

SEDGEFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Registered Charity No: 1064553

INTERIM REPORT 2000



EDITED BY RIK HOGGETT

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

By Rik Hoggett

It is no understatement to describe the 2000 season as SHARP's most successful yet, and all the signs point to even more successful seasons to come. During the course of the summer numerous advances were made in all aspects of the Project's work, new avenues of investigation were opened up and the excavators' campsite was at full capacity for several weeks. In these pages, the SHARP team present the latest findings from all parts of the Project and describe the situation as it stands after five years of work in Sedgeford.

This year there were significant developments in the Boneyard, with the identification of a sunken-featured building, the excavation of several more burials and the digging of an outlying evaluation trench. A campaign to combine the excavations of the 1950s with our own was also begun in earnest, with the digging of a linking trench and examinations of old excavation archives.

At West Hall archaeological work was completed in the Paddock, with the existing trenches being excavated to their lower limits and the site back-filled. Building on this and previous work, a standing building survey was conducted of West Hall House and its grounds.

Work was also begun at several other sites within the Parish, with a view to evaluating their archaeological potential and perhaps expanding the Project in future seasons.

The 2000 season also served to demonstrate that public support for the Project is as strong as ever, with large numbers attending the site tours and over **seven hundred** people attended our first site Open Day, now to become an annual event. As always we are immensely grateful for this support, without which we could not continue to work, and thank you all.

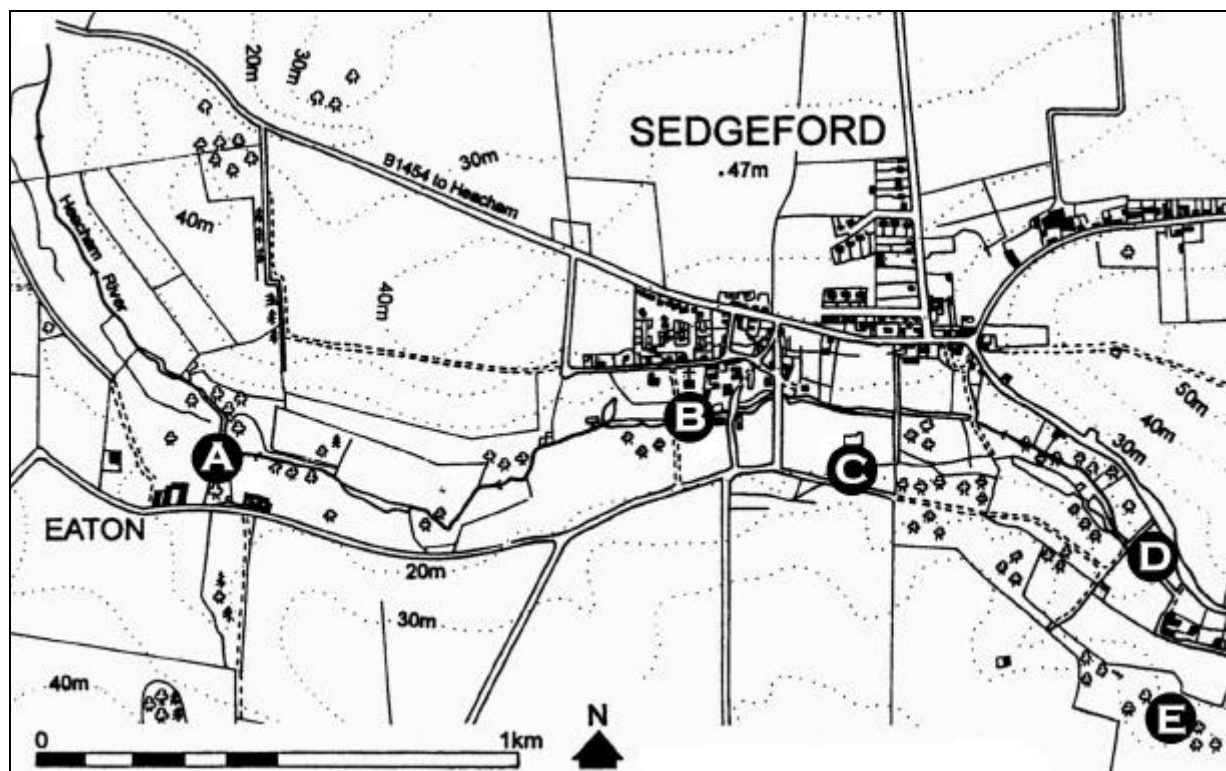


Figure 1. The village of Sedgeford showing the location of areas discussed in the text.

