Medieval Britain and Ireland in 2008

General Editor: NEIL CHRISTIE

Portable Antiquities Scheme Report compiled and edited by:
JOHN NAYLOR, KEVIN LEAHY and GEOFF EGAN

Medieval Britain and Ireland compiled and edited by:
MÄRIT GAIMSTER and KIERAN O’CONOR with
RORY SHERLOCK

The Society is most grateful to all contributors (of specialist groups, field units, museums, universities, developers and individuals) who have provided reports on groups, finds, excavations, field-surveys, and building analyses for 2008. We thank contributors for conforming to the house style; we can advise on content, but are unable to abstract from interim reports. Please note that in certain cases the National Grid Reference has been omitted to protect sites. Please notify the compilers if this information is to be withheld. For MB&I, see below for the format and content of this revised section, and for contact details of the compilers. Note that the Specialist Groups Reports will now appear in the Society’s Newsletter rather than in the Journal.

PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is a voluntary scheme to record archaeological finds made by members of the public. Many of the finds come from archaeological sites which have been damaged or eroded, usually by agriculture, leaving the objects as the only evidence of past activity; other objects are of interest in their own right. In 2008, a total of 53,319 finds of all periods was recorded, of which 13,333 finds were of medieval date. There were a total of 1,927 pre-Conquest finds and 11,406 of post-Conquest date. Coinage accounted for 3,907 of these — 202 of pre-Conquest date, and 3,705 post-Conquest coins.

The entries below do no more than set out a small selection of the discoveries made over the last year and recorded by the Scheme’s Finds Liaison Officers, and in terms of research carried out. Full details of all finds recorded by PAS can be found on the Scheme’s website, at www.finds.org.uk, or obtained from Dan Pett at the Scheme’s central office within the British Museum. (J Naylor)

1 Editors’ contacts: J Naylor: Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH, UK; john.naylor@ashmuseum.ox.ac.uk. K Leahy: Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, UK; leahy.pas@btinternet.com. G Egan: Department of Prehistory and Early Europe, The British Museum, Great Russell Street, Greater London WC1B 3DG, UK; GEgan@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk. Finally, our thanks to Stuart Campbell (National Museums Scotland) for the image of the buckle from Burghead, Moray used in Fig 6c.
ENGLAND

AVON

Stanton Drew  A complete 15th-/16th-century iron rondel dagger (Fig 1a) was found by Mr Paul Goodman (PAS database no GLO-D8BD87). Preserved in a riverine, waterlogged environment, the wooden handle, like the blade, is in very good condition, and finds in this state are rare outside London. The object itself was a fairly common form of everyday weapon, routinely worn by men outside the home in the 15th to early 16th centuries.² (K Adams)

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Chesterton  A cast copper-alloy harness pendant of the late 12th/early 13th century (Fig 1b) was found by Mr John Kempsall (PAS database no SUSS-696E14). This non-armorial roundel features a highly stylised animal or bird in relief in the centre, emphasised by limited openwork, in a border with fleshy foliate scrolling.³ Harness pendants of this period are stylistically diverse and this example adds to the decorative corpus that we have. There is an attachment tab at the top and traces of gilding survive. (L Burnett)

EAST SUSSEX

Telscombe area  A cast copper-alloy Anglo-Scandinavian strap end of Thomas type B6 produced in the late 11th- to early 12th-century Urnes style (PAS database no SUSS-51A3F5).⁴ The strap end (Fig 1c) is in the form of an animal’s head, wedge-shaped when viewed from above, but openwork sides produce a powerful three-dimensional image. This consists of the head shown with gaping jaws and an impressive array of teeth — three at the front, one in the centre projecting down from the top jaw and one each side, projecting up from the bottom jaw. The eyes are marked by pits set in lentoid fields, the tip of the snout is raised and marked by two nostrils, the line of which expands into a band curving down and back to cover part of the open mouth. The strap end was secured by a single copper-alloy rivet through the bifurcation which was formed as part of the casting process. It is separated from the decoration by two mouldings, at which point the strap end has a D-shaped section. (Laura Burnett)

Wartling area  A cast copper-alloy seal matrix of common form and probable mid- to late 14th-century date was found by Mr Sid Jeffery (PAS database no SUSS-D8F8D5). The round seal has a hexagonal handle, ending in a looped, trefoil terminal (Fig 1d). It reads Coitat’ / Svecex, with *hvnDRDe foxheRLe around (‘County of Sussex, Foxearle Hundred’), all in Lombardic lettering.

The Statute of Cambridge of 1388 set down the specifications for seals to be used on labourers’ passes, which would be carried by travelling workers to show they were not vagrants: ‘around the said seal there shall be written the name of the County and across the said seal the name of the Hundred, rape, wapentake, city or borough’ — the opposite arrangement to that on the present find, which may perhaps be some kind of precursor to those issued under the Statute. Fifteen more of these medieval seal matrices survive, some with a crown to indicate royal authority, with one for Brightford (also in Sussex) assigned to the 16th century.⁵ (L Burnett)

² Ward-Perkins 1940, 42–7, pl 8, nos 5 & 6.
³ Cf Ashley 2002, 4 & 7, fig 7, nos 17–18.
⁴ Thomas 2003.
⁵ Cherry 2006, 15–16, fig 20; Birch 1892, 80 no 4941, 197–8 nos 5454–5 & 22 no 4678.
(a) Rondel dagger from Stanton Drew, Avon. (b) Harness pendant from Chesterton, Cambridgeshire. (c) Strap end from the Telscombe area, East Sussex. (d) Seal matrix from the Wartling area, East Sussex. (e) Sceat from Dymock, Gloucestershire. Scale 1:1 (b, c, d), 1:4 (a), 2:1 (e). Photographs by K Adams (a, e), L Burnett (c, d). Drawings by J Cope (b, d).
An early 8th-century silver coin was found by Mr Donald Sherratt (PAS database no GLO-9BD812). The coin (Fig 1e) is a Series BII sceat, probably minted in the London area around the turn of the 8th century. Remaining in good condition, the obverse shows a right-facing diademed bust within a circle of pellets representing a serpent eating its tail. The reverse shows a right-facing bird above a cross; there are single annulets at either side of the cross, and a smaller cross to the right of the bird. A meaningless legend can be partially seen on both sides but, typically for these coins, is mostly off the flan.

Sceattas were minted in large numbers in the late 7th to late 8th centuries around the North Sea littoral. Their issue coincides with a period of great economic change, the growth of long-distance trade, the beginnings of the development of a defined settlement hierarchy and the re-appearance of urbanism in the form of the emporia. These coins are well distributed around England, but tend to focus towards eastern regions, especially for the earlier issues such as Series B. Finds in western areas are rarer, and this find to the west of the River Severn is at the edge of the known distributions. Their influx into the region possibly relates to the salt trade from the major brine springs at Droitwich. This coin is only the third sceat recorded by PAS in Gloucestershire.

An approximately L-shaped, cast, copper-alloy scabbard chape (Fig 2a) of 12th-century date was found by Mr Jason Davey (PAS database no SUR-43C192). It is in the form of two squirrel-like animals in close congress, probably mating. This is a new variant of a series of knife chapes, which were presumably cast flat and then bent into a U shape, to be riveted in place on the ends of scabbards. Those previously known, some of which are in Romanesque style, have been studied in a recent national survey.

A 13th- or 14th-century copper-alloy buckle and swivel (Fig 2b) connected by a link were found by Mr Craig Allaker (PAS database no NCL-5D3D67). The unusual, oval-framed buckle has a moulded, integral plate with a pentagonal terminal and a closely fitting pin. The swivel has a rounded terminal set through a moulded, round-section element with a pair of obliquely hatched collars. The buckle and the swivel are holed for the attachment of the oval link. Finds of this type are not common and complete examples are rare. The function is uncertain — the ensemble could be for use on horse harnesses or possibly on a baldrick to hold a hunting horn; alternatively, the allowance for swivelling could indicate it was for a dog or other large pet to permit free movement without the leash becoming twisted.

A cast copper-alloy chatelaine of Continental type (PAS database no HAMP-235970). The fitting (Fig 2c) consists of a bell-shaped flat plate at the top of which is a biconical fitting decorated with incised transverse lines possibly imitating a spacer bead. The plate may have been slotted into this fitting, or could be integral with it. Corrosion products suggest that this fitting has an iron core.

---

6 Metcalf 2001, 47.
7 Eg Moreland 2000.
8 Naylor 2008.
9 Woods 2006–7; the present find is perhaps a variant of no *25 in 2007 part 8 (there the design is described as a horse’s head).
10 Cf Jackson 1911, 589–93, figs 811 & 818.
FIG 2
(a) Scabbard chape from Broughton, Hampshire. (b) Buckle and swivel from Marchwood, Hampshire. (c) Chatelaine from Micheldever, Hampshire. (d) Halfpenny from Wonston, Hampshire. Scale 1:1 (a, b, c), 2:1 (d). Photographs by R Webley (c) (d). Drawings by D Williams (a), M Hoyle (b).
The plate is decorated on both sides, the more ornate surface bearing a double grooved border on its sides with a ridge between. Within the field are two creatures facing each other in profile; their ‘beaks’ are connected, and the tips of their ‘hands’ and ‘feet’ also touching. Each has a defined ear and a punched annulet eye. The legs are raised and joints moulded where they meet the bodies. Other joints are represented by transverse collars. The hands and feet have four fingers or claws. The bodies follow the edge of the plate and are decorated with diagonal lines of pellets giving the effect of scales or feathers. This interpretation of the motifs can be compared to that represented on the illustration where the two animals become two faces with bold eyes, long noses and clasped hands. Both interpretations may be valid. The other face of the plate bears three irregular rows of double ring and dot motifs. The flat, circular loops are set on the upper edge, of which the two remaining show evidence of wear.

Comparative artefacts include another chatelaine from Norfolk (PAS database no NMS-2139A) and pendants from the North Downs, Kent, providing further examples of contact between England and the Continent. (R Webley)

Wonston  A 10th-century silver halfpenny of King Æthelstan of Wessex (924–39) (Fig 2d) was found by Mr Mark Duell (PAS database no HAMP-55EAA4). About half of the coin survives, but the design is clear. The obverse shows a small, central cross around which reads the inscription [ÆTHELST]AN REX (King, Æthelstan). The reverse shows the moneyer’s name in two lines, [OF MO (probably Cunerof), separated by a line of three crosses, with a trefoil of three pellets below (a similar one would have been present above). Halfpennies of this period are rare finds, the first being late 9th-century issues of King Alfred of Wessex (871–99). Their minting continued until King Eadgar’s (959–75) reforms of 973, when cutting pennies into fractions became the norm. Æthelstan’s coinage is relatively rare, and this is only the eighth recorded by PAS nationally, and the first halfpenny. (R Webley)

Hertfordshire

Ridge  A late 11th-century openwork, copper-alloy terminal (Fig 3a) filled with lead was found by Mr Graham Batt (PAS database no BH-F48C72). Formerly identified as sword pommels, these ornate, relatively delicate and lightweight objects have been reinterpreted as staff terminals, specifically differentiating them from macehead weapons. Recent finds from the City of London confirm their dating as late 11th-/early 12th-century.

