

Seventh Century Cemeteries in the Ouse Valley

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SUMMARY

Intensive museum research has revealed a wide range of cemeteries and individual burials of seventh century date from the Ouse valley. Sites in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire are catalogued in detail. Where the material is not well known, as with the Kempston cemetery, it is catalogued fully; where recently published only a more summary note has been made.

INTRODUCTION

It has become increasingly recognised in the last forty years that the accoutrements of the last phase of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries differ not merely in detail but also radically in form from those of the cemeteries of the fifth and sixth century. Since the seminal work of Leeds¹ and that of Lethbridge on Cambridgeshire,² it has become obvious that the phase has specific grave goods, and it has become apparent that these can be recognised in many areas of England from as widespread localities as Yorkshire,³ the Peak District,⁴ the Northamptonshire Uplands,⁵ the upper Thames Valley,⁶ and Wiltshire.⁷ The present gazetteer seeks merely to catalogue the material from the Ouse river valley and beyond in the Chiltern Hills of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

The gazetteer has been built up from a search of the relevant periodical and other literature and more particularly from an intensive examination of the museum collections of the area. In this paper no material of this phase has been illustrated. It is a well-known enough assemblage and it would not have been part of the concept of a gazetteer to have provided illustrations of the whole of the seventh century material from a site such as Kempston. The gazetteer has been designed to supplement the discussion of the seventh century material of the Northamptonshire Uplands which will be appearing elsewhere.

GAZETTEER

BEDFORDSHIRE

ASTWICK TL 216385

A small cemetery of weapon-producing graves, including a sugar-loaf shield boss, a sword and spearheads.

Museum British Museum, register numbers, 1915, 12-8, 353/365.

Literature D.H. Kennett, 'Seventh Century Finds from Astwick'; *Beds Arch J* 7, 1972, 45-51.

CHAMBERLAIN'S BARN, LEIGHTON BUZZARD SP 928262

Two cemeteries, with 19 and 68 identifiable graves found 1931-36.

Museum Luton Museum, accession number 14/57.

Literature M. Hyslop, 'Two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Chamberlain's Barn, Leighton Buzzard', *Arch J* 120, 1963, 161-200.

CLIFTON TL 169388

Small plain pot, probably an accessory vessel to a burial.

Museum British Museum, register number, 1915, 12-8, 207.

Literature *Beds Arch J* 7, 1972, 42 and fig 4.

HARROLD SP 953573

Cemetery of 14 graves and some unassociated finds, found 1951-53, in a complex of sites including a large pre-Roman settlement and a probable Viking grave.

Museum Bedford Museum

Literature V.I. Evison, in *Beds Arch J* 5, 1970, 38-46 with figs 12-14.

KEMPSTON TL 031474⁸

An extensive cemetery beginning early in the fifth century with about 300 burials, of which over 156 have been recorded in detail. Nine definite Christian Saxon graves can be identified as well as a number of unassociated objects.

Graves:

Grave 3, found 1845, has a silver pendant with gold foil facings, originally four of which three are extant, two with garnet settings, diameter 47mm.

Museum Bedford Museum, B M 160.

Literature *Bedford Times* 28 February, 1846; *Beds Arch J* 6, 1971, 2.

Grave 32b, found 1863, recorded as one of many graves on 20 October 1863.

Objects include a pear-shaped garnet set in a gold casing, a pendant of the Roundway-Desborough type, length 22mm. This complex group is also recorded with the Kempston cone beaker, beads including seven of crystal, a bronze ear and tooth-pick set on a bronze ring, and a ring and handle of bronze from a wooden object, which probably represents two graves super-imposed on one another.

Museum British Museum, reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 4. (garnet pendant).

Literature Minute Book 343; Fitch, 1864, 286-7; Fitch, 1868, 203-4; Wyatt, 1868, 171; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 4.

Grave 34, recorded 31 October 1863, a single grave. Objects in this female grave are reported as two small circular brooches near the wrists, a string of 37 beads, two silver rings on the fingers, fragments of silver wire rings, a single bead on a ring (possibly found near the ear), a small gold ornament less than 8mm long, with filigree ornament and a small square setting of red glass or garnet.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 6.

Literature Minute Book 344; Fitch, 1864, 287 and pl.2 nos 1 and 5; Fitch, 1868, 204-5 and pl. 40 nos 1 and 5; Wyatt, 1868, 170; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 6.

Grave 42, found 16 November 1863, recorded as a single grave. Objects recorded in this grave 2ft 3in deep at right angles to others near with only part of the skeletal remains are a workbox and associated bronze chain with thread in the bronze box, and possibly also a necklace of amber, glass and crystal beads, a pair of brooches and a toilet set.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 140, possibly also British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 168 and 169 are from this grave, though they could be from grave 71.