A - Eaton. B - West Hall. C - Boneyard/Reeddam. D - Bowling Green. E - Pagan Saxon Evaluation.

BONEYARD AND REEDDAM

By Gareth J. Davies

Located on the southern slope of the Heacham River valley, the Boneyard has long been known as the site of a cemetery, due to the regular appearance of human bone during ploughing. Excavations conducted by Dr. Peter Jewell during 1957-58 discovered 'some thirty' articulated skeletons from what was originally interpreted as a Saxo-Norman cemetery, and further to the west, Middle to Late Saxon occupation deposits in the form of a series of intercutting gullies, areas of burnt daub and flint cobbling (Wilson and Hurst 1959, 298). It was with this prior knowledge that SHARP began a large-scale excavation of the site in 1996, which has subsequently revealed a complex sequence of both human and natural effects on this piece of Norfolk landscape.

MEDIEVAL CHANGES TO THE LANDSCAPE

Whilst we are very fortunate that the Boneyard site has remained free of development since its abandonment, it has not been left entirely untouched by the events of the last millennium. Immediately north of the Boneyard, at the base of the valley, is the area known as the Reeddam due to its deliberate flooding in the Norman period for the cultivation of reeds, an event which greatly effected the surviving archaeology. Whereas the upper slope of the Boneyard is characterised by orange sand and gravel of periglacial origin, the damming of the river and the subsequent advance of the marsh has turned the orange sand on the lower slope of the Boneyard a dark grey colour, making interpretation of the archaeology difficult.

The most impressive feature associated with this period of the site's use is a large ditch, up to five metres wide and one metre deep, running from east to west across the northern portion of the main site. This ditch probably represents the southern boundary of the Reeddam and it was re-cut at least once during its existence. In the relatively short period since

that time, much of the Boneyard field has been covered by a layer of colluvium (hill wash) over a metre thick in places.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY

Below the layer of hill wash and the medieval ditch, SHARP's excavations have unearthed an intriguing, but at times problematic, sequence of Anglo-Saxon period archaeology, the interpretation of which has grown with the Project itself. The most extensive feature of the Boneyard-Reeddam excavation is a large Anglo Saxon inhumation cemetery which, to date, has produced a total of 161 burials of various degrees of preservation and completeness (see Figure 2). The people in the cemetery were buried in a west-east orientation without grave-goods, strongly suggesting that they were Christian burials, and therefore date to the seventh century or later. Initial radiocarbon dating of an early burial from the Reeddam has given a date of 730AD±40, significantly earlier than that suggested by the excavations of the 1950s, and one supported by the artefactual evidence, which suggests an eighth or ninth century date for the cemetery.

The arm positions of the burials and the occasional bone or metal pin both suggest that most people were buried in shrouds. However, not all of the burials in the cemetery were shroud burials. To the east of the excavation area there are a group of burials that have produced a number of iron coffin fittings, perhaps suggesting both differing status and segregated areas within the cemetery? By far the most concentrated area of burials is on the flat ground to the north of the excavations in the now waterlogged Reeddam. Within a five by ten metre trench a total of 61 burials have been excavated to date, and in places there are at least four phases of intercutting burials. In some cases, where a later burial disturbed an earlier skeleton, the disarticulated bone

