

#### 54 Barham (near) (1), Kent: Anglo-Saxon silver-gilt sword-ring

**Date:** Late 6th century

**Finder:** Mr P Castle

**Date of discovery:** 10 May 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Cast silver-gilt sword ring inlaid with niello. Each face is grooved and gilt, one side is beaded, the other is plain. Around the circumference a central gilt beaded band is flanked by a nielloed zig-zag on one side and a row of nielloed triangles on the other. The ring shows signs of wear where it was originally attached to the sword hilt.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Diameter: 17mm; thickness: 6 mm; metal analysis: 89 per cent silver; weight: 7.51g.

**Discussion:** This ring would have been part of a fine early Anglo-Saxon sword hilt. Sword hilts with rings attached are known from a number of rich Kentish cemeteries and form a homogenous group characterised by the hilt construction, parcel gilding and niello work on the pommels (V I Evison, 'The Dover ring-sword and other sword rings and beads', *Archaeologia* 101 (1967), pp. 63–103). The earliest finds in this country date to the late 5th century, but the majority are found in richly furnished high status male burials of the 6th century (see W Menghin, *Das Schwert im Frühen Mittelalter*, Stuttgart, 1983).

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 60.

**Disposition:** Dover Museum wishes to acquire.

**Valuation:** To be determined.

A C EVANS

#### 55 Winchester area (1), Hampshire: Gold imitation coin pendant (Fig. 55)

**Date:** About 600

**Finder:** Mr M McGovern

**Date of discovery:** Before 1996

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** A gold imitation *solidus* of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I (AD 491–518) made into a pendant by soldering a small loop of ribbed gold sheet to the top.

**Dimensions:** Height (including loop): 24 mm; weight: 4.69g.

**Discussion:** Similar pendants, with coins or coin imitations of Continental origin, occur in some Anglo-Saxon graves of the 7th century AD, e.g. four looped examples in the British Museum, all with imitations of gold 'solidi' of East Roman and Frankish rulers, from a well-known burial of the earlier part of the century found at Sarre, Kent (R Jessup, *Anglo-Saxon Jewellery*, pl. xxvii). The find possibly, therefore, derives from a ploughed-out Anglo-Saxon grave of similar date, and its fine state of preservation would support such a hypothesis, although the alternative possibilities that it represents a casual loss or even a ritual deposition cannot be ruled out.

**Note:** The pendant was found before the Treasure Act came into force on 24 September 1997.

**Disposition:** Disclaimed; to be returned to finder.

B AGER



(fig. 55) Winchester area

#### 56 Margate, Kent: Anglo-Saxon Gold composite disc pendant

**Date:** 7th century

**Finder:** Mr J Laing

**Date of discovery:** Before 24 September 1997.

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Sheet gold disc pendant with beaded wire rim. In the centre is a hollow boss surrounded by a similar beaded wire border from which radiate the four arms of a cross, each composed of two parallel lengths of beaded wire. On three of the arms the wires are broadly equal in circumference; the fourth is formed of one thick and one thin strip. In each of the quadrants of the pendant is a single beaded wire figure-of-eight motif soldered to the disc. Flanking the arm of the cross immediately below the loop are two gold granules. The ribbed suspension loop is rolled under the rim on the front and terminates in an irregular V-shape on the back, which is plain. The object is in good condition and shows little sign of wear.

**Discussion:** Disc pendants of this type, which are always made of gold, are usually found in female graves and occur either singly or as part of a necklace incorporating other elements such as silver *bullae*, mounted gold coins or cabochon pendants, together with amethysts, simple monochrome glass or biconical spacer beads and slipknot rings (see L Webster and J Backhouse (eds), *The Making of England* (London, 1991), pp. 51–3). These are all typical components of the universal dress fashion adopted in England during the 7th century. It was a direct result of the increased contact with the Mediterranean world generated by the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity and replaced the Germanic tradition of regional types of paired brooches and swags of amber and polychrome glass beads that were formerly in vogue.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Diameter: 30 mm (including loop); metal analysis: 51 per cent gold; weight: 2.6g.

**Disposition:** This object was found before the Treasure Act came into force. At inquest it was found not to be treasure trove and was returned to the finder.

A C EVANS

### 57 Norwich area, Norfolk: Gold swivelling bezel from a Frankish seal-ring (Figs. 57.1-2)

**Date:** 7th century

**Finder:** Mr R Crawford

**Date of discovery:** April 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** This remarkable piece is a double-sided seal matrix from a gold signet ring of Frankish type, diameter 12 mm, and with a gold content of approximately 98 per cent. It was designed to pivot on a pin which engaged with the shoulders of the ring itself, now lost. The bezel is engraved on one side with a long-haired frontal bust surmounted by a cross, with stylized drapery below; around this is a retrograde inscription in a mixture of capitals and lower case, which may be read as a female name, *Baldehydis*. On the reverse is a scene with a male and a long-haired female figure embracing beneath a cross. Damage to the pivot pin suggests forcible removal. There is wear on the pin and pivot hole, but little on the sides of the bezel, suggesting that it was separated from the ring at a relatively early stage.

**Discussion:** Swivel seal rings are not known from Anglo-Saxon England, although a few examples survive from Merovingian Gaul, and Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, writing in the 6th century to his brother, Bishop Apollinaris of Valence, refers to a ring of this type (Avitus, *Ep.* 87). Again, no Anglo-Saxon seal rings with female names are known, but a number of Frankish gold seal rings with circular bezels bearing the names or monograms of high-status and royal women survive. Male names are more common on such rings, however, and some of these are also engraved with a profile bust. The scene on the reverse can be paralleled on what appears to be a Frankish betrothal ring in the British Museum collections, which also has the names Dromacius and Betta engraved upon it – presumably the couple depicted.



(fig. 57.1) Norwich area

All of these rings are datable to the 7th century, and the appearance of the present ring would be consistent with such a date. More work on the sources for the unusual frontal bust, and the possible relationship of this motif to the early 8th-century 'Woden/Monster' sceatta-type may shed further light on the ring's origins and date.

Tantalizingly, because unverifiable, the name on the bezel may have particular historical significance; as it appears on the ring, it represents the Frankish form, *Baldhild*, which would have had an Anglo-Saxon cognate form, *Bealdhild*. This is probably not a very rare name in either form, but it is a striking coincidence that the only historically recorded female of that name is the Anglo-Saxon woman who married Clovis II in about 648, and who acted as Queen-regent after his death in about 657 until she retired in 663/4 to the monastery she had herself founded at Chelles, where she died about 680. The *Vita Sanctae Balthildis*, written not long after her death, commemorates her supposed rise from beginnings as an English slave to marriage to the King and an illustrious aftermath at court and in her monastery. It remains more likely, however, that she was in reality a princess from one of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties; it is known that both the Kentish and East Anglian royal families had links with their Neustrian Frankish counterparts. Of course, we can



(fig. 57.2)

never know for certain whether the woman named on the ring represents this historical individual; but they are certainly of similar date. A further mystery is why such a prestigious Frankish object came to rest in rural Norfolk; though such a ring might certainly have been a prestige gift, or even a sign to identify the wearer as an emissary of the owner.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 91.

