

SOME RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM NORFOLK

NEOLITHIC AND LATER MATERIAL FROM A SHAFT AT BRAMPTON

In May 1980 several features, mainly of Iron Age or Romano-British date, were exposed during excavations for the construction of a new barn at Street Farm, Brampton, just below the 50 ft. contour on the west side of the Bure valley (Co. No. 16143, TG/2220 2410). They were the subject of salvage excavations by John and Cynthia Pope, Jeremy Norman and Tony Gregory (Pl.I), during which one feature (Co. No. 16143/c9) proved to be a vertical-sided shaft 1.75 m in diameter which was excavated to a depth of 2.10 m in the natural clean yellow sand which locally overlies the chalk, but was not bottomed. The upper 1.10 m of its red-brown sand-loam fill contained the material described below, together with a few small fragments of charcoal. No finds were made below this depth.

Pottery

162 sherds, excluding crumbs, were excavated from the shaft, and are composed as follows:

Date	Number
earlier Neolithic	147
later Neolithic or early Bronze Age	4
? early Iron Age	8
Romano-British	3
	<hr/>
	162

The Romano-British and possibly early Iron Age pottery consists of plain body sherds, hand-made in the latter case. A minimum of eleven pots, however, is represented among the Neolithic and early Bronze Age sherds (Fig. 1 and Table 1). All the Neolithic bowls (P1 – P8) are undecorated and are characterized by smooth, rounded shoulders. They cannot be ascribed to any particular bowl style. At least thirty-five sherds come from a single large pot more than 55cm in diameter (P1). Condition is very uneven, some bowl sherds being small and abraded and others large and fresh.

Later Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery styles are represented only by three small, abraded decorated body sherds (P9 – P11) and one hard, sand-gritted, undecorated, buff body sherd, all of which may be of Beaker.

Flint

The modified and worked flint from the shaft consists of twelve pot-boilers (four of them fire-reddened), three other fire-reddened flint fragments, one possible hammerstone (a thermally fractured fragment battered on two faces), and a hundred and forty pieces of struck flint. The last are composed as follows:

cores	flakes	chunks (irregular waste)	retouched pieces
10	108	5	17
7.1%	77.2%	3.6%	12.1%

cores:flakes 1:10.8



PLATE I



PLATE II

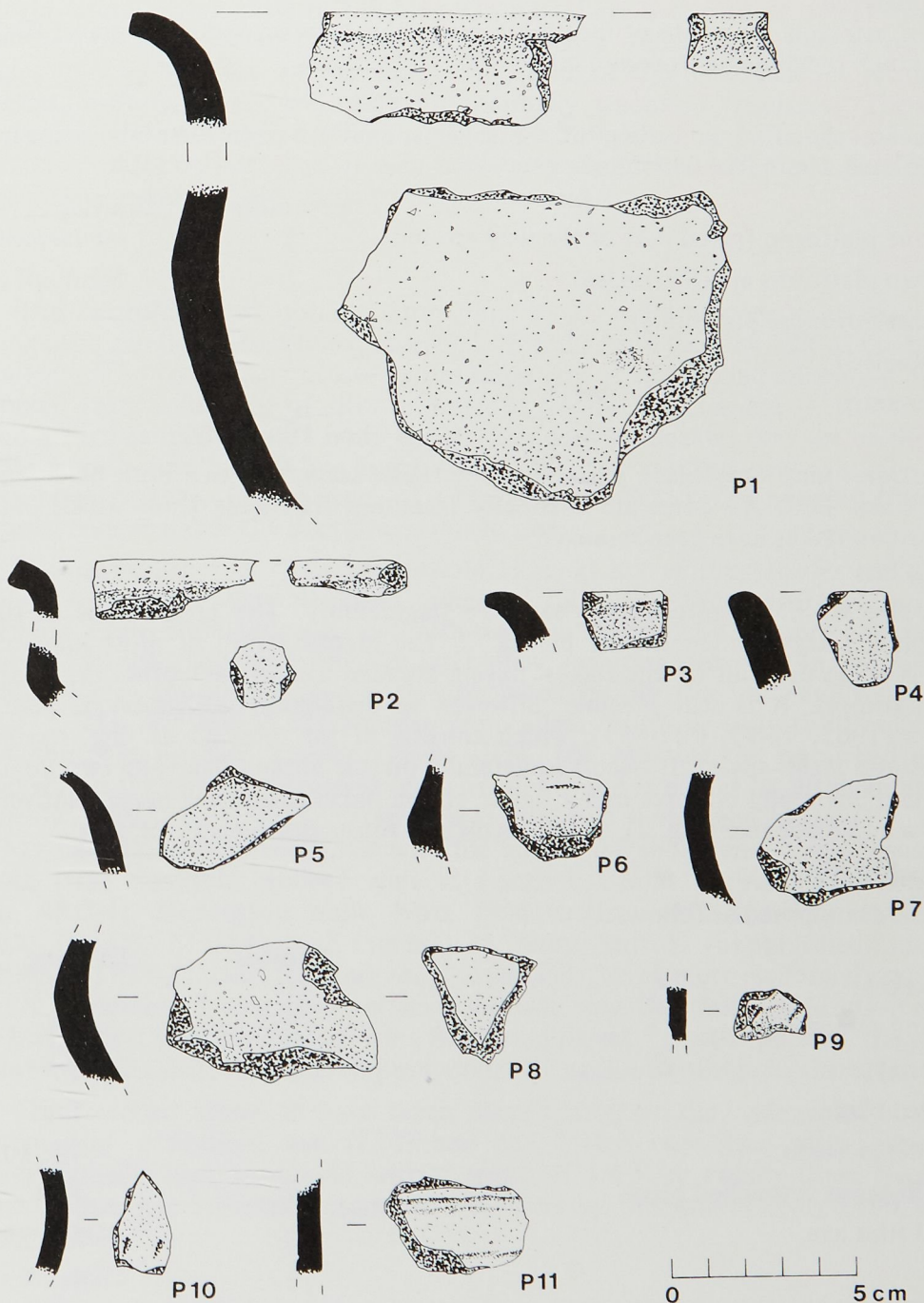


Fig. 1
Pottery from site 16143/c9, Street Farm, Brampton.
Scale 1:2. Details in Table 1

Raw material

All the artefacts are made of mottled brown, blue-grey or dark grey gravel flint, with much remaining cortex and many thermal fractures.

