisticated. It has an asymmetrical bevelled section, with a vertical width of c. 65 mm. It also projects from the inscribed surface of the tombstone by 18 mm. The Hebrew letters are deeply incised, the incisions having a squared profile. They are almost uniform in height at c. 40 mm, with a similar spacing between lines.

The original would have been almost square in form. This may be ascertained from the length and layout of the reconstructed epitaph. Comparisons can also be made with Selden's transliterations of four London tombstones (now lost) that indicate a nearly square form.<sup>6</sup> More importantly the surviving features of the tombstone correspond most closely with the general form and quality of some contemporary tombstones that survive in Germany at Worms<sup>7</sup> and other Rhineland Jewries.<sup>8</sup>

The features it shares in common are a square form with a prominent and projecting frame, and a general simplicity in style and finish. But it should be qualified that some tombstones do vary this design with a curved or arched top, or a less projecting frame.<sup>9</sup> Some examples of tombstones from the Alsace-Lorraine region of France also have this square framed form but others in the region modulate the shaping of the frame and the tombstone so that the interior of the top of the frame is curved or the tombstone itself has a curved top.<sup>10</sup> At this period there was also a marked tendency towards uniformity and an avoidance of display in all tombstones.<sup>11</sup> The only significant variation in form of the Northampton tombstone is in the stylistic refinement of the horizontal part of the frame which deviates from the usually plain and square cut or curved profile. The overall similarities indicate something of the common culture shared by the Franco-German and English Jewry.<sup>12</sup>

The tombstone is of Barnack Rag, from the famous Barnack quarries close to Stamford, 35 miles from Northampton.<sup>13</sup> The quarries operated on a large scale from the 8th century onwards,<sup>14</sup> producing for architectural purposes, and also from the 10th century for mass-produced grave slabs which were transported up to 70 miles, with many surviving in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire.<sup>15</sup>

While the inscription is incomplete a constructive translation is possible. The first line is the clearest and almost certainly reads *Zoth matsebath* meaning 'This is the tombstone of'. Even though the *matsebath* is only indicated by a 'mem' and the possible top right-hand portion of a letter 'tzadi', this is an almost certain reading, as it is the only one that accords with one of the commonly used formulaic openings in such epitaphs, being widely used in N. France and the Rhineland.<sup>16</sup> The second line, under close examination, appears to read *he haber* meaning 'fellow', as pertains to membership of a religious fraternity or group and simultaneously 'devout' or 'learned', the qualities and qualifications for membership of such a group. It is a formal title; a *haber* usually denoted a scholar advanced in rabbinical learning, perhaps the recipient of a lesser rabbinical degree.<sup>17</sup> Notably, *haverim* were not necessarily Rabbis,<sup>18</sup> but many were, in which case they would be titled *he haber Rabbi*.<sup>19</sup> The *haverim* were an élite scholarly group in medieval Jewish society<sup>20</sup> and are thought to have played a crucial