This appears to be the only known example with a filler. If mounted on a robust stick the heaviness of the lead would mean the object could have been used as an effective striking weapon. This is presumed to be an individual adaptation to this example rather than widespread practice. (J Watters and G Egan)

Greater London

Southwark  A cast, late 15th- or early 16th-century copper-alloy purse frame (Fig 3b) (PAS database no LON-7E4B77). This comprises two semicircular flanged-strip arcs with holes for sewing the textile or leather pouch in place, and a fairly robust wire bent into a roughly similar outline. In the absence of the usual bar and suspender, the last

14 Bailey 1994; Daubney forthcoming.
15 Museum of London Archaeology sites BBB05 and GPO03, acc nos 317 and 71; Ward Perkins 1940, 23, fig 2 no 2.
16 Cf NARC-56B401, a macehead from Newport (Isle of Wight) noted below.
(a) Terminal from Ridge, Hertfordshire. (b) Purse frame from Southwark, Greater London. (c) Macehead from Newport, Isle of Wight. Scale 1:1. Photograph by J Watters (a). Drawings by S Rountree (b), P Walsh (c).
may be a makeshift replacement to attach the purse to a waist belt, rather than a
strengtheners to give shape to one of the bags of the pouch.\textsuperscript{17} (K Sumnall)

\textbf{Isle of Wight}

\textit{Newport}  A cast macehead (Fig 3c) in copper which may have been alloyed with lead
(PAS database no NARC-56B401). It has three rows of spikes above a cylindrical stem,
which has a collar at the lower end. Several spikes show evidence of distortion from
heavy impact. This unusual weapon, of which some 30 are known in Britain, is of
a standard form. Dating remains debatable but the 14th century appears most likely.\textsuperscript{18}
(S Ashby)

\textit{Shalfleet}  A gold, 6th-century Visigothic tremissis (Fig 4a; PAS database no IOW-715794) copying, in a highly devolved way, the Byzantine issues of either Justin I (518–
27) or Justinian (527–65). The obverse shows a right-facing bust, with a cross composed
of wedges on the chest. The highly blundered inscription reads IVIS\textsuperscript{[ ]}III\textsuperscript{[ ]}I, which can
be related to Justin or Justinian. The reverse shows Victory, advancing right, holding
a palm and a wreath, with two extra legs derived from the skirt of the chiton, and
behind a wing. Visigothic tremisses of this type are not easily datable but are generally
considered to have been minted some time in the period \textit{ad} 526–68.\textsuperscript{19} Finds are
extremely rare in Britain and this is only the second example recorded by PAS.\textsuperscript{20}
(J Naylor and F Basford)

\textbf{Lancashire}

\textit{Fylde area}  A cast copper-alloy balance for weighing coins (Fig 4b) was found by Mr
Steve Newby (PAS database no LANCUM-890806).\textsuperscript{21} It could be folded flat for storage
or while being carried around. Trebuchet-type balances such as this were used to check
that the precious-metal content of individual silver coins held in the shovel-like tray
was correct and to identify counterfeit pieces through assessment of their weight.\textsuperscript{22}
(D Boughton)

\textbf{Leicestershire}

\textit{Loughborough area}  A cast and enamelled 14th-/15th-century heraldic harness-mount
attachment (Fig 4c) was found by Mr Doug Goddard (PAS database no DENO-9D4F70).
The slightly elongated quarter-circle component has a cross-hatched, gilt background
containing a shield within which a white lion rampant can be seen in a red field.
This design is repeated on both faces, with a rod-like attachment tab emerging at the
base of the vertical side. The unusual form is paralleled by a similar component on a
Spanish mount now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.\textsuperscript{23} (A Rohde and G Egan)

\textbf{Lincolnshire}

\textit{‘Lincolnshire’}  A hollow-cast 14th- or 15th-century lead/tin miniature jug, presumably
a toy (PAS database no SWYOR-oA1FF2). The object (Fig 5a) is crushed flat and abraded but can be identified from the handled attached to the rim. Little can be made
out of the linear decoration which would have been on the body, but vertical hatching
around the base remains clear. This is an addition to the few unusual rural finds of
mass-produced medieval toys.\textsuperscript{24} (A Cooper and G Egan)

\textsuperscript{17} Cf Ward Perkins 1940, 164, fig. 51 (a drawing of a late 15th-century tomb brass).
\textsuperscript{18} Cf Daubney forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{19} Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 48, see pl 11, nos 192–208.
\textsuperscript{20} See KENT-C37138 (Treasure case 2007 T693).
\textsuperscript{21} PAS has recorded several other examples of this type — eg SWYOR-C16852 and SWYOR-6D4488.
\textsuperscript{22} MacGregor 1985; Rogers 1993.
\textsuperscript{23} Wixom 1999, 162 no 192.
\textsuperscript{24} See Forsyth & Egan 2005, 268–91 for comparable London playthings.
(a) Tremissis from Shalfleet, Isle of Wight. (b) Balance from the Flyde area, Lancashire. (c) Harness mount from the Loughborough area, Leicestershire. Scale 1:1. Photographs by F Basford (a), D Boughton (b), A Rohde (c).
FIG 5
(a) Miniature jug from Lincolnshire. (b) Die from Swinhope, Lincolnshire. (c) Radiate brooch from Whilton, Northamptonshire. (d) Stylus head from the Worksop area, Nottinghamshire. (e) Penny from Mildenhall, Suffolk. Scale 1:1. Photographs by A Cooper (a), F Minter (e). Drawings by M Elwes (b), S Ashby (c), J Goddard (d).
Swinhope

A solid, cast copper-alloy die used in the production of filigree pendants of the Hiddensee-Rügen type was found by Mr David Holland (PAS database no NLM-690F57). The die (Fig 5b) has a flat back and three projecting arms together with a barrel-shaped head, in the form of a cross. The head represents that of a stylised bird, with eyes, a nose and what appears to be a bill that points towards the body. The body, in the form of a bird’s outstretched wings, bears relief ornament consisting of a ring emanating from the bird’s neck or bill. The ring is bound by four overlying arms, creating a closed ring-knot motif related to the Scandinavian Borre style.

This object would have been used to create pressed silver or gold sheet appliqués, applied to a pendant back-plate and used as a base for filigree and granulation work. The die, together with a lead patrix from York used to create moulds for similar dies, suggests the manufacture in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire of highly sophisticated silver or gold jewellery.

Related jewellery is normally attributed to the Hiddensee-Rügen style, named after the gold jewellery hoard discovered in the late 19th century on the island of Hiddensee, off the Baltic coast of Germany. The distribution of such objects extends from Iceland to Russia, but most examples derive from southern Scandinavian hoards of the late 10th/early 11th century.

25 Related jewellery is normally attributed to the Hiddensee-Rügen style, named after the gold jewellery hoard discovered in the late 19th century on the island of Hiddensee, off the Baltic coast of Germany. The distribution of such objects extends from Iceland to Russia, but most examples derive from southern Scandinavian hoards of the late 10th/early 11th century.

The Swinhope die is one of a small group of recorded objects used in the production of Hiddensee-style cruciform pendants. Their manufacture is attested at Hedeby (Schleswig, Germany) by 13 bird-shaped dies. A further die comes from the ‘fortress’ at Trelleborg (Denmark), while a clay mould used to make similar bronze matrices was recently uncovered during excavations at Borgeby in SW Scania. These examples provide evidence for the production of Hiddensee-style pendants at high-status sites in areas controlled by the late 10th-century Jelling kings.

No finished pendants of the type represented by the Swinhope die are known, either from England or Scandinavia, and the die is smaller and simpler in design than related objects, which can display openwork and complex interface motifs. The die’s closed ring-knot motif is, however, seen on silver Hiddensee-style pendants from the Tolstrup hoard (Denmark) as well as on the York patrix and a corresponding bronze die from Hedeby. These parallels confirm the Swinhope object’s southern Scandinavian character and highlight its significance as an object probably used to create prestige Scandinavian-type pendants in an area of England which, by the late 10th century, had come under the control of the West Saxon kings. (J Kershaw)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Whilton

An incomplete, 6th-century radiate brooch was found by Mr Steve Gibson (PAS database no NARC-9BD914). Finely cast in copper alloy, the brooch (Fig 5c) is now worn and corroded. The semi-circular head plate is edged with a cast rib, enclosing a field containing a stylised face. Three small, geometric knobs protrude from the head of the brooch, the terminal knob being perforated by a small hole. The bow is decorated with a broad medial rib with narrower lateral ribs. It appears that the foot was broadly lozenge-shaped, with two elaborate lateral knobs. Its central decorative field is now obscured by corrosion. The foot is truncated and the catch plate intact, but the pin is missing.

The brooch is one of a new type with few good parallels, its origins unclear. Alongside the stylised face on the head plate, there is an inverted full face at the other end of the bow. The identification of the headplate motif as a half-face is possibly confirmed by a brooch from Shelfanger (Norfolk), the surviving part of which shows

26 Skovmand 1942, 53.
27 Armbruster 2004, 113, 118 fig. 8.
28 Norlund 1948, pl XXV.5; Svanberg 1998, 113–24, fig 5.
29 Eilbracht 1999, taf 8, nos 125 and 126; Roesdahl 1981; Armbruster 2004, fig 8 top left.
the lower half of a human face like on button brooches; additional support is given by the human and animal heads found at each end of the bows of some square-headed brooches.

The general form of a sub-circular headplate with flat, single or trefoil knobs and lozenge-shaped footplates occurs on brooches from Bremen-Mahndorf (Germany) and from both Dinton and Buckland in Buckinghamshire. At that time, based on the example from Bremen-Mahndorf, a possible Continental origin was suggested, but there is also a Scandinavian version with a more semi-circular headplate like the new find from Gl. Hviding (Denmark), and Uppåkra (Sweden), which has two possible parallels in Kent — eg the ‘Nydam’ Style brooch from Canterbury.

Human faces only occur on two of the English examples, so the Northamptonshire brooch may be a local version of a more broadly NW Germanic/southern Scandinavian type. Dating evidence is scant, but the late 5th to mid-6th century is plausible given the stylistic similarities with button brooches, although this remains uncertain. (B Ager and S Ashby)

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Worksop area An 11th- or 12th-century cast copper-alloy mount or stylus head was found by Mr Gale Roberts (PAS database no DENO-66AA97). The mount (Fig 5d) consists of a roughly pear-shaped plate; one end is rolled, seemingly forming a socket for a rod. The face exhibits a striking figure of a coiled beast with a narrow, dog-like head. Its sinuous body curls around so that its narrow tail lies beneath the head. A single leg is stretched across the opening between the body and the neck on which it rests. Behind the leg is a teardrop-shaped wing, ending in a curl. The end of the tail is curled where the plate is rolled to form the socket. The beast is best identified as a wyvern as the single wing and a single leg suggest that the beast had two rear legs and a pair of wings, rather than the four legs plus wings of the dragon. Parallels are difficult to find: a Romanesque object from Winchester, interpreted as a stylus head, is three-dimensional and has a spatulate end, while flat backs occur on a small group of objects known as ‘aestels’ of which the Alfred and Minster Lovell jewels are the best known examples. Although divorced from the Worksop find in both style and time, both have been interpreted as ‘aestels’ possibly functioning as pointers used in reading. This interpretation remains open to doubt and the Worksop find might best be described simply as a mount. Until recently Romanesque metalwork was seen as rare in England and it is important that finds being recorded by the PAS are filling this lacuna. (A Rohde)

SUFFOLK

Mildenhall, near A late 9th-century Viking penny (Fig 5e) was issued from Danish East Anglia under Æthelstan II (878–90), previously known as Guthrum (PAS database no SF-E21D06, EMC no 2008.0027). The obverse is plain, showing a small central cross and the inscription ELDETA RE (King Æthelstan). The reverse simply gives the moneyer’s name in two lines, ABENLE (Abenel). Like many early-Viking coinages it copies the ‘Two-line’ types produced for King Alfred the Great of Wessex (871–99), and it is possible that Æthelstan II shared a mint place on the boundary between Anglo-Saxon England and the Danelaw as part of the agreement reached after Alfred captured London in 886. Coins of Æthelstan II are extremely rare, heralding the beginnings

30 Penn and Rogerson 1989, fig 1.
32 Jessup 1950, pl 19:5.
34 After defeat by Alfred the Great at Edington (Wiltshire) in 877, Guthrum was baptised and took the name Æthelstan (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 305); North 1994, 108 no 479.
35 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 318.
of Viking monetisation, and this is only the second example recorded by PAS.\textsuperscript{36} (F Minter)

\textbf{surrey}

\textit{Betchworth} A 12th-century cast, copper-alloy sheet buckle plate (Fig 6a) was found by Mr Nick Green (PAS database no SUR-C27225). Now lacking the frame, the folded, rectangular plate is integrally cast with the slightly raised, openwork design of a wyvern with the wing part raised and a curled, bifurcated tail. The design has been enhanced with tooling with annular punches representing scales on the beast’s body, and may have a design derived from contemporary sculpture.\textsuperscript{37} (D Williams)

\textit{Blandford Forum} An 11th-century stirrup-strap mount of Williams Class A, Type 4 (PAS database no SUR-684BD7) usefully extends the decorative repertoire used on stirrup mounts.\textsuperscript{38} The mount (Fig 7a) has an iron rivet at its apex which is, unusually, covered

\textsuperscript{36} See PAS database no KENT-338E94 for other find.

