

SOME RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM NORFOLK

Although there were as usual many interesting single finds made in Norfolk in 1980 they were overshadowed by three major hoards.

The most spectacular was undoubtedly the Roman gold and silver treasure discovered with a metal-detector at Thetford. This hoard was found late in 1979 by the late Arthur Brooks but the find was not reported until 1980. Unfortunately this delay meant that the find-spot could not be investigated. The Treasure consisted of two groups of objects. The first group contained three silver strainers and thirty three spoons many inscribed with the name of the god Faunus, and had been used for religious ceremonies. Almost certainly they came from a temple in the Thetford area. The second group was probably a jeweller's stock-in-trade which included gold necklaces, pendants, bracelets and rings, many set with precious or semi-precious stones, and a superbly decorated gold buckle. The quality of this hoard is comparable with that of the Roman treasures from Mildenhall and Water Newton. Preliminary work shows that this hoard was concealed at the end of the 4th century or early in the 5th century, a period when the east coast of Britain was under attack by pirates and the Roman Empire in the west was crumbling. Further evidence for unrest in late 4th century Norfolk was discovered at the end of 1978, about 450 m. from the Treasure find-spot. This was a hoard of 47 Roman silver coins probably buried in the 380s (*Norfolk Archaeology* vol. xxxvii, part II, 1979, pp 221-3). The Thetford hoard has been acquired by the British Museum.

The second hoard was found in 1977 by William King when digging a grave in Pentney churchyard. The hoard of six silver 9th century disc brooches was handed to the then vicar. They were found in the parish chest in 1980 and brought to the Norwich Museum. They were declared Treasure Trove and have been acquired by the British Museum. The hoard contained two pairs of brooches and two singletons. They nearly double the number of brooches of this type known from Britain. In 1980 when describing the two 9th century silver objects from Costessey (*Norfolk Archaeology* xxxvii, part 3, 1980, pp 351-3) I said that 'Ninth century pieces of such quality are rarely found in East Anglia, . . .' Hardly was that sent to the editor than these brooches, even more outstanding examples of the Saxon silversmith's art were reported.

The third hoard was perhaps less spectacular but was of great importance for Late Bronze Age studies in Norfolk. This hoard was found with a metal-detector in December 1979 on the edge of Beeston Hall School sports ground by a former pupil James Ellis. The Norfolk Archaeological Unit were informed and were able to carry out a full investigation of the site. The hoard consisted of twenty items, some containing fragments of others. The majority were axes many of which can be paralleled in 8th/9th century BC contexts. A spearhead, a knife, a gouge, a chisel, half a two-piece axe mould, a casting jet and ingot fragments were also included. Fortunately no attempt had been made to clean the pieces before they reached the Castle Museum laboratory. It was soon obvious that most if not all of the items had been tied together with string made of lime bast, pieces of which survived in and on many of the pieces. Perhaps the most important feature of this hoard was that it had been buried in a pottery bowl. Few such associations are known in Britain and this is the first such find in Eastern England where the

form of the pot can be reconstructed. This is the only pottery vessel from Norfolk which can be dated to the Late Bronze Age from its associations. A preliminary note on this hoard has been published by Andrew Lawson in *Antiquity*, LIV, November 1980, pp 217-9.

Barbara Green

A BRONZE MOUNT FROM WEST DEREHAM

A particularly interesting and fine bronze mount was found in February 1980 by metal detector on a ploughed field at West Dereham.¹

The mount is circular with a bearded head in relief. It was brought into King's Lynn Museum as an enquiry and taken to the British Museum where Catherine Jones identified it as a Roman head of Silenus, the companion of Bacchus. The Greek 'Sileni' were traditionally the older Satyrs, and one of these, known as *the* Silenus, always accompanied Dionysus (the Roman Bacchus), whom he is said to have brought up and instructed. In Roman mythology Silenus is generally represented as a jovial old man, fat and round, and is often shown riding an ass as he was usually intoxicated and could not trust his own legs.

The West Dereham mount is 8 centimetres in diameter and the head is within a doubled-lined ring 5.8 centimetres in diameter. Silenus is depicted as balding, crowned with laurel leaves, and with a moustache and beard hanging in ringlets.



