Report of the Portable Antiquities Scheme 2009

Edited by MICHAEL LEWIS

GEOFF EGAN (1951–2010)

The sad and untimely death of Geoff Egan, shortly before Christmas 2010, leaves a gap that cannot be filled. Since 2004, Geoff had been employed to work with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) as Finds Adviser for Medieval & Post Medieval Objects (part-time at first, then full-time) and he was also editor of the Scheme’s contribution to Post-Medieval Archaeology. He started working with metal-detectorists and other finders (principally mudlarks) in the 1970s, long before it was fashionable for archaeologists to do so, and was one of the first people to recognize the contribution that metal-detecting could make to archaeology. While Geoff will be best remembered for his knowledge of medieval and post-medieval finds, he had a much broader knowledge than that. He was passionate about archaeology; almost every hour of his life was dedicated to researching archaeological finds, talking and writing about them. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him or had the pleasure of working with him.

REPORT OF THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME 2009

The Portable Antiquities Scheme exists to record archaeological finds found by the public; it was established as a pilot project in 1997, expanding to the whole of England and Wales in 2003. The Scheme currently employs 40 locally based archaeologists (known as Finds Liaison Officers), five period specialists (Finds Advisers), and a Central Unit of five others based at the British Museum, as part of the Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure; also working for the Scheme are interns (thanks to Headley Trust and IfA funding), volunteers and self-recorders (finders trained to record their own finds). The PAS is (principally) funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and since 1 April 2011 fully managed by the British Museum.

All finds recorded by the PAS are recorded on its database (www.finds.org.uk), which is published online and also made available to local Historic Environment Records. Researchers who are registered with the PAS benefit from full access to PAS finds spot data. The Scheme is also keen to know about researchers using PAS data in order to highlight how this data is being used.

In 2009, the PAS recorded 66,374 finds, of which 10,016 (15%) were post-medieval or modern in date; the Scheme is necessarily selective in recording post-1700 finds. These are mostly recovered by metal-detectorists (88%), including mudlarks on the Thames, who are responsible for many of the most important post-medieval finds recovered in recent times.

The finds in this report have been selected because of their rarity (whether as exceptional survivals or unusually complete) or particular interest. Their bias is London-centric, since the foreshore (particularly the Thames) provides superior environmental conditions for survival in comparison to arable farmland, the latter being where most metal-detecting takes place.¹

Items found in 2009 include practical objects, such as an early copper-alloy skillet from Congleton, Cheshire (No. 1), which is remarkable since such artefacts are very rarely found so complete; usually only the legs or handles are recovered, of which there are numerous examples on the PAS database. Another find, perhaps symbolizing a period of medical advancement, is a lead-alloy syringe from the City of London (No. 4); few 17th-century (or even 18th-century) syringes have been recorded by the PAS, and most of those are from London. More an item of extravagance, but still of
A SELECTION OF FINDS RECORDED DURING 2009

1. Cheshire, Congleton (PAS: NARC-3775C7; finder N. Gidman; recorder T. Brindle, Staffordshire & West Midlands FLO); the skillet was found wedged between large rocks, presumably deliberately placed as it was discovered.

Almost complete cast copper-alloy tripod skillet (Fig. 1) with two integral legs remaining, but reduced in length by wear, and lacking feet which were probably originally present; one of the legs is slightly shorter than the other (32.7mm and 44.4mm in length respectively) and the third, below the handle, is missing, leaving a hole in the base of the skillet. The incomplete handle (33.5mm, surviving length) projects from the upper part of the skillet and has a curved brace, which is attached to the bowl just above the missing leg. The exterior of the skillet is extensively covered with a thin but very rough deposit, probably calcium carbonate, almost certainly acquired post-deposition. Where the surface of the metal is visible it has the texture typical of a loam-cast vessel. The skillet is decorated with two wire mouldings running around the bowl, approximately in the centre, separated by a gap of 7.3mm. The base has a clear sooty deposit indicative of having been placed in a fire, as does one of the sides. The interior is extremely smooth, suggesting that it was well maintained. Dimensions: base diameter, 113mm, flaring to 135mm at the rim; height, 53mm; thickness (walls), 3.3mm.