Cores

These are classified according to the scheme used for the Hurst Fen industry (Clark *et al.* 1960, 216-217):

Class	Number	Drawing
A2 (one platform, flaked part of the way around)	2	F1
B3 (two platforms at right-angles)	1	F2
C (three or more platforms)	3	F3
D (Keeled)	1	F4
fragmentary	<u>3</u>	
	10	

Three cores have only blade scars, five only flake scars, and two both blade and flake scars. Both A2 cores are thermally fractured fragments from which only one or two flakes have been removed.

Flakes

Forty-five of the unretouched flakes are fragmentary. The proportions of the remaining sixty-two are shown in Fig. 2. The identification of most kinds of wear is made difficult by the flakes' having abraded against each other in storage and transport. It is still possible, however, to distinguish utilization of Smith class a (1965, 92-93, F27-F31), which consists of the removal of fine, regular squills at a steep angle). It occurs unilaterally on one broken flake and two intact ones and bilaterally on three intact flakes, all the flakes concerned being relatively narrow and blade-like (Fig. 2), as well as on two retouched pieces (F8, F9).

Retouched pieces

These are composed as follows:

Type	Number	Drawing
end scraper	3	F5
side-end scraper	1	F6
side scraper	1	F7
serrated blade	2	F8
shouldered blade	2	F9, F10
miscellaneous retouched piece	6	F11
flaked flint axe	2	F12, F13
	<u>17</u>	

The teeth of both serrated blades show a distinct lustre, especially on the ventral face, and are closely-spaced, at 10 – 15 per centimetre. The illustrated example (F8) has coarser inverse retouch on its unserrated edge and class a utilization at its distal end. Both shouldered blades (F9, F10) are made by the working of a

single lateral notch close to the butt. On F10 there is also some dorsal thinning of the butt, perhaps to facilitate hafting. Class a utilization is present on both sides of F9, but not on the distal end. Two of the miscellaneous retouched pieces, including F11, are made on thermally fractured fragments. The more complete flaked flint axe (F12) seems to be unfinished, since an area of cortex remains on its cutting edge. It may have been abandoned when two particularly deep flake removals were made from the butt end.

Discussion

a) the finds

The Neolithic bowl pottery represented by P1 – P8 belongs to an extremely long-lived family of traditions, current in Britain from the first half of the fourth millennium bc to perhaps as late as the beginning of the second millennium bc and known from a number of sites in Norfolk (Healy forthcoming a). If P9 – P11 and a further unillustrated body sherd are indeed of Beaker, they are unlikely to date from before c.2150 bc (Burgess 1980, 62) and are thus probably later than the bowl pottery. The presence of a few Romano-British and possibly Iron Age sherds confirms that the deposit is a mixed one.

The distribution of flake proportions (Fig. 2) lies at the broader end of the range found in earlier Neolithic industries, including those analysed by Pitts (1978). Class a utilization is, as Smith suggests (1965, 92-93), more common in earlier Neolithic contexts than in later ones, occurring not only in the primary industries of the causewayed enclosures listed by her (*loc. cit.*) and by Whittle (1977, 71), but also in the industry from a late fourth or early third millennium bc house at Fengate, Cambs. (Pryor 1974, 10). Most of the retouched pieces fall within the restricted range of types usually found in earlier Neolithic industries (Healy 1980, vol. I, 272). Exceptions are the two shouldered blades (F9, F10). They may perhaps be compared with the tanged and shouldered blades associated with later Neolithic grooved ware at Fengate, Cambs. (Pryor 1978, 108-109, fig. 48:3-4), Durrington Walls, Wilts. (Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 174, figs. 76:F79, 77:F84), and Creeting St. Mary, Suffolk (unpublished, Ipswich Museum 1937-22). But these are inexact parallels, being more elaborately worked, with bilateral and sometimes bifacial retouch, and the class a utilization of F9 might suggest an earlier date for the Brampton pieces. Like the pottery, the struck flint from the shaft seems to be predominantly earlier Neolithic in character.

Flint-working seems to have taken place nearby on the evidence of both the apparently unfinished axe (F12) and the 1:10.8 core:flake ratio, which is exceptionally high compared with a mean of 1:62 for twenty-three Neolithic and Bronze Age industries examined elsewhere by the writer (Healy 1980, vol. I, 155 – 157).

b) the shaft

Other vertical-sided shafts are known from Brampton. One (Co. No. 16143/c5) sectioned during the same excavation was 80 cm in diameter and 2.30 m deep, with a red brown sand-loam fill similar to that of site 16143/c9. Struck flint and two flint-gritted sherds were found in it at a depth of 2 m. Another, discovered some 180 m to the south-west in 1971, contained Beaker sherds, charcoal and burnt flint in its lower fill and Romano-British sherds in its upper fill (Co. No.

