

Illegible seals

49. Lead, flat. Cut quarter only, but originally circular, *c.* 42 mm. The central motif was probably a series of radiating lines ending in dots (intended to represent nails?). The surviving fragment of legend reads RO. IS and is engraved the right way round, so that the impression would be in mirror-writing. Alderford 19643.
50. Lead, flat. Cut quarter only, but originally circular, *c.* 32 mm. The central motif may have been an 8-point star, and the surviving part of the legend reads SIGIL (Seal of...). Beeston 4084).
51. Lead, flat with unpierced lug at top. Oval with rounded ends, 38 x 30 mm. Fleur-de-lis cut upside down. The legend has a cross at the top, but the rest of the inscription has not been cut; probably an unfinished matrix. Reverse has SIG lightly scratched into it. Thurning 34365.
52. Lead, flat with pierced lug on reverse. Pointed oval, 44 x 21 mm. Fleur-de-lis. Legend completely illegible. Happisburgh 34331.
53. Lead, flat. Cut ?quarter only, but perhaps originally pointed oval, *c.* 38 x 22 mm. Legend poorly cut, ...CP... Fring 1659.
54. Lead, flat. Cut fragment, less than a quarter. Possibly originally circular, at least 30 mm. Legend neatly cut, .../IC... Fring 1659.
55. Copper alloy, flat with raised rib ending in broken pierced lug. Circular, 25 mm. 5-petalled flower with oblique ribbing on petals. Legend illegible. Mautby 34672.
56. Lead, flat. Half only, deliberately cut, now crumpled. Circular, 30 mm. Central motif illegible.A HESSIW..... Sporle 28569.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**SEDFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT,
1999: FOURTH INTERIM REPORT**

by Melanie van Twest

with contributions from Andrea Cox, Neil Faulkner, Janet Hammond *and* Richard Hoggett

The Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project continues to develop its activities with the intention of building comprehensive knowledge of all periods of settlement and land-use within the parish. Current research close to the modern village seems to show Iron Age and middle-late Saxon occupation south of the river, with Roman and post-Conquest medieval settlement to the north, but further investigation will no doubt reveal a more complex pattern.

Although SHARP is a volunteer project whose main activity is a six-week summer season, post-excavation work is continuing, and the results of the first four years of excavation are due to be published in 2001. This report will cover evidence recorded in 1958 and in 1996–99, and will include a full discussion of changing methodologies together with provisional interpretations and conclusions. We hope to follow up with further reports at approximately four-year intervals, each drawing upon earlier work in developing interpretation and understanding of the site. In addition, a full edited site archive is planned for publication in CD-ROM format.

