

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

Thanks are due to the Holkham Estate and particularly to Mr F.C. Jolly, formerly Administrator, for arranging access to the site and to the Holkham archives, and the late Dr W.O. Hassall, formerly Librarian at Holkham, for help with the identification of the building. The aerial photograph was taken during aerial reconnaissance with a grant from the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

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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-

marily undertaken through the identification service provided by the Norfolk Museums Service, at the Archaeology Department at the Castle Museum, Norwich and Norfolk Landscape Archaeology at Gressenhall.

This activity, both metal-detecting and recording, has resulted in an unprecedented and unimagined enhancement of artefactual data held in the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The first recorded metal-detecting activity in Norfolk was logged in 1973, and has increased until it now accounts for more than one-third of archaeological events recorded each year.

Distribution Maps

Metal-detector finds are the most common sources of data used to generate distribution maps of different classes of artefact or sites of specific periods. Some of the latter may even be most visible archaeologically through their metalwork. The classic example of this is provided by Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, with forty recorded up to 1973, and sixteen out of a minimum of eighteen discovered since then the result of metal-detector finds.

Furthermore, our reliance upon the metal-detector with reference to particular artefact or coin types may be gauged from the fact that detecting accounts for at least the following percentages of the recorded examples:

Iron Age coins	63%
Roman brooches	79%
Early Saxon brooches	78%
Middle Saxon pins	89%
Medieval buckles	87%
All metalwork hoards	93%

It is clear that, in using this data to generate county-wide distribution maps, there will be distortions resulting from differential coverage of the Norfolk landscape. Thus it would be misleading to conclude that the absence of a type of coin or metal artefact from a part of Norfolk is significant, if those parishes have not been metal-detected to the same extent as others where coins or artefacts have been found.

Quantification

Any attempt to quantify an activity as diverse in its method and its participants as metal-detecting is fraught with difficulties. It is generally impossible to take into account differential recovery of material as a result of variations in: search technique; the type of machine used; the expertise of, and time spent by, the searcher; the area covered; the ground and weather conditions; and the soil type. What is attempted here, however, is a quantification of metal-detecting itself as an activity (as opposed to the results) by means of an analysis of the number of metal-detecting 'events' recorded, *ie.* the number of times a parish has been visited by a metal-detectorist where this has been recorded in the SMR. On the computerised SMR record, it is possible to ask the question 'How many metal-detecting events have taken place in the parish of.....?' to give a total number of events for each.

While this does not, of course, give any information about activity *not* recorded in the SMR, then the same is true of the artefacts and coins recovered by such unreported detecting. Given that the SMR is generally the source of data used to generate distributions, the patterns of reported artefacts or coins can be contrasted with the patterns of reported metal-detecting activity.

Thus it may be possible and valid to comment on, for example, the absence of Icenian coins or Early Saxon metalwork from an area which has seen considerable metal-detecting activity. Conversely, the absence of such data from areas where metal-detecting activity is minimal or totally non-existent is, of course, of no significance.

Activity in Norfolk

What is immediately apparent from the map (Fig.1) showing the distribution of metal-detecting as an activity in Norfolk is that the coverage is very uneven. There are blank areas, some of which may be due to non-archaeological factors, such as the presence of a landowner, authority or institution on whose land metal-detecting is not permitted. Several Broadland parishes and afforested areas are similarly devoid of known activity.

The majority of Norfolk parishes have less than twenty recorded detecting events which, considering the size of most of them, does demonstrate the poverty of coverage. This includes fairly large and significant areas of the Fens, the Brecks, central Norfolk, the coastal strip of northern and north-eastern Norfolk, and south-east Norfolk.

In contrast, there are certain parishes or groups of parishes where activity is focused, probably due to the presence of an active metal-detector club or even just one or two individual