Roderick Butler and Christopher Green, who examined the skillet, suggest it may be a very early example. The bowl is proportionally shallower and wider than recorded 17th-century skillets, and is more comparable with a cauldron recovered from the Mary Rose; that example shows evidence of much use, the front legs being shortened through fire degradation, and therefore was likely to be of some age when the ship sank in 1545.2 Another early example, recorded by Butler and Green, has comparable bowl proportions and was cast with a scratchmark believed to be that of a South-East foundry active c. 1500.3 Perhaps the closest parallel is a skillet illustrated by Eveleigh in the National Museum of Ireland, but of unknown provenance.4 This and the Congleton skillet both have shallow, slightly flared bowls, as well as features (they are decorated with wire mouldings around the bowl and the handles of both are supported by curved braces) thought to be indicative of an early date.

Butler and Green believe that the Congleton skillet had a long working life; the rim of the bowl being damaged and split, the front legs fire-degraded and the vessel probably discarded when the back leg became detached, taking a chunk of the bowl with it, although the handle break seems relatively clean. It appears likely that this skillet pre-dates any so far recorded, hence its significance.

2. Nottinghamshire, Beckingham (PAS: DENOB5D251; finder P. Slack; recorder R. Atherton, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire FLO).

Cast lead-alloy hornbook, dating to between c. 1550 and c. 1700, which consists of a rectangular
No. 1: cast copper-alloy skillet, 16th century, from Congleton, Cheshire (drawing by Jemma Elliot).
sheet, with moulded design of the alphabet arranged on five lines: A:B:C:d: / E:F:G:H:I: / K:L:M:N: / [O:]P:q:R S(retrograde) / T V W X y(retrograde) z: (Fig. 2). The top left-hand corner of the object is broken, so whatever came before the A (which is placed part-way along the line — see below) is missing. The first four lines are separated by a double line with regularly spaced transverse lines running between, and the last two lines are separated by a plain line. It has a triple line border, with regularly spaced transverse lines running between, at the top edge; a double line border, with regularly spaced transverse line running between, at the bottom edge; and a plain line border on either side. At the centre of the bottom edge there is a flat rectangular projection with the moulded initials WI, perhaps a maker’s mark or the initials of the owner. This projection, also found on a lead hornbook from near Sleaford, Lincolnshire,\(^5\) mimics the handle on wooden hornbooks. The left-hand side of the projection is damaged and an L-shaped piece of lead found with the hornbook may have been attached at an angle here, although if so its function would be unclear. The hornbook appears to have been bent in two places and subsequently straightened. Dimensions: length, 63mm; width, 47.6mm; thickness, 1.6–3.2mm; weight, 40.75g.

Hornbooks were teaching tablets that usually contained the alphabet (as in this case) or the Lord’s Prayer, and seem to have been in use from the 16th century into the 17th century. The term ‘hornbook’, although commonly used for lead tablets, is perhaps misleading since true hornbooks were made out of wood onto which printed paper would have been mounted and then covered with a thin sheet of transparent horn for protection. Lead hornbooks are presumed to be cheaper versions of these. Hazel Forsyth and Geoff Egan observed that the mistakes made on them, such as reversed or omitted letters in their alphabets (as on the Beckingham hornbook), suggest that they were produced for children in families where literacy was not developed, which may also explain their primarily rural distribution.\(^6\) With the exception of examples from Bishops Hull, Somerset, and West Overton, Wiltshire, hornbooks recorded by the PAS are found in the North-West, Yorkshire and the East Midlands.\(^7\)


Incomplete lead-alloy openwork toy coach of Forsyth and Egan Type 1,\(^8\) which would have been
assembled from eight component parts: 1) a sheet that would have been folded to form the base and sides, complete with horses; 2) the back panel; 3) the front panel; 4) the roof; and (5–8) four axles, each with a wheel. Of these parts, the majority of the sides and horses remain, along with two axles with wheels, three of the four axle loops, and the front panel with the coach-driver; the back panel and roof have been lost along with two axles and wheels (Fig. 3). The surviving elements show the coach to be similar to other components of the late 17th century found in London.9

The sides are almost complete, although one (the left) is better preserved than the other. The sides mirror each other; matching Forsyth and Egan’s Design 5.10 The slightly trapezoidal frame has two horizontal divisions: above a solid base band of foliate mouldings is a line of arcing arches with knops on the uprights to suggest turning. A square panel beside the window, towards the rear of the carriage, contains a single ring with ring-and-dot collars. A male passenger with a small hat, brushed-up hair, tight-fitting doublet and trunk hose looks out of the door. Complete axle loops survive at four corners. The side sections of the sides, each with nine arcades, adjoin the pole which holds the two horses at the point where the front panel with driver is inserted into the base; this is attached with tabs. The horses match Forsyth and Egan’s Design 9,11 but the left-hand horse is better preserved than the other; the head of the former is missing, and the latter is extremely damaged. The harness equipment includes a headstall, bridle, reins, leading rein, rein hanger, loin strap, breechband and diagonally hatched pad cloth. The horses’ legs (seven of which remain) have been moulded to suggest movement. Two complete elaborate wheels with axles remain, comparable to Forsyth and Egan’s Design 1.12 The wheels have six turned and arched spokes and a beaded or nailed hoop. The apex of each arch and the junctions between the spokes are secured by collars.