Fig. 1
Roman Bronze mount depicting the head of Silenus.

He has heavy jowls and a large puckish nose. A bronze statuette with a similar face, from Fenchurch Street in the City of London, is in the collections of the British Museum.² This is slightly different from the West Dereham Silenus in that the head is adorned with trailing vines. The West Dereham head has a wreath of broad leaves, one of which is damaged and partly missing.

Mounts of this type are known from elsewhere and a very similar mount with a different male head is known from the area of Trier.³ The reverse of the West Dereham mount is hollow, and has a thick nail or rivet (now much corroded) held in place by a lead plug. The specific purpose of this mount is not known, but such things were used as decorations on furniture etcetera. The date of manufacture is also uncertain, but in Catherine Johns' opinion it was probably 1st or 2nd century AD.

At some point the head was re-used as there are signs of two, or possibly three, rough indentations on the rim which indicate that it had been crudely nailed — possibly onto a timber post. A similar practice is known to have occurred with other bronze items discovered at the Sawbench Temple site at Hockwold-cum-Wilton.⁴

Robert Trett

¹ County number 4390; TF 6739 0233. The mount is in private possession.

² BM 1901. 6-6-2.

³ Heinz Menzel, *Die Römischen Bronzen Aus Deutschland II Trier*, (1966) Plate 49 112 (unprovenanced)

⁴ Norwich Castle Museum reference and accession number 396 962.

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT WYMONDHAM ABBEY with a note on the old sewers

During Autumn 1980 the system of surface water sewers in Wymondham was replaced. The work involved digging a new trench across Abbey Meadows, outside the area scheduled as an ancient monument but within the monastic precincts. The work was observed by the writer with Steven Ashley and Jayne Bown, and by Andrew Rogerson in the early stages, all of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit. The contractors were May Gurney Ltd. whose foreman, Mr. Rush, deserves a special mention for his painstaking recovery of even the smallest finds.

The trench was dug in a northeasterly direction from the weir on the river to the angle of Church Street. Its depth varied owing to the irregular slope of the land, but generally a layer of degraded boulder clay was revealed to a depth of c.2 metres above natural gravels, which were yellowish towards the river and reddish with lumps of ironbound conglomerate at the northern end. The surface level of the gravels varied in depth but this seems to have been due to natural causes rather than humanly dug features. No earthworks were visible on the surface before excavation except for a drainage gully; no traces of foundations or robber trenches were seen in section, indicating that though within the precincts this area had not been built over. Several charters describe the abbey as set amidst extensive open spaces including alder carrs.¹

The majority of the finds, all from the boulder clay soil, consist of animal bones. A very large number of sheep, pig, cow and horse bones were recovered

from the whole length of the trench, together with a few of goose and rabbit or hare. At the river end two cannon bones of fallow deer were found, apparently the back legs of the same animal. Though it is now becoming accepted that fallow deer were present in Britain in the medieval period, such finds are uncommon enough to be noted. In the same area the mandible of a wild boar and another, identified as a type of large hunting dog, also occurred. Further scraps of fallow deer bone were recovered from the northern end of the trench. Several of the bones bore traces of butchering.

The associated pottery included a base sherd cut by a cheesewire which appeared to be Thetford-type ware. This was found at the river end; the majority of sherds came from the central section and consisted of medieval wares of the 13-15th century, largely Grimston-type ware. Towards the north Late Medieval/Transitional wares began to appear. At the edge of the meadows 19th century pottery including a base of Nottingham/Derby stoneware was recovered.

Other finds consist of medieval brick fragments, tiles including a glazed ridge tile, stone fragments and a large iron nail of the type used for securing beams. Recent metalwork included a pair of early veterinary forceps.

The inference that may be drawn is that this area was used for dumping of refuse from the monastic kitchens. Although no tip lines were visible, the sequence of the rarer bone finds together with the Thetford-type ware near the river, the more common bones with Grimston-type ware further up the slope, and the recent finds at the northern end, suggest a gradual infill of marshy ground. (A complete horse skeleton which had been buried in a pit was an intrusion of comparatively recent times). The only exceptions are the few scraps of fallow deer bone found in the area of the recent pottery. The pottery sequence of Thetford-type to Late Medieval/Transitional wares ties in well with the dates of the monastery from 1107 to 1538.

