

## Pins

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A wide variety of pins was recovered from the excavations, ranging from Anglo-Saxon and Saxo-Norman dress or stick-pins to the smaller, late medieval and post-medieval examples. Five pins with solid heads were found in burials, and may have been used to secure shrouds. None were recorded as being directly associated with the burial, nor had any textile preserved, and it is possible that they, like those occurring in structural deposits, were lost by people visiting the church and graveyard. Many small pins of a size compatible with 'dressmaking' pins occurred in later medieval, but principally post-medieval, contexts. The majority of these pins have wound-wire heads; those with solid heads are discussed separately.

Pins with wound-wire heads, used to secure items of costume, are found in large numbers on later medieval and post-medieval sites. Analyses of several groups of these revealed them to be made of brass wire (Caple 1991, 250). Those found in later burials (Phase A) at Barton appear to be associated with the pinning of burial shrouds and coffin linings. Discussion of these small pins is based upon the work of Caple, and employs his typology.

### Dress Pins

Fig. 839

A single pin of bone (no. 1) was recovered from a potential Saxo-Norman floor level in the western annexe. The pin has a short shank and large disc head with ring-and-dot decoration; it may be compared with one having a centrally pierced head recovered from a late tenth-century context at Coppergate, York (MacGregor *et al.* 1999, 1948–49, fig. 907, no. 6812) and with late Anglo-Saxon pins of copper alloy also from York (Waterman 1959, fig. 11, nos. 1–3).

A variety of copper-alloy dress pins were found. The majority had 'round' heads of

spherical or hemispherical shape, and there was a single headless example. A headless pin with two transverse mouldings at the neck (no. 2) was found in the lower fill of a hollow or pit straddling the eastern churchyard boundary, north of the chancel; it was associated with pottery of mid-twelfth to early thirteenth-century date. This may be compared with Irish stick-pins with undifferentiated heads that have been found at Dublin and Waterford in contexts dating between the mid-eleventh and mid-thirteenth centuries.

A long pin with a hipped shank and incised decoration on the head and neck (no. 3) was found in a layer overlying the mortar floor of the Anglo-Saxon chancel. This item falls into the category of a club-headed stick-pin. These pins have been found in large numbers at Dublin and Waterford, in contexts dating from the mid-eleventh to the end of the thirteenth century (O'Rahilly 1998, fig. 21). The simple decoration is similar to that on a pin of 'undifferentiated head' type found in an early twelfth- to mid-thirteenth-century context at Waterford (Scully, 1997, fig. 15:1.10).

A pin with a solid, round head with a faceted top and the lower portion knurled or wrythen (*i.e.* decorated with spiral grooves; no. 4) occurred in the burial of a mature male dating between the mid-tenth and the thirteenth centuries. A longer pin with a similar head was found in a mid-to-late twelfth-century deposit at Waterford (Scully 1997, 444–5, fig. 15:13.8). Three pins with flat-topped heads but the same wrythen decoration on the lower part were found at Coppergate, in deposits dating between the mid-ninth and the thirteenth century (Mainman and Rogers 2000, 10467, fig. 1274). Solid headed pins with faceted tops but lacking the wrythen decoration were worn in the first half of the fourteenth century in London (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 1475–6, fig. 199).

#### *Pins with hollow heads*

Three brass pins had hollow heads filled with lead, by which they were also attached to the stem. A brass pin with a hemispherical head and lead filling (no. 5) was recovered from a buried soil. Two pins

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<sup>4</sup> Revised report submitted in 2003, checked 2010. Full catalogue entries for material discussed but not illustrated will be found in the database table 'Finds'.