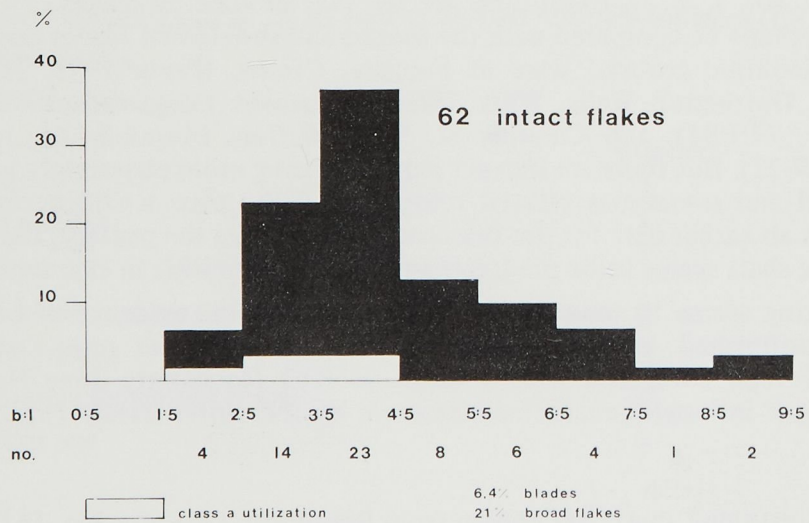
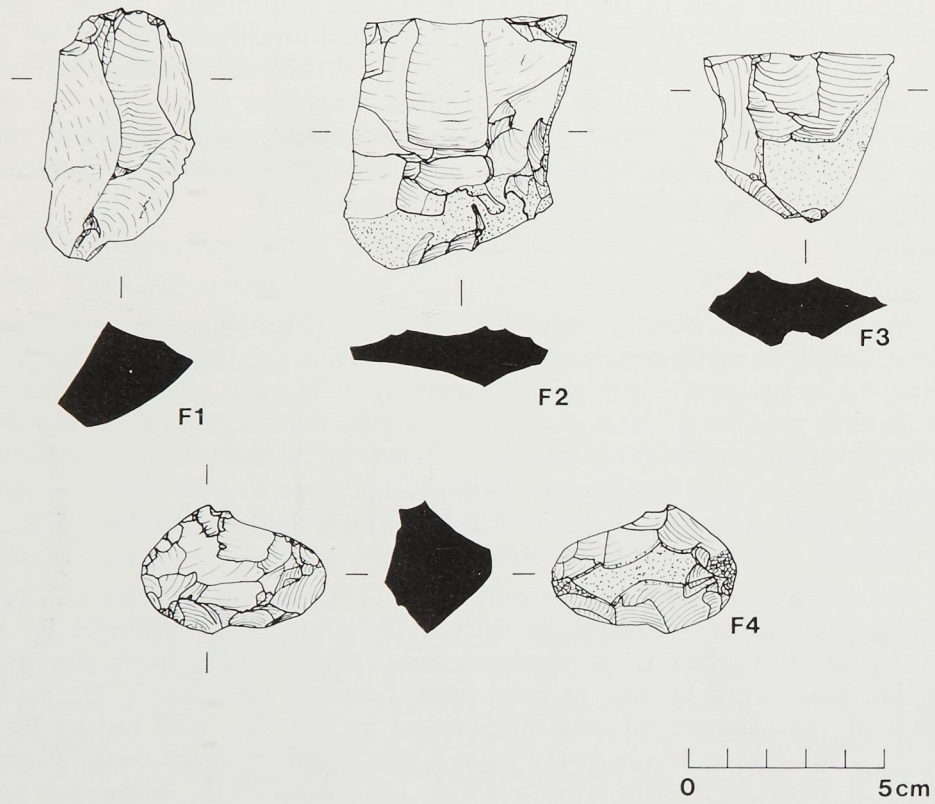


Fig. 2
Cores (scale 1:2) and flake proportions from site 16143/c9, Street Farm, Brampton