I am grateful to Mr. P. Lawrence and Mr. J. Goldsmith of Norwich Castle Museum for identifying the bone and soils, Mr. A. Rogerson of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and Miss S. Jennings of the Norwich Survey for identifying the pottery and other finds, and Miss B. Yates of the Rural Life Museum, the ironwork. All the finds have been deposited with the Norfolk Museums Service.

The brick sewers under the streets of Wymondham, now replaced by the new pipes, have been the origin of many stores of "monks' tunnels", particularly the recurrent legend of a tunnel from Becket's Chapel to the Abbey. Their brickwork suggests a date around 1800. Until recent years they disgorged at the corner of Church Street into an open channel across Abbey Meadows. The entrance here was approximately 1 metre high and 1.5 metres across; the tunnel was arched with a flat brick floor, one course of bricks standing proud at the springing of each side. Continuing northeast along Church Street the structure narrowed considerably to an oval shape. The extent of the system is unrecorded; it was noted that in Market Street the sewer diverged from under the roadway to pass underneath nos. 21-25, houses whose exteriors at least seem to be late 18th century. Originally the sewers were foul as well as for surface water, serving only certain houses, however.² A rebuilding of these properties may have coincided with the construction of the sewers and the opportunity was taken to serve them. The new pipes installed in 1980 follow more direct routes and not all the old sewers have been destroyed; sections have been sealed off and bypassed which will no doubt puzzle future archaeologists.

The excavation of the trenches along the streets produced no finds except one green-glazed Grimston-type handle from Church Street. The passage beside and underneath the carriage arch of the White Hart Hotel in Market Street was trenched — the building has been described by Mr. A. Carter as a 17th century erection behind a 19th century facade, the roof beams being 16th century reused from before the fire of 1615. No traces of any foundations or floor levels were seen, indicating that this has probably always been a passage. The beam in the ceiling of the carriage arch with stud holes must therefore be reused; it may be significant that the facade of the arch is slightly different from that of the main building.

Edwin J. Rose

¹ I am grateful to Fiona Macdonald of the Centre of East Anglian Studies for this information.

² Information from Mr. H. Temple-Cole who supervised the installation of the new foul sewers in 1932.

AN UNRECORDED ?16TH CENTURY BUILDING AT CROSTWIGHT

In 1980 Mr. Alstone of Witton Old Hall showed to Mr. A. Lawson and Mr. A. Rogerson of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit a ruined building on his land, which he stated was locally believed to be an old church or mill. Subsequently the writer visited the site (county number 16419).

The main feature of the ruins is the stump of a tower of which three sides only remain to a maximum height of approximately 6 metres. It is octagonal on the outer face but circular inside, and its structure consists of a core of flintwork between an inner and an outer brick skin, the bricks being arranged in chequerwork fashion. Joist holes indicate a probable staircase inside. The tower stands at the southwest corner of a rectangular building of which only the foundations remain. A door opened eastwards from the tower into this building, and where the building's west wall joined the tower a fireplace was situated; the back of the chimney remains against the tower. The foundations of the building are overgrown but its approximate dimensions are 19 metres by 6 metres, aligned E-W, and they also consist of a core of flintwork between brick skins, except for the northern wall where no outer skin is now apparent. A number of brick relieving arches occur in the north and south walls. The brickwork of the tower could be late 16th or early 17th century date; the relieving arches are similar to those noted in the foundations of the 16th century Bridewell Palace in London.¹

Mr. Alstone informed the writer that substantial portions of the building were demolished in the 1940s. A sizeable tree has grown up between the tower and the south wall.

It is a remarkable fact that this building does not appear on any map with the possible exception of the tithe map of 1838 that shows a black rectangle here, on a different alignment. Faden's map of 1797 shows the area as woodland; the first edition of the one-inch Ordnance survey map (1836) indicates only an empty field, as does every later edition of the 1", 6" and 25" Ordnance Survey maps. By coincidence the site is only a mile or so north of Dilham Hall where a 15th century tower was discovered in 1904.²

The purpose of the building is unexplained. The story that it was a mill seems to have been partly inspired by its resemblance to a more recent windmill stump



Plate I



Plate II



Plate III

A wallpainting of a ship at North Elmham. Photograph by E. Rose

and partly from the idea that the relieving arches were intended as sluices. There are several mounds in the field but these have been ploughed in the past and produced no foundations. It should be noted however that the building stands close to the ruins of the 16th century Crostwight Hall.