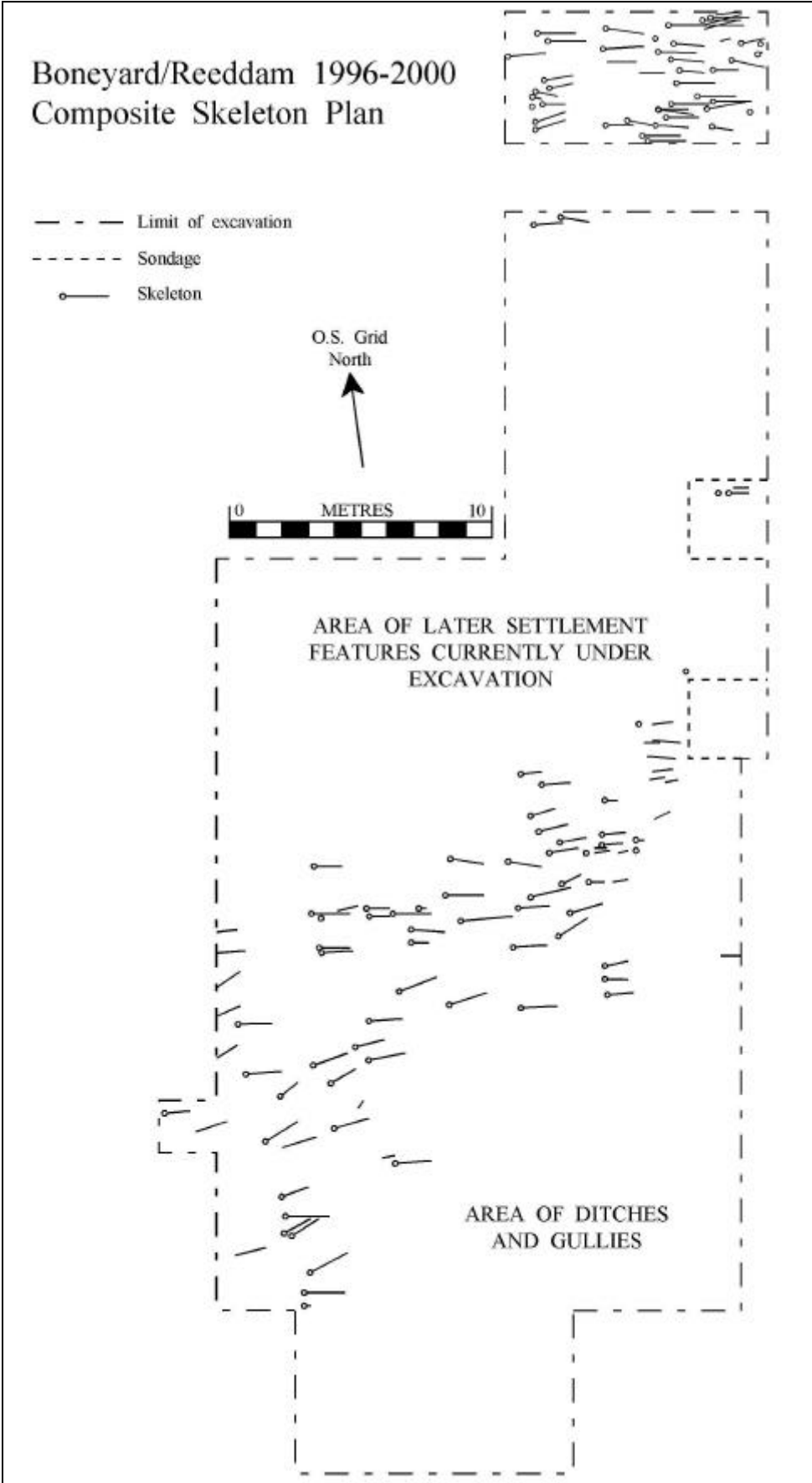


Figure 2. The positions of the burials from Boneyard and Reeddam.

(charnel) from the earlier burial was positioned around the sides of the later grave cut. Because of the intensity of burial in this area the presence of charnel is often the only way to recognise the earliest phase of burials.

Although we have only excavated a fraction of the site, it would appear that the burials in the Reeddam may represent one of the more utilised areas within an extensive cemetery. Certainly this area was re-used for burial on a number of occasions whereas burials further up the Boneyard slope are a lot more dispersed and rarely intercut each other.

LATER ANGLO-SAXON OCCUPATION

After the cemetery fell into disuse there were a number of different phases of occupation on the Boneyard site. Most noticeable are at least three phases of intercutting north-south drainage ditches and gullies, some fairly sizeable, and a necessary feature to protect a settlement on the slope. In the south east corner of the upper slope these north-south ditches do not truncate any skeletons and may be contemporary with the cemetery. On the lower slope these drainage ditches cut through other settlement features, which immediately post-date the cemetery. These settlement features include a number of postholes and a probable sunken-featured building (S.F.B.). S.F.B.s are typical structures on Middle Saxon sites and are represented by a large oval hollow in the ground that fills up with material after the building becomes disused. S.F.B.s are sometimes found with post-holes in or around them (as is the case here, see Figure 3) and are often interpreted as ancillary buildings that consisted of a post built structure with a raised timber floor and a small cellar-like cavity below.