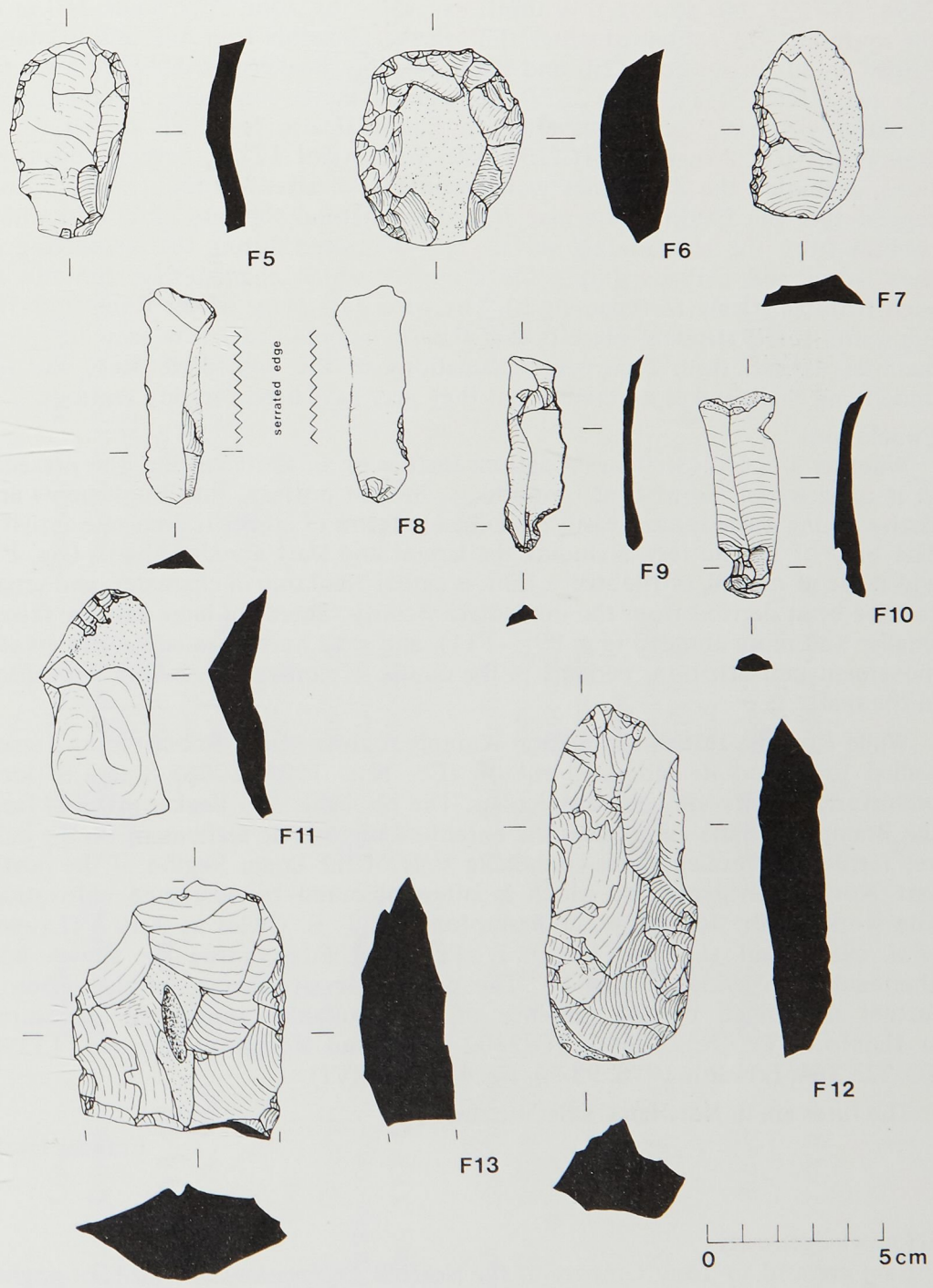


Fig. 3
Flint implements from site 16143/c9, Street Farm, Brampton. Scale 1:2

7594, TG/221 240 approx.). A third, excavated by John Pope some 340 m to the south in 1975, contained struck flint, Beaker, possibly Iron Age, and Romano-British sherds in its upper fill and plain, possibly Beaker sherds in its lower fill (Co. No. 1006/c20, TG/2220 2379). Comparable shafts, containing predominantly Neolithic material, were excavated on Eaton Heath, Norwich, by Dr. G. J. Wainwright (Co. No. 9544, TG/209 060; Wainwright 1973). Several considerations, including the difficulties which would have attended their construction, suggest that the Eaton shafts may have been natural solution pipes into which rubbish from the surrounding surface was deposited during the weathering of their edges and perhaps during the slumping which characterizes the fills of such features (Healy forthcoming b). The wide date range of the finds from the Brampton shafts strongly suggests that they two contained secondarily deposited material derived from successive occupations of the immediate area, and the underlying chalk makes it possible that they may have been solution features.

Conclusions

Whether site 16143/c9 was a natural feature or an artificial one, the presence in it of charcoal, burnt flint, pot-boilers, broken pottery, flint implements and flint-working waste is most easily explained in terms of adjacent domestic activity. The bulk of the pottery including the largest and least abraded sherds (e.g. P1) and most, if not all, of the struck flint, is earlier Neolithic in character, and seems to have been derived from the immediate vicinity. Sherds of later date are fewer, smaller and more abraded (e.g. P9 – P11), and may have been subject to greater movement and attrition, perhaps in the course of cultivation, before deposition in the shaft.

While Romano-British occupation is amply represented at Brampton by a small walled town and its industrial suburb (Co. Nos. 1124, 1006), traces of local prehistoric activity are less conspicuous. The Neolithic and Beaker material from the Brampton shafts emphasises the extent of prehistoric settlement on the light yet fertile and resilient loess-containing soils of the Loam Region of the north-east Norfolk, evidence for which is often obscured by sustained cultivation. The work of Mr. John Pope at Brampton, Mr. J. E. Owles at Witton (Lawson *et al.* 1983) and the late Mr. J. E. Turner at Edingthorpe has shown how abundant such evidence may be. The prehistoric significance of the region is further underlined by the presence of two probable causewayed enclosures, at Hainford (Co. No. 11646, TG/2302 1820) and Roughton (Co. No. 13358, TG/223 364; Edwards 1978, 93-94, fig. 47, pl. XXVI).

The finds are in Norwich Castle Museum.

Frances Healy

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Tony Gregory of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit for bringing the material to my attention, and to Jeremy Norman for permission to publish Pls. I and II.

Table 1. Illustrated Prehistoric pottery

Pot	Colour Exterior	Core	Interior	Texture	Filler(s)	Decoration, etc.	Style	Comments
1	Brown to orange 5YR 4/2 to 7.5YR 5/4	Brown 5YR 4/2	Black-brown 5YR 4/1	Coarse, hard	Large angular flint with some sand and some red (haematite?) particles	Non-decorative scoring inside neck, apparently from the dragging of grits during smoothing	Neolithic bowl	Rim diameter 55cm+. Also 32 unillustrated sherds of the same pot.
2	Black to orange-brown 5YR 3/1 to 5YR 4/3	Orange-brown 5YR 4/3	Black to orange-brown 5YR 3/1 to 5YR 4/3	Quite fine, hard	Sand and small angular flint		Neolithic bowl	Rim diameter 40cm+. Also 1 unillustrated sherd of the same pot.
3	Buff-brown 7.5YR 5/4	Buff-brown 7.5YR 5/4	Brown 7.5YR 4/2	Medium, hard	Medium-sized angular flint with some sand		Neolithic bowl	
4	Orange 2.5YR 5/8	Orange 2.5YR 5/8	Orange 2.5YR 5/8	Coarse, hard	Large angular flint with some sand		Neolithic bowl	Very abraded. Also 3 unillustrated body sherds of the same pot.
5	Orange-brown 7.5YR 4/4	Brown 7.5YR 4/2	Orange-brown 7.5YR 4/4	Fine, hard	Sand with some medium-sized angular flint		Neolithic bowl	

Table 1. Illustrated Prehistoric pottery (contd.)

Pot	Colour	Exterior	Core	Interior	Texture	Filler(s)	Decoration, etc.	Style	Comments
6	Black-orange	10R 3/1	Orange 2.5YR 4/8	Orange-brown 2.5YR 4/2	Coarse, friable	large angular flint with some sand and some red (haematite?) particles		Neolithic bowl	
7	Black-brown	5YR 3/1	Black-brown 5YR 3/1	Black-brown 5YR 3/1	Medium	Medium-sized angular flint with some sand and some red (haematite?) particles	Slight external burnish	Neolithic bowl	External shoulder diameter approx. 15cm
8	Black-brown	5YR 4/1	Brown 5YR 5/3	Black-brown 5YR 4/1	Coarse, friable	Large angular flint with some sand and some red (haematite?) particles		Neolithic bowl	External shoulder diameter approx. 16cm
9	Orange	5YR 5/6	Grey 5YR 3/1	Grey-orange 5YR 5/1	Medium, fairly hard	Grog with some angular flint and some sand	Plastic finger-tipped or finger-pinched rustication	Later Neolithic/early Bronze	Age probably rusticated beaker

Table 1. Illustrated Prehistoric pottery (contd.)

