

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGY

THE HOLKHAM 'VILLA' OR 'SKOYLES' BARN'

by David Gurney

Introduction

In June 1989, aerial reconnaissance by Derek A. Edwards located the cropmark of a building on the Holkham Estate. This was in a field on the north side of Deep Clump, 1200m west of the Hall (Plate 1) at TF 8720 4296 (Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record No. 25491). The initial interpretation of the site was that it was a newly-discovered Roman villa, situated near the end and only 400m east of the major Roman road from Toftrees (Dunton) to the coast at Holkham (Griffith 1989).



Plate 1

Cropmark of Skoyles' Barn, Holkham, looking south-east
by Derek A. Edwards (reference TF 8742/AG/DKZ12).

The Building

The building was aligned north-east to south-west, probably facing north-west, around 50m long and 20m wide, with a central range showing some signs of internal subdivisions and a large room at each end (10m by 20m) projecting slightly forward of the facade.

In October 1989, the discovery of mortared post-medieval bricks (similar to those from the Estate brickworks at Burnham) on the site indicated that this was not a Roman villa, but must have been a building associated with the Holkham Estate.

Documentary and cartographic research

Although nothing was known in this location from the extensive archives, maps and surveys of the Holkham Estate, subsequent enquiries have shed a little light on this building.

In the key to the park map of 1843 (Hassall 1976, pl. 4), the field which would have contained this building is called 'Skoyles' Field', although no building is shown on this map (or on the Tithe Map of 1839). Samuel Skoyles was tenant between 1814 and 1824 of the New Inn (built 1786-8, by Wyatt, on the site later occupied by Model Farm), and an estate survey by the agent Keary in 1851 includes the comment that 'Skoyles' Barn' was most judiciously situated, but the roofs were not good. An inventory by the agent F. Blaikie of c.1816 of the New Inn does not mention the barn nor is it named separately, which suggests that it may have been built during Skoyles' tenancy and named after him.

Conclusion

The evidence suggests that this building was in fact 'Skoyles' Barn', dating to the period 1814 to 1824. It seems to have stood until the building of Model Farm made the decaying barn redundant, and it was probably demolished in the 1850s or soon after.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A NOTE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF METAL-DETECTING IN NORFOLK

by David Gurney

SUMMARY

This short note is to draw attention to the uneven distribution of metal-detecting activity in Norfolk. It is hoped that this will be taken into account in the interpretation of finds distributions and period maps which, ultimately, are generated in part at least from the same data.

Introduction

The Norfolk landscape is predominantly agricultural, potentially opening up vast tracts of long-ploughed countryside for the recovery of coins and metal artefacts through responsible metal-detecting. The subsequent recording of provenances and identification of this material is pri-