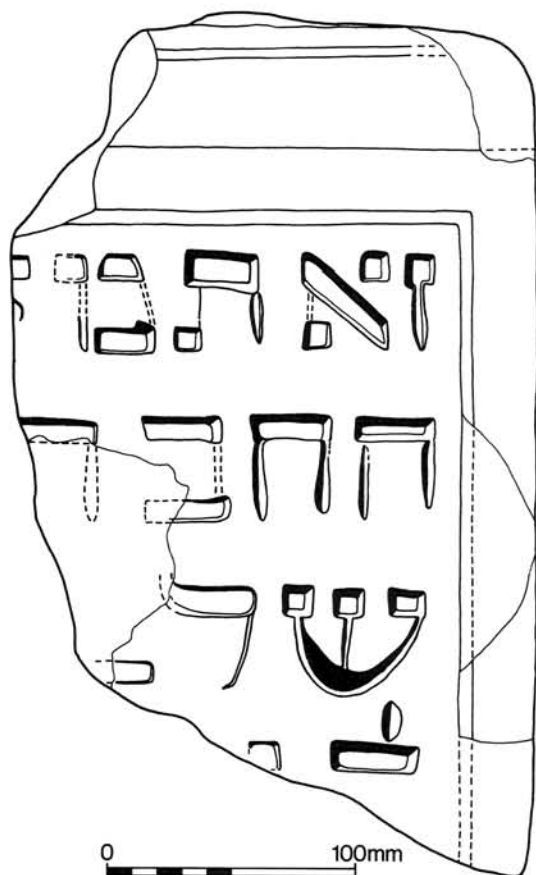


FIG. 6

A Jewish tombstone from Northampton, c. 1259 to 1290, in Northampton Central Museum.

Drawing by Melanie Connel

role in talmudic learning in most Jewish communities. They may have studied in formal talmudic institutions in larger Jewries in England.<sup>21</sup> The missing end of the line can be readily interpolated, given that *matsebeth* must be followed by the honorific title *he haber*, then the full width of the tombstone is indicated by the end of *matsebeth*. This entails that after *he haber* there can be only a maximum of three more letter spaces before the name of the deceased starts from the beginning of line three.<sup>22</sup> Thus it is very likely that the space was filled by *Rabbi*, occupying three letter spaces.<sup>23</sup> Line three then is a proper name starting with the consonants 'shin' and 'lamed', followed by the corner of a possible 'mem'. The 'lamed' is almost destroyed apart from its mid-portion and a correct though faint descender stroke not visible in normal light. Stylistic comparison with French and German examples, especially of the exit points for the ascenders and descenders from the horizontal mid-portion, disqualify the alternatives, which necessitate squared ends for one or both of the extremities of the horizontal element. The likely candidate for the name is *Shelomoh* (i.e. Solomon), or perhaps *Shalom*. The final line is almost obliterated, but the vertical mark above the remnants of the first letter is a superscript marker indicating a contraction, or a letter to be read for its numeric as well as for its phonetic value. According to epitaph formulae this would imply that it was a contraction of his father's title *R(abbi)*, with the following letter being the first letter of his name. In this case it would also follow that the last two spaces of the previous line would have contained *ben*, meaning 'son of'. Alternatively the contraction could indicate part

of an abbreviated conventional eulogy to conclude the epitaph, or it could be the date of decease indicated by an abbreviation of the pericope of the week followed by the year in the Jewish calendar. All of the foregoing translations accord with the common epitaph formulae of the 13th century, which usually comprised a short opening, followed by a brief eulogy<sup>24</sup> naming the person, his father, and notable qualities, followed by a date of death. It is again instructive to see the close parallels between this and the German and N. French examples of epitaph formulae.

The tombstone can be ascribed to the 13th century. The Northampton Jewry did not exist until as late as 1159, and they did not have a cemetery until at least 1259; this was closed in 1290 on the general expulsion of the Jews from England.<sup>25</sup> Therefore the tombstone must date from between c. 1259 and 1290. Stylistic comparison with French and German examples confirm this general date, with the use of *matsebeth* being a distinctive 13th-century usage,<sup>26</sup> and the framed form of tombstone suggests the later 13th century.<sup>27</sup>

The original situation of the tombstone would have been the Northampton Jewish cemetery, the so-called 'Jews Garden' or 'House of Life'.<sup>28</sup> The cemetery was also used by the Jews of Stamford.<sup>29</sup> It occupied an area outside of the old North Gate of the town, now the Barrack Road area, and until 1992 its precise location has not been known through historical records or archaeological confirmation.<sup>30</sup> Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that it may be identified with a tiny old enclosure in the former possession of St Andrew's priory, now the Maple Street area to E. of Barrack Road. In October 1992 the collapse of a culvert on the junction of Maple Street and Temple Bar revealed up to five skeletons, only 15 m from the projected centre of this enclosure; unfortunately there was no clear dating evidence for the skeletons, although a small amount of medieval and post-medieval material was recovered from overlying deposits. At present the tombstone is the only unequivocal evidence for the existence of the cemetery. The burials are probably part of the cemetery, but further evidence is needed.<sup>31</sup>