Pot	Colour Exterior	Core	Interior	Texture	Filler(s)	Decoration, etc.	Style	Comments
10	Orange-brown 7.5YR 5/4	Grey 7.5YR 3/0	Brown 7.5YR 5/2	Quite fine, hard	Sand with some grog	Wedge-shaped impressions	Later Neolithic/ early Bronze Age Beaker?	
11	Red-orange 2.5YR 5/6	Grey 2.5YR 4/0	Orange-buff 5YR 5/4	Fairly coarse, soft	Grog with some sand	Channeled lines	Later Neolithic/ early Bronze Age	Curvature in horizontal plane only suggests straight-side vessel. External diameter approx. 12cm

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Burgess, C., 1980, *The Age of Stonehenge* (London).
- Edwards, D. A., 1978, 'The air photographs collection of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit: third report', *East Anglian Archaeol.* 8, 87-105.
- Healy, F., forthcoming a, 'Farming and field monuments: the Neolithic', in Ashbee, P., and Barringer, J. C., (eds.) as yet untitled compilation of synthetic papers on East Anglian prehistory (Norwich).
- Healy, F., forthcoming b, 'The excavation of two Early Bronze Age round barrows on Eaton Heath, Norwich', *East Anglian Archaeol.*
- Healy, F. M. A., 1980, 'The Neolithic in Norfolk', unpubl. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of London.
- Lawson, A. J. *et al.*, 1983, *The archaeology of Witton, near North Walsham, Norfolk*, *East Anglian Archaeol.* 18.
- Pitts, M. W., 1978, 'Towards an understanding of flint industries in post-glacial England', *Inst. Archaeol. Bull.* 15, 179-197.
- Pryor, F., 1974, *Excavation at Fengate, Peterborough, England: the first report*, Royal Ontario Museum Archaeology Mongraph 3.
- Pryor, F., 1978, *Excavation at Fengate, Peterborough, England: the second report*, Royal Ontario Museum Archaeology Mongraph 5.
- Smith, I. F., 1965, *Windmill Hill and Avebury* (Oxford).
- Wainwright, G. J., and Longworth, I. H., 1971, *Durrington Walls: excavations 1966-1968*, Rep. Res. Comm. Soc. Antiq. London XXIX.
- Wainwright, G. J., 1973, 'Prehistoric and Romano-British settlements at Eaton Heath, Norwich', *Archaeol. J.* 130, 1-43.
- Whittle, A. W. R., 1977, *The earlier Neolithic of southern England and its continental background*, Brit. Archaeol. Rep. supplementary series 35 (Oxford).

A 14TH-CENTURY PEWTER CHALICE AND PATEN FROM CARROW PRIORY, NORWICH

INTRODUCTION

Carrow Priory was a Benedictine Nunnery founded in the 12th century and dissolved in 1539. The site, which is a scheduled ancient monument, now lies within the grounds of the 'Colman's of Norwich' factory (Fig. 4). The remains were first uncovered during 1879-1881 under the instigation of Jeremiah Colman and a report on the findings published in Loftus Brock 1882, but were then allowed to become greatly overgrown. A works canteen was built over the nave of the priory church in 1968 but in 1981 it was decided to expose the remaining portions of the chancel, choir and south transept and it was hoped to extend this work to the rest of the claustral complex at a later date. The work was financed jointly by Colman's of Norwich Ltd., Department of the Environment and

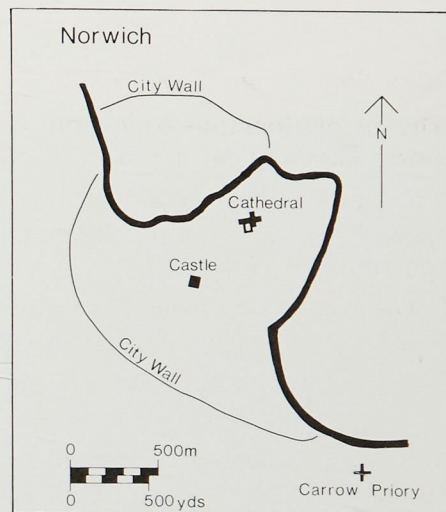


Fig. 4

Norwich City Council. Archaeological supervision was undertaken by the Norwich Survey.

The archaeological brief was to clear the site to 3 ins. (7.62 cm) below the original floor level which would then be relaid in Breendon gravel. Over much of the area it was apparent that the Victorian excavators had followed a similar level, but some areas of Late Medieval tiled floor had been left intact, as had a series of burials. Some of these had been commented on in the 1881 report, although none had actually been excavated. It is the contents of one of these burials (Grave 120 on Fig. 5F) that forms the subject of this note. Eleven burials in all were discovered within the church, with the main series along the Choir arcade on each side. In front of the Late Medieval Chancel steps were found the positions of at least three burials, although only two (including Grave 120) could be excavated. Two further burials were found in what had been the original graveyard to the north of the 12th-century Priory church, cut by an extension of the north aisle. With the exception of a child's burial from the graveyard and priest burial 120 all the graves were of adult females, interpreted as being of medieval nuns.

Grave 120 itself measured 1.85 x 0.51 m. and was brick-lined. It had possibly been re-used as a hole had been cut through the lining at the east end, presumably to allow the insertion of the foot of the coffin. (Grave 122 on the same site had also been re-used. In this case the original floor of the grave had been cut away and the later burial inserted.) No actual evidence of a coffin was found, although there was a scatter of coffin nails by the right elbow of the burial. The layout of the skeleton, that of an adult male, is shown in fig. 5E, the feet were crossed right over left. It can be seen that the chalice and paten lay to the right of the head, in an upright position with the paten over the bowl of the chalice. The only other finds in the grave were a single sherd of 13th/14th-century Grimston ware, a fragment of medieval glass and fragments of 14th-century Flemish floor tiles.