Literature Minute Book, 344 and 346; Fitch, 1864, 289; Fitch, 1868, 206; Wyatt, 1868, 168; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 140, 168, 169.

Grave 71, found 18 January 1864, a single female grave. Objects include a bronze workbox with attendant fittings, with linen and worsted thread, a string of 9 glass beads and one pottery bead, fragments of silver rings, two fragments of a bronze pin, silver cap-shaped articles, (possibly silver bulla beads).

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 141 (workbox), 1891, 6-24, 168/169 (fittings), 1891, 6-24, 339/340 (fragments of linen and worsted thread).

Literature Minute Book 346; Fitch, 1864, 291 and pl.5 no 3; Fitch, 1868, 209 and pl.43 no 3; Wyatt, 1868, 168; *V C H Beds* 1, 1904, 181 with fig; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 141, 168, 169, 339 and 340.

Grave 73, found 25 January 1864, a single grave. Objects are two silver rings, weights 33 and 20 grains, two fragments of a silver bead, weight 7.5 and 7 grains, five amethyst beads of multiple construction with shell infilling to a bronze framework.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 9 (bead of multiple construction), 1891, 6-24, 42 (four amethyst beads).

Literature Minute Book, 347; Fitch, 1864, 292 and pl. 2 nos 2 and 3; Fitch, 1868, 210 and pl. 40 nos 2 and 3. Kennett *Kempston* objects 9 and 42.

Grave 79, found 18 February 1864, a complex that probably includes more than one individual burial whose relationships to each other cannot be determined. Objects include a bracelet of twisted bronze, a silver bead, two silver rings and groups of silver 'cones' in the first recorded part of the complex which has also two broken urns and a third more complete and ornamented. In the second recorded group are a complete bronze pin and fragments of others, a silver ring and iron fragments.

None of these objects can be identified with any certainty.

Literature Minute Book, 348; Fitch, 1864, 293-4 and pl. no 2; Fitch, 1868, 211-2 and pl.42 no 2; Kennett, *Kempston*.

Grave 136, found 18 May 1864, a single grave, containing two clay spindle whorls, a silver dress fastening, a fragment of a blue glass base from a ribbed and toed palm cup, fragments of a bone comb, fragment of a bronze gilt shield rim, length 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 3 (glass base), 1891, 6-24, 36 and 38 (spindle

whorls), 1891, 6-24, 181 (bronze shield rim fragment), 1891, 6-24, 305 (silver dress fastening).

Literature Fitch, 1864, 298; Fitch 1868, 217; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 3, 36, 38, 181, and 305.

Grave 151, recorded 20 December 1864, a single grave found after the main excavations with a spearhead, a large knife (? a scramasax), a low conical shield boss with silver rivet heads on the rim and an openwork disc, probably a pouch mount.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 65 (shield boss), 1891, 6-24, 191 (openwork disc).

Literature Minute Book 366, Kennett *Kempston* objects 65 and 191.

Individual Objects

Apart from these identifiable grave groups there is a body of objects in the Christian Saxon finds from Kempston which have no identifiable associations.

Three biconical paste beads in one necklace string and two in another.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 53 (with two), 1891, 6-24, 54 (with three).

Literature Unpublished, Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 53 and 54.

Three bronze bulla beads.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1876, 2-12, 20 (one), Bedford Museum accession no. 3854, vii-viii (two).

Literature Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 350 and 419.

Three silver pendants.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1876, 2-12, 21 and 22, Bedford Museum accession no. 3848.

Literature Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 351, 352, 368.

Two small bronze buckles.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 203 and 204.

Literature Unpublished, Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 203 and 204.

Bronze pouch mount.

Museum Bedford Museum accession number B M 143.

Literature Unpublished, Kennett, *Kempston*, object 431.

At least three small pots.

Museum Bedford Museum accession numbers 3775, 3779, B M 96.

Literature Unpublished, Kennett, *Kempston*,

objects 375, 379, 453.

Sugar-loaf shield boss.

Museum British Museum, reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 59.

Literature Evison, 1963, 46 and fig. 26a; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 59.

Silver wire rings, finger rings and fragments.

Museum British Museum reg. no. 1891, 6-24, 7 and 8, and 300 to 325.

Literature Unpublished. Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 7, 8, 300-325.

LUTON, BISCOT MILL area TL 079231.

Eleven burials found near Biscot Mill between 1923 and 1970 may represent a small cemetery. Finds were few and consisted of weapons and a pot of seventh century type.

Museum Luton Museum

Literature R.K. Hagen, 'Anglo-Saxon burials from the vicinity of Biscot Mill, Luton', *Beds Arch J* 6, 1971, 23-27.