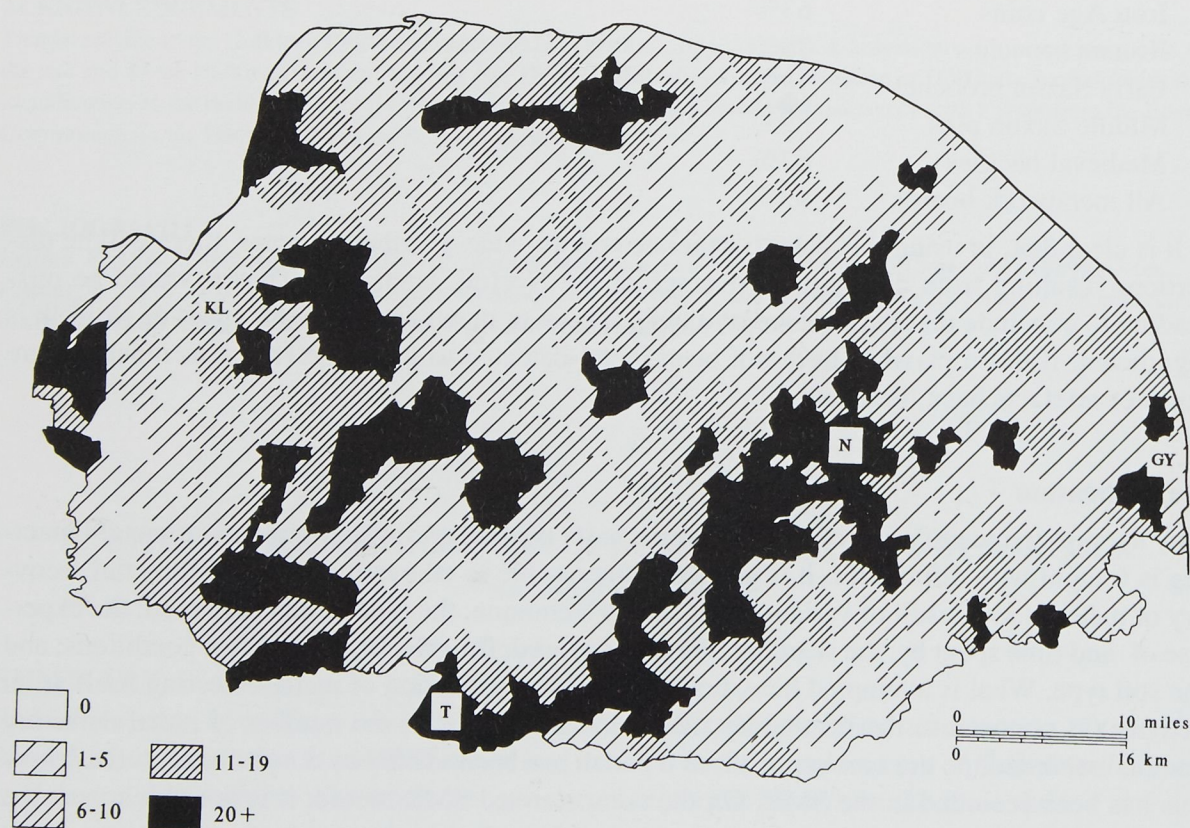


Fig. 1

Metal-detecting in Norfolk: the number of recorded events by parish.

KL = King's Lynn, T = Thetford, N = Norwich and GY = Great Yarmouth.

searchers. Once an area becomes known for interesting or important finds, there is a natural tendency for it to be searched more actively, on more occasions or by more people than would be the case in areas thought to have fewer finds. In Norfolk such parishes include Snettisham (48 events), Hockwold-cum-Wilton (30), Congham (86), Fincham (84), North Creak (55), Hindringham (53), Brampton (76), Caistor St. Edmund (122), Burgh Castle (152) and Quidenham (107). The locations of major population centres (Norwich, King's Lynn, Thetford, Great Yarmouth) must also have an effect here. Copies of this data (parish/number of events) are available from the author.

An Example

A single example may suffice to make the point, and that is the presence/absence by parish of Middle Saxon coins across the county. This is illustrated on Fig.2 which, when compared with Fig.1, amply demonstrates the relationship between coin distribution and metal-detecting activity. While there are large areas of the county where no Middle Saxon coins are recorded, these are parishes where metal-detecting has been relatively infrequent or even non-existent.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to argue that we must not interpret coin and metalwork distribu-

