

probably earlier, buildings. It seems to be an old settlement site, although nothing from the medieval period has yet been identified. Walking a hundred yards down the marsh track from the farm and then looking back at the house, it is very clear that it stands on a bluff or 'nes' above the Bure marshes. The freeman with his fifteen-acre farm, his two plough oxen, his acre of meadow and share of a saltpan is very typical of the self-sufficient freeholders who made up half the population of Flegg in the 11th century.

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SEDFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT, 1997 INTERIM REPORT

by Andrea Cox, Jonathan Fox and Gabor Thomas

Introduction

SHARP is a long-term, multi-period research project that aims to make an intensive study of the historic and prehistoric development of the north-west Norfolk parish of Sedgford. It is committed to integrating a wide range of historical and archaeological techniques, to the training of students and volunteers, and to the presentation of its work to the public. It is hoped that publication will take the form of brief annual interims (of which this is the second), occasional full-length interim reports, and *East Anglian Archaeology* monographs as discrete parts of the project reach conclusion. Work in the 1997 season expanded on and consolidated the work of the previous season, and included a more extensive programme of geophysical and landscape surveying and two more open-area excavations. The work generally concentrated on three locations (Fig.1): an area in the outlying hamlet of Eaton (A); the West Hall area (B); and the Boneyard/Reeddam (C).

Field Survey

Work by the field history team this season continued to focus on the survey and study of the physical remains and field boundaries of Sedgford parish.. This was partly accomplished by a one-week intensive course run by the team, which concentrated on a survey of the hamlet of Eaton (Fig.1: A) and an associated water-mill. An exploratory field-survey of