LUTON, DALLOW ROAD TL 028215

A female burial with a pair of iron shears and a cowrie shell.

Museum Luton Museum, accession number 91/30.

Literature *Ant J* 11, 1931, 282-284.

TOTTERNHOE, MARINA DRIVE TL 008214

Cemetery with at least 49 burials excavated in 1957.

Museum Luton Museum

Literature C.L. Matthews, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Marina Drive, Dunstable', *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 25-47.

WHIPSNADDE about TL 0018

A possible rich grave was found in the reign of Edward I.

Literature *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 76.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BARRINGTON B (HOOPER'S FIELD) TL 387497

An extensive cemetery beginning in the fifth century which is usually thought of as purely of the pagan phase has a few objects of the Christian Saxon phase of the seventh century; but no grave groups.

Workbox fragment.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession number Conybere 611.

Literature Unpublished.

Pendant of the Acklam type with a central white paste setting for a lost stone on a gold background with gold filigree interlacing.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession number 34,838. *Literature* Unpublished.

Silver ring brooch with four garnets.

Museum Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, accession number 1909-278.

Literature N. Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, 1926, 138.

BURWELL TL 590665

A cemetery, purely of the Christian Saxon phase of the seventh century with 123 graves excavated by Lethbridge, 1925-29.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

Literature T.C. Lethbridge, *Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk*, 1931, 47-70.

CHERRY HINTON TL 484555

A cemetery of eight secondary burials found during excavation of a Bronze Age barrow. Apart from an earlier find of a crystal ball, the grave groups are:

Grave 1: Spearhead

Grave 2: Two bronze belt fittings, iron knife.

Grave 3: Small pot, silver wire ring with four beads.

Grave 4: Iron bed mountings.

Grave 8: Iron knife.

Grave 9: Blue glass bead, bronze buckle with decoration a jour.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

Literature Unpublished, but the present author hopes to publish the finds from this site in a future issue of *Proc Camb Antiq Soc*.

HASLINGFIELD TL 413520

A large cemetery usually considered to be purely fifth to sixth century in date. The following items of the Christian Saxon phase of the seventh century have been identified:

Cowrie Shell

Three draughtsmen made from teeth

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, exhibited.

Literature Unpublished.

Workbox fragment.

Museum Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, not registered but labelled.

Literature Unpublished.

MELBOURN TL 382438

A cemetery of 28 graves excavated in 1952 with purely seventh century material.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession numbers 53-183 to 53-201. *Literature* D.M. Wilson, in *Proc Camb Ant Soc* 49, 1956, 29-41.

QUY TL 525510

Group of finds consisting of silver box with domed top and ribbed design to the sides; two silver rings; and a blue bead on a silver ring. Probably a single grave.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession numbers 42-125 to 42-127.

Literature Unpublished. It is hoped to publish these items in a future issue of *Proc Camb Ant Soc*.

SHUDY CAMPS TL 604444

A cemetery of 148 graves excavated by Lethbridge of which the 77 graves with grave goods are published.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

Literature T.C. Lethbridge, *Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire 1936*.

STRETHAM, near Ely TL 520750

Single Pendant, crystal in a gold case with a central amethyst setting, with a gold ridged bead at the top.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession number 51-565.

Literature Unpublished. It is hoped to publish this item in a future *Proc Camb Ant Soc*.

LITTLE WILBRAHAM TL 560577

A large mainly early cemetery but with a contingent of important late sixth and early seventh century finds has produced at least one grave group of this phase.

Grave 59: Five amethyst beads and an iron knife.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, accession number 48.1397.

Literature R.C. Neville, *Saxon Obsequies Illustrated*, 1852, 17 and pl. 22.59.

HERTFORDSHIRE

IPPOLLITTS, POUND FARM TL 192274

A single burial discovered 1952 with a scramasax, buckle and knife.

Museum Hitchin Museum.

Literature Unpublished.

LETCHWORTH, BLACKHORSE ROAD

TL 233336

A cemetery of 10 burials discovered in the course of excavation of a large complex prehistoric site, 1958-66. The only grave goods were a spearhead lodged in the chest of grave 6 and scramasaxes with graves 2 and 4.

Museum Letchworth Museum.

Literature J. Moss-Eccardt 'A Saxon Cemetery at Letchworth, Hertfordshire' *Beds Arch J* 6, 1971.

VERULAMIUM TL 131067

A cemetery of 32 graves excavated 1966-68 outside the south-west gate of Verulamium. Objects include a silver disc pendant, and two workboxes. *Museum* Currently with Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Department of the Environment. *Literature* *Med Arch* 12, 1968, 158; *Antiquity* 43, 1969, 46-47.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD TL 1714

A poorly documented burial with a Coptic ewer and a glass palm cup.

