



Briefing



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Recent Portable Antiquities finds from Yorkshire



Having described one rare Anglo-Saxon hanging bowl in the last issue, what should come along in the meantime but another? From Weaverthorpe in the Wolds (YORYM-5952), this is a more conventional bowl, but highly unusual in being almost complete. It retains all three of the zoomorphic hooks and rings, and the bowl, although bent, is almost entire, with just a couple of holes to the base. The basal disc was also recovered, together with a couple of copper alloy fragments and four bones, probably from a sheep and intended as food for the burial it presumably accompanied, but of which nothing is known.

Hanging bowls have a wide date-bracket, from AD 550 to 700; this one looks later. The three hook escutcheons, similar but not identical, are very like the ones from the Stirton, Airedale bowl (see *Issue 12*) but less developed: those also had (probably) bird-head hooks. The recorder also points to the Hadleigh Road, Ipswich bowl as a parallel. The Stirton bowl was acquired by a museum but no such luck for the Weaverthorpe one, which went to auction and was sold for £28,000 (£36,400 after commission). The purchaser is currently unknown.

This may be the last hanging bowl to be sold at auction in this way. The revisions to the Treasure Act will ensure that such assemblages are offered first to a museum. This is something of a safeguard, although of course appropriate funding would also help.

Restarting at the beginning, the Bronze Age axehead from Upper Helmsley near Stamford Bridge (LVPL-EEEE073) is also a very nice find: unlike most, it is complete. It is a Fulford type, dating between 1000-800 BC.

The copper alloy ribbed bracelet was found at Goodmanham, near Market Weighton (YORYM-AD5204) and is worn. It was made during the later Iron Age, c. 650-100 BC and the type is well known in the Arras culture of East Yorkshire. An example from Castle Hill, Scarborough was dated by Challis and Harding to the second half of the seventh century BC.

Iron Age/Roman buckets often had 'bovine mounts' — heads of bulls/cows to decorate the handle fixings. From Hellifield in Craven comes LANCUM-D72FF3, a particularly fine specimen, in good condition, with forward-curving horns with little horn caps, narrowed eyes and one remaining fixing arm to the left, possibly intended as an extended ear. The horn caps are regarded as dating the object to 75-100BC.

By chance, a similar bovine mount has been recovered, from Kilburn in Hambleton (YORYM-76CAE2). This is regarded as being later in date, c. 100 BC-AD 300, and has up-curved horns (the tips are unfortunately broken so any horn caps are missing) with, in this case, ears behind the horns. The more naturalistic large round eye openings may confirm the later date, and one retains its enamel eye.



Clockwise from top left:

Upper Helmsley: Bronze Age socketed axehead

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Goodmanham: later Iron Age ribbed bracelet

© York Museums Trust (CC BY 2.0)

Hellifield: Iron Age copper alloy bucket mount

© Portable Antiquities Scheme (CC BY 2.0)

Kilburn: Iron Age/Roman bucket mount

© York Museums Trust (CC BY 2.0)

Oswaldkirk: silver denarius of of Q. Titius

© York Museums Trust (CC BY 2.0)

Conistone with Kilnsey : Late Iron Age brooch

© West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service (CC BY 2.0)

Scarborough: early Roman Aucissa brooch

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The silver denarius is from Republican Rome, issued by Q. Titius in about 90 BC and was found in Oswaldkirk near Helmsley (YORYM-2ABC14). Surprisingly, quite a few Republican coins are found in Britain. It is of course normally impossible to tell when or how such coins came to Britain, but some were simple imports, to judge from their use in making British Iron Age coins. The denarius was first issued about 211 BC and lasted until it was replaced between AD 270 and 275.

Turning now to brooches, the almost complete Late Iron Age La Tène III 'Nauheim progenitor' type is a nice find, coming from Conistone with Kilnsey in Wharfedale (SWYOR-A263AA). It dates to c. 50BC-AD50 and shows hardly any wear, suggesting it may have been relatively new when lost.

A later, Roman, brooch comes from Scarborough (YORYM-2F119D). It is a broken 'Aucissa' brooch dated to c. AD43-80. Such brooches probably came from Gaul in the early first century and first appear in Britain after the invasion of AD43 AD; they are found mainly in military areas. The name comes from the inscription often found on a small panel at the top, which is assumed to identify the maker's workshop.

One would not think of glass as being a suitable material for bracelets, but many were made in the early Roman period and Ivleva states that 'the quick manufacturing technique identified through experimental archaeology suggests that they may have been mass-produced, widely available and easily accessible.' Most come from Yorkshire and northward: the only known potential workshop is at Thearne, in the East Riding. These fragments were found at Ellerker, west of Hull (YORYM-D43C96); this type has a broad date range, c. AD50-AD200.

Someone lost the most important part of their ring in South Milford (SWYOR-EEF9C9): the age of the dark blue glass intaglio again can only be dated within the broadest of ranges, AD43-410. It is intended as an imitation of a nicolo, a type of

intaglio carved in banded onyx or agate so that the depiction, engraved on the pale top layer, reveals the dark colour underneath. In this case the figure is unclear but may be Victory. A similar 'nicolo', of a genius with a cornucopia and patera, was found in the Doncaster excavations of the '60s and '70s.

The colourful seal-box from Scrayingham (LVPL-F06B37) is complete, dating from c.AD 100-200, and shows the usual holes in the base and side notches for a cord securing a pouch. Seal boxes come in a variety of shapes but the attractive enamelled 'swash-N' design is specific to this type of rectangular box. The distribution of seal boxes shows a marked bias towards military sites and smaller rural settlements, and no less than ten were tossed into the Tees at Piercebridge as a rite of passage.