**Disposition:** Norfolk Museums Service

**Valuation:** £60,000

L WEBSTER

### 58 Hurley, Warwickshire: Gold repoussé pendant fragment

**Date:** 7th century

**Finder:** Mr J Stanfield

**Date of discovery:** 28 August 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Gold foil repoussé disc, decorated with a tripartite geometric design composed chiefly of arcs and bosses, the whole encircled by two rows of lightly punched pentagons and triangles respectively. One edge is partly broken away, perhaps where a pendant loop had been attached. Diameter 20 mm, gold

content approximately 83 per cent.

**Discussion:** The disc is most probably from a pendant, possibly originating in south-western Germany rather than Anglo-Saxon England, since it bears a general resemblance to late 7th-century cross-decorated repoussé pendants found in this region. However, the stamped border is more reminiscent of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon 6th- and early 7th-century traditions. Without a closer parallel, its place of origin must remain open at present.

**Disposition:** To be determined; inquest awaited.

L WEBSTER

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### 59 Congham, Norfolk (1): Anglo-Saxon silver sword pommel

**Date:** Early 7th century

**Finder:** Mr J Wells

**Date of discovery:** October 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Partly gilded cast silver cocked-hat sword pommel of the early Anglo-Saxon period, which originally had a ring fixed to it. On top of the pommel are two ungilded tongue-shaped ridges, decorated with an engraved single-line border and originally a ring-and-dot at each end. These ridges are raised against a gilded background. Such double grooves are characteristic of pommels that have borne rings.

The sides of the pommel are each decorated with a line of punched inverted triangles which would probably originally have been filled with black niello. These have worn away to invisibility in some areas. Along the bottom of the sides is a double groove which has been gilded. The side panels are defined towards their corners by a wide vertical groove, also gilded. One side has a ring-and-dot in each corner, and the other has at the top a single arrow-shaped rune. This rune not only represents the letter T but is also the symbol of the god Tiw, the god of war. Part of the ring-and-dot decorated side has broken away, but the corresponding part of the Tiw-rune side appears to have had a semi-circle cut

rather than broken out of the metal.

The ends of the pommel, beyond the wide gilded vertical groove, are decorated on both sides with a ring-and-dot with a pair of vertical grooves either side. The end beyond the worn double groove is decorated on the top with a worn gilded trefoil and beyond this has two lobes each with a rivet hole. The space between the lobes would have been filled with a pin supporting the end of the loop which carried the ring. The opposite end has a single ring-and-dot on its top and two lobes containing rivet holes, but in between these is a third lobe, with a hole which contains a silver ?dummy rivet head.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Length: 49 mm; height: 17 mm; metal analysis: 98 per cent silver; weight: 7.51g.

**Discussion:** The pommel is best classified as Menghin Typ Bifrons-Gilton (W Menghin, *Das Schwert im Frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 312ff), which is characterised by the cocked-hat form and loose ring attachments. Such pommels belong to Group C and are dated by Menghin between 530 and 570. Its closest parallel is a silver-gilt ring pommel from Dover Grave C, which shares the long, low shoulders and is also decorated with slashes (Menghin no. 90; V I Evison, 'The Dover ring-sword and other sword rings and beads', *Archaeologia* 101 (1967), pp. 63ff, figs. 4–5). The sword from Bifrons 39 (Menghin 89), also silver-gilt with loose rings, is decorated with a single swastica on one face – reminiscent of the single T-rune on the Congham example – while a similar, but ringless, silver-gilt pommel from Gilton (Evison p. 88, fig. 10a) carries a runic inscription. These are all cemetery finds from Kent and they reflect the distribution of ring-swords in early Anglo-Saxon England, which is predominantly Kentish. The discovery of this pommel in Norfolk is interesting as it expands both the distribution pattern of this type of pommel and the range of high-status objects in the kingdom of the East Angles.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 66.

**Disposition:** King's Lynn Museum

**Valuation:** £900

**60 Aldbrough, East Yorkshire: Gold Anglo-Saxon sword pommel (Fig. 60)**

**Date:** First half of the 7th century

**Finder:** Mr J Sutton

**Date of discovery:** 12 November 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** The pommel consists of a leaded bronze matrix covered with heavy gold sheet and pierced by the iron tang of the sword blade. One face is decorated with beaded filigree wire and the remaining surfaces with empty cloisonné cell work. Traces of a grey silty substance remain in some of the empty cells and this was identified visually as soil. Underdrawing for the filigree interlace is visible in several places. Two long gold rivets remain in position on one side of the pommel but the second pair of rivets survives only as corroded iron oxides suggesting a repair using iron rivets.

**Dimensions:** Length: 4.5 cm; height: 1.5 cm; metal analysis: 81 per cent gold; weight: 27.65g.

**Discussion:** The pommel, of so-called 'cocked-hat' form, is Anglo-Saxon and can be dated to the first half of the 7th century. It belongs to a Menghin's Group E (Typ Beckum-Vallstenarum: Wilfrid Menghin, *Das Schwert im Frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1983), p. 315 and Map 3), high status pommels of the early 7th century whose distribution is concentrated in Eastern Scandinavia (cf. Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (London, 1974), pl. 11), with outliers in East Anglia and Kent, the Danube headwaters of Frankia and Lombardic Italy.

The best known example from Anglo-Saxon England is the gold and cloisonné garnet sword pommel from the Sutton Hoo ship-burial (about 625–30; Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, Volume 2* (London, 1978), pp. 303–4, fig. 220), with which the Aldbrough pommel shares common cell types, in particular the three stepped and mushroom forms seen in the short upper panels. It



(fig. 60) Aldbrough

can also be compared to two recent finds, both early 7th century, one a sword pommel found at Ludlow and now in the Shrewsbury Museum, the other a seax pommel found near Maxstoke Priory, near Birmingham and acquired by the British Museum in 1996 (BM 1996,0112.0). The high quality, yet rather stilted, filigree interlace can be compared with the filigree decoration on the triangular buckle and plate from Gilton Ash, Kent (George Speake, *Anglo-Saxon Animal Art* (Oxford, 1980), pl. 7b) and to filigree panels on the composite brooch from Kingston Down, grave 205, Kent (Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (eds), *The Making of England* (London, 1991), cat. no. 32a, p. 50). All three date from the early 7th century.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 59.

Allegations were made that this object had not been found on the beach at Aldbrough, as the finder stated, but at a site at Melton Hill, near Hull. Following an investigation by the police and archaeologists, a jury at coroner's inquest decided that the sword pommel had been found at Melton. The Treasure Valuation Committee reconsidered this evidence and received fresh evidence submitted on behalf of the finder and concluded that the object had, in all probability been found at Aldbrough, as Mr Sutton stated.