The front panel of the coach is an openwork rectangle with a standing driver, like Forsyth and Egan’s Design 6.13 The diagonally hatched frame is slightly wider at the top and three diagonal struts support the moulded standing figure of a coachman holding a whip in his raised (right) hand and wearing a high-crowned, conical hat, doublet, trunk hose, nether stockings and garter.

The ornate openwork of such miniature coaches may represent the opulent carving and other embellishments of the finest coaches of the aristocracy at the time. Dimensions: height, 39.1mm; width, 64.84mm; thickness, 18.9mm.


Lead-alloy (pewter) syringe, dating to c. 1600 (Fig. 4). It has a cylindrical barrel with an integral flat end cap and the remains of the spout in the centre. At the opposite end the barrel steps out slightly to form a finger flange for grip. There is a separate cupped end cap which sits on top of the barrel and has a central perforation for the plunger. The plunger has a large circular thumb rest, decorated with a moulded five-petalled flower with central pellet. The barrel is marked with three bands of three engraved lines around its body. Similar lines also mark the cupped end cap. There is no evidence of maker’s marks. Dimensions: length, 125.91mm; diameter, 21.95mm; weight, 99.64g.

Five other syringes have been recorded by the PAS, all but two of them from London. Of these, a complete copper-alloy example is most similar in form to the City of London syringe, and was, also discovered by the same finders on the Thames foreshore.14

5. Surrey, Epsom (PAS: SUR-23EF78; finder M. Davison; recorder D. Williams, Surrey FLO).

Large gilded copper-alloy circular horse-harness decoration, bearing the arms of the House of Stuart (Fig. 5). These arms are shown on a rounded central circular boss, encircled by a garter bearing the incuse motto of the Order of the Garter (in Old French): HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE (usually translated as ‘Evil to him who thinks evil’). The shield is supported by a lion (dexter) and a unicorn (sinister); the lion (body right, head forward facing) is crowned and has an elongated body, and the unicorn (facing left) is chained. A royal crown sits above the boss containing the arms. The frame which surrounds the arms comprises curling vegetal forms against a field of multiple punched pits. At the base is a scroll bearing the incuse royal motto DIEU * ET * MON * DROIT (‘God and my right’). The back is hollow, and within the dish so formed are the remains of an iron attachment. At the top and bottom is a pair of projecting rounded knobs, the purpose of which is unclear.

This object, which is of the highest quality, was probably lost from a horse belonging to the Royal Household, although it is unclear to which part of the harness it would have been attached. If it was one of a pair, it may have been from the bridle bit; alternatively, it could have come from a band at the breast or rump. Similar bosses, of mainly 17th–century date, bear the Prince of Wales’
FIG. 3
No. 3: lead-alloy openwork toy coach, late 16th century, from the City of London, London.
feathers or other non-Royal devices.\textsuperscript{15} Additional evidence for a royal connection is provided by the known visits on two occasions, in 1662 and 1664, of Charles II to The Durdens (Durdans), a large house near Epsom, in the vicinity of which this object was found, and it is plausible that the decoration was lost on one of these visits.\textsuperscript{16}


Lead cloth seal from Kent, dating to c. 1650 (Fig. 6). It has three lines of relief-stamped lettering — (3 pellets) MO / KENT. / (3 pellets) IS — inside a circle of pellets. Geoff Egan, who studied the object, identified it as a four-disc alnage seal, of a type, and alnager combination (\textit{i.e.} MO and IS), previously unknown.\textsuperscript{17} Dimensions: diameter, 16.9mm; weight, 2.51g.


Copper-alloy sundial with moving fitting, of 17th-century date (Fig. 7). Its rectangular-sectioned dial consists of two rings: a circular band (11.9mm wide), with an encircling central groove and a thin sliding ring that sits inside the groove. The sliding
ring is made from sheet metal and is slightly concave to make a neat fit with the groove in the wide ring of the dial. Each end of the sliding sheet-metal ring has been folded back on itself a small distance, and these two opposing curves have been fastened together in a square-shaped clasp (approximately 3.8mm × 3.8mm), which serves both as a fixed pinhole and as a handle to rotate the sliding ring. In this way, the pinhole of the dial, through which light is directed, can be easily aligned with the correct stage on the scales marked on the dial. A large attachment loop has been pierced through at two parallel vertical points on the dial. Attached to this loop is a wire ring.

