

Two Anglo-Scandinavian harness cheek-pieces from Tandridge and Nutfield

These two 11th century cheek-pieces were found by Mr R Skinner of Streatham while using a metal detector. Object A was found near Tandridge village while object B comes from Henhaw Farm, South Nutfield. Pairs of cheek-pieces of this general type are known from central and southern Sweden and Denmark but they also occur in East Anglia, Lincolnshire and elsewhere in eastern England. The general topic of Anglo-Scandinavian equestrian equipment has been discussed recently by Graham-Campbell (1992). These Surrey finds are the first such cheek-pieces to be recorded from the county, but this should occasion no surprise as other examples of

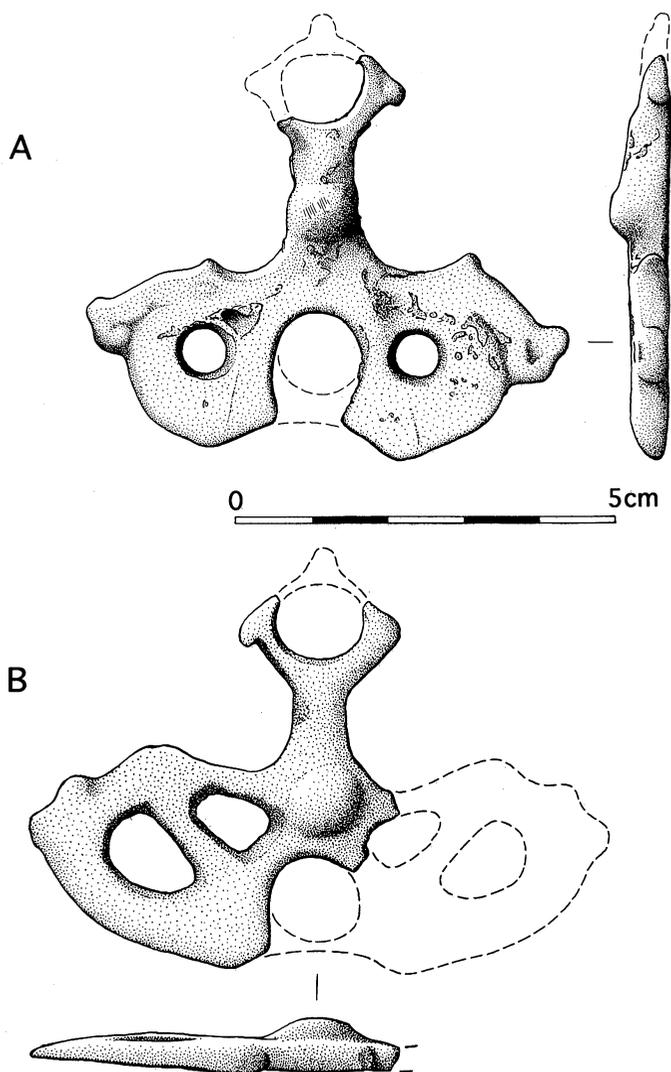


Fig 1 Late Saxon harness cheek-pieces from Tandridge (A) and Nutfield (B). (1:1)

Late Saxon Scandinavian-inspired equestrian equipment have recently been recorded from the general area (Williams 1996). These include harness link-pieces, which are associated with the present finds, and stirrup-strap mounts.

The Tandridge cheek-piece (fig 1, A) is largely complete, although part of the characteristic knobbed terminal has broken away. The surface is much worn and any surface decoration is no longer visible. However, the object clearly displays a pair of facing ribbon-like beasts of Late Viking inspiration, which curve around the two outer apertures to create the profile. A depression visible on the left side may have formed the open mouth of that beast. There would have been a central circular aperture to hold one end of the iron bit, but the edge of this hole has worn through use and this, no doubt, occasioned the discarding or loss of the object. The cheek-piece from Nutfield (fig 1, B) differs in form and is less complete as one side and part of the terminal are both missing. This object, which is also heavily abraded, likewise displays a ribbon-like beast in profile whose open jaws gape either side of the two inner apertures. The Nutfield cheek-piece also exhibits wear on the central aperture.

Together with a small number of stirrup-strap mounts and other artefacts these finds add to a small but growing body of artefactual evidence for the exploitation of the Wealden fringe in the Late Saxon period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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