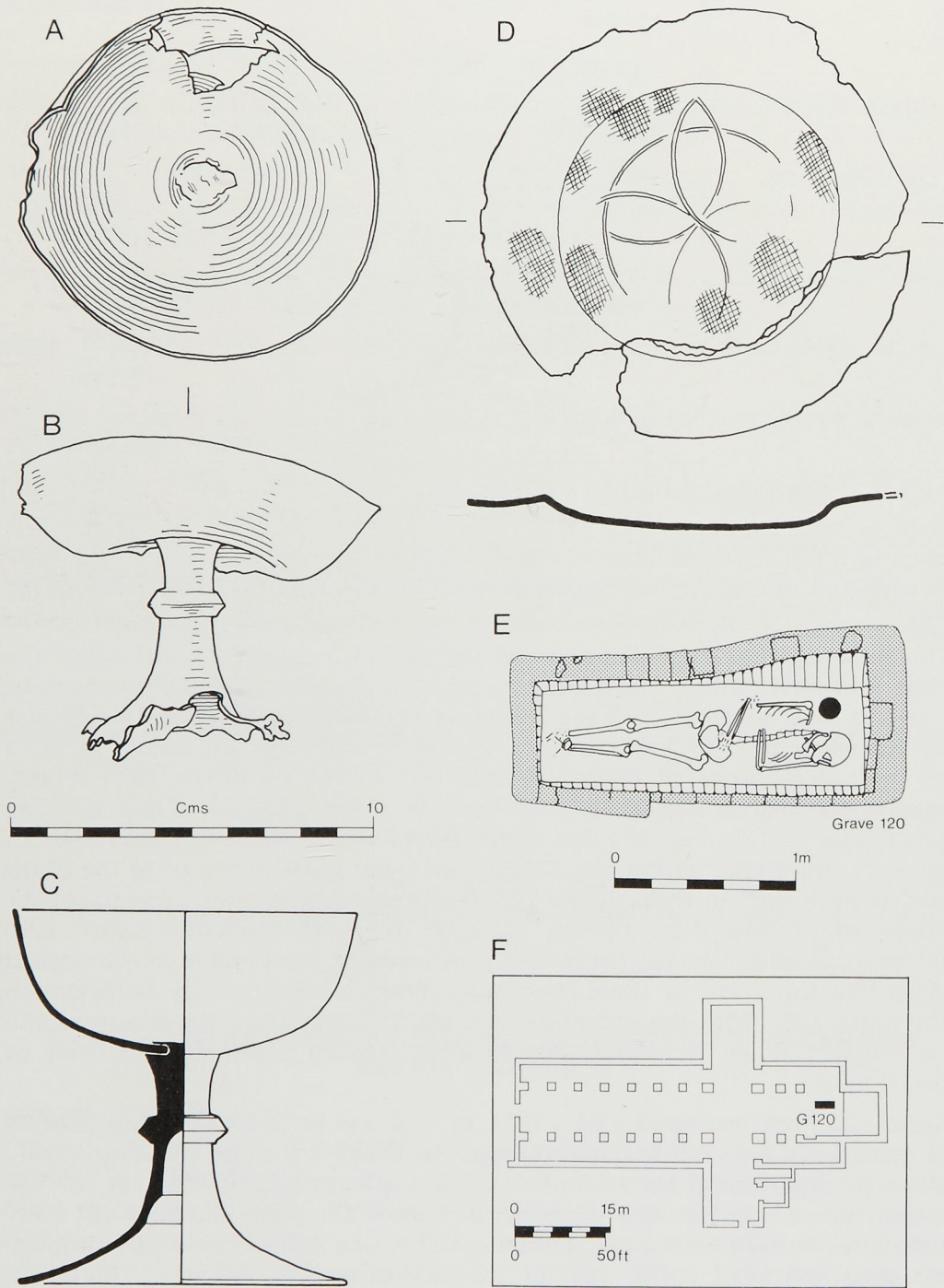


Fig. 5



PLATE III

The Finds (pl. III)

a) The Chalice (Fig. 5A, B and C)

The chalice has a shallow hemispherical bowl (now distorted through soil pressure in the grave) with a hollow stem attached through a hole in the centre of the base of the bowl and then soldered in place. The stem expands slightly at the top just beneath the bowl, and at the base where it forms a plain circular foot, now damaged. The knop, at the narrowest point of the stem, is formed from a separate collar with bevelled edges, apparently slipped over the stem before the latter was soldered in place.

Diameter of bowl: max. 102 mm.

Height: max. 81.5 mm.

Diameter of knop: max. 23 mm.

b) The Paten (Fig. 5D)

The paten is slightly dished with a raised flat rim. There is a compass-drawn quatrefoil in the centre within, and partly overlapping a double-contoured circle. The surface of the paten is covered with coarse textile impressions.

Diameter: max. 118.5 mm.

Discussion

The chalice is well made, and its bevelled knop, shallow bowl and stem expanding to the foot are features which characterise the pewter chalices from

nine priestly burials of the 13th century in the Chapter House Vestibule of Lincoln Cathedral. The chalice from grave 4 is particularly close (Bruce-Mitford 1976, 138, pl. 5). The Carrow Priory chalice has been dated to the 14th century on the basis of fragments of pottery and floor tiles found in the back-fill of the grave but we do not know how long it was made before deposition in the grave. As, however, the chalice does seem to be closely based on such 13th-century models, it is reasonable to suppose that it was made quite early in the 14th century.

The form of the paten is not particularly diagnostic. The quatrefoil in the centre is probably intended to represent a cross; many chalices of both pewter and silver are decorated with such a motif, though the silver ones have more complex motifs such as the Agnus Dei, the hand of God, or figures of saints. The religious symbolism of the cross is obvious. The textile impressions on the paten indicate that the chalice and paten may have been placed in a coarsely woven cloth bag beside the priest's head, with the paten over the bowl of the chalice (as found). Given the position of the chalice in the grave, well above the priest's right shoulder, it is unlikely that the textile impressions are from the priest's robes.

Having dated the manufacture, albeit tentatively, to the early 14th century with the proviso also that the date of deposition might have been later, it is unfortunately still impossible to identify the actual priest. Walter Rye published extracts from the wills related to Carrow (Rye 1889, Appendix IX) and a number of priests, vicars, rectors and chaplains are referred to. In most cases there is no evidence that they were intending to be buried within Carrow Priory. Where the will does mention burial it usually also stipulates which part of the Church is to be used. Only two wills of the 15th century direct unspecified burial within the Priory Church and are therefore unlikely to describe this particular grave. There is, however, a great deal of unpublished material relating to Carrow Priory which may shed further light on the subject in the future.