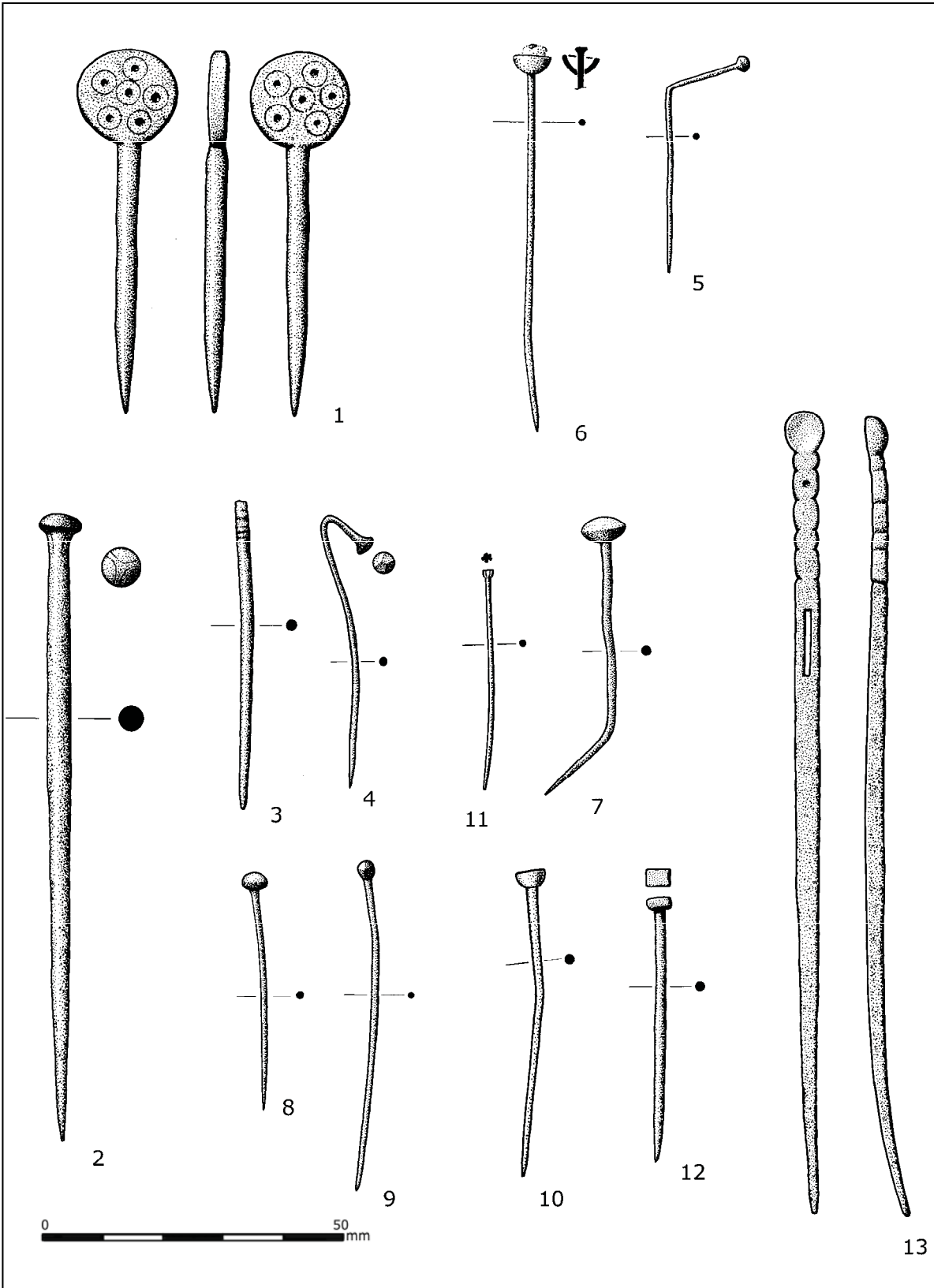


Fig. 839: Dress pins. (1 — bone; 2-13 — copper alloy). Drawing: Simon Hayfield

had spherical heads made in two hemispheres with a central core of lead.

One (no. 6) was found in a Saxo-Norman earth floor within the primary church. The other (no. 7) was from a late medieval layer in the churchyard. The latter pin is complete, so that the lead core is not exposed.

#### *Pins with solid, spherical heads*

Seven pins had solid heads that were spherical; their stems ranged in length from 38–48 mm, and the heads varied between 2.5 mm and 4 mm in diameter. They were found principally in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century deposits. One pin had a solid, spherical head with small facets (no. 9). It was found in a construction deposit outside the church. It is comparable to two pins with faceted heads from later fourteenth-century contexts in London (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 1475–6, fig. 199). A pin with a solid hemispherical head (not illus.) was found in a Phase A grave: the length of the stem (48 mm) suggests that it is of similar date to those with spherical heads, and was therefore residual in the grave.