\textsuperscript{37} For further discussion of this object type, see LANCUM-193FE7, Ruthin (Denbighshire), below.

\textsuperscript{38} Williams 1997, 39–40.
with a separate copper-alloy dome. Two iron rivets survive at the base, one possibly having been similarly covered. The mount has an oval body framed by a pair of ribbon-form beasts, whose well-modelled open-jawed heads with pointed oval eyes, pointed ears and lip lappets are of late-Viking inspiration. The heads curl around the lower rivets and the tails curl up into spirals flanking the pointed lobe above the apex rivet. Set within the oval frame is a grotesque face with prominent, domed rounded eyes and projecting cat-like ears. The nose, with modelled nostrils, is set at the lower end of a projecting strip. Around the head are scroll-ended tendrils two of which suggest a moustache. The lower, straight edge of the mount is turned to form the transverse rib common to these mounts. It is probable that the mount was fixed to the lower end of a stirrup-strap at the point where the stirrup itself was attached. (D Williams)

WARWICKSHIRE

Wixford An early 13th-century Irish penny (Fig 7b) was found by Mr Bob Laight (PAS database no WAW-7285B2). Minted in Dublin under King John (1199–1216), it belongs to his Third Coinage (c 1207–11). The obverse shows a front-facing bust within an upright triangle holding a sceptre in its right hand, and with the inscription IOh[A]NNES REX (King John). The reverse shows a sun, triangle and three stars within a triangle and the inscription ROBERD ON [DI]VE (Roberd of Dublin).

The Irish coinage minted for King John can be placed within the remits of his broader ambitions. In 1204, the English coinage was overhauled, and alongside this an entirely new Irish coinage was issued, at the same standard as in England. This was likely in order to make the Irish penny acceptable internationally, and they are relatively common outside Ireland. The reasoning behind this was John’s need to fund his (ultimately unsuccessful) attempts to regain his territories in France which were lost by 1203, and he was happy to use Ireland’s resources to do this. The moneyer ‘Roberd’ was Robert of Bedford, the clerk in king’s service, who held the post until 1210. (K Leahy)

WEST SUSSEX

Houghton A 12th-century cast, copper-alloy folded sheet buckle plate (Fig 6b) with an integral, openwork panel found by Mr John Kempshall (PAS database no SUSS-3E04E1). The panel has a stylised, symmetrical central plant or bush with a pair of opposed birds facing each other, roosting towards the top, and a cross in the centre at the top. This motif may perhaps derive from a carved tympanum. (L Burnett)

WILTSHIRE

Urchfont A late 13th-century coin brooch (Fig 7c) was found by Mr David Grenfell (PAS database no DOR-403D81, Treasure report 2008 T128), consisting of a penny of Edward I (1272–1307), modified with the addition of a hook soldered onto the obverse and gilding on the reverse, which would have been on show. The coin itself is a Class 1c, issued in 1279. The obverse shows a front-facing bust with the inscription EDW REX ANGL’ DNS hYB (Edward, King of England, Lord of Ireland). The reverse has a long cross with three pellets in each angle, and the inscription CIVITAS LONDON (City of London) identifying the mint.

Although rare, the reuse of coinage in brooches has a long history, being known from the 9th century and including groups of late Anglo-Saxon/early Norman and late 13th-century examples. This latter group appears to have begun with the introduction

39 Spink 2003, 123 no 6228.
40 Dolley 1972, 4–7.
41 For further discussion of this object type, see LANCUM-193FE7, Ruthin (Denbighshire), below.
42 Cf Allen’s (2004, 29) study of Edward I’s groats in which 14 of the 59 coins used for the study had attachments and/or gilding removed after recovery prior to sale.
43 Williams 2001; Cook 2008.
of the groat under Edward I (1272–1307) in 1279, which account for most examples. This issue was short-lived, however, ceasing in 1281, from when the French gros tournois, the equivalent denomination, was used instead.\textsuperscript{44} Alongside these there is a smaller group of penny-sized pieces, both English and foreign. Four other modified pennies are known from England, dating from 1279–1301.\textsuperscript{45} This example is the first

\textsuperscript{44} Allen 2004, 29; Cook 2008, 239.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 237.
Class 1 recorded and the earliest long cross issue yet seen converted into a brooch. Functionally, the reuse always involves the attachment of the fastener to the obverse in order that the cross on the reverse will be exhibited, highlighting the likely religious overtones to their display.\(^{46}\) (C Hayward Trevarthen and J Naylor)

**EAST YORKSHIRE**

*Howden* An incomplete ornate, composite cast and sheeting early 15th-century copper-alloy harness mount (PAS database no NLM-6AFB72). This multi-component mount (Fig 7d), presumably a centre-piece, would be placed on a horse’s forehead. A central, hollow shaft supports a biconvex knop from which four arms branch upwards around a stylised tower. On this, a three-dimensional bird is perched with wings bent as if swooping; the head of the bird is missing. Tooling on the bird enhances this impressive mount. The bifurcate terminal on each of the four arms would presumably have held a shield or other-shaped pendant with arms identifying the rider. No precise parallel has been traced but some comparable items are known, one with two different surviving arms, which led to the suggestion that these may indicate families of which the rider was a descendant.\(^{47}\) (L Staves)

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

*Brimham* An 8th- to 9th-century copper-alloy mount of Irish type (PAS database no SWYOR-3847B1). It is circular with a raised rim and is decorated with five well-defined, slightly pointed bosses (Fig 8a). These bear ‘watch spring’ spirals made up of three concentric grooves spaced evenly round a now vacant central setting. These grooves diverge and expand from the base of each boss, forming trumpet shapes on the face of the flat disc. The deep central setting is circular and is likely to have contained a glass ‘gem’. Three of the original four rivets survive, although these are crude, failing to respect the design suggesting some form of reuse as is seen on the large Irish boss used on Steeple Bumpstead church door.\(^{48}\)

‘Watch spring’ spirals and settings are typical of 8th- or 9th-century Irish metalwork, the ornament following Insular tradition. Objects of this type are normally gilded, but there is no evidence for this here. It is possible that this mount came from a shrine, probably brought to England by the Vikings during the late 9th century, although it lacks the usual lateral attachment lugs. A parallel for raised spiral bosses is a circular shrine fitting from Komness (Norway).\(^{49}\) This type of larger shrine mount was usually hollow and was made in sets to be placed on the cardinal points of an equal-armed cross. Much grander parallels for raised bosses are the pair of gable mounts now in St Germain, but neither model appears to have such deep relief as on the Brimham disc.\(^{50}\) Manuscripts of the period, such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells, carry similar ornament. However, the closest parallel for this piece is a disc from a shrine from Clonard, Co Meath.\(^{51}\) This find is an important addition to the growing corpus of Irish metalwork found in England. (A Cooper)

*Nidd* An 8th- to 9th-century copper-alloy Carolingian mount or brooch (Fig 8b) found by Mr Charles Jones (PAS database no SWYOR-906685). The object is rectangular with two lugs, set asymmetrically on the reverse, although these are broken, making

---

\(^{46}\) Ibid; Williams 2001, 70.

\(^{47}\) Cherry 1991, 20 & 24, fig 1 no 7, with mention of another complex mount with unidentified arms in the British Museum.

\(^{48}\) For discussion of this object, see Youngs 1993.

\(^{49}\) Wamers 1985, Kat 129, Taf 12,1.

\(^{50}\) Youngs 1989, nos 138a and b.

\(^{51}\) Ó Floinn 1989–90, 49–55. Several similarly decorated pieces from Viking graves in Norway are referenced in this article. Our thanks to Ragnall Ó Floinn (National Museum of Ireland) for bringing this reference to our attention.
definite attribution of function difficult. If both lugs had circular holes, the object would best be seen as a strap mount but if one has a slotted hole, forming a hook-like catch, it could be interpreted as a brooch, and given the lugs are closer to one side of the plate this is most plausible. The face is gilded and shows a crude rosette design with devolved acanthus leaves at each side, both of which are Carolingian motifs.\footnote{Lennartsson 1997/98.}

Carolingian square and rectangular mounts are represented in the collection of the British Museum, which includes the silver-gilt example from Wareham.\footnote{Webster and Backhouse 1991, no 256.} The use of acanthus and rosette motifs was discussed by Fraenkel-Schoorl, and examples of brooches with two widely spaced lugs were illustrated by Wamers.\footnote{Fraenkel-Schoorl 1978; Wamers 1994: ‘Rechteckfibeln’.} Other Carolingian mounts recorded by PAS include finds from Sleaford (DEN0-184477) and Torksey (DEN0-872273), and these make a useful contribution to our knowledge of cross-Channel contacts during the early medieval period. (Amy Cooper)

**WALES**

**DENBIGHSHIRE**

*Ruthin* A 12th-century composite, sheet and cast copper-alloy buckle plate (Fig 6c), lacking the buckle frame (LANCUM-193FE7), was found by Mr Ray and Mrs Sanna Landar. It comprises a rectangular front integral with a smaller back of less regular
outline, folded at the slot for the pin, and a rectangular, openwork panel, cast in low relief with a scene of three log-robed figures. The seated, central figure is haloed, bearded and possibly crowned, and is flanked by two standing attendants. These are also probably haloed, reaching up towards the head of the central figure with a supportive or adulatory gesture. This image possibly represents Christ enthroned attended by saints and is potentially derived from a sculptured panel. Another similar buckle (Fig. 6d) from Burghead (Moray) shows what appears to be a coronation. A number of similar plates have already been published — six from Lincoln, two from a site east of Bury St Edmunds, and single finds from Hampshire, Nottinghamshire and the Wirral, and another from Tholthorpe, North Yorkshire, has subsequently been recorded by Jim Halliday. Another in Bury St Edmunds has a seated figure alone but with a bird at his left hand. The drawing suggests that in that specific case at least the panel was integral with the plate and not openwork.

This piece, along with Houghton (West Sussex, above) and Betchwith (Surrey, above) are among a series of ornate 12th- to early 13th-century buckle plates. These feature possible biblical scenes or a range of real and mythological beasts and birds, and perhaps abstract patterns in some cases, all in low-relief Romanesque style. An example from Lincoln, with its relatively realistic representation on a separately cast panel (riveted in place), may be seen as representing the best quality and arguably the original form. In contrast, the illustrated parallels for that piece (and presumably the others mentioned in Cherry’s paper, as no difference is noted) have the decorated plate integral with the cast back, as seen above. This conceivably represents a derivative form, while what may be a further degeneration of slightly later date is shown by one-part sheet plates stamped with similar designs but lacking openwork. All three varieties of these top-of-the-range buckles are enhanced with tooling and they frequently retain traces of gilding. (D Boughton and G Egan)

FLINTSHIRE

Flint A late 12th- to early 13th-century penny was found by Mr Douglas Fletcher (PAS database no LVPL-925FC2). The coin (Fig 8c), a Group i Class ii short cross penny, was minted in Rhuddlan (Clwyd) during the period 1190–1205. The obverse shows a front-facing bust with the inscription hENRICVS REX (King Henry) — though this was used on all short cross pennies regardless of the actual issuing ruler. The reverse shows a central, voided cross with a quatrefoil in each quadrant and the inscription TOMAS ON RVLA (Thomas of Rhuddlan) identifying the moneyer.