There is considerable evidence of the custom of accompanied priestly burials. Despite the fact that such a custom had obvious pagan connotations, the Church had no objection to it. Up to the mid-13th century, pewter chalices and patens found in the graves of priests were probably those which had been used in the celebration of Mass. From the mid-13th century there was a campaign among the bishops for the use of only silver chalices for Mass. The bishops were intent on displacing pewter chalices specifically, and other base metal chalices, copper-gilt, continued to be made, presumably because when new they looked like gold or silver-gilt (Oman 1962, 196-8). In 1229-31, Richard le Grant, Archbishop of Canterbury, forbade his bishops to consecrate pewter chalices (Lyndwode 1679, 234). Nevertheless, unconsecrated pewter vessels continued to be used for both burial and other specific purposes. In 1229-30 William of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, ordered that an unconsecrated chalice of pewter, tin or base metal be provided in every church in the diocese for burial with parish priests (Lyndwode 1679, 234). Pewter chalices were also used for administering communion to the sick and by the laity for drinking unconsecrated wine after receiving the wafer (Watkin 1948, lxxxix). The Inventory of Church Goods of 1368 for the Archdeaconry of Norwich records pewter chalices in 250 churches, each of which also

had a silver chalice. However, there were some exceptions. While West Raynham had a silver and a pewter chalice ('calix argenteus, alius stanneus'), the pewter chalice at East Raynham was replaced by a silver one ('calix argenteus loco calicis stannei').

Stylistically, these 14th century and later funerary chalices and patens became decadent copies of their 13th-century predecessors, rather than following the new silver types (C. Oman, pers. comm. via R. Bell). This is one reason they are so difficult to date, in the absence of any other datable evidence. The pewter chalices are characterised by a much flatter bowl than contemporary silver examples. Frequently the knob is only a plain collar or strip. Because of this simplicity of form, they are also difficult to date typologically.

Other recent Norfolk examples

Barton Bendish, All Saints Church (site no. 4499): a lead chalice and paten were excavated in 1981 from a priest's coffin burial. The grave was cut through the north respond of the chancel arch, and on the evidence of the floors which seal it, can be dated to pre-1350 (preliminary dating, pers. comm. A. Rogerson). The chalice has a shallow bowl, and knob with bevelled edges. The paten, like the Carrow example, is decorated with an incised compass-drawn quatrefoil.

Barton Bendish, St. Mary's Church (site no. 4513): a paten was found in 1979 by workmen digging a pipe trench. It was undecorated and lay on the head of a skeleton (undated) buried across the entrance to the priest's door.

Tivetshall St. Mary, St. Mary's Church (site no. 10971): a chalice was recovered from a floor-tomb in the chancel of the ruined church. The degree of disturbance in the area made dating impossible. The knob is merely a plain strip around the stem. The latter appears to be solid, broken just below the knob and with the foot missing.

Malcolm Atkin and Sue Margeson

Acknowledgements

Thanks must go first to Colman's of Norwich Ltd. for both the opportunity to record the finds and then to publish them. It is hoped that both chalice and paten will go on display in the Colman's Museum, Carrow Works. Thanks are also due to Sarah Jennings and Paul Drury for identifying the pottery and floor tiles respectively, and to Andrew Rogerson and Robert Bell for making information available prior to publication. The illustrations are by Martin Creasey.

Resistivity survey of the Priory precinct to be published in *Geophysical Surveys* 1983 (*Occasional Papers* 3, Dept. of Arch. Sciences, Univ. of Bradford).

Bibliography

- Brock, E. P. L., (1882) 'On the excavation of the site of Carrow Abbey, Norwich by J. J. Colman Esq., M.P., in 1880-1881' in *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, 38, 165-214.
- Bruce-Mitford, R., (1976) 'The Chapter House Vestibule graves at Lincoln and the body of St. Hugh of Avalon', in *Tribute to an Antiquary, Essays presented to Mark Bloch by some of his friends*, (London), pp 127-140.

- Lyndwode, W., (1679) *Constitutiones Provinciales Ecclesiae Anglicae*, (Oxford).
- Oman, C., (1962) 'English Medieval Base Metal Church Plate', *Archaeol. J.*, 119, 195-207.
- Oman, C., (forthcoming) 'Chalices and Patens' in *Winchester Studies*, 7, ed. by M. Biddle *et al.*
- Watkin, A., (1948) 'Inventory of church goods temp. Edward III', *Norfolk Record Society*, XIX Part II.

MEDIEVAL FLOOR TILES FROM ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH, REEDHAM

Following a disastrous fire on 19th March 1981 in Reedham Church, restoration work revealed an area of medieval floor tiles at a depth of c. 0.15m in the south chancel or Berney chapel which dates to c.1300. The tiles were not recorded *in situ* and their disposition and exact location were not noted. The nineteen-and-a-half examples examined which apparently form the total found, are on loan to the Norfolk Museums Service.

This paper is intended to increase in a small way, the range of published designs in Norfolk whose medieval tiles, apart from the products of the Bawsey kiln(s) (Eames 1955), have been less adequately served by publication than those of Suffolk (Myres 1933; Keen 1971; Sherlock 1980).

Monochrome tiles with decoration in relief

Six designs occur on eleven-and-a-half tiles measuring 129-134mm across and 18-22mm thick. The fabric is fairly hard sandy brick red with reduced areas towards the centre of the upper face. Two examples are fired harder to a pinkish red. The clear lead glaze appears mottled olive brown over oxydised, and green over reduced areas. All tiles are worn.

Relief decorated tiles not manufactured at Bawsey, near King's Lynn, are characteristic of the eastern parts of Norfolk and Suffolk (Keen 1980, Fig. 28). No production centres have been identified except perhaps Butley (Sherlock 1980, 32), although varieties of design, style and fabric suggest more than one source. Dating is difficult but the production of relief tiles began in the thirteenth century and was most active in the fourteenth century (Keen 1971, 143-6; Eames 1978, 28). The Reedham examples may belong to the first half of the fourteenth century, while the only large group of non-Bawsey relief and counter-relief tiles in Norfolk, from the floor of a manor house at Hempstead near Holt (Eames 1978), probably belong to the second half.

Fig. 6 No.1 Shield with chevron decoration perhaps based on the arms of the Clare family. One example. The surface has been scratched twice in antiquity, after firing. Tiles bearing the Clare arms have been found at Butley, Great Bricett and Snape Priors, Suffolk (Myres 1933, fig. 6, no. 1; Sherlock 1980, 32, nos. 28-9).



Fig. 6

St. John the Baptist's, Reedham:- monochrome tiles with decoration in relief.
Scale 1 : 3. Drawn by S. J. Ashley.