**SEDFORD
Boneyard/Reeddam**

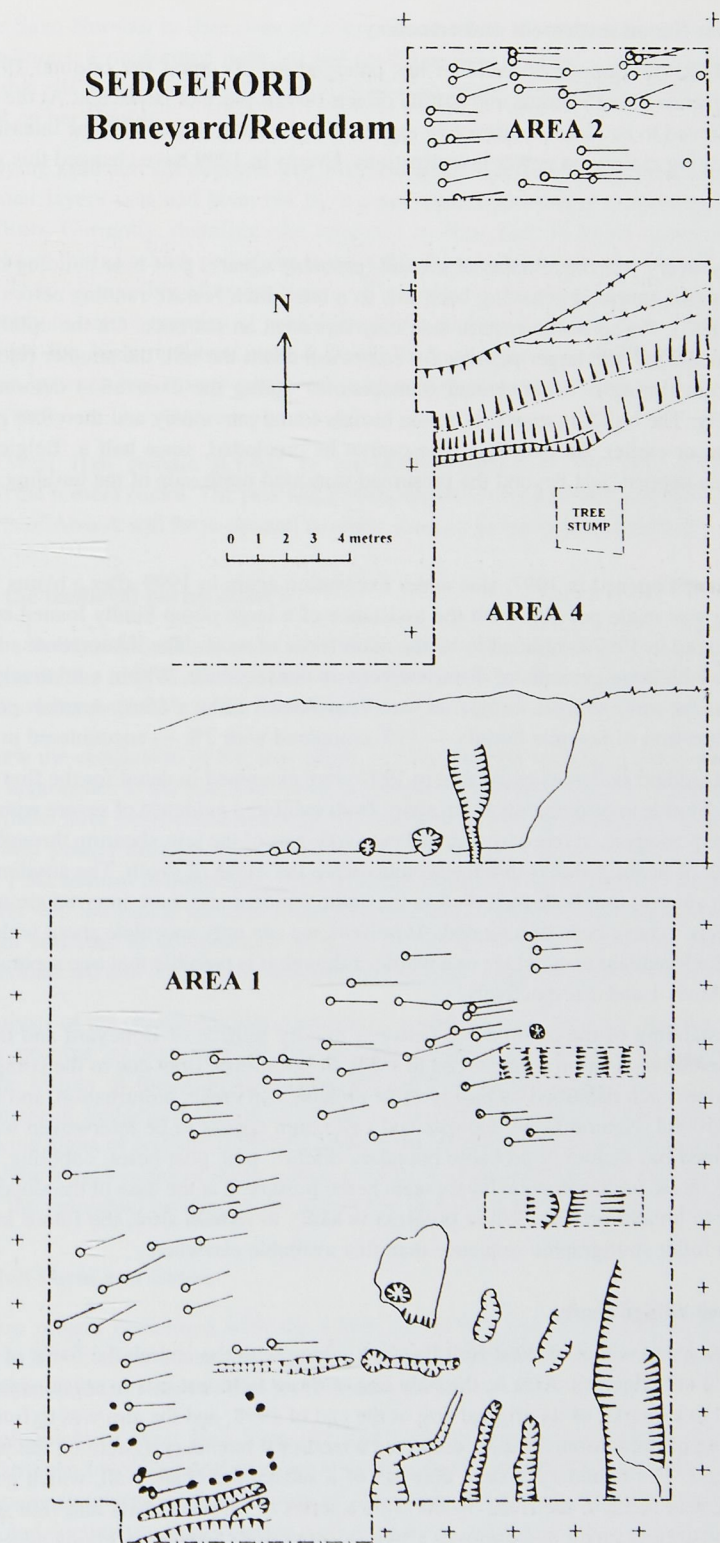


Fig. 1 Boneyard/Reeddam, 1997-9: plan showing the main excavated features. Burials shown schematically.

Boneyard/Reeddam: the Saxon settlement and cemetery

The main focus of SHARP in Boneyard/Reeddam has enlarged greatly upon the original 1996 open area, and is revealing a complex sequence of both human and natural effects on this piece of landscape. At the end of 1998, the 1996 trench (Area 1) was believed to be almost completely explored to the natural. In 1999, the intention was to 'finish off' this area while concentrating mainly on newer investigations. Events in 1999 have changed this situation dramatically.

Area 1

The most significant discovery was the remains of a small (probably square) post-hole building comprising three sides formed of 13 post-holes (the fourth side having been lost to a later ditch feature running across the entire site) in the south-west corner of Area 1. A gap in the eastern side may represent an entrance. On the uphill (southern) side, two drainage gullies were identified, the larger perhaps for rain-wash down the hill, the smaller (closer to the post-holes) probably for run-off from the roof. A convenient thunderstorm during the excavation demonstrated their possible functions very effectively. The building underlies seven burials found previously and therefore predates the cemetery, making it Middle Saxon or earlier. An Iron Age date cannot be precluded, since half a 'Belgic'-type pot was found nearby in a primary ditch deposit, just beyond the presumed truncated north side of the building.

Area 2

Area 2, the Reeddam trench opened in 1997, was under excavation again in 1999 after a hiatus in 1998 due to a high water-table. Excavation was made possible with the assistance of a large pump kindly loaned by Anglian Water. The dense layer of burials found in 1997 continued to be the main focus of work. The inhumations, unlike those in Area 1, are very tightly packed, with large amounts of disturbed bone in consequence. Within a relatively small trench (10m x 5m) 45 burials have thus far come to light, compared with 73 in Area 1 (20m x 15m). Another point of difference with Area 1 is the higher proportion of juvenile burials — 31% compared with 7% — encountered in Reeddam.

In 1999, two of the Reeddam skeletons excavated in 1997 were examined in detail for the first time. These were two adult males, buried side by side approximately 0.2m apart. Both exhibited evidence of severe wound trauma to the skull and jaw, caused by a sharp weapon; in one case this had cut away part of the jaw, shearing through tooth roots and bone alike. The complete lack of healing shows that the wounds were the cause of death. The similarity of the injuries and proximity of the burials suggest that both men died in the same incident and were interred simultaneously. One other Reeddam skeleton appears to have been decapitated. At present, we can only speculate about wider interpretations both of these burials and of the Reeddam assemblage as a whole, although it is possible that two separate phases of interment may be represented in Areas 1 and 2 respectively.