Coins of the Rhuddlan mint are not particularly common and this is the first with a Welsh provenance to be reported to PAS. The history of the Rhuddlan mint is somewhat unclear: in 1157, Henry took control of Rhuddlan castle and kept it until 1167 when it was besieged and destroyed by the Welsh prince Owain Gwynedd; rebuilt under Welsh rule, Rhuddlan was not permanently re-captured by the English until 1241. This is at odds with the numismatic evidence which shows the issuing of coins of English type during the period of Welsh rule, indicating a more complex situation than the documentary evidence alone would imply, although it remains likely that the coinage was issued under the authority of the Welsh princes rather than directly through the English kings. (F McIntosh and J Naylor)

55 Cherry 1987, fig 3a.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid, no 15. The same components are evident in the Ruthin item.
58 Ibid; buckle plates SUSS-3EoqE (Houghton, West Sussex) and SUR-C27225 (Betchwith, Surrey) plus another PAS-recorded finds, NLM-1A1AF4 (Calney, North Lincolnshire), with a lion in the openwork.
59 Eg Egan & Pritchard 1991, 111–12 no 500 and parallel, a London find assigned to the early 13th century.
60 Equating to the reigns of Richard I (1189–99) and John (1199–1216) — Wren 1992, 66.


Ashley, S 2002, Medieval Armorial Horse Furniture in Norfolk, East Anglian Archaeology 101, Dereham: Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.


England (or salt, sceattas and tolls: controlling systems of exchange’), Leeds: International Medieval Congress paper.


Penn, K and Rogerson, A 1989, ‘An Anglo-Saxon brooch fragment from Shelfanger, near Diss’, *Norfolk Archaeology* 49, 324.


**MEDIEVAL BRITAIN AND IRELAND — FIELDWORK HIGHLIGHTS IN 2008**

**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

As previously reported, this section now features a selection of highlighted projects or discoveries across Britain and Ireland, with reports which are extended overviews of results, finds and contexts. The selection each year will aim to cover new evidence illustrating the breadth of medieval contexts, and showing their regional or national significance; these reports also offer scope for fuller illustrative documentation. Contributors are welcome to offer potential extended summaries (of maximum 2,500 words with short supporting bibliography where appropriate; good quality b&w and/or colour pls and figures — to a maximum of five) to the editors in future issues. Please note that the deadline for submissions will be 1 March each year.
It is important to stress that MB&I entries of traditional format are still required; from 2008, these are being housed and accessible on an online database and directory hosted by ADS and accessible via the Society’s webpages. The facility will also enable contributors to submit extra images to support their texts. In time, the searchable database will include all back issues and entries of MB&I. Thus the Index listed below uses the numbers to signify the full sequential county and country listings; however, only those numbers in bold refer to those entries that appear in print in this volume as Highlights.

We thank all contributors past, present and future for their efforts, texts and support in maintaining this invaluable source of summaries on annual fieldwork activities and discoveries. Contributors to this year’s Highlights are flagged at the end of their respective reports.

For future submissions, please contact:

*British sites*
Compiled by: Márit Gaimster, 9 Cranfield Road, Brockley Cross, London SE14 1TN, UK. E-mail: mgaimster@pre-construct.com

*Irish sites*
Compiled by: Kieran O’Conor with Rory Sherlock, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland. E-mail: Kieran.d.oconor@nuigalway.ie

INDEX FOR MEDIEVAL BRITAIN AND IRELAND 2008

I. PRE-CONQUEST
bone/antler artefacts: 27.
boundaries, ditches, enclosures: 2.
burials, cemeteries: 182, 191, 193, 204, 236.
ceramics: 2, 26, 56, 99, 100, 123, 182, 223, 245.
cesspit: 85.
churches: 136, 178.
corn-dryer: 197.
environmental evidence: 90, 233, 245.
farmstead: 192.
glass bead: 230, 233.
hearth: 90.
industrial sites: 110
    bone/antler: 27.
    ceramic: 27.
    fishing: 244.
    leather: 27.
    metal: 123, 232, 252.
    textile: 27, 233.
monastic sites: 208, 223, 249, 253.
Pictish features: 204, 206, 230, 236.
refuse, domestic (pits, middens): 232.
FIELDWORK HIGHLIGHTS

roads, streets, trackways: 26, 123.
skeletal evidence: 2, 191, 193.
stone artefacts: 182, 192, 233, 242, 244–5.
stone cross: 223.
stone, funerary (cross-slabs, grave-markers, grave-covers, head supports): 193, 204, 206, 223, 236, 249.
sunken-featured buildings: 110, 148.
waterfronts: 69.
weights, scales: 191.
wells: 90, 148.

II. POST-CONQUEST

agriculture: 139, 220, 235.
area survey: 168.
barns: 185.
bone/antler artefacts: 70, 93.
boundaries, ditches, enclosures: 18, 90, 57, 87, 100, 222.
buildings, civic/public: 213.
buildings, defensive (peel towers, tower houses): 210, 247.
coins, jetons: 42, 47, 70, 93, 190, 196, 207, 216.
college: 155–6.
corn-dryer: 176, 190, 216, 218, 229, 237.
farmsteads: 3, 46, 49, 56, 107, 161, 222.
field systems: 14, 21, 24, 38, 53, 111, 122, 164, 201, 218, 237.
fishpond: 8, 65.
floor tile: 60, 65.
gardens: 37.
glass (vessel, window): 66.
glass urinal: 62.
graffito: 126.
hearth, fireplaces: 112, 252.
hospitals: 93, 113.
industrial sites: 211.
bone/antler: 27.
butchery: 189.
ceramic (pottery, tiles): 16, 103, 125, 131, 168, 184, 186, 223.
fishing: 114, 243.
horn: 27.
leather: 27, 32–3, 168.
salt: 170.
shipbuilding: 114.
wood: 189.
inns of court: 72.
leather: 65–6, 70, 240.
manors and moated sites: 9–10, 19, 25, 34, 37, 40, 43, 52, 76, 99, 119, 134, 143, 201, 255.
mason’s mark: 44, 70, 126.
mills (water): 73, 157.
ovens, kilns: 201.
papal bulla: 238.
pilgrim’s badge: 70.
quarrying: 15, 75, 78, 127, 140, 243.
refuse, domestic (pits, middens): 41, 139, 232, 240.
stone, architectural: 60, 68, 124, 205, 209, 227.
stone, funerary: 39, 196, 212, 224.
town defences: 13, 64, 66, 102, 163, 177.
villages: 121, 130, 144, 176.
waterfronts: 69, 70, 73, 116, 124.
waterworks (conduits, dams, drains, ponds, tanks): 2, 48, 113, 198, 201.
weights and scales: 196.
wells: 65, 198.
wooden objects: 70, 81, 198, 200.
yards, metalled surfaces: 216.
At Riverbank House (TQ 32730 80670) excavation was directed by A T Mackinder of the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on a site previously investigated in the 1980s. Known then as Swan Lane (SWA81), this work produced a vast amount of information regarding the development of the later medieval waterfront with timber revetments, buildings and associated small finds. Offering a wealth of well-preserved and stratigraphically well-dated material, the finds from Swan Lane and other sites along the Thames waterfront formed the basis for the series of catalogues of medieval finds, published by the Museum of London.¹

During the medieval period the waterfront became crucial to the burgeoning fortunes of the city as London developed into a major trading port. Land with access to the waterfront was therefore at a premium, and as the city’s trade grew so did land reclamation. This process usually involved constructing a timber revetment on the foreshore and filling in the space behind with dumps of material imported from sites elsewhere in London to create a flat working area. At Swan Lane, nearly 20 m of land was reclaimed during the 12th and 13th centuries. Further reclamation was conducted during the 14th and 15th centuries with the waterfront expanding another 20 m to the south.² At some point in the 15th century the waterfront was built in stone and expansion southwards was effectively halted. As the riverfronts advanced, so the buildings associated with the docks and industry followed; the tenements on the S side of Thames Street were originally fairly small but, as the river was reclaimed, the properties grew southward and became long and narrow. There were four lanes dividing the site into five properties, their varying E–W dimensions reflecting their somewhat haphazard and unplanned growth southwards. The area was important for fulling and dyeing industries with the medieval Dyer’s Hall located on the site. A series of some 35 hearths was revealed on the site, along with several contexts containing fuller’s earth (a clay used in the textile industry).³

The waterfront structures

During 2007 and 2008, fieldwork took the form of investigating pile locations chiefly around the perimeter of the site, with a watching brief on the basemented area (Fig 1). On the Angel Passage (W) frontage of the site three trenches were located (Trenches 3–5) in which four E–W timber revetments were found. Unfortunately these do not seem to correlate with the SWA81 work. The earliest revetment, found in Trench 5, was an E–W post-and-plank revetment with three vertical posts holding the planks in place. This revetment with front-bracing and a tieback is thought to be part of the mid-13th-century waterfront. If these revetments correlated with those found at Swan Lane (SWA81) then there may have been another revetment to the south, between Trenches 4 and 5. In the middle of Trench 4, a second example of an E–W post-and-plank revetment was found comprising a timber baseplate with four vertical posts holding planks in place, also front-braced. This is probably of late 13th- to mid-14th-century date. At the N end of Trench 3 a late 14th-century front-braced revetment comprised a timber baseplate with three vertical posts holding planks in place. Behind this waterfront a chalk wall may have been a river wall built to replace an earlier timber version. A timber box-drain ran along the W side of the trench and a timber cask acting as a sump

² Egan 1991, fig 2.4.
³ Ibid, 12–16.
lead into the top. To the south a possible 15th-century revetment was built over the box-drain. Again, this was a post-and-plank build with an elaborate tieback structure and was probably front-braced. In addition to the timber structures there were traces of 13th-/14th-century buildings with chalk-and-ragstone walls parallel to the Angel Passage to the north of Trench 5.

On the Swan Lane (E) frontage of the site, at least ten timber revetment structures have been uncovered and these have a fair amount of correlation with the earlier SWA81 discoveries. Trench 15 featured evidence for a medieval building with a N–S running wall built on two large chalk footings with small timber piles. A buried timber cask was probably used to store shellfish. An E–W revetment in Trench 9, with a substantial baseplate, is part of a late 12th-century waterfront. Just to the south another timber structure may be some form of front-bracing and a dump of timbers aligned N–S may be another collapsed revetment. Evidence for another waterfront running between Trenches 9 and 10 can be seen from the large front brace found in Trench 10. At a later date this waterfront was replaced with an E–W chalk wall. It is not clear

---

**FIG 1**
Riverbank House: site location and plan of trenches showing the major medieval waterfront revetment timbers in Trenches 2 to 15. © Museum of London Archaeology.
how this activity relates to another waterfront in Trench 10; with a N–S baseplate this
appears to be late 12th/early 13th-century in date. Probably the latest structure in this
trench, dating from the 13th century, was an E–W post-and-plank revetment at the
S edge of the trench (Fig 2). This is probably the return of a N–S structure beneath
Swan Lane that was indicated by the ends of tiebacks found in trenches 15 and 9.

The next waterfront was indicated by a major N–S baseplate which was
front-braced from the E side. This waterfront was constructed like a box with an E–W
baseplate jointed into the main N–S baseplate with vertical posts holding back planks.
In Trench 12 a well-constructed timber ‘box’ structure comprised a N–S baseplate
jointed into two E–W baseplates, with a double row of vertical stave planking. As the
upper parts of this structure were truncated and none of the vertical posts survived, it
is not clear how these staves were held in place. This waterfront was early to mid-14th
century in date and was extended with a further revetment structure with planking that
was now horizontal. Trench 13 had a well-constructed E–W waterfront with massive
front-braced timbers (Fig 3). The carpenter’s assembly marks were carefully inscribed
on the timbers next to the corresponding joints; clearly a lot of time and effort had been

FIG 2
Riverbank House: the 13th-century
post-and-plank revetment in
Trench 10. Photograph by M Cox,
© Museum of London Archaeology.
spent on this structure. This was probably mid- to late 14th century in date; at this time there was also a massive waterfront being built on the site to the west. There was a second E–W waterfront built in the late 14th or 15th centuries and set almost directly over the baseplate of the front-braces, resulting in the plank faces of the two revetments being only 1.8 m apart. Substantial remains of a medieval building were found parallel to Upper Thames Street, where a large chalk wall formed the N end of a building that was 12 m wide; this was of 12th-/13th-century date and the highest survival was at 2.86 m OD.