Museum British Museum, reg. no.

Literature *Proc Soc Ant* 18, 1900, 110-114; *VCH Herts* 1, 1902, 253-254.

HUNTINGDON AND PETERBOROUGH

PETERBOROUGH TL 195986

A palm cup found with a skeleton before 1956. *Museum* Peterborough Cathedral.

Literature D.B. Harden, in D.B. Harden (ed), *Dark Age Britain*, 1956, 142 and pl. 18p.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

BRIXWORTH CHURCHYARD area SP 747702

A burial found in 1894 in Brixworth Churchyard contained a bronze pin with style II ornament on its head and a coin of Cuthred of Kent (794-802). *Museum* Northampton Museum.

Literature D.H. Kennett, 'Uplanders'.

CLIPSTON SP 714815

A group consisting of a scramasax, a spearhead and a knife found in 1867, once confused as coming from Great Oxendon (the next parish).

Museum Northampton Museum, accession numbers D215-217/1955-56.

Literature D.H. Kennett, 'Uplanders'.

CRANSLEY SP 838778

A group of finds made in 1879, apparently rep-

resenting a small cemetery. Eleven objects are recorded but only one pot is extant. It is not clear how far objects recorded as found near each other represent grave groups. A damaged skillet and a workbox with an attached tag were reputed to have been found with a sword. Beads, two brooches, five wire rings, a spearhead and two potts are also recorded.

Museum British Museum, accession number 1882, 6-22, 1 (a pot).

Literature R.S. Baker in *P S A*, 9, 1881, 93-95; D.H. Kennett, 'Uplanders'.

DESBOROUGH SP 805830

A large cemetery of at least sixty graves was discovered during ironstone quarrying in 1876. Partly recorded by R.S. Baker, who succeeded in obtaining from the workmen some of the most spectacular finds from the cemetery. Two graves were recorded in detail. Grave A contained the well-known Desborough necklace. Grave B contained a bronze skillet, a silvered bronze spoon, silver fragments, fragments of bronze scale pans, two glass palm cups, a silver hinge or clasp and two iron objects (not now extant). Grave C was unfurnished.

Museum British Museum, register numbers 1876, 5-4, 1-11.

Literature R.S. Baker, 'On the discovery of Anglo-Saxon remains at Desborough, Northants', *Archaeologia* 45, 1880, 466-471; D.H. Kennett, 'Uplanders', has a full description of each piece and illustrations.

HARDINGSTONE SP 737583

A burial found in 1855 contained a human skeleton accompanied by a spearhead and a horse with a bridle bit and a horse phalera.

Museum The bit may be that in Northampton Museum labelled 'Hunsbury' which is in Hardingstone parish; the phalera is reported as being in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, Dorset.

Literature *VCH Northants* 1, 1902, 253-254 with coloured plate; Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England* 1926, 148 with fig 287.

LODDINGTON SP 814783

A group of objects found about 1903 and taken by later commentators to represent a grave group, consisting of an iron shield boss and its grip, an iron bar, two spearheads.

Museum Northampton Museum accession numbers, D290-295/1955-56.

Literature Ant J 43, 1963, 46 and fig 25 a-e; D.H. Kennett, 'Uplanders'.

SUFFOLK

HOLYWELL ROW TL 714765

A large cemetery, excavated by Lethbridge 1931, with at least 100 graves. Several of these are seventh century.

Grave 4: Holdborough type shield boss, iron bound bucket, small buckle.

Grave 11: a well-known assemblage dated to this phase by its three pendants but including a great deal of earlier material.

Grave 12: silver pendant, silver finger ring and beads.

Grave 29: iron bound bucket, sword, spearhead, shield boss of conical form.

Grave 30: small bronze buckle.

Grave 31: bronze buckle with silver inlay, beads, bronze clips.

Grave 56: conical shield boss, small bronze buckle, spearhead.

Grave 91: conical shield boss, small bronze buckle, spearhead.

Museum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

Literature T.C. Lethbridge, *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk*, 1931, 1-46.

DISCUSSION

This small gazetteer has brought to notice a striking fact about the material of the final phase of the grave goods of Anglo-Saxon England. Material usually ascribed to the influence of the Christian conversion does not all come from sites purely of this phase. These are in the area large and medium size cemeteries of the phase.⁹ In Cambridgeshire the larger sites like Burwell and Shudy Camps are good examples, while the cemeteries of twenty to seventy graves such as Chamberlain's Barn, Marina Drive, Desborough, and Verulamium point to the medium size ones. It is possible also to note sites with fewer than twenty graves such as Astwick in Bedfordshire, Cherry Hinton in Cambridgeshire, Cransley in Northamptonshire and Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, in Hertfordshire. Other sites of a similar size in Bedfordshire are the Biscot Mill burials and Harrold. Individual burials, both richly accompanied such as Wheathampstead and, just outside the area, Broomfield and Taplow, and of warriors with their arms, like Loddington, can be evidenced.