**Disposition:** East Riding Museum Service

**Valuation:** £50,000



(fig. 61) Littlebourne

### 61 Littlebourne, Kent: Silver-gilt buckle with triangular plate (Fig. 61)

**Date:** First half of the 7th century

**Finder:** Mr R H Riley

**Date of discovery:** December 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Silver-gilt buckle with a triangular plate, recently broken in two pieces. The oval loop, of D-shaped section, is cast in one with the plate. It has a false shield-on-tongue composed of two stepped, crescentic panels, each decorated with a band of interlace now obscured by corrosion. The base of the tongue is an elongated oval, the tip is now missing. At the junction of the loop and plate, on each side of the narrow flange bordering the latter, is a garnet-inlaid collared boss with a beaded rim. One of the garnets is a cabochon, the other is flat-cut and was presumably a replacement in antiquity. These bosses are purely decorative, unlike those found at the end of the transverse pin which secures the loop to the plate on other surviving examples where the loop is actually hinged. The plate originally had three domed rivets. The lateral pair nearest the loop are now missing; the large basal rivet has a beaded wire collar. There is a

narrow band of Style II zoomorphic interlace along each side of the plate flanking a central panel containing incised ornament obscured by corrosion. All that is currently visible is a V-shaped element immediately above the basal rivet. This may be the tail of a fish.

The plate is hollow, and part of the flanged edge is broken away. On the back, immediately below the loop is a rectangular panel, also gilt, now cracked and damaged, engraved with a Style II animal. The remains of two rivet shanks are visible; the third is now missing. These would have secured a separate sheet metal back-plate, now lost.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Length of plate: 91mm; width of loop: 28 mm; weight: 49.08g; metal analysis: 94 per cent silver.

**Discussion:** This piece belongs to a well documented group of early Anglo-Saxon triangular buckles found in high status male graves of the first half of the 7th century (G Speake, *Anglo-Saxon Animal Art* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 54–8, pls 5–7; V Evison, *An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Alton, Hampshire* (Hampshire Field Club monograph no. 4, (1988), pp. 18–20 and 51). The finest example, of gold, is from Taplow in Buckinghamshire, but the remainder are silver-gilt, often inlaid with garnets and inset with foil plates capped by zoomorphic Style II filigree. The majority are from the richly furnished cemeteries of East Kent such as Faversham, Sarre and Gilton. The Littlebourne example, which is decorated with incised ornament, is essentially a slightly cheaper version of one of these buckles, and similar copper-alloy imitations are known from other Kentish cemeteries such as Faversham (G Speake op. cit., pl. 8). Stylistically it is closest to the example from Crundale (J Backhouse and L Webster (eds), *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991), pp. 24–5) which also has a stepped shield-on-tongue, narrow bands of interlace and a rectangular panel on the back with the scratched rendering of a backward-gazing, body-biting animal. It shares the same hollow construction, which has led some writers to describe the Crundale buckle as a reliquary buckle. The Crundale buckle also has a fish on the plate, an early symbol of Christianity and on both these buckles

we see the replacement of pagan images by new iconography following the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons during the 7th century.

**Disposition:** Royal Museum and Art Gallery, Canterbury hopes to acquire.

**Valuation:** £3,500

A C EVANS



(fig. 62) Newark

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**62 Newark, Nottinghamshire: Anglo-Saxon sword scabbard fitting (Fig. 62)**

**Date:** First half of the 7th century

**Finder:** Mr Malcolm Ellis

**Date of discovery:** 30 September 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Pyramidal scabbard fitting of heavy gold sheet with inlaid cabochon and cloisonné garnets, the interior filled with compacted sandy soil and copper-alloy corrosion products. The surface of the fitting is covered with a grey silt-like deposit containing occasional grains of sand. One face is disfigured by an area of copper-alloy corrosion. Three garnets are missing and one is fractured, with the upper part missing.

The fitting, typically, is in the form of a truncated pyramid with an empty square setting at the apex. This probably originally contained a square-cut plate garnet. Each of the four faces has filigree wire borders and is decorated with a matching design of five garnets: a large, high quality and well formed cabochon is placed at the centre, with a rectangular garnet above and below it and a curved garnet to either side. The garnets are, with the exception of one cabochon, set over pointillé gold foil. Between the garnets the fields are filled with grouped filigree rosettes. At each corner of the base is an oval cell containing a single finely cut and polished tear-drop garnet which, like the cabochons, is of exceptional quality.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Height: 15 mm; base: 17 x 17 mm; weight: 13.07g; metal analysis: 84 per cent gold.

**Discussion:** Pyramidal fittings were used on straps that held a scabbarded sword to the sword-belt. Over one hundred examples are known and the majority are listed by W Menghin, *Das Schwert in Frühen Mittelalter*, Karte 22, (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 363–5. Finds of pyramids in Great Britain since his research have been mostly stray finds with the exception of a copper-alloy example with glass and garnet inlays from the robber trench through mound 6 in the Sutton Hoo cemetery. Most sword pyramids are plain and made in either copper-alloy or silver, but a very small group are inlaid either with glass or with garnets. The Newark pyramid belongs to this group. The majority of the group are Anglo-Saxon finds and include the Sutton Hoo mound 1 gold and cloisonné pyramids and the pyramids from the high-status burial at Broomfield, Essex (see R Bruce-Mitford, ‘Six Interesting Pieces of Cloisonné Jewellery’ in *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (London, 1974), pp. 262–80 and pls 86–7). It can be compared most closely to an example from Dalmeny, Roxburghshire, which shares the placing of garnets on the four corners and filigree rosettes, and to the pyramid from Ezinge Terp, Holland, with which it shares the use of

a fine cabochon flanked by curved garnets. It dates from the first half of the 7th century.

**Disposition:** British Museum wishes to acquire.

**Valuation:** £18,000

A C EVANS

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### 63 Holderness, East Yorkshire: Anglo-Saxon gold and garnet pectoral cross (Fig. 63)

**Date:** First half of the 7th century

**Finder:** Mr R Wray

**Date of discovery:** About 1968

**Circumstances of discovery:** During agricultural work.

**Description:** Gold and garnet cross pendant. The cross is equal armed, each arm with rounded corners and with cloisonné cell-work built up on a thin backplate. The cell-work is filled with poorly shaped garnets over calcium carbonate backing paste. At the centre of the cross is a large flattened cabochon stone whose upper surface is drilled, probably for the insertion of a gold or blue glass fillet, now missing. The cabochon is set in a simple cell with an undecorated collar and is surrounded by twelve square or rectangular garnets (three now missing) set over pointillé gold foil. The four arms of the cross spring from this central field and are filled with garnets. Within a simple border of roughly square garnets, the arms share paired motifs: the upper and lower arms are decorated with a central panel containing two cruciform stones surrounded by small garnets cut to accommodate them; the lateral arms contain a panel filled with very poorly made pointed mushroom/arrow shaped garnets, again with small garnets cut to fill the panel's margins. The cross is suspended by a heavy suspension loop soldered to the back plate and decorated with fine filigree wire and a double strand of twisted wire (SZ) runs around the edge of the cross disguising the join between the cell-work and backplate. The cross is battered and the suspension arm has been bent and straightened out

causing the cell-work to buckle.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Height: 53 mm; width: 50 mm; metal analysis: 77 per cent gold, 22 per cent silver; weight: 12.23g.