The original cemetery was walled and included a small house for funeral rites, and a lodging for a watchman.<sup>32</sup> Most burials there would have had a tombstone; such stones would have been set upright in accordance with Ashkenazic practice.<sup>33</sup> In this period tombstones may still have been set at the foot of the grave and faced outwards. It is thought that the Ashkenazic tombstones are evolved from the inscribed foot-pieces that were common in Sephardic horizontal sarcophagi.<sup>34</sup> The graves and their tombstones were usually arranged in orderly rows that were extended by successive burials.<sup>35</sup> After the expulsion the cemeteries were eventually desecrated and their stone fixtures used as building materials.<sup>36</sup> A number of tombstones, mostly fragments, have been found and then lost from three of the ten medieval Jewish cemeteries in England: London, Bristol, and Cambridge. Seven tombstones have been recorded, though poorly.<sup>37</sup> Recent archaeological excavations of the cemeteries at London,<sup>38</sup> York,<sup>39</sup> and Winchester<sup>40</sup> have failed to yield other markers.

The Northampton tombstone is important because it appears to be the only surviving example of a medieval Jewish tombstone in England. Furthermore, it corresponds most closely with the tombstones of the Rhineland, and slightly less so with those of the Alsace-Lorraine region, with the combined use of the prominent and projecting square frame of the tombstone, and the use of the epitaph formulae *Zoth matsebeth*. The Northampton tombstone has less in common with the tombstones of the rest of N. France in that they lack the prominent and projecting framing, even though the epitaph formulae are by no means disparate.

Despite the stone being an isolated and specific example, it confirms that some of the Jews of E. England were of German origin, and were within the cultural sphere of influence of the Rhineland Jewry (as well as the N. French Jewry) whose influence was mediated through the E. coast ports from the Rhine.<sup>41</sup> In addition the presence of a *haber* (and perhaps Rabbi) in Northampton adds some weight to information suggesting that there was a formal talmudic academy in Northampton, which certainly confirms the importance of the Northampton Jewry.<sup>42</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr Robert Moore and Northampton Central Museum for their help, and Melanie Connel for her drawing. Also I thank Rabbi Shalom-Ber Engel for important assistance in the Hebrew translation.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The other is above the medieval Jewish ritual bath or *mikveh*, at Jacob's Wells Road, Bristol. This unique find was discovered in 1987. See S. M. Youngs, J. Clark, D. R. M. Gaimster, T. Barry, 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1987', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 32 (1988), 230.

<sup>2</sup> The sketch is in the Dryden Collection, part of the local studies collection at Northampton Central Public Library. It is titled 'An incised inscription on a stone found in Northampton'.

<sup>3</sup> G. N. Wetton, *Guide Book to Northampton and Its Vicinity* (Northampton, 1849), 15, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Wood and Law, *Northamptonshire* (Northampton, 1847).

<sup>5</sup> Dryden, op. cit. in note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Reproduced in H. Prideaux, *Marmora Oxoniensa* (Oxford, 1696), 310.

<sup>7</sup> I. Singer (ed.), *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York, and London, 1901-06), XII, 194, 561.

<sup>8</sup> A. Kober, 'Jewish Monuments of the Middle Ages in Germany', *American Academy for Jewish Research* XIV (1944), 149-220; xv (1945), 1-91, gives a general survey of remains. But for examples of prominent and projecting square framing see tombstones at Worms in xv (photographs). Speyer, xiv, 198, 219, and see photographs in xv.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. For examples at Speyer, xiv, 199, 207, 219; at Cologne, xv, 25, 27, 59; at Worms, xv (see photographs).