The overall impression given by the material assembled in the gazetteer is not merely of the richness of these sites but also of the large number of earlier sites with material of this phase. One is struck by the occurrence of graves and objects of this period in cemeteries which begin among the earliest in Britain. This is not merely at a site like Kempston, which has long been recognised as a problem. The compilation of the gazetteer has revealed a much more extensive group of finds from sites beginning in the fifth and early sixth century. The large Cambridgeshire cemeteries of Barrington B, Haslingfield and Little Wilbraham are a case in point here. At none of these is it a large quantity of this material: five amethyst beads at Little Wilbraham, three unassociated objects at Barrington B, five at Haslingfield. The phenomenon is found also in the Avon valley. Bidford-on-Avon has two graves of this phase.¹⁰ Grave 22 contained an ornamented plate with concentric repouse dots, perhaps a workbox top, a hairpin, a necklace of glass and amber beads and an iron buckle in a woman's grave.¹¹ Grave 100, a child of eight, was accompanied by a workbox, a silver pin with a sapphire setting, beads, a knife and an iron implement.¹² At Baginton, now only useable as a collection of objects, the material in Coventry Museum includes a sugar-loaf shield boss¹³ and two small bird's heads,¹⁴ probably shield fittings, all unassociated but representing clearly late burials on the site. At Holywell Row, there are eight graves of this phase.

However, these examples should not blind the scholar into believing that all the major sixth century cemeteries have a small amount of the accoutrements of the final phase. It is not difficult to cite cemeteries which have none of these objects. Argyll Avenue, Luton,¹⁵ is a good example from Bedfordshire. Though they have never been collated in detail, the finds from Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire,¹⁶ represent another cemetery of the late sixth century which does not continue into the final phase. These examples can be repeated from Northamptonshire: Northampton St. Andrews,¹⁷ Kettering Stamford Road,¹⁸ Burton Latimer,¹⁹ Newnham-Badby,²⁰ the two cemeteries at Brixworth,²¹ the second cemetery at Desborough,²² and Nassington,²³ merely to cite those cemeteries thought to have contained at least twenty burials when first discovered.

However, the cemeteries which have a few burials of this phase do overlap with the purely late cemeteries of Burwell and Shudy Camps,