**Discussion:** Cross pendants are rare in the early Christian period, but the Holderness example can be usefully compared to three other examples which share cloisonné garnet inlays (references to L Webster and J Backhouse (eds), *The Making of England, Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991)). Two, the Ixworth cross (cat. 11, p. 26) and the Wilton cross (cat. 12, p. 27), are similarly made to the Holderness cross, and have finely executed cloisonné garnet-filled cellwork soldered to a simple back plate. The cell shapes are varied and sophisticated. Both the Wilton and Ixworth crosses have flaring arms that spring from a central medallion, and both date from the early 7th century. The third, St Cuthbert's cross (cat. 98, p. 133), also has flaring arms but these, in contrast to the Ixworth and Wilton crosses, are filled with simple square cut garnets and spring from a single large plate garnet in a shell collar at the centre. The structure of the cross is more complex and relates to the later composite brooches rather than to the earlier 7th century pendant types. St Cuthbert's cross, found in the coffin of the saint, was made during the second half of the 7th century. The Holderness cross has manufacturing techniques in common with both the Ixworth and Wilton crosses. It also shares the use of a border filled with simple square or rectangular garnets with the Ixworth cross and the arrow-shaped garnet with the Wilton cross, where it is used as a filler element to a paired mushroom shaped cell – a motif in Anglo-Saxon England which is characteristic of the early 7th century. On balance, the Holderness cross relates more closely to metalwork made in the early 7th century.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 80.

**Disposition:** Declared not treasure trove in April 1999 and returned to finder. Subsequently acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

A C EVANS



(fig. 63) Holderness

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#### 64 York area (1), North Yorkshire: Silver Anglo-Saxon dress pin

**Date:** 8th to 9th centuries

**Finder:** Mr P R Ireland

**Date of discovery:** September 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Small Anglo-Saxon dress pin with typical solid globular head with a collar and hipped shank. Complete but bent.

**Dimensions:** Length: 59 mm.

**Note:** Good parallels for this pin and other related forms from dated contexts are to be found in D A Hinton, *The Gold, Silver and other Non-Ferrous Alloy Objects from Hamwic* (Southampton Finds 2, 1996).

**Disposition:** Disclaimed; returned to finder.

S M YOUNGS

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#### 65 Winterbourne Whitechurch, Dorset: Silver Anglo-Saxon finger ring (Fig. 65)

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Mr R Tory

**Date of discovery:** November 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Silver ring with an oval bezel with a beaded border on which is a reserved panel framing a lively animal in Trewhiddle style. Once inlaid with niello, the ring is now a flat strip.

**Dimensions:** Length: 39 mm; weight: 1.5g.

**Disposition:** Inquest awaited; Dorset County Museum hopes to acquire the find.

S M YOUNGS



(fig. 65) Winterbourne Whitechurch

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#### 66 Gimmingham, Norfolk: Silver Anglo-Saxon pin-head

**Date:** 9th century

**Finders:** Messrs S Burgess and A Kedge

**Date of discovery:** November 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with metal-detectors.

**Description:** Small faceted silver pin-head decorated

with engraved crosses and triangles inlaid with niello. High silver content. The shaft is missing.

**Disposition:** Disclaimed; returned to finders.

S M YOUNGS

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### 67 Spofforth, North Yorkshire: Anglo-Saxon silver hooked clasp and pin-head fragment

L WEBSTER

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Mr G P Stebbens

**Date of discovery:** Before 17 February 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** The clasp is lentoid in shape, with a hook at each end; it is 35 mm long, with a silver content of approximately 98 per cent. The entire front is decorated with a panel of elegant Trewhiddle-style plant ornament in silver, reserved against a niello background, surrounded by a border of punched beading. Though hooked tags are a well known type of Anglo-Saxon dress accessory, this double-ended type is very unusual, resembling earlier Frankish hooked clasps in its form. Like these, it was probably used to fasten clothing.

The pin-head consists of a flat terminal in the form of a snarling animal head, the stub of the missing pin-shaft visible at the back of the head, which looks upward; it is 26 mm long in its present state and has a silver content of approximately 93 per cent. The animal head is inlaid with niello, in which the eye is picked out, and the snout and lower jaw are picked out with parallel banding. Within this head, and immediately above the stub of the pin-shaft, is a small field containing a Trewhiddle-style animal in silver reserved against a niello background. A number of Anglo-Saxon 8th- and early 9th-century pins are decorated with similarly grotesque animal heads, though the use of niello and Trewhiddle-style decoration on this example puts it rather late in the sequence. The idea of inserting a smaller animal into the head of the larger is a typical Anglo-Saxon decorative conceit, seen on other pieces of jewellery of

this period. Pins of this general type were worn by women on garments and head-veiling.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 98.

**Disposition:** Harrogate Museums and Art Gallery Service

**Valuation:** £1,050

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### 68 Frodesley, Shropshire: Two Anglo-Saxon strap-end fragments

**Date:** 9th century

**Finders:** Messrs J S Martin and R Thompson

**Date of discovery:** 24 January 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with metal-detectors.

**Description:** Originally thought to have been parts of the same object, close inspection and analysis has shown that these two fragments come from two separate strap-ends. Each fragment is 25 mm in length, but the mid-section fragment has a silver content of approximately 97 per cent, while the end-section's silver content is approximately 93 per cent. Both are decorated in the Trewhiddle style; the mid-section has six panels of plant and animal motifs, while the end section appears to have had a single panel with animal and interlace decoration, and terminates in a round-eared animal head with prominent eyes. Both fragments come from strap-ends which are characteristic mid 9th-century types. They were probably originally inlaid with niello, which has leached out.

**Disposition:** Shrewsbury Museum hopes to acquire this find.

**Valuation:** To be determined.

L WEBSTER

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### 69. Wick, South Gloucestershire: Silver Anglo-Saxon strap-end with niello inlay

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Mr David Woodhouse

**Date of discovery:** 26 December 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Cast strap-end with a pair of rivets in situ at the split end and a simple rounded terminal. Below the split, which originally contained the end of a leather or textile strap, the edges of the strap-end are scalloped, each scallop holding a tiny gouged semicircular impression. Beneath the rivets two sets of short deeply chiselled lines make an inverted beaded triangle from whose apex a single set drops to the base of the strap-end forming a powerful beaded spine separating two equal fields, each contained by a single incised marginal line. These are ornamented in similar but not identical style with a recessed design now only partially filled with degraded niello. The motifs are free flowing but abstract and composed of loosely foliate elements together with elongated notched fishhooks. The back is plain.