Edwin J. Rose

¹ Museum of London, *Archaeology of the City of London*, 1980.

² *Norfolk Archaeology* XV (1905) 190.

A WALLPAINTING OF A SHIP AT NORTH ELMHAM

The photograph (plate III) shows a wallpainting discovered in the house known as Cornerways at North Elmham, Norfolk (county number 13643). It depicts a sailing ship with three masts; the vessel has a very high poop and no indication of a forecastle. The mizzenmast is drawn with a crude representation of a sail below a crosstrees; the mainmast is very faint but has a suggestion of ratlines against it, and a pennant at its top (not visible on the photograph). The foremast is crudely drawn. On the bowsprit a billowing sail is indicated, and a flag streams from a mast on the stern. There is an attempt at perspective in the depiction of the rear of the vessel.

The picture is drawn with lampblack on the plastered wall of an alcove in an upper room. The alcove has at some period been converted to a cupboard by the addition of a stud and plaster wall across the front, and it seems probable that the picture was drawn before this was done; it could only have been executed with considerable difficulty afterwards. The house bears a date of 1640 at the rear, but this would seem to refer to alterations as the fine collar and windbrace roof is early 17th century, and other details of the timber-framed construction indicate a 16th century origin.¹ Mr. Charles Lewis of the Maritime Museum, Great Yarmouth, has identified the painting as being of a ship of 17th century type, and there seems no reason not to accept that it is a contemporary illustration. The reason for its provenance in an inland village must be a matter for conjecture.

The writer is grateful to Mrs. N. Virgoe for bringing the picture to the notice of the Archaeological Unit, and to Mr. Lewis for his help.

Edwin J. Rose

¹ These conclusions were reached independently on separate visits by the writer and by Mr. David Yaxley.

THOMAS GAWDY OF SHOTTESHAM AND A SIXTEENTH CENTURY GOLD FINGER RING FROM EAST RUDHAM (TF 8466 2904 APPROX.)

In the summer of 1977 Mr. W. E. Griffin discovered a gold ring on a ploughed field in the parish of East Rudham and not far from the ruins of Coxford Priory. Mr. Griffin reported his find to the police and they in turn notified the King's Lynn Museum. Initial inspection showed that the ring was a flat band 1.8 cm in diameter with the inscription 'PLEBS SINE LEGE RUIT +' on a plain background. The motto was translated as 'Without law the people go to ruin' and was of the type that would have been issued by a Serjeant-at-Law. A Serjeant-at-Law was a member of the highest order of barristers, and it was customary for newly appointed Serjeants to send a ring engraved with their motto to other Serjeants. (No new Serjeants were made after 1875. The last died in 1921.)

The East Rudham ring was shown to officials at the British Museum, and subsequently the motto was identified by the Librarian of Lincoln's Inn Library from the record of the call in *Dyer's Reports fol. 72* as that adopted by the Group of Serjeants called in 1552: Robert Brooke, Richard Catlin, William Dalison, James Dyer, Thomas Gawdy, Ralph Rokeby and William Staunford. The practice at the time was for all the Serjeants at one call to adopt the same motto.

The ring was the subject of an inquest on the 13th July 1978 and having been found not to be treasure trove was handed back to the finder. The finder offered the ring to King's Lynn Museum and it was purchased by Norfolk Museums Service (Accession No. KL 260.978) in October 1978 for £500 with the aid of a 50% grant from the Victoria and Albert Museum. The ring is now on display at the Lynn Museum.

Mr. Claude Blair of the Department of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum checked records in the Library of the Society of Genealogists for the seven serjeants called in 1552. He found that only two seemed to have Norfolk connections.