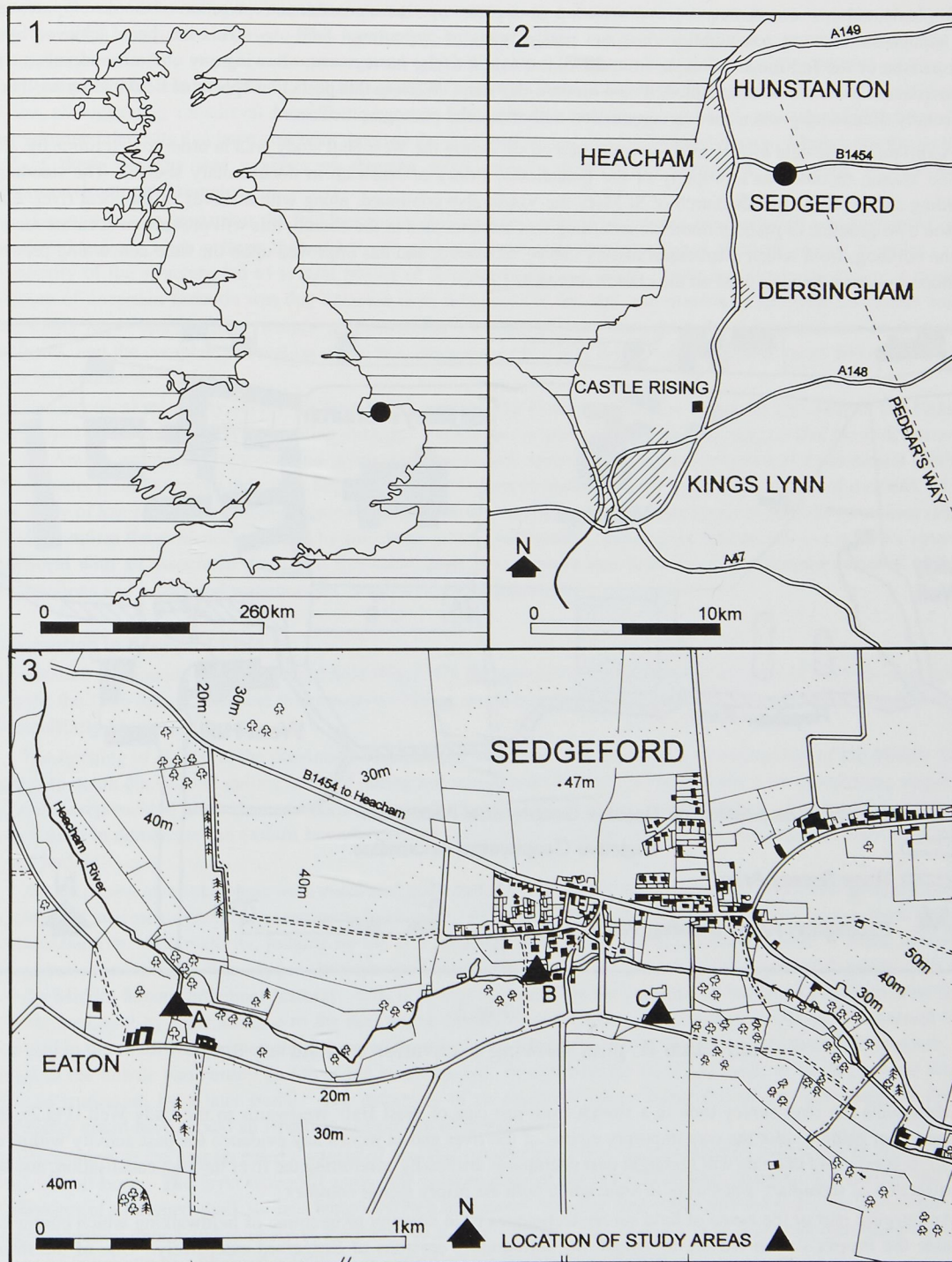


Fig.1

Location of Sedgeford and of study areas A-C

the latter was undertaken to supplement the documentary evidence studied in the 1996 season. One of the most significant results of this work was the identification of a series of roads and trackways running through the village and its environs by the technique of 'map regression'.

Implemented this season, map regression allows us to piece together a possible interpretation of the development of the village structure, its communications, and past patterns of agricultural land-use. This has been achieved by a comparison of the full range of maps, from the oldest extant to the most recent, allowing any obvious anomalies and concordances to be recorded and plotted on a modern-day map. Work in this particular sphere of field history has been especially illuminating when used in conjunction with the aerial photographic record.

Additionally, the field history team concentrated on surveying the West Hall study area in order to determine the site of the Manor, recorded as a property of the Benedictine Priory of Norwich in documentary sources. The standing-building survey of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin also continued, along with a survey of the local river. This season a programme of photogrammetric recording was implemented in the church; this will provide an accurate record of the building, from which a structural history can be recovered, and has improved upon the time-consuming process of stone-by-stone drawing used on the church survey in 1996.