**Discussion:** Strap-ends have a long history in this country, with origins in the Roman period. They were used as protective tabs on the end of textile or leather straps in a variety of different contexts – as belt ends, as purse or satchel fittings, as sword-belt tabs or as tabs on horse-harness straps. They occur occasionally in early Anglo-Saxon contexts, but are found principally in 9th and 10th century contexts, by which time they are common in all parts of the country. The majority are decorated with distinctive animal ornament and usually have an animal-headed terminal. This example is small and is unusual in both its abstract ornament and its lack of a zoomorphic terminal and is probably a local development. A broadly similar type, eschewing animal ornament in favour of scroll decoration, is regarded as a local product of East Anglia. Its straight-sided and relatively narrow form can be compared with an example from Lincoln (J Backhouse and L Webster (eds), *The Making of England, Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900* (London, 1991), catalogue no. 191) which dates from the 9th century and its overall decorative style is familiar from, for example, a pair of dress-hooks from Winchester, also dating from the

9th century (ibid., catalogue no. 200). This example would date from the 9th century.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Length: 30 mm; metal analysis: 94 per cent silver.

**Disposition:** Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery hopes to acquire this find.

**Valuation:** To be determined.

A C EVANS

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## 70 Bidford, Warwickshire: Anglo-Saxon gold polyhedral fitting

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Mr R Laight

**Date of discovery:** 6 August 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Polyhedral socketed gold terminal (overall length 15 mm) ornamented with a pattern of deeply cut roundels separated by lozenge-shaped fields, containing respectively triangles and squares inlaid with niello. Each roundel additionally contains three plain pellets. The short socket (internal diameter 2.5 mm, length 5 mm) extends from a narrow collar below the head and ends in another. It is pierced by a rivet. The gold content is approximately 92 per cent, and it weighs 3.97g.

**Discussion:** The precise function of this artefact is not clear. Its small size, narrow socket and lack of a smooth flattened base (and thus its unsuitability for sliding across a page) set it apart from the four so-called *aestels* or manuscript pointers, all of which have sockets with internal diameters that are twice the size of this, flat bases, and are significantly larger. In form, the head resembles the polyhedral headed middle Saxon pin types, some of which have ring and dot or more elaborate decoration, like the large example from the Trewiddle hoard. However, although one or two rare examples of separately attached heads are known, none resembles this, which seems to have been fixed to an organic shaft or other organic object. An alternative explanation might be that it was a

decorative hanging bobble of some kind – for example, from a rich garment or vestment, such as an ecclesiastical band or stole.

The use of nielloed geometric decoration has later 9th-century Trehiddle style parallels, for example on a group of silver sword fittings, and on the Anglo-Saxon gold ring in the great Viking hoard from Høen, Norway.

**Disposition:** To be determined; inquest awaited.

L WEBSTER

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### 71 Kingston Deverill, Wiltshire: Silver-gilt Anglo-Saxon pin-head

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Mr D J Smith

**Date of discovery:** October 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Globular, hollow pin-head of gilt silver with filigree ornament and deep collars for decorative settings, diameter 12 mm. The shaft is broken off.

**Disposition:** Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum

**Valuation:** £600

S M YOUNGS

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### 72 Walgrave, Northamptonshire: Anglo-Saxon silver strap-distributor

**Date:** 9th century

**Finders:** Messrs P Flett and C Brooks

**Date of discovery:** 13 October 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with metal-detectors.

**Description:** Silver strap-fitting inlaid with niello decorated in the Trehiddle style, ornamented on both faces. On one face the uppermost panel contains leaf ornament with geometric infill in the narrow fields down each side. Below this and separated by a small rounded boss is a second sub-triangular panel containing a palmette. The tongue-shaped field nearest the loop appears to contain a backward-facing animal, difficult to see because of surface corrosion. The second side has the

remains of a palmette in the uppermost panel, again flanked by geometric leaf ornament in the narrow side panels. The central sub-triangular field contains a tiny animal with a characteristic splayed foot and bulbous head. Below this are two elongated triangular panels containing leaf ornament; the panel nearest the loop contains another animal with its head pointing downwards. Instead of the usual animal head terminal, the object ends in a loop surmounted by transverse ribbed moulding.

**Dimensions:** Length: 42 mm; metal analysis: 91 per cent silver; weight: 4.13g.

**Discussion:** Trehiddle style is found on metalwork of the 9th century all over England (D M Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum*, London, 1964). It is named after a hoard of objects deposited with coins of about 875 at Trehiddle, St Austell, Cornwall. Certain ornamental features occur again and again, making this a distinctive and easily recognised style. The majority of the objects are of silver and inlaid with niello. The ornament is generally zoomorphic, but interlace, leaves and scrolls also occur. The animals are normally speckled and have a squared snout, sub-triangular body, a well defined hip and a leg with three toes. There are often double nicks in the body contours.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 101.

**Disposition:** Daventry Museum

**Valuation:** £500

A C EVANS

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### 73 Chippenham, Cambridgeshire: Anglo-Saxon silver hooked tag

**Date:** Early 9th century

**Finder:** Mr R Allison

**Date of discovery:** December 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Silver hooked tag, with rounded plate and (originally) two pierced attachment lugs at the upper edge; the upper right part of the tag is now missing, along with the greater part of the hook at the other end.

The tag is 29 mm long. It is decorated with a proto-Trewhiddle-style animal with an interlacing tail; the background was probably originally inlaid with niello.

**Discussion:** Tags of this kind have occasionally been found both in graves, where they seem to be associated with clothing, and with small coin hoards, suggesting that they were multi-purpose fasteners used both on garments and to secure purses or small bags. They were widely used in the later Saxon period and usually occur as stray finds.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 65.

**Disposition:** Ely Museum hopes to acquire the find.

**Valuation:** £500

L WEBSTER

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#### 74. Amersham area, Buckinghamshire: Anglo-Saxon silver buckle

**Date:** Mid 9th century

**Finder:** Mrs T Jenner

**Date of discovery:** 12 September 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** The buckle consists of a flat, rectangular loop, with the tongue missing; the upper surface is decorated with interlace and running animals in the Trewhiddle style, originally with a background of niello, now missing. The dimensions are 21mm x 22 mm, and the silver content is approximately 97 per cent.

**Discussion:** The buckle is a rare counterpart to the numerous strap-ends and other such attachments decorated in this style. Their relatively infrequent retrieval from the archaeological record may reflect the greater vulnerability to loss of the dangling strap-end, rather than that buckles themselves were rare in use.