<sup>10</sup> G. Nahon, *Inscriptions Hébraïques et Juives de France médiévale* (Paris, 1986), 182-83, 185-86, show examples from Nancy in Lorraine, 189-92, 199-201, 213-15, 220, from Strasbourg in Alsace.

<sup>11</sup> I. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Roth (London, 1932), 97.

<sup>12</sup> H. Richardson, *The English Jewry under Angevin Kings* (London, 1960), 4.

<sup>13</sup> This analysis was kindly provided by Dr Diana Sutherland of the University of Leicester.

<sup>14</sup> E. M. Jope, 'The Saxon Building Stone Industry in Southern and Midland England', *Medieval Archaeol.*, VIII (1964), 99-101.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 92. Also P. Stafford, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1985), 56.

<sup>16</sup> Singer, op. cit. in note 7, 56. Also Nahon op. cit. in note 10; numerous examples are cited throughout the work, 43 from Paris alone, 47-150. There are examples from Nancy, 183-86; Strasbourg, 202. For examples in Germany, see Kober, op. cit. note 89 for examples in Cologne 29-30, 33, 46, 51. In Worms, 69. In Speyer, 200-01.

<sup>17</sup> Nahon, op. cit. in note 10, 38, and 49n.

<sup>18</sup> There are a number of non rabbinic *haverim* recorded in English documentary sources; see V. D. Lipman, *The Jews of Medieval Norwich* (Cambridge, 1967), 149. For French examples on tombstones see Nahon, op. cit. in note 10, 102-03, 220-21. There is also a putative example of a female *haverah*, 202.

<sup>19</sup> For French examples on tombstones see *ibid.*, 48-49, 57, 104, 114, 149-59, 180, 226, 374-75.

<sup>20</sup> They comprise 3.6 per cent of individuals recorded on French tombstones. See Nahon, op. cit. in note 10, 38.

<sup>21</sup> C. Roth, *Intellectual Activities of Medieval Anglo-Jewry*, British Academy supplemental papers number VIII (London, 1949), 12.

<sup>22</sup> I would like to thank R. Loewe of University College London for constructive suggestions on this point in the translation.

<sup>23</sup> For a very similar example of such an arrangement see Nahon, op. cit. in note 10, inscription 7, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Singer, op. cit. in note 7, 191.

<sup>25</sup> A. J. Collins, 'The Northampton Jewry and Its Cemetery in the 13th century', *Trans. of the Jewish Hist. Soc. of England*, XV (1943), 152-57.

<sup>26</sup> Nahon, op. cit. in note 10, 28.

<sup>27</sup> One may compare it with photographs showing the evolution of the framed form of tombstone. See Kober, op. cit. in note 8, xv.

<sup>28</sup> Abrahams, op. cit. in note 11, 93.

<sup>29</sup> M. B. Honeybourne, 'The Pre-expulsion Cemetery of the Jews in London', *Trans. of the Jewish Hist. Soc. of England*, XX (1959-61), 156. The Jews of Stamford also paid an annual subsidy towards the upkeep of the Northampton cemetery.

<sup>30</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton (Northamptonshire v)* (London, 1985), 382 (microfiche supplement).

<sup>31</sup> The details of the research will appear in a later publication, as will the details of the archaeological material found at SP 754612. I am particularly indebted to Graham Cadman, and Mike Shaw of Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit for providing advance details of the finds.

<sup>32</sup> Collins, op. cit. in note 25, 152-57.

<sup>33</sup> Singer, op. cit. in note 7, 192.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., v, 275.

<sup>36</sup> C. Roth, *The Jews of Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1951), n. 109. After the expulsion the stone fixtures of the Northampton cemetery were valued at 30 shillings 'for carting away'.

<sup>37</sup> Honeybourne, *op. cit.* in note 29, 153–55, 157. The preceding provides a useful summary of the evidence.

<sup>38</sup> W. F. Grimes, *The Excavation of Roman and Medieval London* (London, 1968), 180–87.