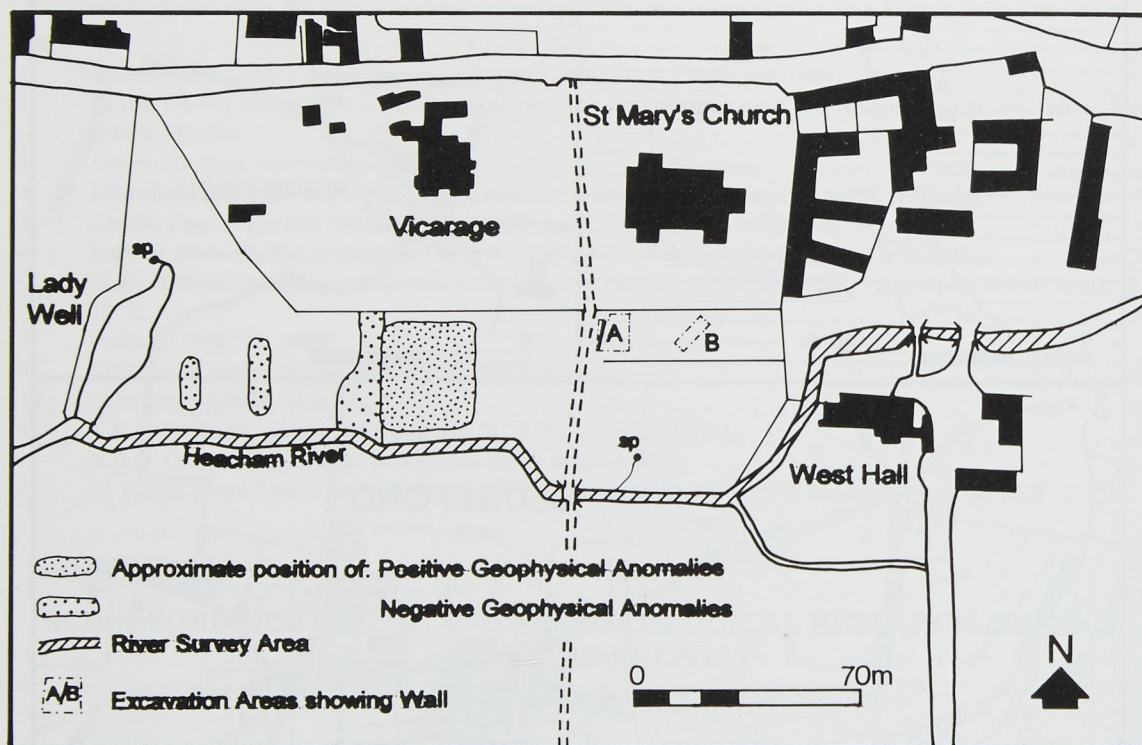


Fig.2

Study area B: plan showing excavation and survey areas

Meanwhile the river survey took in a stretch from just east of West Hall, westwards to the Lady Well (Fig.2), the primary aim being to plot the contemporary course of the river and to record any evidence for past activity within its banks. It is expected that this will highlight past attempts at artificially controlling the river through canalisation, and the construction of subsidiary waterways in association with the priory manor complex.

An intrinsic part of the range of field survey techniques is an ongoing programme of fieldwalking which continues, outside the Project's main season, to sample the surrounding environs of Sedgeford extensively. One of the major discoveries of this work has been the identification of a heavy concentration of Mid-Late Saxon occupation debris at the bottom of Chalkpit field, which lies immediately to the south of Boneyard field. These findings supplement our knowledge of the size and extent of the excavated settlement/occupation discovered in the Boneyard/Reeddam area.

Excavation in the vicinity of West Hall

Open-area excavations in West Hall Paddock (Fig.1: B; Fig.2) expanded upon the results of the 1996 test-pitting and geophysical survey, while the geophysics team extended its study area to the adjacent Dovecote Piece and the gardens of West Hall. Initially, two excavation sites were opened, A and B (Fig.2). Due to the complexity of archaeological deposits encountered in the former, however, Site B was abandoned during the initial stages of excavation. Excavation

at Site A revealed a complex sequence of deposits centred on a substantial metre-wide chalk wall, of which an eleven-metre length was exposed. This survived to a depth of 0.5m below the modern-day ground surface, and was butted to the west by a sequence of superimposed cobbled surfaces, mortar and soil deposits. The flint and cobbles were well worn and the mortar and soil deposits which they sealed yielded painted plaster, roofing tile, lead and Grimston Ware, all suggesting a medieval date. To its east was a large feature containing post-medieval material which truncated two dumped deposits that have also been dated to the medieval period on artefactual evidence. Underlying the wall and all of these deposits was a series of dumped sands, which sealed a layer of peat containing well-preserved palaeoenvironmental remains.

This evidence suggests that the Paddock coincided with an earlier river course or marsh that was reclaimed in the medieval period, when a large high-status structure was built (possibly associated with the manor complex). The longevity of the structure led to several phases of flooring being laid down. After its abandonment a post-medieval feature of uncertain function was dug adjacent to it; it is possible that this may have been excavated to obtain soil for the major landscaping of the vicarage gardens in the Victorian period. Further study of the finds and environmental samples, and the complete excavation of the site, are however essential before any conclusive dates and interpretations can be postulated.

The electrical resistivity survey of West Hall's gardens and Dovecote Piece, to the south and west of the Paddock, employed a one-metre-interval sampling strategy. Preliminary results from the gardens suggest that the wall uncovered in the Area A excavation may continue southwards for several metres, implying the presence of a substantial structure. The results from Dovecote indicate a large rectangular feature of high resistance towards the centre of the field, a linear anomaly of low resistance running adjacent to it, and several smaller low-resistance linear features beyond these (Fig.2). These confirm the evidence provided by the above-ground earthworks, and may be interpreted as a possible structural platform with an associated ditch. At this early stage, it is thought that these features represent manorial building-foundations and associated watercourses, boat-bays and/or fishponds.

Excavation in Boneyard Field

Excavation continued on the Boneyard field (Fig.1: C), the principle objectives being to excavate fully the area opened during the 1996 season, to define the cemetery's extent, and to establish the relationship between Middle Saxon and Late Saxon/Early Medieval features.