Incomplete, but otherwise in good condition, the trumpet brooch from Byland in Ryedale (YORYM-AA8C) is a fine find, dating from c. AD 75-175. Trumpet brooches are found throughout Roman Britain and look to be particularly common in Yorkshire. Early brooches have a curved 'leg': this is straight.

The umbonate ('umbo' is Latin for 'shield boss') brooch from Brierley near Barnsley (SWYOR-165F0A) has suffered from corrosion and, perhaps, long wearing: what was probably originally a circular outline is now irregular, and much of the enamel has worn off. Originally it would have been one of a pair, with a loop at the top to fasten a chain across. It dates AD 75-200.

From Scarborough (YORYM-40BEC5) comes an incomplete enamelled disc brooch, earlier Roman in date, c.AD 80-250. It is a British type, found mainly around Wessex and Sussex, with just a few in the Midlands and North, so far as the PAS distribution is concerned.

The umbonate brooch from Byland (YORYM-AB27EC) dates c.AD 100-250. In 1985 Richard Hattatt regarded the design as 'very rare' and it still is, with only half a dozen on the PAS



Clockwise from top left:

Thearne: early Roman glass bracelet

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South Milford: intaglio from Roman ring

© West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service (CC BY 2.0)

Scrayingham: early Roman seal box

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Byland: early Roman trumpet brooch

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Brierley: early Roman umbonate brooch

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Scarborough: Roman disc brooch

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Byland: Roman umbonate brooch

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Heslerton: Roman disc brooch

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database. The suspension loop is broken, but otherwise the brooch is in quite good condition, with the design clear and unworn.

The last Roman disc brooch for now comes from Heslerton (YORYM-E276B7). It has lost its pin but is otherwise complete, though corroded.

This is another rather rare design: Hattatt knew of just two in 1989 ('clearly an oddity'), Mackreth of 18 similar and the PAS adds six more. They are generally distributed, except in the Midlands, South West and, of course, the North West.

Recognised as a type in 1961 by Hawkes and Dunning, some late Roman official buckles have a distinctive zoomorphic design, with dolphin and horse-head decoration. They were worn by senior army officers and administrators, and are also found in early medieval graves, perhaps suggesting that they were carefully curated as family valuables indicating status. In 1961 Hawkes and Dunning knew of about 111 similar belt-sets: now the PAS database alone records 403 buckles. Originally thought to begin in the late fourth century, they are now thought to be a fifth century British product.

They are normally found away from military areas, turning up regularly in Yorkshire, where two have recently been found. Recently a well-preserved buckle of type 1B has come from Skeeby near Richmond (DUR-455F88). The buckle is formed of two mouth-to-mouth dolphins but these have become abstractions; the horses heads, however, are well defined. A similar Type 1B buckle, more worn, has come from North Dalton near Diffield (NCL-6AEB17).

A second, similar, buckle but of Type 1A was found in the Leeds area (SWYOR-EE90E5), also recently. It is heavily stylised in an openwork design but the outline of the two confronted dolphins can be made out with difficulty. Such openwork development is unusual in Yorkshire, but Appels and Laycock illustrate a 'dragon' buckle found near Malton with eye holes; holes for mouths are a feature of imported buckles, however.

From Pocklington comes a sixth century Anglian sleeve clasp (NLM-AF197D), complete down to the hook that allows a sleeve to be fastened once the hand has passed through. Again, Hines knew of only half a dozen of this (sub-)type in 1984; now the PAS lists 56.

Attributed to the first king of Northumbria to issue coinage, Aldfrith (685-704), this silver sceat from Scrayingham, east of York (LVPL-F0135B), is in Extremely Fine condition. On the obverse is a fantastic quadruped walking left, with a three pronged tail; on the reverse AldFRIDUS is named.

The complete, 'Witham Type' disc-headed pin, dating to c.AD 700-800, comes from Byland near Helmsley (YORYM-AC6063). It is a dress pin, decorated with a cross, and knot interlace in each quarter; the recesses were gilded. The hole is original: rarely, these pins were worn in pairs, linked by a chain.

This incomplete copper-alloy strap end (YORYM-3DF586) is late Saxon in date, c.AD 750 - 950. It has an animal-head design to the right, but the lower part has broken off, leaving only semi-circular 'ears'. It comes from Keyingham, in Holderness.

The complete copper-alloy harness pendant and suspension mount is of medieval date, c.AD 1100 -1450 and was found at Bishop Burton near Beverley (YORYM-42ACC4). It has an equal armed cross, with an integral raised boss at each terminal and a separate raised boss at the centre, all within a quatrefoil frame with moulded fan-shaped projections at each corner. They become more common in the 13th century but are in decline by the late 14th century.

From Leeds comes a silver rose sixpence of Elizabeth I (AD 1558-1603), dating from 1574 (SWYOR-EF59C3). The name 'rose' sixpence is from the Tudor rose mint mark on the obverse, behind the Queen's head. This sixpence has an eglantine mintmark, which was used from 1573 to 1577.



Clockwise from top left:



Skeebly: late-sub Roman zoomorphic buckle

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Leeds: late-sub Roman zoomorphic buckle

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Pocklington: Anglian sleeve clasp

© North Lincolnshire Museum (CC BY 2.0)

Scrayingham: silver sceat of Aldfrith (685-704)

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Byland: mid Saxon disc-headed pin

© York Museums Trust (CC BY 2.0)

Keyingham: mid-late Saxon strap end

© York Museums Trust (CC BY 2.0)

Bishop Burton: harness pendant

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Leeds: sixpence of Elizabeth I (AD1558-1603)

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