<sup>39</sup> P. Ottaway, 'Jewbury', *Archaeology in York — Interim*, VIII, 3 (1982), 12. Further stages of the excavation failed to yield any evidence. See P. Turnbull, 'Sites Review — Jewbury', *Interim*, IX, 1 (1983), 5. N. Pearson, 'Sites Review — Jewbury', *Interim*, IX, 2 (1983), 5–9. N. Pearson, 'Site News — Jewbury', *Interim*, IX, 3 (1983), 3.

<sup>40</sup> L. E. Webster and J. Cherry, 'Medieval Britain in 1974', *Medieval Archaeol.*, XIX (1975), 244.

<sup>41</sup> Lipman, *op. cit.* in note 18, 13, believes that the Jews of Norwich were of German as well as of French origins.

<sup>42</sup> Roth, *op. cit.* in note 21, 12, 43, n. 67, cites three scholars as being resident in Northampton. Magister Aaron (a Magister or Master usually presided over talmudic learning in a particular Jewry, and was a scholar of particular erudition). He notes a lesser talmudic authority known only by his abbreviated name, Rabbi J... (son of?) R.B.... of Northampton. Also he cites the calenderist Moses ben Jacob of Oxford.

## CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE LANDSCAPE: ROMAN TO MEDIEVAL IN SUTTON CHASE (Figs. 7, 8)

Two aspects of the historic development of the English landscape are stressed in recent literature.<sup>1</sup> First, an apparent lack of physical determinism in settlement and land use patterns, and second, the shifting nature of settlement, particularly from the Roman to medieval periods, with the major change occurring in the mid to late Saxon period. This note describes some results of research in a region of the English Midlands<sup>2</sup> which suggests that the pattern of land use in both the Roman and medieval periods was strongly influenced by physical factors and that, despite a lack of evidence for the intervening period, there was a major change in settlement location between the Roman and medieval periods, associated with the abandonment of former arable land.

The region considered here lies NE. of Birmingham, around the town of Sutton Coldfield, and includes parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands (Fig. 7). It is bounded on the S. and E. by the River Tame, on the N. by the Bourne Brook, and on the W. by the Barr Beacon ridge. The region corresponds to the medieval Sutton Chase, a hunting reserve of the Earls of Warwick from 1126 to 1528. The region is divisible into two parts on the basis of its physical characteristics. The upland (over 400 ft.) in the N. and W. has sandy, pebbly acid brown soils and podzols developed on Bunter Pebble Beds and Hopwas Breccia, and little surface water. The lowland in the S., E. and NW. has gentler slopes, soils which are predominantly stagnogleyic clay loams developed on Keuper Marl, and much surface water.

Sutton Chase lies on the N. edge of the Forest of Arden, whose characteristic 'woodland' landscape consisting of hamlets and single farms, often moated, surrounded by small irregularly-shaped fields, has generally been attributed to medieval colonization, associated with assarting documented in the 12th and 13th centuries.<sup>3</sup> Although the documentary evidence for medieval Arden has been relatively well studied, archaeological research in the area has been largely restricted to the survey of medieval earthworks, particularly moated sites, and building recording. Little excavation, fieldwalking or aerial photography has been undertaken, and as a result little is known about the Roman period in the area, in contrast to the abundant evidence from the Avon and Severn valleys to the S.<sup>4</sup> and in and around Wall to the N.<sup>5</sup>

Four aspects of the medieval and post-medieval landscape of Sutton Chase were studied by the writer: unenclosed common waste, parks, hamlets and moated sites. Both archaeological and documentary evidence were employed. The principal archaeological method was fieldwalking, in and around the four features under consideration, where the land was in arable use at the time of walking. The centre, S. and SW. of the study area are built up. Fieldwalking produced quantities of Roman and medieval pottery, but no Saxon pottery has yet been recognized in the region. The evidence from fieldwalking was augmented by consideration of chance finds, which were mainly Roman coins from the built-up part of the study area.