The opening of slots into the previously-unexcavated area to the east revealed the continuation of the Middle Saxon north-to-south ditches and gullies sampled during last season's excavation. Some of these were intercutting, suggesting that they represented more than one period of usage, though their functions remain unclear. The possibility that they were used to demarcate the eastern boundary of the cemetery is unlikely, considering that in places they were cut by later burials.

A total of seventeen skeletons were excavated and a further six partially revealed but not lifted; this increases the total number of interments from both seasons to forty-three. All skeletons were supine and orientated west-to-east, denoting a Christian rite. The majority, judging by the arm positions and the occasional presence of bone or metal dress-pins, were buried in shrouds. The copper alloy pins provide an 8th-9th century date, suggesting contemporaneity with some of the Middle Saxon settlement features. This is further supported by the presence of burials in the south-west corner of the area, and by their absence to the east where Middle Saxon ditches and pits were located. An unusual burial located in the south-west corner of the excavation was of a female with a horse, the latter orientated north-to-south. The head of the female was resting on top of the horse's pelvis, though both the skull and limbs of the horse were missing due to truncation by a later burial. The discovery of an explicitly pagan burial rite of this date suggests that the cemetery could have served an Anglo-Scandinavian community.

Excavation to the east revealed a spread of possible occupation debris characterised by rounded flint clasts, pottery and animal bone. The layer extended across the northern half of the excavation area, thinning out towards the west. Remnants of a rammed chalk surface, supported by a foundation of coarse flint clasts, was discovered in association with the occupation debris and is likely to have formed a floor surface. This material may represent ephemeral structural remains belonging to a phase of activity or occupation post-dating the cemetery.

Excavation in the Reeddam

Excavation here (Fig.1: C) in 1997 concentrated on two areas. The first of these, an area measuring 10 x 5m, was opened up to sample more of the Middle Saxon midden deposits encountered in the previous season's programme of test-pitting. The second, a north-to-south aligned 3m-wide trench linking the main Reeddam excavation and the Boneyard site, was designed to establish stratigraphic relationships between the two sites.

As expected, excavation in the former area revealed a Middle Saxon occupation deposit, characterised by discoveries of Ipswich Ware, animal bone and oyster shell; other Middle and Late Saxon artefacts included a copper alloy stylus and

a bone spindlewhorl with punched ring-and-dot decoration. This season's excavations were marked by the unexpected discovery of a dense concentration of burials cut into this Middle Saxon deposit. Although time precluded total excavation, a total of seventeen east-to-west orientated, supine inhumations were recorded and lifted; these were interred very close together and in some instances lay on top of one another. The evidence suggests contemporary interment in a mass grave. In the absence of any obvious signs of trauma on the skeletons it seems apposite at this preliminary stage to interpret these as plague or famine burials. The dating of this phase of burial was complicated by the homogeneous nature of the surrounding deposits, which prevented the accurate definition of grave cuts and fills. Ipswich Ware was associated with some of the burials, and on this basis they too have been regarded as being of Mid - Late Saxon date. It seems most likely, considering the proximity of the excavation to the Boneyard field, that they represent a northern extension of the Boneyard cemetery at some time during its period of use.

Excavation in the linking trench was restricted to two sondages. The first of these, located at the southern end of the trench, was fully excavated to establish the depth of archaeological deposits. Excavation of the second, located 10m further to the north, was terminated on the discovery of a west-to-east aligned burial which was left *in situ*. Excavation of the southern sondage revealed the northern extent of the occupation debris encountered in the eastern side of the Boneyard excavation. This overlay a substantial colluvial deposits, over 1m deep, which in turn sealed a series of closely-spaced west-to-east burials, some of them intercutting. The earliest of these is interpreted as a confined burial on the basis of the discovery of a number of L-shaped iron fittings and nails. The burials encountered in both sondages are interpreted, on stratigraphic and artefactual grounds, as broadly contemporary with the burials discovered in the Boneyard excavation; they suggest that an area of interments extended northwards uninterrupted into the Reeddam.