**Disposition:** To be determined; awaiting valuation

L WEBSTER

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#### 75 Totternhoe, Bedfordshire: Anglo-Saxon silver strap-end

**Date:** Second half of 9th century

**Finder:** Mr Peter W Barbour

**Date of discovery:** 25 October 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** The terminal, 44 mm in length, consists of a formalised animal head with prominent eyes and snout rather crudely executed in slight relief. The ears are round with half-moon lobes. At the split end are two dome-headed silver rivets about a roughly pelta-shaped field. A tiny triangle fills the intervening space. The central field of decoration is somewhat better executed, with a single animal head facing the split end with a domed head and closed beak, the body surrounded by a hesitant interlaced knob, if anything hinting at a ring-knot. This area retains its niello infilling, missing from the areas on either side of the animal. Here, the legs and tendrils are nicked Trewhiddle style, but now lack decorative emphasis. The field is edged with a beaded border and the whole object is quite worn.

**Discussion:** The strap-end is an example of a not uncommon item of later Anglo-Saxon metalwork. Examples in solid silver are, however, more unusual. A similar piece, but of better quality, comes from Whitby. Several bronze examples, come for instance from Winchester (M Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester II* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 500–02) and Hinton Abbey, Yorkshire, now in the British Museum (D M Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), p. 195). This is dated to the early 9th century. The Trewhiddle-style animal, use of niello and ringed interlace suggest a date somewhat later in the same century.

**Disposition:** Luton Museum and Art Gallery

**Valuation:** £550.

B ADAMS

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#### 76 York area (2), North Yorkshire: Suite of Anglo-Saxon silver and niello strap-ends, together with a brooch frame (Fig. 76)

**Date:** Mid to late 9th century

**Finders:** Messrs M F White, T Garaghan, M Brookes and J Fieldson

**Date of discovery:** 6 September 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** Metal detecting rally

**Description:**

1. A silver strap-end (three animals), roughly oval with moulded details top and bottom; length: 72.7mm; width: 24.6 mm, weight: 33.08g. A heavy casting with an animal mask at the apex in low relief with protruding eyes and comma-shaped ears; the flat central panel has a pattern of three stylized and contorted animals with pricked ear and nicked and spotted bodies running up the centre. These are framed by loops of double-strand interlacing ribbon and the whole design is contrasted against a background of black niello. The top of the piece is split to accommodate a strap and two rivets with low domed heads are still in situ. The rivets lie above a semicircular panel with a pendant looped vegetal motif in low relief. The back is plain with some polishing marks.
2. Silver strap-end broken across the middle, roughly oval with moulded details top and bottom; length: 71.0 mm, width: 24.3 mm; weight: 33.07g. A heavy casting with an animal mask at the apex in low relief with protruding eyes and comma-shaped ears; the flat central panel has a pattern of four stylized and contorted animals with pricked ear and nicked and spotted bodies, two small in the upper corners of the panel and two larger ones engaged in combat at the bottom. These are framed and entwined by loops of double-strand interlacing ribbon and the whole design is contrasted against a background of black niello. The top of the piece is split to accommodate a strap and has holes for two rivets. The rivet holes flank a pendant semicircular panel with a looped vegetal motif in low relief. The back is plain.
3. Silver strap-end (four animals) roughly oval with moulded details top and bottom; length: 71.6 mm; width: 24.3 mm; weight: 32.55g. A heavy casting with an animal mask at the apex in low relief with protruding eyes and comma-shaped ears; the flat central panel has a pattern of four stylized and contorted animals with pricked ear and nicked and spotted bodies, two small in the upper corners of the panel and two larger ones engaged in combat at the bottom. These are framed and entwined by loops of double-strand interlacing ribbon and the whole design is contrasted against a background of black niello. The top of the piece is split to accommodate a strap and has two rivets in position. These flank a pendant semicircular panel with a looped vegetal motif in low relief. The back is plain.
4. Lower portion, approximately three-quarters of a similar strap-end; maximum length: 55.5 mm; width: 23.7 mm; weight: 22.55g. The broad end for attachment is missing. Four complete and one incomplete small animals almost fill the main field. A remaining corner is filled by a plant tendril. The treatment of the animals is similar to that on the complete strap-end but there is no ribbon infilling. Judging from the condition of the broken edge, it is likely that this strap-end was complete when deposited in the ground.
5. Silver and niello strap-end with two domed rivets in position; length: 56.7 mm, width: 20.1 mm, weight: 20.49g. The terminal is a blunt-nosed animal mask in low relief with comma-shaped ears and the eyes protuberant dots at the edge of the mask. Most of the recessed areas here and on the billeted borders of the long sides contain dirt. The main field has superficial scratches and some of the pattern is indistinct; it consists of two animals in profile, one above the other in similar pose with the hind legs curled under the torso, forelegs raised and the neck and large head turned back to face the tail. The bodies are speckled and the background filled with niello. A semicircular field without inlay lies below the rivets and is filled with a looped pendant motif with a central leaf. The upper millimetre of the strap-end is split for

attachment and the back is plain apart from the burred over ends of the rivets.

6. Silver and niello strap-end with broken rivets; length 56.5 mm, maximum width: 20.2 mm, weight: 20.82g. Decoration as 5 above with the exception of the main field with niello inlay where the inlay has reverted to a bluish metallic surface and the animal ornament is quite obscure; it appears to consist of two animals arranged as on the other strap-end but with a smaller one with a diminutive body above the terminal. The heads of the rivets are missing; the back has scratch marks and some small hammered grooves.
7. Openwork fragment (weight: 2.00g) consisting of a shallow curl holding two broken curves linked by a cross bar. There is the stump of another element on the middle of the curl. The cross section of these elements is roughly rectangular with decorative grooves on the upper surfaces and the lower surface plain. This is a fragment of a more complex mount, of which two other parts were found at the same time (see nos. 8–9). It has a circular rim with internal points for rivets and resembles the upper openwork element of a hitherto unique circular disc brooch from a hoard at Pentney, Norfolk (L Webster and J Backhouse (eds), *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600–900* (London, 1991), no. 187 f.). The Pentney group which is dated on stylistic grounds to the first third of the 9th century, therefore confirms that this small piece is also Anglo-Saxon and broadly contemporary with the strap-ends from this find and hence part of the same deposit.
8. A fragment of decorative silver forming an openwork pelta. The upper surface has decorative grooves, the back is plain; maximum diameter: 15.0 mm x 16.0 mm; weight: 2.47g.
9. A fragment of decorative silver rim with a semicircular internal projection holding a silver rivet with low domed head; length: 24.3 mm,

thickness: 2.7 mm; weight: 3.02g. The rim front has two decorative grooves and the back has a low step. The stepped rim with internal point for a rivet suggests that this piece and the other two openwork pieces, which share the rectangular cross-section and decorative grooving, were part of one decorative fitting and that this was made to frame an inner backing panel of some sort.

**Discussion:** This is an unparalleled assemblage of richly decorated silver Anglo-Saxon strap-ends, with four large and two smaller pieces forming three pairs. This is the largest and most finely decorated group of strap-ends known from middle-Saxon Britain.

The animal ornament is in the Trewhiddle style, distinguished by the head and ear type, the use of contouring nicks and body spotting. This style is dated by the coins of the Trewhiddle hoard, deposited in about AD 868, and the strap-ends therefore date from the mid 9th century.