Crucial to our understanding of the relationship between the dry hillside of Boneyard and the wet valley floor of Reeddam is Area 4, where investigation commenced in 1999. Progress was slow due to the complexity of stratigraphy at the base of a steep slope much disturbed by past riverine erosion, soil creep, bioturbation, and human intervention to terrace and utilise the ground. Natural flood deposits and colluvium appear to be interwoven with human occupation evidence, as yet ill-defined but including probable boundary ditches, pits, post-holes, cobbling, midden-debris, and a hearth. Despite the difficulties, archaeological layers seem better preserved at the base of the slope than at the top, where they have been subject to greater erosion. While progress is likely to remain slow, the future investigation of Area 4 should produce a much fuller stratigraphic sequence than that available elsewhere.

West Hall: the medieval village centre

The other main excavation site is that of West Hall Paddock, along with the church the focus of our investigation into the later medieval period at Sedgeford. Area A, the only one of three 1996 test-pits to reveal significant archaeological remains, was backfilled to a quarter of its original size at the end of 1998, and the aim was to finish the remaining area in 1999. At the beginning of the season, Area A comprised a medieval boundary system on the west and a sequence of sand and peat on the east. The boundary system consists of a substantial chalk wall, which geophysical survey has shown runs most of the way south to the river. To the west a series of rammed chalk and flint surfaces formed a path (at least 15 layers demonstrating repair and use over a significant period) apparently giving access to the south door of the church. On the far side of the path lay a backfilled ditch and a later line of probable fence-posts. These remains represent a complex sequence of at least five main periods, some of several phases. This boundary system probably divided the manorial lands of the Priory Manor from those of the local gentry, the de Sedgefords, whose manor-house may have been located in the adjacent 'Dovecote Piece'.

In 1999, the remaining section of wall and pathway were removed, revealing a dense mortar-and-flint surface laid over dumped sand and silt deposits. The discovery of a post-hole and a human burial within one of two cuts into this material suggests that it may represent a floor, possibly of a small chapel associated with an early manor complex. The

burial, which may be Saxo-Norman in date, was of a woman of about 35 who suffered from two (almost certainly related) disabling conditions: a malformed right leg and severe scoliosis (spinal curvature). The context of the burial raises the possibility that she was a woman of religion or of high status. Excavation of the second grave-cut in 2000 may shed further light on her identity.

Beneath the underlying sand and silt deposits was a layer of peat representing a period when the area was marshy. This sealed two Roman layers that had been cut by a small drainage channel containing further peat and large, apparently dressed, flints. Currently, therefore, the sequence in West Hall Paddock appears to be as follows. First there was a Roman phase, during which period the water-table (and possibly the river level) gradually rose until the area was abandoned. Then — possibly after the Norman Conquest — it was reclaimed by depositing large amounts of sand and silt, probably to permit erection of a small building, perhaps a chapel, incorporating at least two burials. Latterly, probably from the high medieval period onwards, a substantial boundary system was established to emphasise the division between two manor complexes and provide access between them to the parish church from the south side of the river.

Investigations at West Hall remain pivotal to our understanding of the shift of settlement focus from Boneyard/Reeddam to the present centre. The peat and Roman deposits explored this year have added to its importance, and in 2000 other parts of Area A will be re-opened to allow these to be more fully sampled.

St Mary the Virgin: the medieval parish church

Whereas the area of the Boneyard/Reeddam excavation to the south of the river Heacham represents the location of the early medieval settlement, the church of St Mary the Virgin, north of the river and west of Boneyard, became Sedgeford's focus in the later medieval period. Investigation of this shift is central to our research at the church.

The 1999 season saw the conclusion of the first phase of recording the building's fabric, begun in 1996. Over the years, many different approaches to the task have been investigated — archaeological, architectural, photographic and art-historical — and these have been combined with the study of surviving documents to produce a history of the building from its earliest phases through to the present day. The floor plan and exterior of the building have been recorded at a scale of 1:50. Interior features have been recorded using measured sketches, scale drawings, photographs and written notes. Over 450 individual building elements have been identified and interrelated to produce a detailed structural sequence. In addition, to complement work on the building itself, a contour survey of the surrounding churchyard has been conducted and inscriptions of extant gravestones recorded systematically.