Preliminary Conclusions

Results from this season's excavation in the Boneyard/Reeddam area have forced us to modify our views on the nature and extent of the Boneyard cemetery. We now know the area of the cemetery was appreciably larger than hitherto thought, and extended a considerable distance northward into the Reeddam. They have also modified our views on dating; stratigraphic and artefactual evidence now suggests that the cemetery had a long period of use extending over several generations during the Mid - Late Saxon period. We must also accept the possibility of a post-cemetery phase of occupation marked by the discovery of ephemeral structural evidence.

It now seems certain that the focus of Saxon occupation lay in the Boneyard/Reeddam area (Fig. 1: C), where there is evidence for an inhumation cemetery with hundreds of burials and an associated settlement. Artefactual evidence suggests some relatively high-status activity. But the medieval village centre was, of course, several hundred metres away on the other side of the river, where we currently have our second main focus of study (B). We are left, therefore, with a number of closely-related research questions for the next few years. What was the size and character of Saxon Sedgeford?. How different was the medieval Sedgeford which succeeded it? When, how, and why did this shift of settlement focus occur?

Future Work

The excavation of all three open-area sites will continue next season, and the field history team will continue to survey Sedgeford and its environs. Priorities will be to excavate fully the Boneyard-Reeddam linking trench to confirm the relationship between the archaeological features discovered on both sites; to sample the rich environmental deposits encountered in the Paddock; and to concentrate excavation to the north of the Boneyard field where - as the excavation of the southern sondage revealed - we may expect to find archaeological features and deposits preserved beneath the colluvium.

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FOUR ROMAN MULTIPLE BOW BROOCHES FROM NORFOLK

by David Gurney

The existence of Roman brooches with multiple bows first came to the attention of the present writer when, in 1989, a photograph of a brooch with a double bow conjoined at the foot from Saham Toney was received (Fig.1, No.3). Since then two further examples of the double-bowed variety have come to light, both made in if not subsequently found in Icenian territory (Fig.1, Nos 1-2), and a triple-bowed brooch, also said to have come from Norfolk, is known from another photograph (Fig. 1, No. 4). These appear to represent a small and highly distinctive group of Icenian brooches, variants of types being produced between *c.* AD 40 and AD 75/85.

It is not possible to offer any practical reason why such brooches should exist, except as elaborations and decorative variants of the more commonplace single-bowed varieties. Although they bear a superficial resemblance to other forms of brooch with divided or double bows they are, of course, quite unrelated to such types as divided bow Knee brooches of later, mainly 2nd-century, date (see, for example, Nor'nour, in the Isles of Scilly; Hull 1967, fig.18, nos 113-115), or 3rd-century P-shaped brooches with double or triple bows, from this country or from Pannonia (see, for examples, Hattatt 1987, fig.86b, fig.87, nos 1249-51, fig. 88, nos 1256-8).

No. 1, from Holme Hale, Norfolk (SMR Site 25783), is a metal-detector find of January 1994 by Mr Murray Howard. It is hinged, with the pin and most of the catchplate missing. The seam across the back of the wings - for the insertion of the axis bar after casting - is a feature which is characteristic of the East Midlands and the Fens. The end of each wing is decorated with a pair of beaded ridges, and the upper part of each bow bears a prominent crest. This form of moulded decoration is more frequently seen in Norfolk and its immediate environs than elsewhere. It may fall within the date range *c.* AD 45 to 75/85.

No. 2 was found by metal-detector in the Scunthorpe area, probably in the 1980s, and is now in the collection of Mr Alan Harrison. The spring and pin are missing. The brooch is relatively plain, with only faint grooves around the catchplate perforation, faint grooves on the wings, and a small crest running from the rear-hook over the front of the wings between the junction of the wings with the divided bow. This is the only brooch of the four which is certainly sprung. The characteristic rear-hook identifies it as a specifically Icenian brooch type, the distribution of which is concentrated in northern East Anglia. This was therefore made in or very near to Norfolk and, if it was traded into Lincolnshire, this was probably in the period *c.* AD 40 to 60/65 or a little later.

No. 3 is said to come from Saham Toney, Norfolk (SMR Site 4697), being found by metal-detector in April 1989. Its present whereabouts are unknown, and the illustration is based on a photograph provided by an anonymous source. The mouldings on the wings are similar to those on No. 1, while each bow is decorated with longitudinal grooves and a ?knurled rib. The pin was presumably hinged, but whether the two sets of wings were ever conjoined like No. 1 is unclear.