The skill and varied treatment of the animal shapes with looped bodies and splayed hind quarters and the general joie de vivre of these and the other associated strap-ends mark them out as the products of a master craftsman. The comma-shaped form of the ears distinguishes strap-ends made in the north of England (Webster and Backhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 233). The best parallel for the form and style is the complete one of a pair in bronze and niello excavated from the royal site at Bamburgh, Northumberland which has very similar ornament in its pendant panel and an arrangement of three animals one above the other in the main field (Webster and Backhouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–5). All this suggests that the workshop lay within the former Anglo-Saxon kingdom Northumbria.

These are the largest and amongst the finest strap-ends known from this period; association in pairs is rare and a matching assemblage of four with another two smaller ones is unparalleled. These pieces were found several metres apart but there seems no doubt that they must have been originally deposited together, possibly dispersed by plough action, but



(fig. 76) York area

subsequent unauthorised activity in the field limited the recovery of further evidence of context.

The best known examples of a pair come from Ipsden, Oxfordshire (A MacGregor, 'A pair of Late Saxon strap-ends from Ipsden Heath, Oxfordshire' in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 147 (1994), pp. 122–7), with two pairs in typical northern style from Lille Howe, Yorkshire (Webster and Backhouse, op. cit., pp. 275–6). But all these are on a smaller scale, although the former have gold filigree inlay. The present assemblage and pairs within it, matched by size but varied in ornament, raise questions about the use of such a large suite, most of which can be shown by the rivets still in place to have been fitted on straps before they were deposited. This is therefore not a manufacturer's pre-sale hoard. It is of considerable art-historical and archaeological interest and represents a major addition to the corpus

of 9th century fine metalwork.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 105. Some of the missing elements have subsequently been submitted and are currently being considered as treasure (see below, no. 77).

**Disposition:** Yorkshire Museum

**Valuation:** £18,000

S M YOUNGS

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**77 York area (3), North Yorkshire: Incomplete Anglo-Saxon silver strap-end**

**Date:** 9th century

**Finder:** Name withheld at request of finder.

**Date of discovery:** September 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Upper part of a silver and niello inlaid

strap-end with upper and lower plates with rivets for attachment, incomplete. The rest of this strap-end is known and formed part of cat. 76, no. 4. Maximum dimensions of this piece are width: 18.0 x 26.0 mm; weight: 9.38g uncleaned, including soil. The upper edge is scalloped with a plain border below which a pendant semicircular field frames a pattern of looped tendrils in reserve; underneath is the upper left corner of a panel of animal ornament with the hindquarters of one of the five animals that almost fill the main field on the lower part. The body is spotted and the background is inlaid with niello. The shanks of both rivets, but the domed head of only one, remain in position. The back is plain with a few deliberate scratches below the ends of the rivets.

**Discussion:** This is a part of a set of six silver and niello strap-ends, pieces which by their form, their distinctive animal ornament and the use of niello are readily identifiable as large strap-ends of mid-Saxon date (see previous entry).

**Disposition:** Yorkshire Museum

**Valuation:** £1,500

S M YOUNGS

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## 78 Barham (near) (2), Kent: Late Anglo-Saxon hooked tag

**Date:** Last quarter of 9th century

**Finder:** Mr Ian Lee

**Date of discovery:** March 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Late Anglo-Saxon hooked tag, silver inlaid with niello. The tag is triangular in shape with a well formed hook at the apex and an egg-and-dart border at the base. Three clean piercings for attachment to fabric or leather lie between this border and the inner fields. Both long sides are defined with a single, deeply incised line, emphasised with short diagonal slashes on the outside. Within the border, the decorative field is filled with three triangular zones arranged base/apex, apex/base,

base/apex. The outer two each contain a single elegantly formed Trehwiddle-style animal against a niello field. The animal, with pricked ears and open jaws, looks backward over its elongated body; its front paw is raised and its back leg stretches to fill the apex of the triangle. The third field contains an irregularly defined palmette motif within a niello field. The lower margin of the plate is separated from the hook by triple geometric mouldings above an incised cross.

**Dimensions and metal content:** Length: 45 mm overall; width: 21 mm; metal analysis: 88 per cent silver; weight: 5.8g.

**Discussion:** Hooked tags fall into two main groups, those with rounded plates and those that are triangular or subtriangular, to which this example belongs (compare catalogue nos. 196–200 in J Backhouse and L Webster (eds), *The Making of England, Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900* (London, 1991)). Many have attachment lugs rather than the simple piercings that this example shows. The ornament, particularly the individual animals in the two leading panels, is exceptionally well executed in classic Trehwiddle style – a design style current in Anglo-Saxon England in the late 9th century and named after the type site of Trehwiddle, Cornwall, where a hoard of metalwork was discovered in 1774. The hoard was deposited about 868. The tag is best compared to a pair with sub-triangular plates from Cathedral Green, Winchester (J Backhouse and L Webster, op. cit., catalogue no. 200), decorated with foliate panels. The mouldings between the nielloed panels and the hook are close in design to the moulded terminals of one of the silver mounts from the Trehwiddle hoard itself (D M Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1994), catalogue no. 94). The tag is in exceptionally good condition and dates from the last quarter of the 9th century.

**Disposition:** Valuation awaited; Dover Museum hopes to acquire.

A C EVANS

## 79 Congham (2), Norfolk: Viking-period copper-alloy ingot

**Date:** Late 9th to early 10th century

**Finder:** Mr J Wells and Mrs P Wells

**Date of discovery:** October to December 1998

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with metal-detectors.

**Description:** An ingot with a rectangular cross-section with maximum dimensions of 41 x 11 x 5 mm. On its upper face it has been hammered into a series of broad transverse flutes. Each edge has also been hammered to produce rough faceting. In shape it is very similar to the Ditchingham silver ingot (*Medieval Archaeology* 37 (1993), p. 223), dated to the late 9th to early 10th century (see also no.98). The ingot weighs 13.51g, half the standard Viking weight of 25/6g. X-ray fluorescence showed the metal to be copper-alloy with insufficient silver content to fall under the terms of the Treasure Act. Returned to finders.

H GEAKE AND S M YOUNGS

## 80 Little Snoring, Norfolk: Silver Viking pendant (Fig. 80)

**Date:** Late 9th or 10th centuries

**Finder:** Mr G Parsons

**Date of discovery:** December 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Pendant consisting of a Borre-style 'gripping beast' within a frame ornamented with four protruding animal heads in profile – the lower two each surmounting a single limb which grips the ring. All the heads have outlined and dotted cheeks, circular eyes and open jaws; the nose ends in a transverse band and beyond this is a curly spiralled upper lip. The back of the head has a curved 'lappet' or pigtail with an engraved border line; on the lower two animals, this is crossed by the limb.