- No. 2 Falconer on horseback. The relief projects up to 3mm and in consequence surface detail of horse and rider has been lost. Two examples.
- No. 3 Fleur-de-lys in bloom with foliage. Four examples, including one with a diagonally incised line from corner to corner.
- No. 4 Eight-petalled flower with inner and outer circle. One example. This design occurs at Flixton St. Andrew, Suffolk (in the possession of the Suffolk Archaeological Unit) with another fragment in the same linear style but not represented at Reedham.
- No. 5 Five-pointed star within circle. One-and-a-half examples. A very similar design occurred at St. Julian's, Norwich (Norfolk Archaeology 1 (1849) 368-9).
- No. 6 Solomon's Knot with concentric lozenges in one corner. Two examples. A similar design but with fleurs-de-lys in each corner occurs on a two-colour tile from Butley Priory, Suffolk (Myres 1933, fig. 4, no. 2; Sherlock 1980, 39, no. 127).

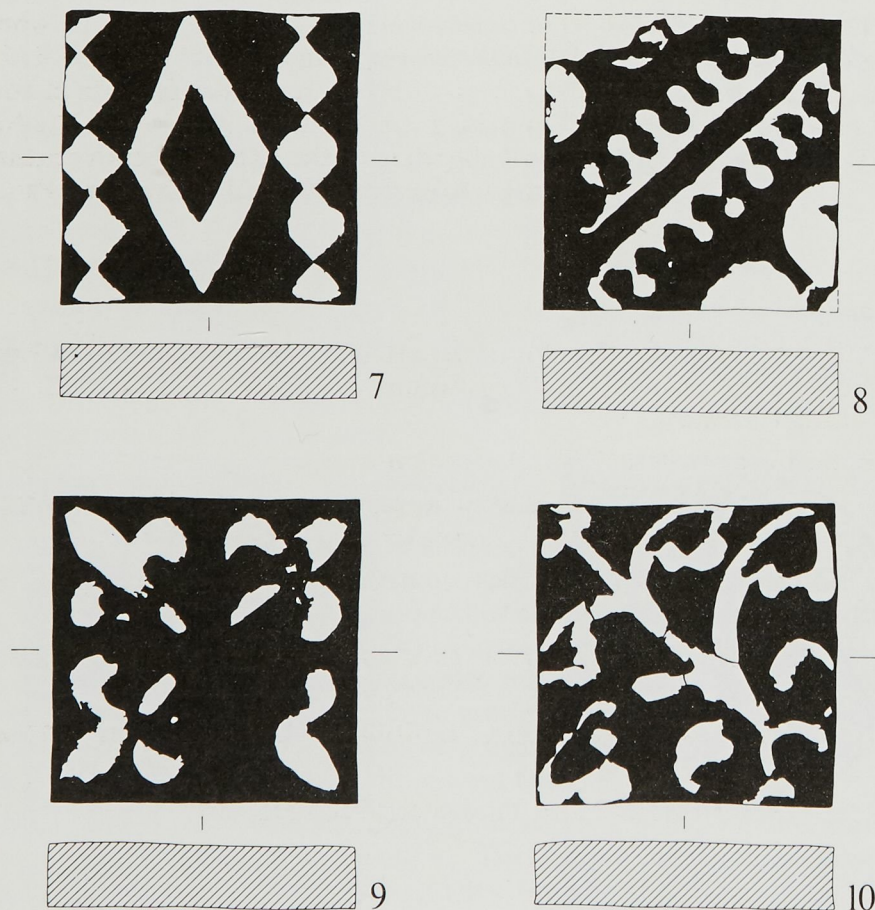


Fig. 7

St. John the Baptist's, Reedham:- two colour tiles.
Scale 1 : 3. Drawn by S. J. Ashley.

Two-colour tiles

Four designs occur on six tiles measuring 111-115mm across and 20-24mm thick. The red fabric is harder and less sandy than that of the relief tiles. The shallow inlaid cream-coloured slip decoration stands slightly proud of the surface because the slip clay is more resistant to wear than the body. A clear glaze is largely worn away on most examples. It is likely that they are broadly contemporary with the relief decorated tiles. No usefully precise parallels have been found for these designs.

Fig. 7 No. 7 Lozenge between two rows of squares set diagonally to the tile. Two examples.

No. 8 Two opposed diagonal bands of heraldic *nebuly*. The incomplete rounded shapes in the other corners suggest this may form part of a composite design, perhaps a large shield of arms. One example.

No. 9 Four fleurs-de-lys with bases to the centre. One example.

No. 10 Diagonal foliage. The open centres to the leaves are a distinctive feature to this design and are not the result of wear. Two examples.

Plain tiles (not illustrated)

Two tiles with slightly undercut edges were recovered. One is very worn with surviving dark green glaze in the only surviving nail hole and measures 112 x 111 x 20mm. The other has dark green glaze on an oxydised fabric and four nail holes. It measures 115 x 115 x 28mm. Both are Flemish and belong in the Norwich group FT 7 (Drury 1982). They probably date to the late fourteenth century.

Andrew Rogerson, Steven J. Ashley and Paul Drury

Bibliography

- Drury, P. J., 1982 'An introduction to the ceramic building materials of Norwich', microfiche supplement in 'Excavations in Norwich 1971-1978, Part I.', *E. Anglian Archaeol.* 15.
- Eames, E. S., 1968 *Medieval Tiles. A Handbook.*
- Eames, E. S., 1978 'The Floor Tiles' in Rogerson, A. and Adams, N., 'A Moated Site at Hempstead, near Holt', *E. Anglian Archaeol.* 8, 55-72.
- Keen, L., 1971 'Medieval Floor Tiles from Campsea Ash Priory', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.* XXXII, 140-151.
- Keen, L., 1980 'The Medieval Floor Tiles' in Christie, P. M. and Coad, J. G., 'Excavations at Denny Abbey,' *Archaeol. J.* 137, 138-279.
- Myres, J. N. L., 1933 'Butley Priory, Suffolk, 5. The Finds, Tiles', *Archaeol. J.* 90, 265-275.
- Sherlock, D., 1980 *Medieval Floor Tiles in Suffolk Churches*