Two pins had spherical heads flattened at the top. One (no. 10) came from the grave of a medieval male (Phase C/D); the other (no. 11) from a grave of Phase B/C, and had a segmented head produced by vertical cuts. This pin is comparable with segmental-headed pins from Waterford: one with dot decoration came from a mid-to-late twelfth-century pit (Scully 1997, 443, fig. 15:2.6). Another, with its head divided into three segments, was unstratified (*ibid.*, fig. 15:2.19).

#### *Pin with a flat head*

A single pin (no. 12) from a Phase B grave had a small, flat rectangular head. It is comparable with crutch-headed pins from eleventh to mid-twelfth-century contexts in Dublin, and may be residual in the grave.

#### *Are the pins shroud pins?*

If the dress or stick-pins recovered from burials were shroud pins their relative rarity would suggest that it was not common practice to secure the shroud or winding sheet. Indeed the winding sheet

might be stitched, knotted or bound in place (Litten 1991, 57–62). Alternatively, it is possible that a simple pin of wood was commonly used which has not survived in the ground, and that the bone and metal pins represent shroud burials of higher status. One might wonder whether dress pins recovered from burials represented favourite pins worn in life. Since the pins were recovered from mature male burials (where the sex could be determined), it makes this an unlikely explanation.

### **Decorative head-dress Pin**

A copper-alloy pin (no. 13) of the type used to decorate head-dresses popularly worn in the Low Countries in the first half of the seventeenth century was found unstratified. Pins of this type have been found in Norwich, a city with a Dutch immigrant population at this time (Margeson 1993, 8–9), in Suffolk, London and elsewhere. Recently, an example has been found at Launceston castle (Corn.) (Mould 2006, 324. Fig. 11.22, NF50), far removed from the east coastal distribution that might be expected. It is interesting to note that a thimble of likely Dutch manufacture (Fig. 763 no. 11; Holmes 1988, 4) was recovered from the same area at St Peter's.

### **Small brass pins**

Small brass pins, principally with wound-wire heads, were recovered from 152 contexts, and also unstratified. A total of 485 pins were found, together with fragments of more than 75 pin stems (shafts). A representative sample is illustrated in Fig. 840. The pins ranged in length from 21–56 mm, the majority falling in the bracket 20–40 mm (roughly between 1 in. and 1½ ins). Ninety percent of the pins were found in deposits dating between the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. Over two-thirds (68%) of all the pins recovered came from burials of Phase A. A small quantity (4%) was found in burials of Phases A/B and B/C, and in structural Period 7 (7%). Very small numbers of broken pin stems were found in earlier burials apparently having intruded from later features. The predominance of pins in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century contexts precluded any

useful consideration of the reduction in length of pin stems over time.

Four hundred and seventy-two pins could be classified into five categories (described below and Fig. 17.5), with 14 pin-heads being too corroded to permit classification. The majority (93%) of the pins had wound-wire heads (types 1–4), and pins with heads of Caple's types A, B and C (Caple 1991, 246, pl. XVI) were found. Caple demonstrated a general progression of pin-head types through time, with type A heads being the most common in the fifteenth century, type B heads being the more usual in the sixteenth century, and type C heads dominant after c. 1700. Type A appears to be a handmade product, while types B and C are the product of mechanized manufacture (Caple 1991, 250). At Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, pins of type C were the most common in contexts post-dating the mid-seventeenth century. In the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century burials at Barton, however, pins with type B heads were most commonly found.

### **Pin-head types found at St Peter's Church**

Fig. 840a

*Type 1 (single twist).* 17 examples (3%) of the pins had a head formed from a single twist of wire around the top of the stem.

*Type 2 (Caple type A).* 21 examples (4%) had the head formed from a double twist of wire.

*Type 3 (Caple type B).* 240 examples (50%) had a spherical head formed from a double twist of wire loosely crimped onto the top of the stem, with the spiral lines of the twisted wire clearly visible.

*Type 4 (Caple type C).* 129 examples (27%), as type 3, the spherical head tightly crimped onto the top of the stem with the result that spiral lines are only faintly discernible. It was not possible to differentiate between Caple types B and C in a further 6% of the pins (29 examples) that were corroded at the head.

*Type 5 (modern).* 36 examples (7%) of the pins had an 'upset' head in the manner of

dressmaking pins in use today. These pins are products of automated manufacture introduced in the middle of the nineteenth century (Caple 1991, 245). Ten graves of Phase A contained pins of this type and it is suggested that they date to the mid-nineteenth century on this evidence<sup>5</sup>. All graves containing type 5 pins were located on the northern side of the churchyard and were the last or penultimate interments in their respective parts of the churchyard.