The finds
Waterfronts produce a greater number of metal finds than dry land sites, as well as well-preserved organic finds such as leather and wooden items. Most of these finds come

---

4 Watermark Place; Mackinder and Wood 2009.
from the rubbish deliberately dumped to help reclaim land behind newly-built waterfronts. The use of metal detectors aided in the recovery of smaller metal items. Because of on-site spoil removal and storage problems the number of finds recovered by metal detecting is not too large; currently there are 562 ‘small finds’, not including the leather items. The bulk of these are medieval and demonstrate the wealth of the medieval city, the extent of international trade and, in some cases, may relate to activities taking place on the waterfront. A wide range of items were recovered, such as coins and tokens, pilgrim souvenirs including badges and a large decorated ampulla to hold holy water, knives, pins, buckles, fishing weights, horseshoes, a candle holder, cloth seals, lace-chapes, a needle holder, razors, a spoon, a curry comb, several finger rings and numerous dress accessories. Non-metal items include leather shoes and scabbards, stone hones to sharpen knives, bone handles, awls and an ice skate; several wooden skewers may be to hold fish for drying.

A particularly significant find is a devotional lead openwork panel with four scenes from the life and death of (‘St’) Thomas of Lancaster (Fig 4). Probably dating from the mid-14th century, the panel presents a visual record of the last days of Thomas, cousin and principal political opponent of Edward II in the early 14th century, who was executed in 1322 following his capture and trial at Pontefract (which was subsequently
the centre of his popular cult as an unofficial saint). This remarkably complete find of one of the largest known pilgrim souvenirs from the Middle Ages (a couple of small side panels may be missing) has several parallels, most being small fragments, and the British Museum holds a near-complete six-panelled version of somewhat poorer style. Additionally, this new find has a commentary in slightly garbled French, which for the first time reveals the maker’s intended message — a few other examples have nonsensical jumbles of letters.

The panels are to be read top row left to right, then lower row right to left. **Scene 1**: Thomas held by two men (‘Here I am taken prisoner’); **Scene 2**: Thomas, held by an official, is set before a judge (‘I am judged’); **Scene 3**: Thomas, condemned and set on a mount proceeds before a hostile crowd to his place of execution — other versions follow tradition in showing the horse lacking a bridle to humiliate the prisoner, but here it appears to be present (‘I am under threat’); **Scene 4**: Thomas is executed with a sword, which fails initially to sever his neck (‘la mort’). Above, Christ and the Virgin look down from Heaven, ready to receive Thomas’ soul. The gilded sun and moon — also new features — emphasise the universality of their eternal power.

The assessment of the excavated material and timber samples from Riverbank House is currently underway, to add further to our knowledge of the use and development of the Thames waterfront in the High Middle Ages; the results of the study will be included in the forthcoming publication on the original Swan Lane work by John Schofield.

(A Mackinder, with a contribution by G Egan)

**OXFORDSHIRE**

**CHARTING SAXON AND MEDIEVAL URBAN GROWTH AND DECAY AT WALLINGFORD**

160. WALLINGFORD, WALLINGFORD BURH TO BOROUGH RESEARCH PROJECT (SU 6045 8933). Summer 2008 saw the first phase of large-scale archaeological excavations carried out as part of the AHRC-funded *Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project* — a collaboration between the Universities of Leicester, Exeter and Oxford. The project works closely with The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS) and Wallingford Museum to explore the archaeology and evolution of a little studied but well-known small town on the Thames in south Oxfordshire (formerly in north Berkshire). This three-year project expands on pilot work that has refined our understanding of the archaeological potential of Wallingford, a town frequently cited as a classic Wessex *burh*, later transformed by the superimposition of a Norman castle. Wallingford stands out for the strong preservation of its urban defences — with earthen ramparts and ditch still embracing the town’s W half — and for the complex earthworks of the expansive castle site in the town’s NE quarter; reusing burghal defences and showing evidence of subsequent Civil War remodelling and later polite landscaping, they dominate the river, bridge and N gate (Fig 5). Most significantly, the town plan shows clear traces of its Anglo-Saxon and later medieval configuration, and is exceptional in preserving two sizeable open areas, Kinecroft and Bullcroft, within its defences — all providing excellent scope to explore the town’s origins, growth and later medieval contraction.

---

5 Spencer 1998, 200, fig 212a; Tait 1955.
6 Schofield et al in prep.
8 On pilot work, see interim in Christie 2004 and 2005; Christie et al 2003 and 2004; on Wallingford’s archaeological setting and earlier finds, see summary by Airs et al 1975.
Previous, largely unpublished, work at the castle site — on the defences and on a cob-built structure in the inner bailey — further underline the town’s rich potential. This was borne out in recent excavation by Northamptonshire Archaeology, in redevelopment work for Waitrose at the very heart of the town, of 210 late-Saxon and medieval burials.\(^9\) Detailed scrutiny and reporting can thus shed light on the earliest settlement at Wallingford (the *burh* lacked any Roman antecedent but a notable early Anglo-Saxon cemetery was identified in the later 19th and earlier 20th centuries outside...
the area of the town’s later SW rampart); on changes accompanying the imposition of a high-status castle with attendant economic growth; and on patterns of urban change prompted by economic and administrative decline. The project aims to sample all zones of the town and its suburbs through geophysical survey, open-area excavation, garden archaeology (test-pitting) and building survey, to chart the transformation of the town across the period c ad 850–1350. Few burhs have seen detailed archaeological scrutiny — the recent compilation of varied excavations at Oxford, including large-scale work at the castle site, being an excellent example of the potential of such work — and this project thus further seeks to offer Wallingford as a major case study of a British small town’s evolution.

The 2008 excavations

In July and August 2008, the Project team, with students from Leicester and Exeter Universities, from the Netherlands and the US, and an invaluable group of volunteers from TWHAS (and with Wallingford Museum, hosting an exhibition on archaeology in the town, serving as display and finds processing space), explored three trenches in three separate open areas of the town, designed to sample different components and periods of the town’s past: Trench 1 in Castle Meadows, exploring space adjacent to the castle outer defences and specifically a platform feature; Trench 2 in the Bullcroft, assessing Anglo-Saxon and later activity in the north-west of the town; and Trench 3 in the Kinecroft, investigating medieval domestic space (Fig 6).

Results were diverse but complementary. In Castle Meadows (SU 6092 8989), the trench exposed part of a chalk-clay platform of probable Civil War date, but also identified deep mixed medieval deposits relating to presumed periodic castle ditch clearance along with landscaping work beyond. The Bullcroft trench (SU 6049 8977) was sited near the town’s NW corner. This failed to trace any intramural lane nor any imprint of structures or enclosure; however, remnant traces of low ridge-and-furrow of uncertain date were recorded — conceivably medieval and associated with the Norman priory in the S Bullcroft zone, or post-medieval and post-Dissolution — and a tree-throw indicative of at least some tree growth in this intramural zone in the Middle Ages. More secure and tangible were the data deriving from the Kinecroft trench, as outlined below.

Excavations on the Kinecroft

The open area of the Kinecroft (SU 6045 8933) occupies the SW flank of the Saxo-Norman town and is still defined by impressive extant rampart defences. The name ‘Kine’ is an archaic name for cattle or oxen, perhaps reflecting how this area was used for open grazing of livestock as well as for occasional fairs or markets (as occurs even today — in particular the site of the ‘Bunklest’ and related fair and stalls, and the site of the town’s annual 5 November bonfire). One of the key research aims here is to characterise this ‘urban’ space: was it always open, as the name suggests, or did the late-Saxon street grid and houses once cross the Kinecroft? A trench measuring 6 x 20 m was thus located near the middle of the open park land to pick up traces of any settlement activity south of a putative westward continuation of a street line (see location of site at ‘6’ on Fig 6; note how a street west of the defences maintains this presumed intramural lane’s line. The trench location was informed by geophysical survey of the Kinecroft in Easter 2008). Archaeological deposits were revealed below the topsoil and subsoil at a depth of between 0.35 and 0.55 m. The evidence in the trench can

Dodd 2003.
Plan of Wallingford, showing sites mentioned in the text and locations of the 2008 trenches. Drawing by M Rouillard, © Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project.
be neatly divided into three activity zones, of which the central part is occupied by building(s), the N part by a road and the S part by a cluster of rubbish pits (Figs 7 and 8).

The medieval building

In the central part of the trench evidence was revealed for a timber building of earth-fast post-in-trench construction. Three substantial N–S and E–W beam slots oriented parallel and perpendicular to each other represented the footings of a large rectangular structure, probably set within a row of similar buildings (Fig 7). These outer beam slots enclosed an area of c 4.2 sq m, though the entire plan of the building(s) was not uncovered within the trench. Within this area were numerous features, probably associated with internal activity within the recorded building, including an internal partition and a small sunken-floored area that may represent a cellar. From the finds recovered
fieldwork highlights

within the beam slot fills, an 11th- or 12th-century date is indicated for construction and occupation.

The S beam-slot was oriented E–W and ran for the width of the trench (6 m), into both the W and E sections, thereby indicating a continuation of structure in both directions. The beam slot was c 0.5 m in width and 0.35 m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. Two beam slots side by side ran alongside the W edge of the trench for c 6 m; these were oriented N–S, with the one to the west possibly belonging to an adjoining building. The full width of the second westernmost beam slot of the pair could not be fully ascertained as it went beyond the edge of excavation. The corner intersection between the two beam slots was a complex juncture of interconnecting beams, indicating contemporary features; these were joined in the corner by a large upright earth-fast post. A second E–W oriented beam slot ran parallel to the S beam slot, 9 m further north, but was considerably narrower (0.25 m in width) and shallower (0.17 m), though it had been partly truncated by the edge of a holloway. A further beam slot was seen heading west — again supportive of the view that there may be an adjoining building (or part of the same, wider building) beyond the W edge of the excavated area.

FIG 8
Wallingford: the Kinecroft trench during excavation, looking south. The holloway, cut by later pits, is in the foreground; beamslots of the rectangular building are visible in the central part of the trench. To the right, an extension is being dug to establish whether the beamslots continue westwards.
Photograph by G Speed, © Wallingford Burh to Borough Research Project.
Within the building area a small narrow N–S beam-slot or gully was interpreted as an internal partition wall; it measured 3.65 m in length and just 0.1 m in depth. The gap between the S terminus and the S beam slot was c 0.9 m and may represent an internal doorway. A rectangular and flat-bottomed pit was found close to, and aligned with, the beam slots in the central-east area of the trench. This feature may represent a small cellar within the building. To the south of the building was a series of intercutting pits, presumably contemporary with the house, situated in a yard to its rear.

The road

In the N part of the trench, a large linear hollow was identified running across the trench in an E–W direction (Fig 8). It was c 6 m wide, and had a similar alignment to the projected course of the extant Kinecroft street to the east. This hollow-way or street ran adjacent and parallel to the building, which formed part of the street frontage on the S side. The road continued in use for a short time after the buildings were taken down, as evidenced by the fact that the N beam slot is partly truncated by the side of the hollow-way. The road itself ceased to function in the 13th or early 14th centuries, with later-medieval pitting or quarrying confirming that its use as a routeway had been discontinued.

At the base of the fills of the hollow-way was the principal small find of the 2008 excavation season: a beautifully preserved copper-alloy strap-end (Fig 9). This is ornamented with the figure of a pair of speckled confronted beasts (?dragons), with interlaced tails. Alternatively, one animal is on the back of the other; and the head of a possible third dragon seems to emerge from the tail of one of the main beasts. The strap-end measures 60 mm in length and is made of two pieces of copper alloy riveted together; traces exist of a small repair. The design is engraved or scored, not punched, while the reverse of the strap-end is smoothed by wear and not decorated. It is thought to date from the 10th–11th centuries. It is possible that the strap-end was in long circulation, only to be dropped or lost by a traveller or trader in the latest stages of use of the road. Alternatively, the presence of earlier residual pottery within the fills of the hollow-way may indicate that the strap-end is also residual.