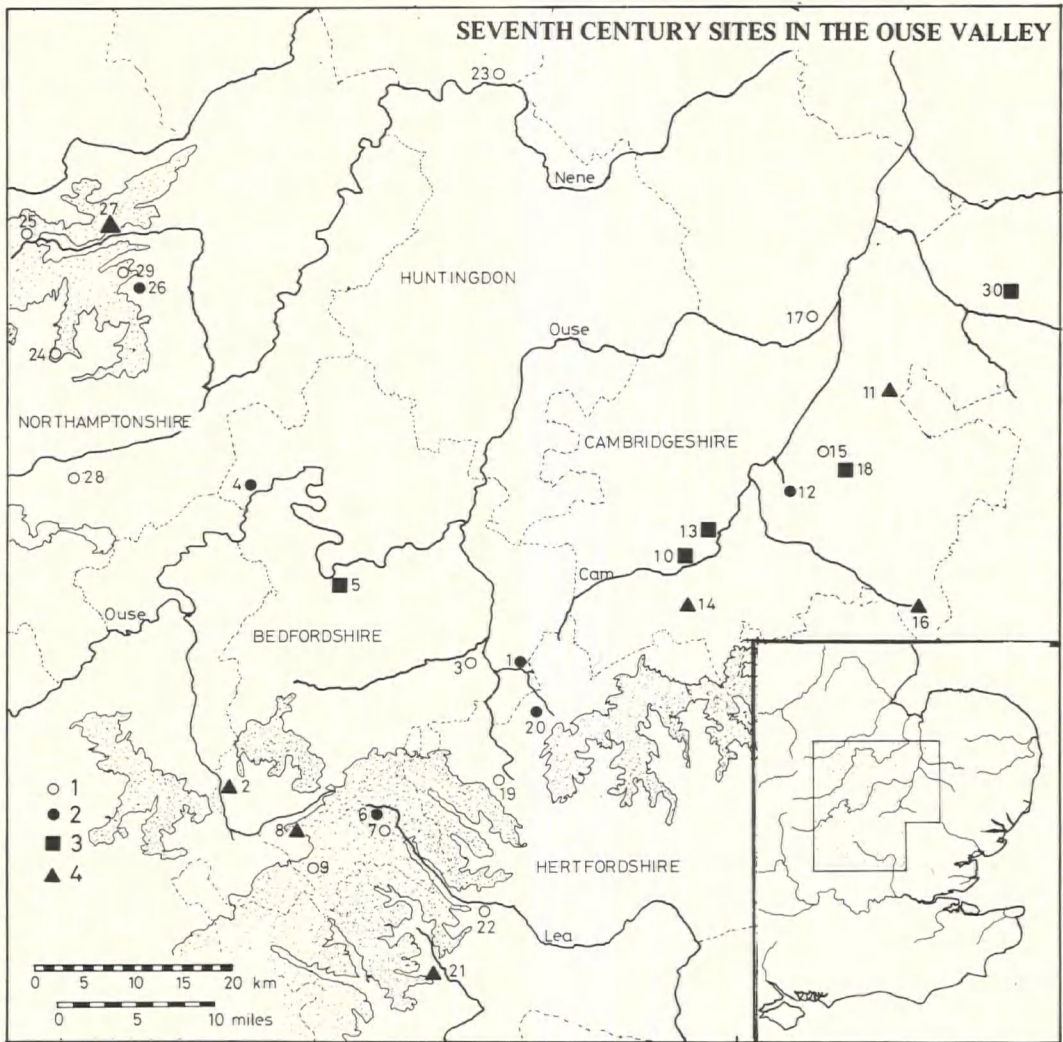


Fig. 1 The Cemeteries of the Ouse Valley, with material of the Seventh Century.

Key: 1 Individual Burial
 2 Small Cemetery
 3 Large Cemetery, beginning in the fifth century
 4 Large Cemetery, new site
 Contour at 400 ft (122m).

Key to sites:

Bedfordshire

- 1 Astwick
- 2 Chamberlain's Barn
- 3 Clifton
- 4 Harrold
- 5 Kempston
- 6 Luton, Biscot Mill
- 7 Luton, Dallow Road
- 8 Totternhoe, Marina Drive
- 9 Whipsnade

Cambridgeshire

- 10 Barrington B
- 11 Burwell

- 12 Cherry Hinton
- 13 Haslingfield
- 14 Melbourn
- 15 Quy
- 16 Shudy Camps
- 17 Stretham
- 18 Little Wilbraham

Hertfordshire

- 19 Ippolitts
- 20 Letchworth
- 21 Verulamium
- 22 Wheathampstead

Huntingdon

- 23 Peterborough

Northamptonshire

- 24 Brixworth
- 25 Clipston
- 26 Cransley
- 27 Desborough
- 28 Hardingstone
- 29 Loddington

Suffolk

- 30 Holywell Row

Desborough and Chamberlain's Barn. Clearly some like Holywell Row have more than one or two burials. And there is one site at least which has the remains, albeit very difficult to reconstruct of a substantial number of graves of this phase. This is the large cemetery found in the nineteenth century at Kempston.²⁴

The gazetteer has assembled for the first time an accurate record of the material of the final phase, known from the Kempston cemetery. It shows nine graves definitely to be reconstructed from the very careful notes of the Rev. S.E. Fitch,²⁵ and a considerable number of unassociated objects. That more material cannot be confidently ascribed a definite grave is due to an accident of history, which masks a minor late Victorian scandal. The material now in the British Museum was purchased in 1891 from Miss Anne Scott, companion to Miss Thornton, of 79, Chester Square, London, and Kempston Grange. The three hundred and forty objects were received without identification as to which graves, they came from or on which day they were found. They had presumably been reboxed, without the original date labels, at some point between 1865 and 1891, probably when they were transferred to London, which is not a known date. Many of the problems of the grave groups of the Kempston cemetery would be non-existent if this had not been done.

It is therefore only possible to note the material extant, which is known to be incomplete from that found. The known material is of such a quantity as to suggest that the final phase of the Kempston cemetery may be in the order of 68 graves as was found at Chamberlain's Barn. It is of course speculative that the complete total of graves found at Kempston is in the order of three hundred, but as a working hypothesis, which can on many points be checked, it has much to commend it. It is known from the very early finds and from the material of the late phase that the cemetery must have had a life of some three hundred years. One has not included in the gazetteer the ubiquitous iron knife of which seventeen are extant from Kempston. These are probably much reduced from the original number, but as at Shudy Camps where twenty one graves had only a knife, the knife is often the only accoutrement of a seventh century grave, and frequently of an earlier one.