The central animal is in classic Borre style with a

triangular mask just below the loop, with long projecting curved ears. Below, a neck curves to expanded forequarters, from which come two forelimbs. One forefoot grips the frame of the pendant, the other rests against it. The ribbon-like body then arches round, crossing over the neck, to expanded hindquarters. Two hind limbs come out, one of which passes under the forequarters to grip the body and the other which grips the frame. There is a short tail. The neck, forequarters, body and hindquarters are all pelleted between borders. The tail and limbs are undecorated. The gripping feet are three-toed; the ungrIPPING foot is in profile and curled.

An as yet unidentified double-strand line crosses the forelimb and hindlimb which grip the frame, and passes underneath the frame to interlace over the central animal's ears. This may represent the central animal's lappets seen from above.

The frame of the pendant is decorated with contour and transverse ridges. It may represent an animal with a billeted body, with the head to the left and tail to the right as the observer looks at the pendant's loop. The head appears to have a round eye and an open jaw.

The loop has a central ridge with a double median groove, with downward-pointing oblique grooving either side; the loop is only fully rounded on the reverse at either end of its length; in between it is a hollow U in section. The reverse is undecorated. Weight: 15.12g.

**Discussion:** The pendant is very similar to six found in the Vårby hoard found in the Mälaren valley of central Sweden and dated to about 940, with further very close parallels coming from Birka (also in Sweden) and from Norway.

**Note:** The metal is approximately 70 per cent silver. See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 84.

**Disposition:** British Museum

**Valuation:** £5,000

H GEAKE AND S M YOUNGS



(fig. 80) Little Snoring

### 81 Clive, Shropshire: Two Viking-period silver ingot fragments

**Date:** Late 9th or 10th centuries

**Finder:** Mr D Jennings

**Date of discovery:** Before 28 July 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** The find consists of one complete ingot, and one fragment. The complete ingot is bar-shaped and square in section, with a marked taper at one end, the other appears to have been trimmed off; there are also signs of its having been hammered. It is 42.5 mm long x (max) 8 mm wide, and weighs 12.64g; the silver content is approximately 42 per cent. The fragment also comes from a bar-shaped ingot, with a tapering rounded end, and approximately square cross-section. It was cast and then hammered on one side; the fragment was sliced off from the parent bar

by a slanting blow from a chisel. It is 10 mm long x (max) 6 mm wide, and weighs 2.88g; the silver content is approximately 96 per cent.

**Discussion:** The complete ingot contains a high admixture of bronze, though this is not unknown in the early medieval period, and its shape and general appearance is also consistent with other Viking-period ingots. Its weight also tallies with a Viking origin, since it seems to represent half the widespread Viking weight unit of 25/6g. The fragment has a higher silver content, more characteristic of Viking ingots, and in shape and appearance it bears a close resemblance to the many smaller fragments of chopped up ingots which are known from this period, for example in the great Cuerdale hoard of chopped silver (*hacksilber*). Its weight, however, does not seem to represent an attempt at delivering a precise fraction of the 25/6g unit, though it might possibly be a very underweight eighth.

Such small items of bullion, usually related to known weight systems, were, like the example from Temple Normanton (no. 83), used in payments and commercial transactions. Although Shropshire is not a major centre of Viking activity, the ingots were found close to the route from Shrewsbury up to Chester, a major Irish Sea trading place which was frequented by Viking and Anglo-Saxon travellers and merchants; a hoard of early 10th-century coins of Edward the Elder found at Shrewsbury itself indicates the movement of wealth in the area.

**Disposition:** Shrewsbury Museum hopes to acquire this find.

**Valuation:** To be determined.

L WEBSTER

### 82 Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire: Gold ingot

**Date:** Probably 9th to 10th centuries

**Finder:** Mr T H Jackson

**Date of discovery:** 31 August 1999

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Gold ingot cast in the shape of a small bar, roughly trapezoidal in section, and tapering to one end. The upper surface is relatively smooth, with a slight depression which is probably due to the cooling process; the other sides retain the rough impression of stone or coarse clay, showing that it was cast in an open mould. Length: 39.5 mm; weight: 38.57g. Metal analysis at the British Museum has established a gold content of approximately 77 per cent.

**Discussion:** The form and general appearance of the ingot are closely similar to a number of the silver ingots found in hoards from the Irish Sea region, for example in the great silver bullion hoard found at Cuerdale, Lancashire, which is dated to the early years of the 10th century. Its weight is also consistent with a widely used Viking 25/6g weight unit. Gold ingots of this period are very rare, though two examples are known from Ireland and another, which is probably of the Viking period, was found recently in excavations in Norwich (see below, no. 99). The Fenstanton piece has a (very approximate) copper content of 7 per cent, which at first sight seemed unusual for Viking period gold; however, it seems the Norwich ingot contains a small amount of copper, and recent analyses of some Viking period gold jewellery from the Høen, Norway, gold hoard confirm a similar presence of small amounts of copper. The metal composition does not therefore seem to preclude a Viking origin for this piece.

**Disposition:** The Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge wishes to acquire the find.

**Valuation:** £400

B AGER

### 83 Temple Normanton, Derbyshire: Viking-period silver ingot

**Date:** 10th century

**Finder:** Mr G Bunting

**Date of discovery:** 12 October 1997

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with a metal-detector.

**Description:** Small bar ingot, of crudely rectangular

shape, 55 x 20 x 14 mm; weight 78.3g, silver content approximately 50 per cent. The ingot was cast in an open mould; a protuberance on the upper surface represents the final dribble of the casting pour.

**Discussion:** The general form and appearance of the ingot resembles a number of other Viking period ingots, including examples in the famous hoard from Cuerdale, Lancashire; its silver content, though at the lower end of the scale, is also consistent with a Viking origin. The weight appears to be a multiple of a known Viking weight unit of 25/6g, making it a three-unit ingot. Such ingots are best known from hoards of this period, but single finds like this also occur, and are consistent with the function of bullion in payments and trading. The location of this find on the eastern edge of the Peak District is fully within the orbit of Viking activity, and is close to a major cross route to Chester and the Irish Sea crossing to Dublin.

**Note:** See *Treasure Annual Report 1997–98*, no. 101.

**Disposition:** Chesterfield Museum

**Valuation:** £150

L WEBSTER

### 84 Warton, Carnforth, Lancashire: Small Viking hoard of Cufic coins and cut silver

**Date:** 10th century

**Finders:** Messrs M Hepworth and D Kierzak

**Date of discovery:** September 1997 and on subsequent occasions.

**Circumstances of discovery:** While searching with metal-detectors.

**Description:**

1. Coin. Silver *dirhem* of the Samanid dynasty. Maximum diameter: 27 mm. Weight: 3.1g. Issue of Ismail b. Ahmad r. AH 279–95/AD 892–907, struck at the mint of al-Shash in AH 285/898 AD (S Lane Poole, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum* (London, 1876), vol. II, no. 256).
2. Coin. Silver *dirhem* of the Samanid dynasty. Maximum diameter: 29 mm. Weight: 3.29g. Ahmad b. Ismail r. AH 295–301/AD 907–13,