The Boneyard S.F.B. is particularly interesting in that after it became disused a large dump of oven lining was thrown into the hollow of the structure. In addition, to the north of the S.F.B. two pits have been excavated that contained a lot of burnt clay. These two pits may represent oven clearances, and it seems that the

occupation immediately after the S.F.B. may represent an area that was being used for the dumping of material associated with informal industries such as bread-making. Indeed, the only evidence found of the bread wheat *triticum* on the site is from a flinty occupation surface adjacent to these 'oven clearance' pits. Around this time there was also considerable amount of animal bone being dumped on the site, a more detailed discussion of which can be found below.

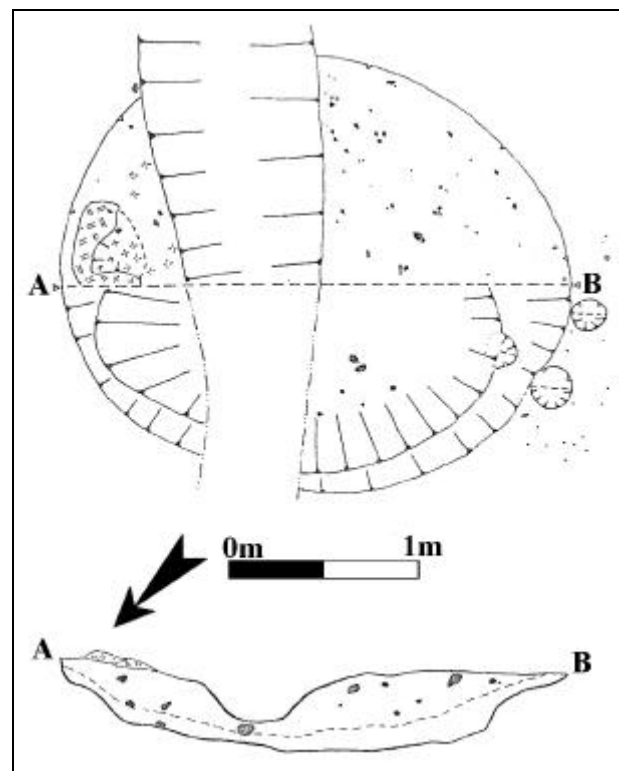


Figure 3. Plan and cross section of the S.F.B.

The main problem with the Boneyard settlement features, as with other Middle Saxon sites, is the lack of any tight dating evidence. The metalwork finds from the settlement layers post-dating the cemetery suggest an eighth or ninth century date for them, a date supported by the pottery finds. Many of the features contain Anglo-Saxon Thetford Ware pottery, which was made from the late ninth to the late eleventh centuries. Some, however, such as the S.F.B. only contain Ipswich Ware, which was produced from the early eighth to the mid-ninth centuries. Typically most features contain both types of pottery, but there is sufficient evidence to conclude that parts of the Boneyard

cemetery may go out of use as early as the ninth century, whilst other areas may have continued in use until some time later. This issue of chronology is one that we will only resolve further by continuing the excavation and commencing a systematic programme of radiocarbon dating.

HOW BIG? HOW IMPORTANT?

The extent of the Middle Saxon site is still an unresolved matter. Presumably the cemetery was bounded to the north by the River Heacham, but to the east, west and south we still have not discovered any definite boundaries. Evaluation work 40 metres to the east of the main trench has shown that there are no burials in this area, but there is a large north-south aligned ditch 2.7 metres wide and 1.7 metres deep. The pottery recovered from this ditch suggests that the ditch was initially cut in the Iron Age and then re-cut a number of times in the Anglo-Saxon period: could this reused ditch represent the eastern boundary of the cemetery?

Geophysical survey seems to have traced the northern course of the ditch running across a part of the Boneyard field, and the most easterly of the 1950s excavations revealed the burials not to extend that far. Work by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit immediately south of the Boneyard field in 1991 did not discover any burials either. It would appear, then, that the approximate limits of the cemetery have been identified, although clarifying them remains one of SHARP's most pressing research questions.