The gazetteer has brought out in detail the richness of the final phase at Kempston, yet to

view these findings in historical perspective is difficult. Mid-Anglia lacks a chronicler. The events of importance are recorded much more haphazardly than is the case with Wessex or Northumbria. One can accept that the material chronicled here represents new fashions introduced at the same time as the Christian faith. The timing of this introduction is difficult to determine. It can hardly have preceded the preaching of the faith by Bishop Felix to the East Anglian kingdom in 636. The events of the 650s are doubtless of more salient interest. In 653 the Middle Angles under Peada received the faith and in 654 the abbey at Medeshamstede was founded at Peterborough. Ely followed in 673. If these dates are to have any archaeological significance, it follows that one cannot expect to find the material of the final phase in the area much before the mid-seventh century.

The site with two or three burials may seem to suggest that the period of overlap was extremely brief. Even in the case of Holywell Row, the time involved may not have more than a decade, for here only eight graves of the phase can be identified with certainty. Mildenhall is an extremely out of the way place and it may well have taken longer for the concept of burial without grave goods, always a large proportion of all Anglo-Saxon sites, to become general for all classes of society. The idea of a new burial place using the new fashions may have been even more difficult to instill or have taken much longer to penetrate the fen. Indeed the recognition of survival of old sites into the period of new grave goods accords with modern missionary experience. However deep the conversion to the new faith of Christianity may be, there remains in the minds of many of the people a lingering hankering for the old ways. The use of grave goods in new forms is one aspect of this in the seventh century conversion of England. The reluctance to abandon old burial grounds may well be another.

In the cases where the survival was limited to a few burials, it is clear that the new faith and the new fashions determined the use of a new burial ground. Kempston, however, presents a totally different problem. Here the evidence suggests that the burial ground remained in use for some decades after the new fashions became prevalent. It is difficult to see how the evidence can be read other than to suggest that the use was for at least half a century.

The recognition of Anglo-Saxon work in Kempston parish church ²⁶ suggests another line of reasoning may not be without some support. The church is well removed from the cemetery site and could well represent the ecclesiastical answer to the long survival of the local burial ground. The strong survival of burial tradition on the Kempston cemetery site is remarkable. The site long quarried away in gravel extraction and housing development in the nineteenth century has a history of burial grounds going back to the Bronze Age. It does not take much imagination to view the Anglo-Saxon cemetery as being centred round a Bronze Age barrow. Indeed the known distribution of collared urns ²⁷ from Kempston argues strongly for this and it would be in keeping with other sites, such as Marina Drive, Bedfordshire, ²⁸ or the large cemetery at Linton Heath, Cambridgeshire. ²⁹ Folk tradition may well have played a considerable part in keeping the Kempston cemetery going well into the late seventh century. Alternatively the topography argues that no other site could be found for the cemetery in a low-lying area. The site not only has the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and the presumed Bronze Age barrows, indicated by the collared urns, ²⁷ but also an important group of Belgic pots found in 1913 representing a burial group ³⁰ and is possibly the site of a Roman cremation cemetery of the first and second centuries. ³¹

The topography and folk tradition of the Kempston area may play their respective parts in the reasons for the survival of the Kempston site. There may be other reasons connected with the transmission of the new faith to the people at Kempston. Their conversion may have been second-hand. They may not have felt that the change of burial site to have been an important public demonstration of their new faith.

Whatever the precise reasons, the long survival at Kempston of seventh century burials in a site going back to be one of the earliest in England is strongly in contrast with the position elsewhere. That, to recapitulate, is the new cemetery or the use for only a few identifiable burials of an old cemetery. It is not the long survival found in the cemetery at Kempston. ³²

NOTES

1 E.T. Leeds, *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, 1936, *passim*, but especially 96-114, drawing on the material assembled B. Faussett, *Inventorium Sepulchrale*, 1856, and the publication of

the material of the larger Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of Kent in the early volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana*.

