



Plate I

Musician from *Statuta Angliae*.  
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### A post-medieval silver hawking vervel (Fig. 3)

by David R. M. Gaimster and Sue Margeson

#### *Introduction*

In March 1989 a silver hawking vervel was submitted to the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, The British Museum, for an opinion. The object is a casual surface find from Norfolk, although the precise location of the discovery is now lost.

Vervels are small loops used in hawking to connect the leather *jesses* or thongs attached to each leg of the hawk to the leash which ties the bird down to its block (Oswald 1971, 19).

#### *Description*

The ring is a plain D-section loop with an external diameter of 10.5 mm. A small quantity of solder is visible at the junction of the loop. The vervel is inscribed in Roman letters 'Cranmer in Norff.', with the *m* and *e* in 'Cranmer' in *ligature*.

### Discussion

Four silver vervels of similar form and style of inscription are known from the British Museum collections.<sup>1</sup> They all have an additional armorial escutcheon soldered to the junction of the loop. The solder still adhering to this example suggests that this feature is now missing.

Another vervel from the British Museum,<sup>2</sup> flat and annular in form, is inscribed 'of Rushbrooke in Suf[folk]', and is paralleled by further types with the same epigraphic format (Dillon 1870, 356).

A silver vervel in the collections of Norwich Castle Museum is also flat and annular, and inscribed 'Garboldishm Norff.'<sup>3</sup> It was found at Harling, Norfolk.

The above examples, with their respective historical associations and style of engraved lettering, strongly point to a late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century date for their manufacture. According to Dillon (1870), vervels of D-section and flat-annular form are figured in contemporary treatises on falconry such as 'Best's Treatise of Hawks and Hawking', London 1619, and 'Latham's Falconry', London 1658. The 'Cranmer' vervel would appear to fit into this date range.<sup>4</sup>

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1. (i) BM MLA 1927, 2-16, 68. Pair of silver vervels with escutcheons bearing the arms of Sherard; the rings inscribed 'Will. Sherard of' and 'Will. lord Sherard' respectively (William Sherard of Stapleford, Leicestershire, created Baron Sherard of Leirim, 1627). Ring diameter 9 mm; length of escutcheon 8 mm.
- (ii) BM MLA 1927, 2-16, 69. Silver vervel with an escutcheon bearing the arms of Degge (Sir William Degge 1612-1704, Sheriff of Derbyshire). Ring diameter 9 mm; length of escutcheon 8 mm.
- (iii) BM MLA OA 9197. Silver vervel with small escutcheon bearing the arms of the Duke of Bourbon; the ring inscribed 'BOURBON'. Ring diameter 10 mm; length of escutcheon 4 mm.
- (iv) BM MLA OA 9198. Silver vervel with an escutcheon bearing the crest of Richard Cope; the ring inscribed 'M<sup>r</sup> Richard Cope of'. Ring diameter 11 mm; length of escutcheon 11 mm.
2. BM MLA 1856, 8-27, 109. Ring diameter 11mm.
3. NCM 422. 978. Ring diameter 15 mm.
4. The only 'Cranmer' so far traced in Norfolk is Cranmer Hall, Sculthorpe, built in 1721. Further research is needed to establish whether an earlier hall stood on the site.

### Bibliography

- Dillon, A., 1867-1870 'Six silver Vervels, or Hawk rings', *Proc. Soc. Antiqs.*, 2nd Series, IV, 355-357.  
 Oswald A., 1971 *Brief notes on the history and practice of hawking*, Canterbury, 2nd edition.

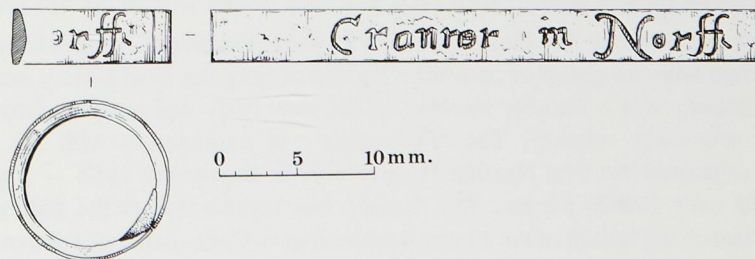


Fig. 3.  
 Silver hawkling vervel.  
 Drawing by Jim Thorn.