Wallingford: an expanding and contracting townscape

The Kinecroft structure is a well-preserved high-medieval timber building — a fairly unusual archaeological survival in a modern context, and one whose presence raises the potential of other clear medieval or Anglo-Saxon domestic units preserved beneath open spaces within Wallingford. This excavation provided a rare opportunity to investigate a complete plan of a medieval building without the usual problems of later truncations seen in most urban excavation environments.

The size of the structure — 6 m in length and at least 6 m in width — is average for a domestic urban medieval building; it may be compared with structures of similar date and construction at Billingsgate/Cheapside, London, and Coppergate, York. It is likely that the part of the Kinecroft structure discovered so far represents the W gable end and the N and S sides, suggesting the building was laid out longitudinally along the street frontage and extending further east. Presumably the entrance is along the N side of the building, fronting onto the street. It remains uncertain if the evidence revealed is from a single large building, or a series of smaller buildings.

Since the position of the structure is on the alignment of the Anglo-Saxon street grid, we need to question whether this denotes evidence of a post-Conquest extension.

12 Hall 1984.
to the formal planned late-Saxon town and forms part of a conscious planning decision. The evidence for a possible further structure of similar size (based on the foundations), built adjacent to the excavated structure, certainly suggests a built-up street frontage and a degree of organisation of properties along the street. This ordered rectilinear arrangement is often followed by further encroachment and development of urban space from the 11th century onwards, but strikingly here there is no such evidence. Instead, the evidence appears to indicate a single building phase, even if the materials from the pits cutting the road suggest that the lane itself (and perhaps a related postern cutting the rampart?) endured longer. There is no evidence to suggest the excavated structure is anything other than domestic. We lack clear evidence for the type of wall or roof construction, but a full timber build is likely.

Although the building shows no clear evidence for more than a single (main) phase of construction, the lifespan of the structure is very difficult to ascertain; no floor make-ups or surfaces survived to enable assessment of any renewal of surfaces. Potentially some truncation has occurred through later market gardening activity over the zone. A general lifespan of 25–40 years is suggested in some other excavated examples, though there is evidence for better-constructed examples lasting 80–100 years, which might fit in with this building at Wallingford. The building style is

13 Schofield and Vince 2003, 80.
typically pre-13th century — ie not timber-framed and lacking stone footings — and the finds indicate an 11th- to 12th-century date, matching a known period of growth in the town following the construction of the Norman castle. Might it even relate to the new French borough alluded to in the Domesday reference to 22 houses (masurae) held by Frenchmen (francigenae), to be compared with examples at Northampton, Norwich and Nottingham where royal castles were similarly imposed on late-Saxon centres?

The town may subsequently have contracted by the 14th century, with the Kinecroft reverting to open (but used) space — a status prevailing largely today (despite partial mid-20th-century encroachment on the E side). Potentially much of the Bullcroft zone, its S end dominated by the Norman-period priory, also remained open in this period, and with that space increasing later following the Dissolution. As Monica Smith has recently argued, consideration of the role of ‘urban empty spaces’ may be extremely significant in understanding urban development; such spaces played under-estimated roles in the economic and social functions of towns. The full causes of Wallingford’s late-medieval economic and social decline are yet to be fully clarified, although detailed documentary assessment and archaeological investigation of both castle and town will help to chart where and when urban contraction was happening.

The second main phase of archaeological investigation in 2009 will seek to build on these first significant findings and explore adjacent space in the Kinecroft (to include also the rampart), plus structures associated with the castle, and potential medieval suburban spaces.

(G Speed, N Christie, O Creighton and M Edgeworth)

WEST MIDLANDS

LIFE, WORK AND DEATH IN BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

BIRMINGHAM. LIFE, WORK AND DEATH IN BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE AD 1100–1900 (SP 0660 8680). Development, planning and construction are not new phenomena in Birmingham city centre. The last 800 years of its occupation has seen the continued development of a bustling and busy town, increasing in size and importance from Birmingham’s medieval roots. Today, it is the city’s continuing development that enables us to investigate, understand, conserve and protect its heritage. The English Heritage-funded project, Life, Work and Death in Birmingham City Centre AD 1100–1900 (the LWD Project) was conceived and commissioned by Birmingham City Council, and work was undertaken by a consortium of specialists managed by Birmingham Archaeology. From 2007 to 2008, the project worked to bring together data from all of the PPG16-funded archaeological works undertaken in Birmingham City Centre, with an aim to providing a synthetic account of aspects of its development. This has had mixed success: while the project has successfully mapped all archaeological works and provided important synthesis of some areas of the archaeological dataset, more research will be required into others before a fully integrated discussion can be published. This is perhaps a reflection of the nature of work undertaken within the remit of PPG16.

Within the study area (Fig 10), all but one of archaeological projects included have been undertaken in accordance with PPG16. The number of projects commissioned as a result of development stood at around 85 at the time of the study and further work has been undertaken since. While the majority of the recovered data has been written up as grey literature reports, essentially unpublished, the importance of the

16 Creighton 2005, 146.
17 Smith 2008.
18 Forster and Rátkai 2008.
archaeological information recovered has been highlighted in popular publications,¹⁹ as well as in two recent monographs.²⁰ The LWD Project has given us an important opportunity to address issues of non-accessibility and of the perceived problems of grey literature, and to begin the process of synthesis and discussion within a regional and national context.

**PPG16 in Birmingham City Centre**

In places, the medieval and post-medieval archaeology of Birmingham city centre is deeply stratified and often includes waterlogged deposits providing rare opportunities to investigate Birmingham’s palaeoenvironmental history. While large-scale projects such as the recent Bull Ring development have raised public interest in particular, the high number of less publicised and far smaller investigations has also transformed understanding of the city centre’s fabric and historic development.

²⁰ Brickley et al 2006; Patrick and Rátkai 2009.
With the exception of Lorna Watts’ publication of the Birmingham Moat, all of the 85 projects included in the LWD Project were developer-funded investigations and comprise the work of 14 different archaeological organisations, with reports written and researched by 39 different authors. From the inception of the project, the use of GIS for mapping, analysis and description of results was seen as central to its success. GIS’s ability to view and analyse disparate datasets was key to better understanding the information to hand and for highlighting gaps in our knowledge which can feed back into the curatorial process. The GIS dataset included all the historic maps of Birmingham as rectified images, onto which was inputted as much information as we could for each site, including, for example, site and trench outlines. We are hopeful that this dataset will become available online.

The projects included in the study were conducted between 1983 and 2007 and cover all types of archaeological mitigation from desk-based assessment through historic building recording to full open-area excavation. The distribution of archaeological intervention in the study area is unequal, concentrating around areas of intensive activity such as the recent redevelopment of the Bull Ring Shopping Centre (see the concentration of site outlines along the B4110 road to St Martin’s Church in Fig 10); this has led, conveniently, to intensive work around the medieval core of Birmingham in the areas of Digbeth and Deritend. Less convenient are the large gaps visible in Fig 10 north and west of the centre, where little or no work has been undertaken and where archaeological survival may be weaker. Consequently we know much of the early development of Birmingham at its core, yet far less about its post-medieval expansion and growth. To shed light on the growth of the city, Nigel Baker’s town plan analysis of the study area mapped its expansion from its medieval core (Fig 11); this provided an invaluable framework by which archaeologists and historians can begin to understand the expansion of Birmingham from a 12th-century planned town to one of the most important modern cities in the UK.

PPG16 and the development of Birmingham

Robert Sherlock’s work in Deritend during the 1950s was the first real glimmer of expectation that archaeology might survive in Birmingham, even if only in small pockets. However, work and later salvage recording by Lorna Watts (1980) at the site of Birmingham’s moated manor did little to dispel the view, both locally and nationally, that archaeological survival within the city was slim and, consequently, that Birmingham was a poor and insignificant place until the mid-18th century. If nothing else, the archaeological work undertaken as part of the planning process since 1991 has finally destroyed those perceptions. The archaeology of Birmingham has proven to be impressive, as has the importance of the industrial town and its long development prior to the Industrial Revolution. The archaeological evidence of Birmingham as an important industrial centre challenges the often-cited view of the city as a product of the Industrial Revolution. Twenty-nine of the intrusive investigations undertaken in the city centre were found to fall within the bounds of the early town (as plotted by Bickley and Hill’s 1890 conjectural map of 1553), 17 of which did record medieval remains. While the level of survival differs considerably from site to site, the collective evidence contributes substantially to the body of knowledge for this period.

In the heart of the city, investigations at Edgbaston Street, Moor Street and Park Street have identified substantial evidence for medieval occupation and industry (Fig 12). These projects are all now fully published and thus provide a strong platform from which other, small-scale medieval discoveries can be viewed. Other major

22 Patrick and Rátkai 2009.
excavations are close to publication,\textsuperscript{23} again providing an essential backdrop illustrating the hustle and bustle of the growing town against which we can now assess new data from more recent excavations (eg Heath Mill Lane, recently excavated by Birmingham Archaeology, and Digbeth Coach Station by Wessex Archaeology). What we now understand is that Birmingham was the focus of many different manufacturing and industrial processes from as early as the 13th century, a pattern which presumably contributed to the process of industrialisation for which the region has become famous. In short, the story told by the archaeology in Birmingham contradicts the historically based concept of an Industrial Revolution; rather, it illustrates an industrial growth more accurately described as an evolution, reflecting its long development from the 13th through to the 19th centuries.

A host of industries is represented in the archaeological record. During the medieval period, it appears that four of these were dominant: the textiles industry, tanning and leather production, metalworking and pottery manufacture. Despite documentary references to the wool industry and wool merchants in Birmingham,\textsuperscript{24} archaeological

\textsuperscript{23} Eg Hewitson et al forthcoming.
\textsuperscript{24} Pelham 1950.
evidence connected with these is lacking. There is, however, some evidence of flax and hemp, remains of which were found at Moor Street and Park Street, and possibly at the Manor Moat and the area of Deritend Bridge, although the exact date of the latter three sites is uncertain. All medieval towns are likely to have had a tannery but Birmingham had at least three, situated on Edgbaston Street, Park Street and Floodgate Street, all of which were sited where water was plentiful. Three tanneries suggest more than just catering for local needs and tanning seems to have been one of the industries underpinning the economy of Birmingham. Metalworking also had early origins in Birmingham, although current evidence does not suggest that it was of major importance. A small amount of tap slag found at Moor Street indicates iron-smelting, but this may have been on a limited scale with the greater proportion of iron brought into the

26 Watts 1980.
town as pig-iron from the Black Country. The fourth industry in Birmingham, pottery manufacture, has slightly more evidence (Fig 13): sites with evidence of potting were located along Deritend, Digbeth and to the north of the Bull Ring; this industry may have begun in the later 12th century and was certainly in operation before the mid-13th century; on typological grounds the latest pottery was probably made in the first quarter of the 14th century.

The most salient aspect of Birmingham’s past revealed by archaeology is the shortage of good domestic assemblages. Although this can be seen as a ‘negative’ result, especially when compared with the rich array of finds recovered from recent work in Coventry, Warwick and Hereford, developer-funded work has opened up a very valid research question as to why Birmingham is so different and why, in an apparently flourishing community, domestic and material remains are so poorly represented. This evidence accentuates the fact that Birmingham was predominantly industrial from the outset. Indeed, negative evidence is still evidence; we can now say with some certainty that there was no Anglo-Saxon occupation in the Bull Ring, Digbeth or Deritend.

A further insight into the townscape and its environs has been a more comprehensive look at the environmental material recovered from developer-funded work. Prior to work undertaken through the development process, the only palaeoenvironmental evidence available was that from Greig’s (1980) sampling of some of the Manor Moat deposits. In more recent years, this has been very much expanded by sampling of the Parsonage Moat/Manor Moat watercourse. The earliest alluvial levels contain in all probability a record of the environment well before the establishment of a settlement in Birmingham. Further environmental sampling has revealed that throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, at least up to the mid- or late 18th century, there was significant tree cover in and around the town, including tantalising evidence of an apple or pear orchard close to Floodgate Street during the 16th–17th centuries. There is evidence of the exploitation of water resources for tanning and retting from the Middle Ages and onwards and, perhaps less expected, evidence for the pasturing of animals within the town itself. The combined projects also provide data on cultivated crops — oats, barley, wheat, rye, hemp, buckwheat, pea, beet and bean — where there had previously been none.