The outer surface of the dial has the initial letters of the months of the year incised in a graduated scale. On either side of the scale are two pairs of incised parallel lines that slope outwards towards the central sliding ring to create a decorative frame for the scale. January to June are indicated left to right on the upper half of the dial, above the central groove (if the attachment loop is at the right); these
letters are stamped I F M A M I. By inverting the dial (so that the attachment loop is at the left) the months of July to December can be read from left to right on the upper half: these are I A S O N D (the earlier months are now upside-down on the lower half of the dial). When the dial is orientated this way the markings on the inner surface are legible from left to right and the right way up.

The inner surface (essentially the clock face) is arranged as three horizontal bands, one for each season and each marked with a letter: S for Summer, H for Harvest and W for Winter. The hours are marked with incised lines that are cleverly angled to reflect the angle that the sunlight will be directed into the dial, sloping away from 12 to increasing or decreasing extents. The half-hour is indicated by punched dots. The two terminals of the attachment loop that have been pierced through are also visible on the interior surface (to the left of the marked clock face if it is orientated the right way up).

The sundial is an incredibly well-preserved example of its type: both surfaces have maintained a bright yellow-gold colour, although the exterior is slightly more worn and also has some slight patches of darker discolouration. An almost identical example (in both form and size) was found on the Isle of Wight in 2010.18 Dimensions: diameter, 38.81mm; width, 11.9mm; thickness, 1.82mm; weight, 18.15g.

8. Lincolnshire, Owersby (PAS: SWYOR-3BE202; finder G. Lawson; recorder A. Downes, South & West Yorkshire FLO).

Lead-alloy medallion, which has been converted into a child’s whirligig (or buzz-wheel) toy (Fig. 8); when mounted on a looped string or cord these items could be used to produce a buzzing sound, and also may have been used to inflict pain on an unsuspecting friend for fun!19

The (original) medallion is an English one commemorating Frederick II of Prussia (r. 1740–86).20 Obverse: forward-facing, draped bust of a male figure, with the surviving legend [FRED]ERICUS [RE]X. Reverse: mounted horseman, riding left, possibly giving orders using a baton to indicate a distant city, and the surviving legend [?REX] DUX [E]T MILES (King, Duke and Soldier). The exergue has been damaged by later modifications, but the final ‘7’ is visible.

The medallion has been modified by cutting the edge into zig-zags and piercing two holes in the centre to make a whirligig. The dating of these toys is uncertain, but Geoff Egan and Hazel Forsyth suggest a 17th- to 18th-century date for many of the examples found in London, although only one has come from an archaeological context (dated 1675–1700) and some are made using 16th-century numismatica.21 Dimensions: diameter, 36.1mm; thickness, 2.2mm; weight, 13g.

9. Cleveland, Loftus (PAS: DUR-2F2D86; finder R. Campbell; recorder F. McIntosh, North East FLO).

Cast lead two-dimensional horse and rider figurine, of 17th-century date (Fig. 9); the rider’s head has broken off at the neck, but was also recovered by the finder. The front of the object is decorated in relief, although the reverse is flat and undecorated; it is therefore of Forsyth and Egan’s Type 4.22

The male rider sits facing forward, wearing a conical hat. His face appears zoomorphic, and he seems to have shoulder-length hair. His right arm...
No. 9: cast lead horse and rider figurine, 17th century, from Loftus, Cleveland.

is outstretched towards the horse’s neck (as if to hold the reins on the hidden side) and the left arm is bent, forming a triangle, with the hand on his hip. There are four large circular buttons down his coat, and linear decoration to form a ruff, also embellishing the edges of his coat. The rider’s leg(s) are broken.

The horse, facing left, looks down; its legs have broken just below its body. The mane is picked out by vertical lines. There is a decorative cross on the neck which has bulbous terminals. The reins come from the shoulder to the mouth, leaving an openwork area. On the body of the horse there is a double horizontal line connected by vertical lines, which (probably) represents part of a decorative harness. Below this are further vertical lines, although the exact pattern is not clear due to the break. On the rump is another cross. Geoff Egan noted that this is an unusual variety of horse and rider; it does not appear to be a soldier or hunter, as no weapon is shown. Dimensions: height, 40.42mm; length, 58.32mm; thickness, 2.8mm; weight, 18.9g.