Once the initial analysis of the church itself is completed, an attempt must be made to place the building in context. Sedgeford was once a 'peculiar' of Norwich Cathedral, and closer analysis of the links between the two institutions will shed more light on the history of the building and the development of the village. On a broader scale, comparison between the development of Sedgeford church and those of Norwich Cathedral's other peculiars would be of great benefit, perhaps allowing signs of stylistic diffusion or the work of a single architect to become apparent. Ultimately, the church of St Mary the Virgin is one of many within a wider ecclesiastical system, and the search for answers must be broadened beyond the individual building if the role of the church within the village is to be fully understood.

Other work: West Hall Farm and Eaton

SHARP is a long-term project concerned with the whole parish heritage. A number of additional activities were therefore undertaken in 1999, some development-driven, some contributions to the wider aim of understanding the development of settlement and land-use in other parts of the parish.

Prior to the redevelopment of West Hall Farm, located north of the river Heacham and east of the church, an investigation was undertaken involving documentary research, oral history (the recollections of Mr Ted Rix since the 1930s), hedgerow survey, standing-buildings survey of redundant structures, and trial trenching to locate buildings recorded on old maps and documents. Some further work is planned, but our conclusion at present is that little evidence for pre-19th century activity at the farm has survived.

The deserted medieval hamlet at Eaton, two miles west of Sedgeford village, was the focus of non-invasive research in 1999, mainly by resistivity survey and structured pH testing. Two areas of both high resistivity and high acidity were identified in a yard adjoining a large barn, one of which corresponds with an area of hard-standing close to the barn doors. The resistivity also revealed a ditch, possibly associated with yard drainage. In addition, work was carried out in the area of Kyme Bridge, a medieval river crossing-point, where evidence was found for causeways on either side of the presumed bridge location.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to the SHARP committee of trustees, supervisory team, volunteer fieldworkers, members of the friends organisation, various specialist consultants, supporting academic bodies, and many local residents and small businesspeople who have sponsored the project, our particular thanks are due to: Bernard and Susan Campbell, Andrew and Katherine Ramsey, Janet Hammond and Tim Snelling, Mr & Mrs Buscall, the vicar and parishioners of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, the people of Sedgeford, and King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. Figure 1 is by Ray Ludford.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN NORFOLK 1999

edited by David Gurney

This is a selection of important finds from an estimated total of more than 13,000 objects seen by the Norfolk Museums Service's Identification and Recording Service, and details of which have been entered on the Norfolk Sites and Monuments Record during 1999. The Norfolk SMR is maintained by the Norfolk Museums Service's Landscape Archaeology Section at Gressenhall, and may be consulted by appointment.

The entries are arranged by period and, within each period, by parish alphabetically. The number after the parish name is the Norfolk SMR number. Grid references have been omitted at the request of finders. Metal artefacts are of copper alloy (bronze) and Iron Age, Saxon and medieval coins are of silver unless otherwise stated. Seal matrices are dealt with elsewhere (this volume).

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology is most grateful to all those who bring in finds for identification and recording, thereby contributing to the SMR and this annual list. The Identification and Recording Service, staffed by Helen Geake, Katie Hinds, Samantha Hyde and Andrew Rogerson, was based temporarily at Gressenhall during 1999–2000. The assistance of colleagues in the Archaeology Department at the Castle Museum (John Davies, Bill Milligan, Kate Sussams, Alan West), Steven Ashley (Norfolk Archaeological Unit), Peter Robins (flint identifications) and colleagues in other institutions, especially the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Ashmolean Museum in the identification of finds is most gratefully acknowledged.

The majority of the finds listed have been found in the course of metal-detector survey (with many finds being reported by members of Anglian Historical Searchers, Anglian Metal Detectors, East Norfolk Metal Detectors, Norwich Metal Detectors and the West Norfolk Search and Recovery Group), but the list may also include fieldwalking finds and new discoveries of sites either by field observation or aerial photographic survey. The illustrations are by Sue White (Norfolk Archaeological Unit).

Undated Prehistoric

Gressenhall 34145. Profuse potboilers on low mound in pasture (A. Rogerson)