Richard Catlin. Listed by *Blomefield* (III p. 2) as Steward of Norwich in 1555. Thomas Gawdy. This he assumed was Thomas Gawdy of Harleston, who died in 1556. (*W. Rye, Norfolk Families*, p. 241).

Sir Robert Brooke (or Brocke) of Madely, Salop, who died in 1558. There is an entry for him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Sir William Dalyson of Laughton, Lincs, who died in 1559. He was Justice of the Common Pleas and had been educated at Cambridge.

Sir James Dyer of Muche Stoughton, Hunts, London, Cambridgeshire, and Bedfordshire, who died in 1582. He was Justice of the Common Pleas and there is an entry in the *D.N.B.* which mentions that he gave an identical ring to the East Rudham ring when he was called in 1552.

Rauffe Rokeby of Cliffe, Yorkshire, who died in 1556 (entry in *D.N.B.*).

Sir William Staunford of Hadby, Middlesex, 1509-1558 (entry in *Alumni Oxoniensis*).

There is a strong local connection with Thomas Gawdy and Henry Hillen in *The History of King's Lynn* (p. 302) mentions Thomas Gawdy as being Recorder of King's Lynn in 1547 during an arbitration settlement in a dispute with Stourbridge Fair. He was also a Member of Parliament for the town and in the same