28 Hewitson and Allen forthcoming.
Work on death and burial in the study area has highlighted the insight that can be gleaned from a more synthetic and multi-disciplinary approach to the osteological material. The excavated burials at St Martin’s Church, in the Bull Ring, constitute an assemblage of both national and international importance, as evidenced by the forthcoming inclusion of data in the Global History of Health international database project. At St Martin’s, burial records for the church begin in 1556 but documentary sources suggest that both the church and churchyard had been used for burial since at least the 13th century, although the various structural changes that took place over the years destroyed the many grave memorials that covered the floor of the church. Smaller quantities of human remains have also been excavated from three other burial grounds in the city — St Phillip’s Cathedral, Park Street Gardens Burial Ground and St Bartholomew’s Chapel. What we lack is osteo-archaeological material dating from earlier periods. Interestingly, the only evidence for earlier human remains was recovered during excavations at Park Street (Fig 14): two skeletons of apparent medieval date were

**Fig 14**
Birmingham LWD Project: female burial (F742) from the excavations at Park Street. © Birmingham Archaeology.

29 Brickley et al 2006.
30 Steckel et al 2002.
31 Smith et al 2008.
32 Ibid.
discovered beneath the floor and walls of a 19th-century building in the NE corner of
the site close to the street frontage; both were in earth-cut graves, laid on their backs
with arms folded, but neither fell within the boundaries of the burial ground.\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{PPG16 and the archaeological profession: the view from Birmingham}

Undertaking the LWD Project has facilitated a more critical look at the mechanics of
the development process and the nature of archaeological works undertaken within it.
It is commendable that a huge amount of information has been gathered through the
process, but there has been the realisation that not all sites can be recorded in sufficient
detail so as to allow the data to be synthesised readily at a later date. This is often
not a problem with the planning process itself, nor indeed with contracting units or
individual specialists. It is more a result of factors divorced from the archaeology: the
initial drivers behind the investigation; the required outcome; or the level of recording
a project demands. Archaeological research in the development process and the catalyst
behind investigations are not primarily borne out of academic pursuit but through
necessity. Since at least 1990, investigations in dense urban environments such as
Birmingham are part of a process which involves developers, consultants, planners, and
archaeologists, informed largely by desk-based assessment and evaluation.\textsuperscript{34} Archaeo-
logical work such as desk-based assessment and evaluation, therefore, is undertaken to
inform that process and not to provide a published account of its undertaking. Many of
the projects included in this investigation, therefore, were not synthesised, interpreted
and discussed in the same manner as one might expect from an archaeological excava-
tion. It is important to bear in mind that much of the work undertaken will not be
published, that it is the result of very site-focused investigation designed to inform
curatorial decisions and may not be suitable for publication beyond archive. What
we need to ensure — as a profession — is that the pursuit of archaeology within the
planning process does not restrict those sites deserving of publication to grey literature
alone. The archaeology of Birmingham reveals that, in actual fact, much of the work
which should be widely available is already published (or soon will be); what is perhaps
more often needed is a more regular synthesis and update of new results. The next stage
of the LWD Project will aim to provide a synthesis of archaeological works, which will
allow the results of recent and forthcoming excavations to be viewed from a sound
platform.

The importance of developer-funded work within Birmingham city centre cannot
be overestimated — only one of the 85 investigations included in the project was
undertaken outside of PPG16. Other than some building recording works, such as
English Heritage’s work on the Jewellery Quarter,\textsuperscript{35} investigations in the city centre
have been exclusively done in response to development. It is perhaps serendipity that
has encouraged a large portion of modern development in and around the city’s his-
toric roots (not least the Bull Ring), resulting in large areas of open-area investigation
at the core of the early town. The opportunity to revisit some of the older investigations,
while looking at ongoing and recent works has enabled field specialists, environmental
archaeologists and material specialists to really understand and put into context the
various strands of information recovered. In addition, knowing what remains under-
represented in the archaeological record (such as domestic finds) holds as much impor-
tance for future development as the positive evidence we have. One of the aims of this
project has been to highlight, for the benefit of curatorial planning decisions, the things
that need to be most protected, most thoroughly investigated and most widely reported
on. Birmingham has produced many exciting archaeological discoveries, which have

\textsuperscript{33} Patrick and Rátkai 2009.
\textsuperscript{34} Carver 1996, 45.
\textsuperscript{35} Cattell et al 2002.
added colour and detail to its now much longer and more varied history. The story is by no means complete and work in Britain’s second city will continue to surprise archaeologists, historians and residents alike.

(A Forster and S Rátkai) 36

WEST YORKSHIRE

A STAMFORD WARE POTTERY KILN IN PONTEFRACT

186. Pontefract, former Simpson’s Malt Factory (SE 462 228). In January 2008 excavations by Archaeological Services WYAS were carried out on the site of the former Simpson’s Malt Factory, close to Monkhill railway station in Pontefract, in advance of new housing development by Rippon Homes (Fig 15). The investigations revealed, among other things, the remains of a medieval pottery kiln. The discovery is remarkable on two counts: first because there has never before been any hint of evidence for medieval pottery production in Pontefract; and secondly, and perhaps more significantly, because the kiln appears to have been firing vessels in fabrics and forms previously associated exclusively with Stamford in Lincolnshire.

Background

Pontefract’s origins lie in the pre-Conquest settlement of Taddencylf (modern Tanshelf) first documented in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year AD 947. The high status of Taddencylf is reflected in Symeon of Durham’s reference to it as a villa regia when writing in the 1120s and the manor’s importance in the late Anglo-Saxon period is reflected in its Domesday entry where it is recorded as having a church and a priest, a fishery and three mills, as well as alms for the poor within its boundary, assumed to be St Nicholas’ hospital. 37 Archaeological evidence for Taddencylf largely exists in the

---

36 The authors would like to thank the advice and support of Mike Hodder (Birmingham City Council) and Ian George (English Heritage). Work was undertaken by a consortium of specialists managed by Amanda Forster (Birmingham Archaeology) and Stephanie Rátkai (independent pottery specialist and archaeologist). Project specialists include Josephine Adams (church archaeology), Nigel Baker (town plan analysis), Ian Baxter (zooarchaeology), Megan Brickley (osteology), David Higgins (clay pipe), Shane Kelleher (buildings), Quitta Mould (finds), Eleanor Ramsey (GIS and mapping) and Martin Smith (funerary archaeology).

37 Faull and Stinson 1986.
form of an extensive pre-Conquest cemetery, seemingly focused around two churches on The Booths and on the castle site, but there is little evidence for any contemporary settlement. Only on the castle site is there some small but definite evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity. It is concluded that the pre-Conquest manor was an extensive area containing a number of dispersed settlements. These would have had an administrative and religious focus at Kirkby, where the churches and hospital lay adjacent to the later castle promontory, which seems a likely candidate for the pre-Conquest royal township. Following the Conquest and the establishment of the castle, Kirkby became the site of the Cluniac priory of St John and parish church of All Saints, both founded by c 1090 (Fig 1). Around the latter a small commercial area developed separately to the newly created borough to the west of the castle.

The pottery kiln site would have been situated on a limestone ridge on the NE edge of the early-medieval town, to the east of what became the detached township of Monkhill, and to the north-east of the site of St John's priory. Even with the benefit of hindsight one might be forgiven for not seeing the signs of this potting activity from the results of previous archaeological work in the town: in 1874 a spouted pitcher was found during the construction of the railway line immediately to the north of the site, and fragments of similar Stamford Ware pitchers and jugs were found during the excavation of the medieval roadside ditch when part of the Cluniac cemetery was excavated in 1987, within 50 m of the kiln. While neither of these findings should have alerted anybody to the close proximity of a production site, it is noteworthy that John Hurst, writing about the Stamford Ware recovered during the 1960s excavation at the priory, found it remarkable that the site should yield so many (four) Stamford Ware jugs when, at that time, only six other examples (not counting spouted pitchers) were known from the whole country.

One of the reasons why there has been virtually no evidence for this kiln site until now is almost certainly due to the fact that the land had been completely remodelled by the creation of the malt factory complex in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, all surface evidence of potting having been scoured away, with the surviving truncated archaeological features having since been sealed by reinforced concrete. It was only by chance that the site of this one kiln (and there could have been others) was included within one of four areas selected for open-area excavation on the basis of earlier evaluation by trial trenching. Medieval pottery was recovered during the evaluation work, but there is no specific reference to Stamford-type wares. However, the fact that a tubular spouted jug in ‘Fine White ware’ was noted suggests that the kiln products were included in a broad ‘Fine ware, Sandy ware, Gritty ware’ category of late 11th- to 15th-century date.

The Kiln (Figs 16–17)

The kiln, excavated by P Weston, consisted of a large 1 m deep ovate pit. In plan it measured approximately 3.5 x 2.2 m and had a central longitudinal partition, 2.2 m long and 0.3 m wide. Its single flue was connected to a smaller sub-rectangular stoking pit (2.7 x 1.9 m), its size and form overall being not dissimilar to the pottery kiln investigated at Stamford School in 1963. Two phases of kiln use were identified. The initial kiln pits were simply fashioned out of the Magnesian limestone bedrock and probably saw use until the central limestone partition was too degraded to act as a central support. A second phase of use saw the limestone kiln pit lined with a thick layer of plastic.
blue clay, which at floor level had incorporated the remains of near complete vessels left over from the previous firing. The new lining had been furnished with body sherds of pottery embedded into its surface — similar to those recorded in the kiln found at Wharf Road, Stamford — as a measure to reduce shrinkage of the clay lining during
Blue clay was also used for the construction of fire bars, the remnants of which were found collapsed into the kiln pit. Around the edge of the pit were eight equidistant large rectangular recesses (c. 300 x 100 mm and approximately 100 mm deep). These were filled with unfired blue clay containing the voids of the wooden members used to support the fire bars before they became fixed and anchored upon firing. The central partition on the kiln had been rebuilt in stone on the stub of the former limestone partition, and its surfaces rendered in white plaster which had been beaten into place with a flat stick whilst wet.

The pottery

Although a significant quantity of medieval pottery was recovered from surrounding features, the vast majority of the assemblage (215 kg) came from the kiln itself. Two principal fabrics were represented, the commonest closely resembling the white Stamford Ware fabrics from Stamford itself and, in general terms of appearance, it is difficult to distinguish this pottery from ‘true’ Stamford Ware. The other fabric is an orange to pale red oxidised fabric, which is somewhat softer and slightly sandier than the Stamford-type fabric and was often finished with a coat of white slip to simulate the appearance of the white Stamford-type ware. At this early stage it is not clear whether there is a chronological distinction between the use of the different clays, although some experimental firing would suggest that the orange-red fabrics were made from the same blue clay used to line the interior of the kiln in its second phase of use.

Vessel forms in the two fabrics appear, at present, to be identical and certainly the commoner decorative motifs seem the same in both cases. The range of vessel forms may not be as wide as at Stamford, with many of the smaller forms and the pedestal based vessels being absent. Spouted pitchers appear the commonest vessel-type produced, the spouts characterised by a straight neck with limited profiling and clubbed and thickened rims. Jugs with simple pulled spouts are a rarer form, but bottles and jars were also identified, together with a smaller number of other forms, including straight-sided bowls. Bases, although clearly defined with a sharp wall/base angle, are generally of a sagging form, with only a small number of flat bases. One base type not documented at Stamford consists of a wheel-thrown ring-foot base that was attached to the sagging bases to form a pedestal; this, together with the wheel stamp decoration (see below), suggests a degree of innovation and individuality in technique when compared to the products from Stamford itself.