Two pins of type 2 (Fig. 840 no. 6) from a post-medieval layer (F225) were notable in having the twist of wire that formed the head occurring some distance from the end of the stem. These pins have not been cut to the required length following the wrapping of the heads around the stems and are unfinished. Quality control seems to have been poor in this instance and these partly-made pins were included in the consignment bought by the customer which, in this case, is likely to have been the undertaker.

Pins of type 1 with a single twist of wire at the head were not found associated with any other type of pin in burials. Pins of types 2, 3, 4 and 5 occurred together in the same graves and appear to have been in contemporaneous use.

In nine graves pins were found associated with woollen textile or fibres. The majority were graves of Phase A, one of A/B, and another was found intrusively in an earlier grave. A single example from burial F7016 was associated with fibres from a silk bonnet (p.713). In five instances the pin could be seen to pass through the woollen material, and in three instances the pin was seen to pierce the tabby woven woollen material twice, as if to secure a fold. Pins from at least three graves (F3643, F5110 and F5117), and from grave soils, had fibres from a tabby weave wool cloth preserved which Penelope Walton Rogers suggests is from a flannel shroud. The preserved fibres from undyed worsted woollen cloth on pins from two graves (F992 and F7010) are

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<sup>5</sup> Graves F3709, F4507, F5109, F5112, F5127, F5179, F5225, F7000, F7016 and F7030. One pin of this type was found in a burial (F4582) attributed to Phase B/C, but is intrusive.