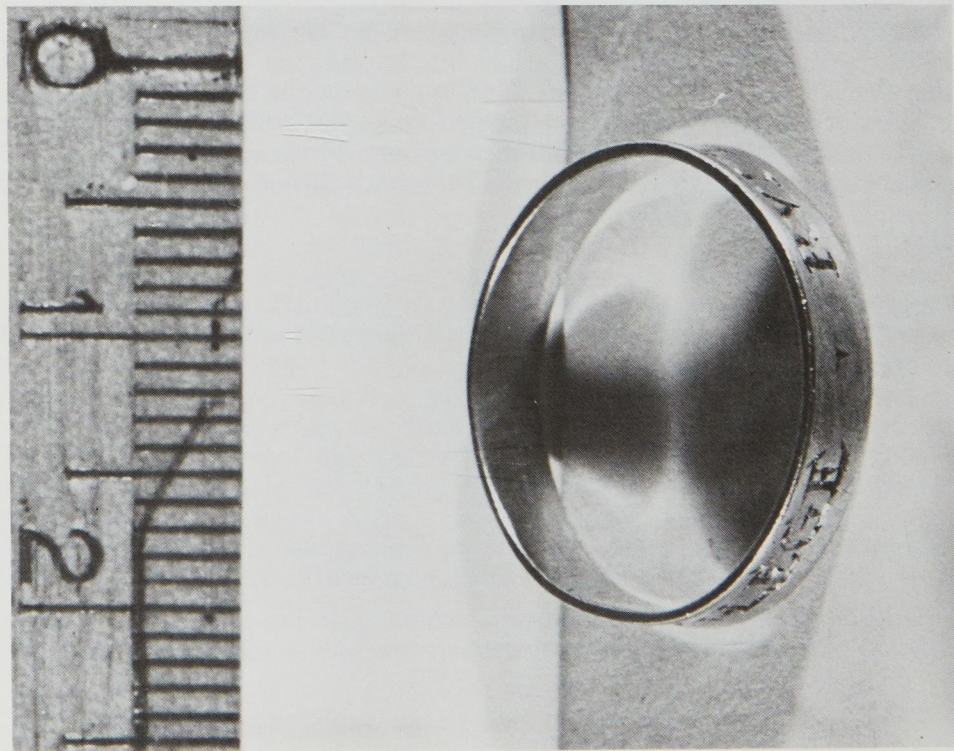


Plate IV

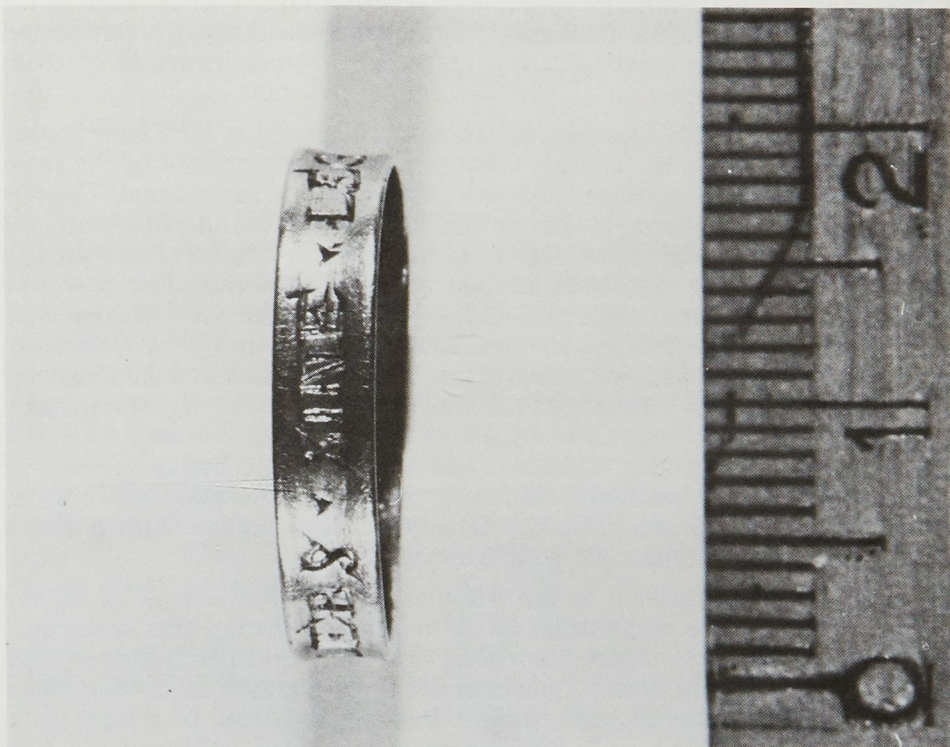


Plate V

Gold ring from East Rudham

year led the town's opposition to Parliament's proposals to seize Gild lands (Hillen p.265). In January 1554 Thomas Gawdy, Serjeant-at-Law, was appointed to a Royal Commission to investigate the activities of conspiritors in Norfolk against the new Queen Mary.

However, the details of Thomas Gawdy are not as clear cut as they first appear since there were no less than six Thomas Gawdys in three generations of the same family — including two different sets of brothers all with the same name. There is an interesting account of them by Percy Millican in *Norfolk Archaeology* for 1938 (Volume XXVI Part III). The Gawdys, a family of lawyers, flourished in Norfolk and Suffolk in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The first two brothers with the same name were *Thomas Gawdy senior of Wortwell* who married twice but left no issue and died in 1541 and *Thomas Gawdy junior of Harleston*, who was born circa 1476, and is described as Bailiff of Harleston in 1509. He married three times and by his first wife, Elizabeth Hellows (or Helwise), had a son *Thomas Gawdy, Serjeant-at-Law, of Shottesham, Redenhall and Norwich*. This is the Thomas of the ring who was called in 1552. Thomas Gawdy of Shottesham also had a half brother *Sir Thomas Gawdy of Claxton*, who became a Justice on the Queen's Bench. Thomas Gawdy of Shottesham in turn had a son with the same name *Thomas Gawdy of Weybread*.

Thomas Gawdy of Shottesham is the Thomas Gawdy mentioned by Hillen. Millican gives these further references: he is mentioned during the inquisition on the goods of his Uncle Thomas Gawdy of Wortwell in 1542, following the latter's death. He entered the Inner Temple and was Lent reader in 1548 and was fined for refusing to read in 1553. In 1545 he became Recorder of King's Lynn and M.P. for the town in 1547. In 1550 he was given the freedom of the City of Norwich and at the same time elected Recorder, an office which he held until his death. As we know he was promoted to be Serjeant-at-Law in 1552, and in 1553 represented Norwich in Parliament. In addition to his appointment on the Royal Commission of 1554, in 1555 he was in the commission for the Peace of Essex where he distinguished himself from his colleagues as the only favourer of the protestants. He owned an imposing house in the parish of St. Julian in Norwich, and he died five months before his father on 4 August 1556.

Robert Trett

Acknowledgement

Thanks are due to Dr. J. H. Baker of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge for his comments and amendments.