The archaeological potential of the Middle Saxon settlement site that would have been in use during the lifetime of the cemetery is vast. The SHARP excavations are yet to reach the 'settlement proper', but from the work in the cemetery and evaluations around the main excavations we are picking up tantalising evidence of a large, wealthy community that either had extensive trade links or its own centres of manufacture. We have several styli from the site (one of which is shown in Figure 4); pieces of decorated vessel glass; fragments of painted wall plaster; decorated bone combs; a range of Middle Saxon metalwork; and eighth century coinage, specifically an Anglian silver penny of King Eadwald (796-798 AD) and a Series R sceatta (730-750 AD).

Many of the artefacts listed above are traditionally seen as denoting 'high status' when found together on Middle Saxon sites. Indeed, styli and painted wall plaster have in the past been associated with monasteries and churches; styli as direct evidence of literacy and painted plaster as an exclusive form of building decoration. Early indicators are that next season, when we begin long term investigation of the settlement next to the Boneyard cemetery, an extensive, wealthy settlement, possibly focussed around a large early church, may begin to be uncovered.

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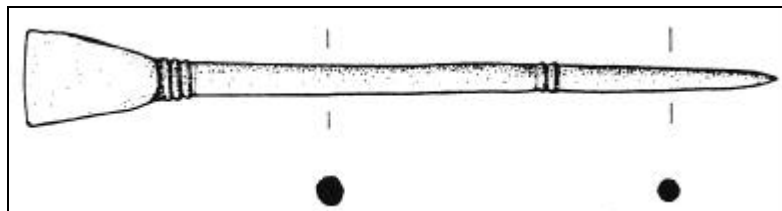


Figure 4. Middle Saxon copper alloy stylus, actual size.

ANGLO-SAXON SEDGEFORD

AN AGRICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

By Ray Thirkettle

The Boneyard-Reeddam site has produced a large assemblage of animal bones, the great majority of which are thought to derive from the occupation activity post-dating the cemetery. The value of much of this assemblage has been reduced by erosion, which has resulted in much mixing of contexts across the site, but there is sufficient material from secure contexts for us to gain an insight into the animal husbandry practices of the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants.

According to the animal bones recovered so far, the range of animals represented on the site follows the usual trend of sheep, cattle and pig, in that order of prevalence. Horse, dog and cat are also present in smaller quantities. Deer is represented by only one fragment of a roe deer's scapula, perhaps the remnant of a special feast?

Birds from the site include numerous domestic fowl, duck and goose. In addition, one bone from a common crane has been recognised. This bird is frequently found on archaeological sites and it is assumed that the bird was once quite common in England (Albarella and Davis 1996).

A study of the kill pattern of sheep, estimated by assigning age categories to the mandibles recovered, has identified two distinct peaks in the age at death sequence. The first peak falls at 1-2 years old and the second at about 5-6 years. The 1-2 year old animals, being newly mature, no doubt were a source of meat and perhaps represent a cull of unwanted male sheep. The 5-6 year old kill-off is perhaps showing animals of declining milk yield and whose fleeces were getting shabby.

In later times the most important contribution that sheep made towards the agricultural economy was their manure (Williamson 1997). The use of husbandry practices where sheep

were closely penned in fields before the crops were sown may be supported by the large amount of sheep allowed to live to old age. The question arises as to whether the death peak at 5-6 years represents a cull, or has some other explanation, such as natural mortality?

The Anglo-Saxons of Sedgeford evidently ate well from locally butchered beef; the spread of cattle bones shows a slight bias to the skeletal elements of the head and lower leg bones, the off cuts of butchery. The scarcity of long bones, the humerus and femur, could perhaps be explained if these were habitually smashed for the extraction of marrow, a possibility which examination of bone fragments cannot prove.

The enormous quantities of oyster shells which litter the sites, along with mussel shells and the occasional cockle, signify the consumption of shellfish, but what about fish? The close proximity of the river and the coast make it hard to believe that fish were not being eaten. However, despite a programme of wet sieving and objective sampling we have failed to recover much evidence for this.

Environmental sampling is recovering traces of cereal grains with oats, rye, barley and wheat present. With this year's recovery strategy we hope to have recovered chaff from these cereals, which will allow us to identify the varieties being grown. The samples are at present awaiting analysis. If we are successful we will be able to make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon agricultural economy in East Anglia.