Incomplete lead-alloy toy clock, dated to the 17th or 18th century (Fig. 10). Its circular clock face has the numbers I, II, III, IIII, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, in the usual manner, with a pellet between each number; there is a twisted rope border above and below the numbers. Its hour and minute hand point to XII and VI (respectively), and a horizontal bar connects III and IX. Above the clock face is a single-arched crown. The frame beneath the clock face is incomplete, with the right side and the lower part missing. To each side of the clock face are openwork scrolls. Below this is a band of six surviving vertical twisted rope pillars, with a central pellet on each. The lower part of the clock is largely incomplete, with only the left side present. Placed centrally beneath the pillars (described above) are three ring-and-dot motifs arranged in a trefoil. To the left is what appears to be one side of a pointed arch, the main decorative element being a quatrefoil in a twisted rope border. The side edge has some scrolled decoration.

This toy clock is unlike any of the examples previously recorded from London; its openwork frame precludes it being a pocket watch, and the crown above marks it as unusual if the object was intended to be a toy long-case clock or a building. Instead Hazel Forsyth, who examined the object, suggests that it could be a large, elaborate bracket clock. Dimensions: length, 33.33mm; width, 25.56mm; thickness, 0.90mm; weight, 2.89g.
FIG. 10
No. 10: incomplete lead-alloy toy clock, 17th/18th century, from Southwark, Greater London.

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NOTES

1 It is important to note that searching the Thames foreshore is licensed, and there is a mandatory requirement to report finds. For details see <http://www.pla.co.uk/display_fixedpage.cfm?id/4018/site/environment>; it is a requirement that all finds are reported to the PAS via the Museum of London. A permit scheme also operates on Crown Estate owned foreshore, see <www.thecrownestate.co.uk/metal-detecting>, which requires that archaeological finds found in England and Wales are reported to the PAS. There is a mandatory requirement to report all archaeological finds in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
2 Gardiner 2005, 323.
3 Butler & Green 2003, no. 146; this (unprovenanced) skillet was in the Butler Collection, but is now owned by the Museum of Somerset. Butler & Green 2003, nos 145 (a cauldron) and 147 (a mortar) have the same mark, but both are unprovenanced.
5 LIN-4DAAD5. Other lead hornbooks with the alphabet recorded by the PAS include LVPL-529, LVPL-2245, NCL-915595, LIN-339910, LIN-16BF84, SOMDOR-281FD2 and NLM-844D27.
6 Forsyth & Egan 2005, 29.
7 SOMDOR-281FD2, NMGW-E9EC71. Forsyth & Egan 2005, 29 noted only one example from London.
9 Forsyth & Egan 2005, 317–20, although this example from the City of London is more complete than any example published here. See also Egan 1996, fig. 37, which illustrates an almost complete toy coach in the Museum of London collections.
10 Forsyth & Egan 2005, 319, no. 10.5.
11 Forsyth & Egan 2005, 320, no. 10.9.
14 LON-D479A1. See also LON-E496A3, DENO-1106A4, LON-6EB9B4 and SUR-B62B22.
15 See LANCUM-49FFD6 and LANCUM-61D8E2 (both fleur-de-lis), and also SUR-7428F2.
16 John Evelyn writes in his diary for 1 September 1662: 'Being invited by Lo. Berkely, I went to Dur- dans, Epsom, where din’d his Majestie, the Queene, Duke, Dutchesse, Prince Rupert, Prince Edward, and abundance of Noblemen' (Bray 1890, 288).
In 2010 a cloth seal with a relief stamped legend seemingly identical to that on the seal from St Ann Without was found at Offley, Hertfordshire (BH-E96F73). For Kent cloth seals, see Egan 1987, 136–41, and Egan 1995, 36–7, fig. 18.

Several less well preserved sundials are recorded on the PAS database, indicating that such instruments were probably more common than previously thought (see NARC-C1A1B5, YORYM-FEEF07 and NLM-6F4A87; see also Turner 1980, 25).


Olding 2003, 166, no. 621. Thanks to Elke Bannicke, and also Barrie Cook and Philip Attwood, for the identification of the medallion.

Other whirligigs recorded by the PAS include one from Bridgnorth, Shropshire (HESH-901BA4), formed of sheet metal, and another from the City of London (LON-043672), made from a token.

Forsyth & Egan 2005, 149.

Forsyth & Egan 2005, 144–51, particularly 4.7 and 4.9; Egan 1996, figs 5–6.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


ABBREVIATIONS

FLA Finds Liaison (Officer) Assistant
FLO Finds Liaison Officer
IfA Institute for Archaeologists
PAS Portable Antiquities Scheme

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