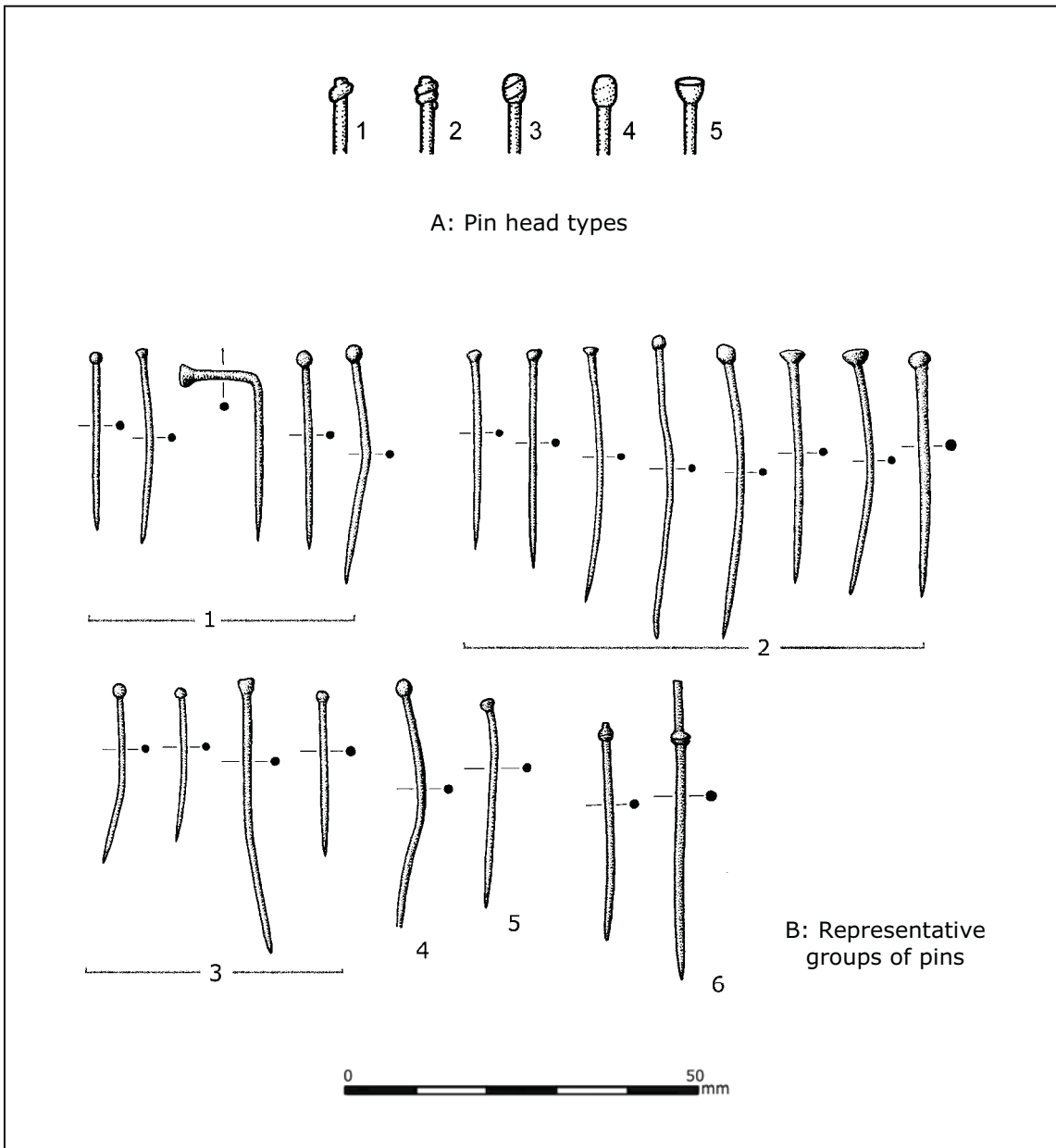


Fig. 840: Small brass pins. NB the head types in A are not to scale. Drawing: Simon Hayfield.

suggested to come from coffin linings or side sheets (p. 711).

### Catalogue of Illustrated Pins

#### *Dress pins and head-dress pin*

Fig. 839

- 1 Bone pin with short, round-sectioned stem and disc head flattened in the same plane. Head decorated on both faces with six ring-and-dot motifs. Complete. L 66 mm, head D 17 mm, Stem D 3mm. F767; Period 3. See also Fig. 238
- 2 Copper-alloy round-sectioned pin stem with pointed tip, no head. Stem decorated with three incised lines forming two transverse mouldings at the neck. Complete. L 51 mm, D 2 mm. F5359; Period 5.
- 3 Copper-alloy pin, round-sectioned swollen stem and domed head with three incised lines producing a large central triangular motif and four vertical incisions running from the head down the neck. Complete. L 106 mm; head D 7 mm, max stem D 4mm. F156; Period 2.
- 4 Copper-alloy dress pin with solid head with a gently faceted top, the lower area knurled. The pointed stem is bent close to the head. Complete. L 54 mm; head D 4 mm. Grave F7224; Phase D/E.
- 5 Copper-alloy (brass or leaded brass) pin with hemispherical head, lead core and clenched shank. Complete. L 46mm; head D 3mm. F1661; Period 1.
- 6 As above, head fractured. L 66 mm; head D 7 mm. F580; Period 3.
- 7 Copper-alloy pin with bent stem and large, slightly flattened spherical head; made in two parts with a central seam. L 48 mm; head D 8 mm. F5233; Period 7.
- 8 Copper-alloy pin with solid, spherical

head and round-sectioned pointed stem. Complete. L 39 mm; head D 4 mm. F5342; Period 7.

- 9 Copper-alloy pin with long, pointed stem and small, solid, faceted head. Complete. L 55 mm; head D 3 mm. F7071; Period 7.
- 10 Copper-alloy pin with solid, flattened spherical head and wire stem. Complete. L 53 mm; head D 4 mm, stem D 1mm. Grave F7134; Phase C/D.
- 11 Copper-alloy pin with the solid, flat-topped head divided vertically into five panels. Complete. L 37 mm; head D 2 mm, stem D 1mm. Grave F7154; Phase B/C.
- 12 Copper-alloy pin with round-sectioned, pointed stem and flat, rectangular head. Complete. L 44 mm; head L 4 mm, W 3mm. Grave F366; Phase B.
- 13 Copper-alloy head-dress pin of rectangular section with long rectangular slot, five decorative mouldings and a scoop-shaped terminal with a small round hole below. Complete. L 136 mm, terminal W 7mm. 970615; Unstrat.

#### *Small brass pins*

The following are representative of the groups of pins found.

Fig. 840b

- 1 Pins from F5173; Period 8.
- 2 Pins from F5175; Period 7.
- 3 Pins from grave F7027; Phase A.
- 4 Pin from grave F3762; Phase A/B.
- 5 Pin with an upset head (type 5) from grave F4507; Phase A.
- 6 Unfinished pins from F225; Period 8.