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

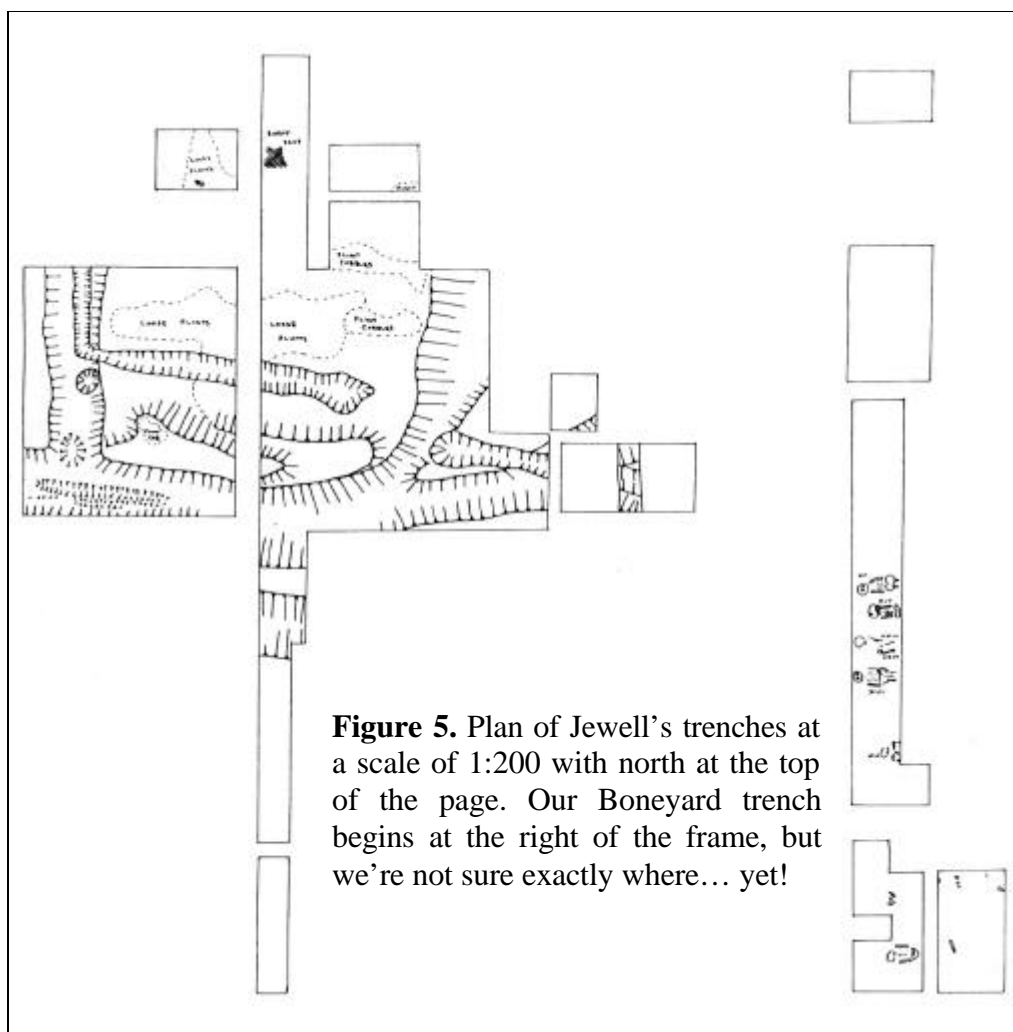
RESEARCHING PREVIOUS EXCAVATIONS OF THE BONEYARD

By Dominic Andrews and Melanie Van Twest

INTRODUCTION

As was discussed above, SHARP are not the first to excavate the Boneyard site. Several excavations were conducted in and around the area during the late 1950s, the most significant of which was that conducted during 1957-58 by Dr. Peter Jewell of Cambridge University. Although a brief summary of his excavation findings was published in the journal *Medieval Archaeology* in 1959, the fact that some of the collaborators did not deliver their respective reports means that the excavation has never been fully published. SHARP is intending to rectify this in our first monograph, by publishing Jewell's excavations along with our own.

Before SHARP's first season in 1996, the then directors went to visit Dr. Jewell and obtained copies of much of his excavation's paper archive, subsequently using this information to place the main Boneyard trench adjacent to the previously excavated areas. Jewell himself visited the site during the 1997 season, and, although he has since sadly died, it has always been our intention to combine his findings with our own to create an overall archaeological picture of the Boneyard. To this end, the 2000 season saw the opening of a trench linking our excavations to Jewell's and also the beginning of a programme to re-examine his site archive. Most of this archive is lodged with Norwich



Castle Museum and will be examined once the museum reopens in 2001, but some of the excavated human remains are now held by the Department of Biological Anthropology at the University of Cambridge and were examined by SHARP during the 2000 season.