By far the commonest decorative motif is the wheel stamp (Fig 18), seemingly more prevalent than in Stamford. The Pontefract products bear the design in profusion and it has sometimes been applied to such a degree that it seems that there must have been little regard for the final appearance of the vessel. Impressed or combed horizontal wavy lines were also used, but usually in combination with wheel stamps. The majority of strap handles are plain with a dished cross-section, but a small number are decorated with thumb impressions along the edges, while others bear applied and finger-impressed strips running down the centre; twisted strips were also present but are rare. It is notable that the rouletted design, common on vessels from Stamford, is entirely absent from the Pontefract assemblage. The range of glazes was limited, with thin and patchy green glaze typical of the Stamford products from c. 1150 onwards is notably absent.
Dating

No formal dating of the pottery has been undertaken, but some potential parallels for the Pontefract forms have been identified in a mid-12th-century group from Stamford.46 This date for the kiln seems to gain endorsement through the presence of the Stamford Ware jugs in the Cluniac priory deposits — assuming that they originated from this kiln — and through the stratigraphic association of the kiln’s products with other well-documented 11th-/12th-century material from features excavated on the Simpson’s Malt Factory site. However, the preliminary results from the scientific dating programme, including archaeomagnetic dating and radiocarbon determinations, do not concur with the provisional dates attributed on the basis of pottery forms. An archaeomagnetic date based upon material from the kiln wall has produced a result consistent with a date between AD 580–1014.47 While the range of this determination is unsatisfactorily broad, it is unequivocally pre-Conquest, a fact that now seems to be borne out by the radiocarbon determinations on plant material from the basal layers from both the kiln and the stoking pit. At the time of writing only three of a possible seven radiocarbon results have been received. The 95% confidence intervals of the calibrated dates straddle the Conquest period (SUERC-22828, 1020 ± 30BP: cal AD 900–1150; SUERC-22829, 1035 ± 35BP: cal AD 890–1040; and SUERC-22830, 1010 ± 30BP: cal AD 970–1160).

46 A Vince and J Young pers comm.
47 Greenwood and Batt 2009.

FIG 18
Pontefract: complete bottle with wheel-stamp decoration. Height c 20 cm. Photograph by P Gwilliam, © Archaeological Services WYAS.
These ranges would seemingly accommodate the initial pottery dating, but the 68% confidence intervals of all three dates fall within the much tighter range of cal AD 980–1030, suggesting that it is more than likely that the kiln was last fired in the pre-Conquest period.48

Significance of the findings

The importance of the discovery of this kiln, its associated pottery assemblage and its dating can scarcely be underestimated from the point of view of understanding the production and circulation of pottery in the early medieval period. Equally, assuming that the potter(s) responsible for the site were originally from Stamford (a very distinct possibility given the similarities in form and decoration), it is likely that the site will provide further information pertaining to the organisation of pottery production in social terms.

It has previously been assumed that Stamford Ware was only manufactured in Stamford between the mid-9th and the mid-13th centuries, and exported in a finished state through markets and via peripatetic elite and ecclesiastical households. The increasing quantity of Stamford Ware recognised on sites in Derbyshire and Yorkshire, notably York, has long been interpreted as evidence for the wide distribution of this ware and the long-standing importance of Stamford as a centre of production serving a very large area of the country. Indeed, the early hypothesis of a separate northern production centre to explain the York Stamford wares has long been abandoned,49 particularly since Kilmurry’s work, and the ‘Northern Stamford wares’ attributed to the Stamford kilns.50 Now the attribution to at least some of these Stamford Ware vessels, and other incidences of Stamford Ware in the north, certainly in Saxo-Norman contexts, must be in doubt and an origin in Pontefract, or perhaps even other production centres elsewhere, must be considered a possibility.

For Pontefract, assuming a pre-Conquest date is upheld, the pottery kiln provides some further evidence of the late-Saxon Taddenscylyf and also offers some further explanation as to why the kiln’s products have never been identified in previous work in the town — there having been no excavations of any pre-Conquest settlement areas. That the pottery has been found in notable quantities in later medieval features in close proximity to the kiln might reasonably be explained by residuality due to the dispersal of waster heaps.

Future Work

So far only one kiln has been found by chance at Pontefract. Unless this was the result of small-scale, short-term production by one relocated potter, there would seem good reason to suppose the existence of other kilns in the area. Further archaeological investigations in advance of the proposed housing development will test this possibility. Even on its own, however, the kiln’s discovery raises many research questions which it is anticipated will be addressed with the aid of English Heritage funding. Issues to be addressed will include aspects of manufacturing technology, the implications for the understanding of the pottery industry in N England, the role of migrant potters and investigation of demonstrable links between the pottery industries at Stamford and Pontefract at the same period. Towards this end it is proposed that petrological and chemical comparison be made between material from Stamford and elsewhere with the different fabrics identified from the Pontefract kiln.

(I Roberts and C Cumberpatch)

48 J Meadows pers comm.
49 Dunning 1956; Swinnerton 1959.
50 Holdsworth 1978, 6; Mainman 1990, 463.
A Norse and later medieval settlement with probable early-medieval occupation at Ballachly

Chapel Hill, Ballachly (ND 1607 3024). Investigations continued at the site of Ballachly (Caithness), a small contoured hill situated in the valley of the Dunbeath waterway, approximately 1.2 km inland from the North Sea, with the sponsorship of Historic Scotland and CASE. The 2008 season marked the beginning of a three-year project, led by a team from the University of Nottingham, aiming to investigate features excavated in 2007, in addition to new trenches within the scheduled area. Objectives included establishing the nature of geophysical anomalies recognised in the resistivity survey and investigating the derivation of Wall A, one of two large radial walls present on the site. In addition, ORCA undertook a first geo-radar survey to assess the value of this technique here.

Known locally as Chapel Hill or ‘House of Peace’, the site’s reputed monastic nature has been alluded to in antiquarian literature and claimed from discoveries of two early-Christian inscribed stones, found in the vicinity. One of these, assigned a 7th-century date, is a cross-slab which depicts a cross either being suspended or on a standard, along with elements of a chi-rho and the associated symbol of a fish, while the other has been given a later 10th-century bracket, consisting of fragments of an interlace cross of the Kingarth style. Additionally, the site’s suggested ecclesiastical connections have derived from the series of large walls radiating outwards from the hill, along with another which encloses the site’s total area of c. 4 hectares; noticeable also is the considerable depth of build-up and agricultural soil in certain areas of the site. Below we outline the main results from this year’s trenches.

Beginning with the unscheduled area, Trench II (Fig 19), situated south-west of Chapel Hill, was enlarged to further investigate features discovered in 2007. Evidence suggested augmentation of the natural stratigraphy around one of the projecting terraces at the base of the hill. A probable boundary wall was encountered with a downwards-sloping scarp; photographic evidence attests its continuation around the terrace, and with the actual wall destruction dated by a 17th-century Charles II coin. Although no definite features emerged to indicate a ditch, a large stone deposit at the trench end by the river edge may have been a dumped layer serving as banking. Potentially the ditch was once part of a monastic vallum, although there is no firm evidence yet to substantiate this.

Trench III was extended towards Chapel Hill and Wall A, to investigate a linear feature indicated by resistivity and a cobbled surface. Approximately 9 m wide and oriented at a roughly 45 degree angle to the wall, the function of the cobbling is uncertain, although a working surface for an industrial area is plausible, based on the considerable amounts of slag uncovered, along with a piece of lead waste. Sherds of 14th- or 15th-century pottery, including imported German stoneware and local late-Norse fabrics, may support the presence of a former market area. Extending beneath this surface was a deposition layer of loose gravel and large boulders, radiocarbon-dated to cal AD 1010–1160 (SUERC-21062), but perhaps denoting a natural accumulation through considerable occupation and plough activity.

Trench IV, situated in close proximity to Wall A and within the scheduled area, targeted the large radiating wall and its perceived blocked portion. This was standing in the late-Norse period and was probably not constructed much earlier than that; the upper portion and its gap are perhaps much later, perhaps of the 15th or 16th century. As it was also apparent that the ‘break’ did not carry on to the bottom of the wall or extend much below the present ground surface, several questions about the phasing of

---

52 Craven 1886; Morrison 1996, 70.
its construction are raised, particularly as there are no traces of a pathway or road leading up to it. A considerable depth of topsoil had accumulated over the archaeological deposits of Trench IV, and at 0.7–0.8 m in depth an extensive dark layer revealed a large amount of evidence for burning, with slag and burnt clay, along with pottery preliminarily dated from the late Norse period; this may relate to either large-scale industrial activity or a widespread episode of destruction. Sealed beneath were a number of archaeological deposits and features, the earliest of which was a possible bank of compacted stones and gravel. Running parallel to the bank was a section of walling 1.0 m in width (Fig 20), whose build suggests an early-Christian rather than a late Iron-Age date; it appears to have been in use prior to Wall A’s construction given its
different alignment. Efforts to level the area between bank and earlier wall saw infilling with a soil and clay mixture, containing fragments of 6th- to 7th-century pottery. Although no floor surfaces have yet been revealed, the wall likely formed part of a structure relating to the early-Christian occupational phase, being subsequently demolished, possibly for re-use of the stone elsewhere, as the lack of tumble is suggestive of a deliberate act.

After the wall’s demolition, a build-up layer of brown soil containing burnt sheep bone and charcoal is indicative of a dispersed surface midden; cut into the brown build-up layer were a number of features associated with craft-working activity, including a hearth which contained small fragments of burnt clay, perhaps remains of clay...
moulds, while another feature was associated with burning and fragments of kiln furniture. The extensive deposits of burnt material are indicative of industrial activity nearby, being radiocarbon-dated to the 13th and 14th centuries AD, which corresponds with the discovery of both locally-made and grass-marked pottery of the later Norse period, as well as large amounts of slag and iron ore or haematite.

Trench VI yielded similar burnt material deposits, which included late-Norse pottery and slag, as well as a possible Viking-period bead. Located across a low-resistance linear irregularity (later reinforced by the geo-radar survey which suggested a deep ditch-like feature), the mixed gravel, stone and boulder make-up of the trench’s natural appeared cut by a ditch, c 1.1 m wide and 0.75 m deep. Excavation indicated a revetment on its E side, and the upper fills contained pottery, burnt bone and charcoal. Radiocarbon-dated to between the 9th and 11th centuries, the ditch itself appears to run at an angle parallel to the base of the hill — perhaps again a putative monastic vallum.

Overall, excavations at Ballachly have so far produced a sequence of events from the Mesolithic to the early 20th century, with uncovered microliths establishing the presence of prehistoric hunter-gatherers, who perhaps used the hilltop as a vantage point. Most probably the site witnessed monastic activity in the early Christian period, and perhaps fully into the 10th century, but related structural elements remain to be traced. However, the site’s industrial and commercial aspects seemingly came to outweigh any religious attachment, with activity by the 15th century largely directed to commercial and iron production. Conceivably the Continental links and outside trade indicated by the German Siegburg stoneware and known repute of the area for its iron extraction reflects affiliation with the location of Magnusburgh, the ‘lost’ 17th-century settlement in the vicinity. Further investigation is key to expanding our knowledge of the site sequence; work in 2009 will investigate the relationship between the summit of Chapel Hill and the structures discovered in 2008, as well as the function of the structures on the hill itself.

(L. Laing, E Oakley, A Sassin and I Tompsett)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published sources

Banks, I and Hooper, J 2003, Chapel Hill, Ballachly, Dunbeath, GUARD Project 1002, Glasgow: Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division.
Bickley, W B and Hill, J 1890, Survey of the Borough and Manor or Demesne Foreign of Birmingham made in the First Year of the Reign of Queen Mary, 1553, Birmingham: C Copper and Co.
Dodd, A (ed) 2003, Oxford before the University. The Late Saxon and Norman Archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the Defences and the Town, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph 17, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology.
Fisher, I 2001, Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands, Edinburgh: RCAHMS.
Hall, R 1984, The Excavations at York: The Viking Dig, York: Bodley Head.
Hurst, J G 1965, ‘Stamford Ware, a group of jars’, in Bellamy 1965, 120–2.
Unpublished sources
Cumberpatch, C G 2005, Medieval pottery from six sites in Pontefract, AOC Archaeology Group, unpubl rep.
Greenwood, D P and Batt, C M 2009, Archaeomagnetic dating of a pottery kiln from the excavations at Simpson’s Malt, Pontefract, University of Bradford, unpubl rep.