

Finds on your Doorstep – 8000 years of life in Melton Ross - finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (search for finds.org.uk) – by Martin Foreman, Finds Liaison Officer for North Lincolnshire

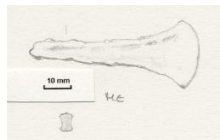
From Prehistory to the end of the Roman period (7000 BC - AD 410) 30 records

Though Prehistoric activity might be expected anywhere along the ancient Middlegate track, its profile is low amongst finds from Melton Ross, and a period of 7000 years is represented by only three objects. Roman finds are dated from the late 1st century onwards. Those finds for which locations have been given are from close to New Barnetby village. Some are suspected to have been reused in the Early Anglo-Saxon period, and a most significant aspect of Roman finds here may be their relationship with later periods. Specifically, presence of the latest Roman coins may correlate with evidence for the earliest Anglo-Saxons.

A Mesolithic flint, Late Bronze Age chisel and Late Iron Age cosmetic grinder suggest long-standing occupation in the vicinity. They may be linked to the use of Middlegate as a route from Neolithic times.



Flint core
NLM-79772E



Chisel
NLM932



Cosmetic mortar
NLM-94E39C

Roman coins include more 4th-century coins dated after 361 than is usual. Issues of the House of Valentinian and Theodosius may mark official activity, and use of their coins – under Roman or later authorities, and in ways which are poorly understood – was often followed by the establishment of Anglo-Saxon settlement.



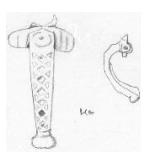
The sequence of coins begins with Domitian (81-96) and extends to Gratian (367-383)

NLM-FEAA56 NLM-AB22D2 NLM-AAE762 NLM-943179 NLM-9495DC NLM-78F928 NLM-943F84 NLM-940CD7 NLM-AACF27

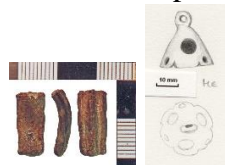
Other objects indicate Roman activity over the same period; some are of types favoured in the Corieltavi tribal area. Later brooches may be linked to an official presence, perhaps securing a route along Middlegate.



TOT ring
NLM-7632F8



Headstud brooch
NLM7

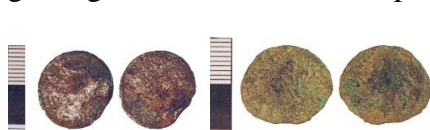


Bracelet fragment & bell
NLM-AB948E NLM937



Badge of rank & military brooch
PUBLIC-E44CD0 NLM-AAC551

Some Roman coins are pierced for use as amulets or necklace components, or are burnt. The latter may be grave goods which have been partly melted in the pyre which consumed the body of an Early Anglo-Saxon.



Roman coins melted by intense heat
NLM-AB7FCE NLM-942002



Coins from the period 283-378, all pierced to be worn
PUBLIC-5A5A6D NLM-944DCE NLM-94669C NLM-94882E

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The Early Anglo-Saxon period (AD 410-700) 30 records

The first Anglo-Saxons followed funeral rites involving cremation of a costumed body. Later generations followed the custom of inhumation of the clothed corpse, perhaps influenced by the later Roman custom followed in Britain. There was a period of overlap between the practice of these rites, suggesting diversity within a population otherwise united in its adherence to Germanic customs.

Early Anglo-Saxon finds suggest the close proximity of cremation and inhumation burials of the 5th and 6th centuries. Cremation may have stressed links to practices followed in a former European homeland, while unburnt burial may have been preferred by the native born.

Burnt objects may show the presence of cremation, though here as the practice of a minority where more families preferred unburnt burial. Tweezers might be added to urns, and pots used as urns or as grave goods.



Burnt objects

NLM-AB76DC NLM-AAA82E



Tweezers

NLM-AB1B0A NLM6



Early Anglo-Saxon potsherds

NLM-796B74

NLM-795DC3

NCL-059291

Cruciform brooches were part of the Anglian costume of adult women c.450-575, usually worn singly. The detached knobs are of a fully-round form of earlier date. The gilded florid cruciform brooch was a later type.



Fragments of earlier brooches

NLM-AABA52 NLM-AAB0D9 NLM-AA9E21



Other forms of brooch head

PUBLIC-E4A00C NLM-8EC0B7



Feet from cruciform brooches

PUBLIC-E4577A PUBLIC-E3BE3F NLM8

Small long brooches were a smaller sort of cruciform brooch, worn either singly, or in pairs at the shoulders to fasten a tubular gown. Other items from female graves included a hanger, clasp and a spangle from a pin.