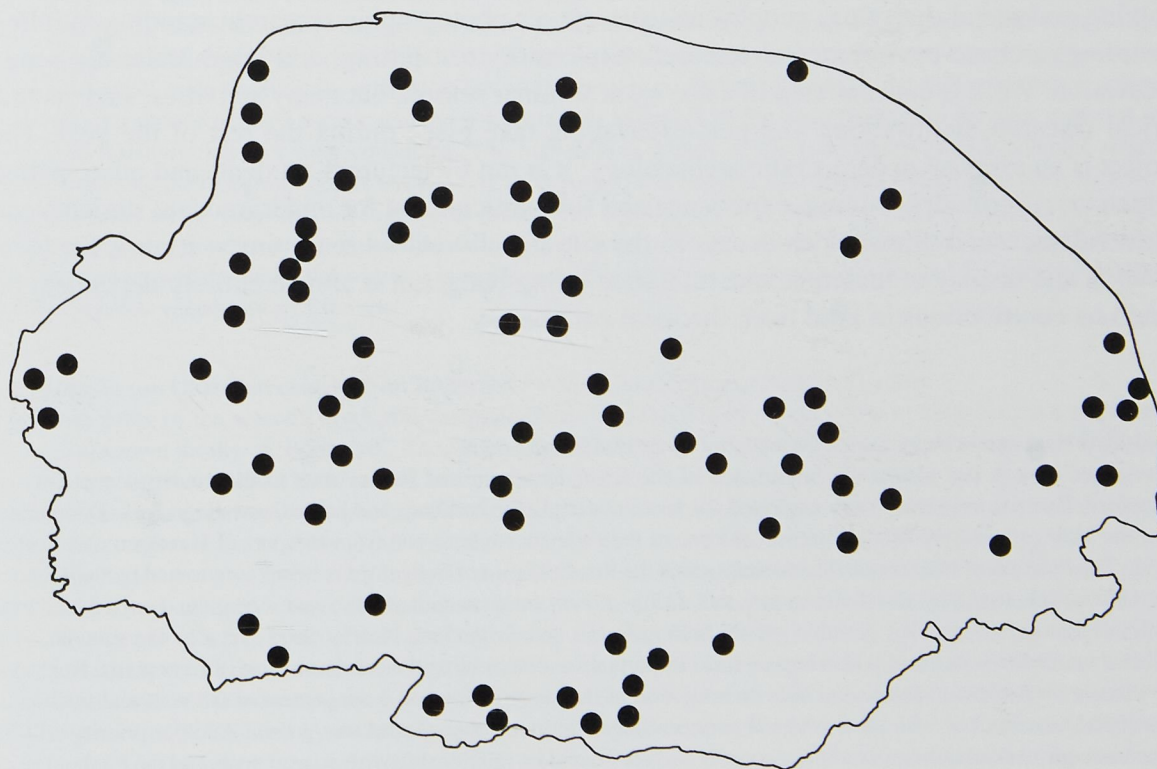


Fig. 2

Parishes in Norfolk where Middle Saxon coins have been found.

tion maps at face value, and that a weighting should be applied based on the level of metal-detecting activity. This, in Norfolk, is particularly important, given the wealth of artefactual and coin evidence within the Sites and Monuments Record from nearly twenty-five years of data collection.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based upon data provided by metal-detectorists across the county, whose continued co-operation in reporting finds is most gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are due also to John Davies and Andrew Rogerson for commenting upon a draft of the paper, and to Steven Ashley for drawing Figure 1.

SEDFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT, 1996: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

edited by Neil Faulkner

This is a long-term multi-period research project aimed at investigating human settlement and land-use in a north-west Norfolk parish. A full range of historical and archaeological techniques are used: archive, cartographic and place-name research; field reconnaissance and survey; field-walking and metal-detecting; geophysical survey; air-photographic research; standing-building recording; archaeo-environmental research; exploratory test-pitting; and large-scale, open-area excavation. Work is concentrated in a six-week summer season, but many activities, such as historical research, fieldwalking and post-excavation, take place during the rest of the year. The project is an exercise in democratic archaeology: it is run by lecturers, students and other skilled volunteers; it provides training, experience and full participation for undergraduate students and other volunteers; it allows open access to the site for all visitors at all times; it aims for local curation and display of material; and, on a shoe-string budget, it is almost entirely dependent on generous contributions in kind from the local community.

Field-historical research *by Steven Barnett and Janet Hammond*

This season's work has shown the importance of the River Heacham and its environs to the medieval economy of Sedgeford. Riverine resources were exploited for food, materials for building, and other domestic usages. Documents from the 12th century onwards also report the use of the river for trade to and from the port of Heacham and further afield. The location of two recorded moated courts at the Priory Manor of Sedgeford is being ascertained by field reconnaissance, air-photography, resistivity survey, and a 17th-century estate map. Reconnaissance near the deserted medieval hamlet of Eaton has revealed possible canals linking Eaton and Sedgeford. Nearby there are also the remains of a medieval undershot water-mill with a bypass lock, important for determining the maximum size of river punts. Next season will see further documentary and field investigation of the construction and management of the manorial reed-dam, an artificial lake stocked with pike, where a commercially-important crop of reed was grown. Another priority will be to increase our understanding of river transport at Sedgeford and its relationship with coastal ports and the Fenland river systems. We await archaeological evidence to pinpoint buildings mentioned in the written record, and to build a picture of Saxon river usage at 'Old Sedgeford' south of the river.

Archaeo-environmental research *by Stacey Hennessy*

Work was directed towards a feasibility study that would allow efficient targeting of all future environmental input to