- 2 T.C. Lethbridge, *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk*, 1931, especially 1-46 for Holywell Row and 47-70 for Burwell; and T.C. Lethbridge, *Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire*, 1936.
- 3 Leeds, 1936, 98-103, drawing on J.R. Mortimer, *Forty Years Researches in British and Saxon Burial Mounds in East Yorkshire*, 1905.
- 4 A. Ozanne, 'The Peak Dwellers', *Med Arch* 6-7, 1962-63, 15-52.
- 5 The present author is in the course of completing a study of the sites of this phase in Northamptonshire; the material in the gazetteer concerning Northamptonshire is described and illustrated in detail in his forthcoming study, 'The Uplanders: a study of Anglo-Saxon burial sites of the Christian Saxon phase in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire'. For a summary see R.A. Smith, 'Anglo-Saxon Remains', *VCH Northants* 1, 1902, 223-256.
- 6 Mrs. T.M. Dickinson informs me that her work on sites in the area has revealed a considerable number of these sites in the area.
- 7 Material in Devizes Museum; for a summary see L.V. Grinsell in *VCH Wilts*, 1957.
- 8 The literature on the Kempston cemetery is complex. In the gazetteer the following abbreviations are used: S.E. Fitch, 'Discovery of Saxon remains at Kempston', *AASR* 7, 1863-64, 269-299. S.E. Fitch, 'Anglo-Saxon remains discovered in Bedfordshire', in C. Roach Smith (ed), *Collectanea Antiqua* 6, 1868, 201-221. Minute Book, 'Minute Book of the Bedfordshire Archaeological and Architectural Society, 1847-1873', in Bedfordshire County Record Office, document X 69/16. D.H. Kennett, *Kempston: 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Kempston, Bedfordshire: a reconsideration'*, 1968, unpublished; copies available Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum and County Record Office, County Hall, Bedford. J. Wyatt 'Anglo-Saxon remains recently discovered in Bedfordshire', in *Collectanea Antiqua* 6, 1868, 166-172.
- 9 For the detailed literature of sites in the area covered by this survey see the entries in the gazetteer.
- 10 J. Humphreys *et al.*, 'Excavation of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire', *Archaeologia* 73, 1923, 89-116 and *Archaeologia* 74, 1925, 277-288.
- 11 Humphreys, 1923.
- 12 Humphreys, 1923, 101 with fig.
- 13 *Ant J* 43, 1963, 44 and fig 24a.
- 14 Coventry Museum, accession number A/1013/82.
- 15 W. Austin and T.W. Bagshaw, 'A Saxon cemetery at Luton, Beds', *Ant J* 8, 1928, 177-192.
- 16 Most of the material from this site, or more probably sites, is in Aylesbury Museum, who have two belt mounts, a bronze disc, a glass claw beaker, beads, a pair of applied brooches, two spearheads, two swords without any ornamentation, a shield boss with a silver top and silver rivet heads, and a bucket. There is a sword in Wisbech Museum and two small pots in the British Museum.

- 17 D.H. Kennett, 'Anglo-Saxon finds from St. Andrews Hospital, Northampton', *J. Northampton Mus* forthcoming.
- 18 Material in Northampton Museum and Kettering Museum, not well published with the exception of the pieces figures by J.N.L. Myres in *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, 1969.
- 19 D.H. Kennett, 'Barton Seagrave: Anglo-Saxon finds made in the late nineteenth century', *J. Northampton Mus* forthcoming.
- 20 Material in Northampton Museum, not well-known except for brooches illustrated by E.T. Leeds in *A Corpus of Early Anglo-Saxon Great Square-Headed Brooches*, 1949.
- 21 Northampton Museum have a large collection of objects from Brixworth found about 1900, but never properly recorded. Two sites in the parish have been confused and the objects mixed. The brooches were listed by N. Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, 1926. These are mostly cruciform brooches and will be figured and discussed by the present author in a forthcoming paper in *J Northampton Mus*.
- 22 Little is known of these discoveries. The notes of the late E.T. Leeds in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, have a photograph of two group IV cruciform brooches in private possession in 1949. It is hoped to include these in the forthcoming discussion of cruciform brooches from Northamptonshire.
- 23 E.T. Leeds and R.J.C. Atkinson, 'An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Nassington, Northants.', *Ant J* 24, 1944, 100-128.
- 24 For a complete discussion of the complexities of the Kempston cemetery *vide* D.H. Kennett, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Kempston, Bedfordshire: a reconsideration', 1968, unpublished, and the earlier accounts cited in 8 above. The comments of the following paragraph are summarised from a complete account of the complex written and museum history of the material, discussed in detail in Kennett, *Kempston*.
- 25 Comparison with the published accounts of Little Wilbraham and Linton Heath by R.C. Neville is not unfavourable.
- 26 M.J. Hare in *Beds Arch J* 6, 1971, 35-37.
- 27 D.H. Kennett, 'A lost collared urn from Kempston', *Beds Arch J* 5, 1970, 5-8.
- 28 *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 28; C.L. Matthews, *Ancient Dunstable*, n d but c 1963, 16 and fig 6.
- 29 R.C. Neville, 'Anglo-Saxon cemetery excavated January 1853 at Linton Heath, Cambridgeshire', *Arch J* 9, 1854, 95-115.
- 30 See A. Simco, 'The Iron Age in the Bedford Region', this journal, 00-00, especially 00 and fig 0.
- 31 Bedford Museum have a large collection of Roman material from Kempston, none of it published in detail. Most is complete pots, with cremations retained in some cases. The find spots of several are unknown, but those which are known suggest a nucleus about TL 030475, near the site of the Anglo-Saxon and Iron Age finds.
- 32 Paper completed 25 April 1973.

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