Small long brooches

PUBLIC-E40AF1 PUBLIC-E3DCB6 PUBLIC-E38E51 NCL-20C9C1

Girdle hanger, wrist clasp, spangle & fragments

NLM-AB9FF2 NLM5 PUBLIC-EE3FA6 LIN-4B0F71 PUBLIC-EE85F6

Enamel suggests work by British craftsmen: it appears on a hanging bowl mount and tweezers. Both were objects most likely to come from the burials of men. Bird heads on a gilt buckle might represent Roman eagles or Woden's ravens: this example may combine a later Roman military style with the bird head motifs.



Enamelled metalwork was a Celtic speciality

NLM-AAFD2A

PUBLIC-A05DF8



Buckle with gilding and bird heads

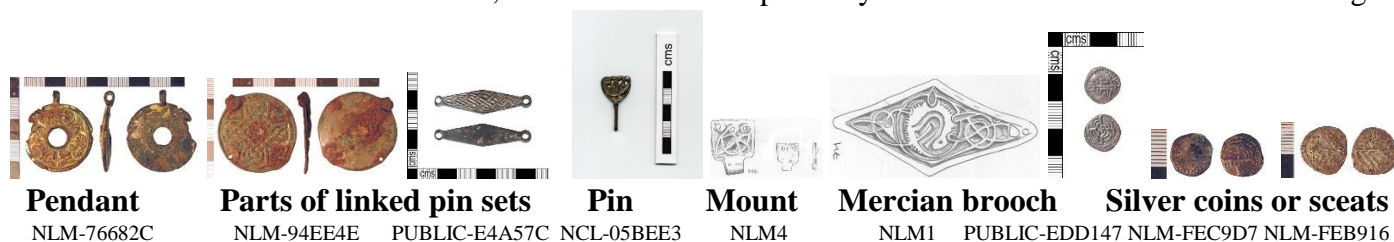
PUBLIC-E50572

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The Middle Saxon and Viking periods (700-1066) 42 records

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity promoted a common English culture across their separate kingdoms. This also promoted the growth of trade, whose international reach is indicated by silver coins first struck by Frisian merchants. Such coins together with other types of object may indicate either centres of lordly occupation or market places. A position on Middelgate might commend the latter. This activity flourished throughout the 8th and into the 9th century, a period to which pins and strap ends may be dated. It was interrupted by a Viking takeover of English lands which carved out a northern Danelaw.

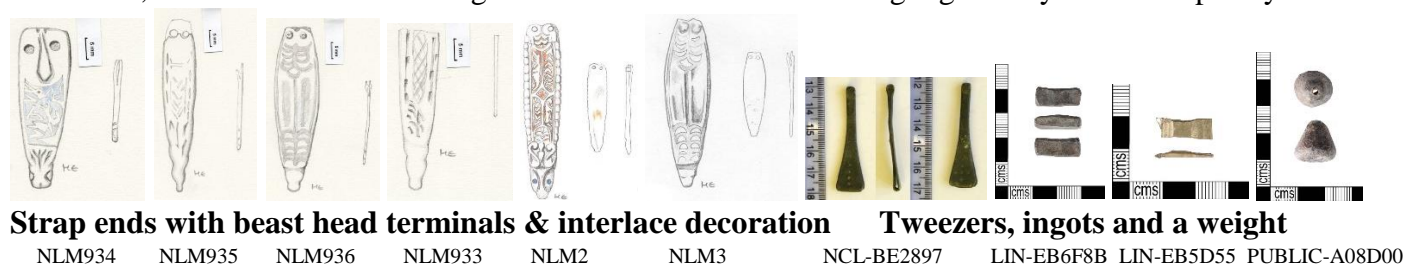
Objects of the 8th century were often gilded. The interlace patterns sometimes point to Mercian influence. The earliest coin was minted in Frisia, but the others were probably struck in York for Northumbrian kings.



Pins may have fastened hair or veils for women. They may indicate occupation where women were present, or may hint at what they did there. A market place might also see bride fairs where marriages were arranged.



Strap ends of 9th-century forms were attached to belts or garters. They might be silvered, niello, or, in two cases here, enamelled or fitted with glass insets. Other finds including ingots may be contemporary or later.



A brooch shows Frankish contacts. Iron knives hint at occupation, though only loosely dated. A whorl and beater span Middle Saxon-Viking transition, while a stirrup mount and some tags are Anglo-Scandinavian.