A LINK TO THE PAST

Due to the fact that Jewell's original plans used natural features to provide locational details, many of which have since disappeared, we were not entirely certain of the relative relationship between his trenches and our own before the excavation began. We knew that they were close to each other - indeed, we believe that they overlap slightly in the south western corner of our Boneyard trench - but beyond that all was supposition. The research aims of the linking trench were, and are, therefore threefold: 1) to identify the positions of Jewell's trenches, 2) to remove Jewell's backfill, exposing his sections, and 3) to excavate away the undisturbed areas around Jewell's trenches. These aims will allow us to interpret Jewell's findings in relation to our own, enabling us to integrate evidence from both projects.

A rectangular trench was begun, extending away from the western side of the Boneyard trench and, as it was assumed that the field had been deeply ploughed since the 1950s, we did not expect to find intact archaeological deposits very near to the surface. The supposed deep ploughing had clearly never occurred, as traces of Jewell's trenches were revealed at a relatively shallow depth within the trench, a fact later confirmed by Bill Armitage, who was responsible for ploughing the field in the 1960s.

Rather than excavate the entire area at once, thin sondage trenches were dug along the northern and southern sides of the linking trench to sample the stratification. This sampling revealed part of one of Jewell's trenches, which crossed the eastern end of the linking trench, running approximately north-south. The excavation was able to clearly identify the edges of the old trenches, marked

as they were by the presence of darker backfill against a lighter, undisturbed sand. This backfill was removed in places to reveal the bottom of the original trench, marked by the hard, sandy, chalk gravel taken to be the natural in this area. A hollow was found in the surface of this layer, which may represent a grave cut from which the 1950's excavators took one of their skeletons. Next season work will begin on the removal of the remaining backfill of Jewell's trench.



Plate 1. Jewell excavating a skeleton, 1958.

At the southern side of the western end of the linking trench, excavation of an area believed to be outside Jewell's trenches revealed traces of human bone and eventually an articulated skeleton. The skull was missing, apart from one piece of bone and a part of the jaw, and seemed to have been truncated by a north-south running feature. The ribs and arms had also been disturbed and the legs were partly displaced, but most of the bones of the feet were present, although scattered. It is thought that this burial had been very lightly skimmed during ploughing and that the disturbance results from this. However, the truncation of the skull is more archaeologically interesting - the area to the west of the cut is filled with flint rubble in a loose soil and may well represent the position of another trench which may have removed the skull.

Clearly, then, this season's work has demonstrated that Jewell's trenches are still largely undisturbed and that their

archaeological potential is high. In addition there are areas of undisturbed stratification between them, the eventual excavation of which will greatly enhance the archaeological record of the Boneyard.

THE CAMBRIDGE SKELETONS

The Department of Biological Anthropology at the University of Cambridge holds over 70 partial skeletons, supposedly from Sedgeford, as a part of the Duckworth Collection. During the course of a week we were able to identify 22 skeletons as those excavated by Jewell in 1957-58 by matching their Roman numeral cataloguing system with that used on excavation plans showing the skeletons in situ.

Jewell's plans compared well with the evidence of the skeletons themselves, as the amount of skeleton shown present was generally very accurate, although frequently ribs and hands were missing - clearly shown on the plans, we can only assume that they were not recovered during excavation, presumably as they were deemed to be of little diagnostic value. This is still essentially true, but the idea of separating articulated bones for any other reason than dire necessity is not one that is tolerated so easily today and provides an example of the change in attitudes in archaeology during the last forty years.

Jewell's 22 skeletons were examined in the same way as those excavated by SHARP and their data added to the SHARP burials

catalogue. Taking the Cambridge burials into account, we now have evidence for at least 189 articulated skeletons in varying degrees of preservation. Work on the disarticulated bone is still incomplete, but initial estimates suggest that it could represent about 50 individuals, bringing the total nearer to 240. This is a substantial number of burials, and from only a part of the cemetery, and perhaps adds weight to the growing theory that far from being a rural backwater, Sedgeford was an ecclesiastical site of some importance at the time of the cemetery's use.

Our work at Cambridge this season has clearly demonstrated the value of examining the archives of previous excavations and we hope to have as much success when we examine the rest of Jewell's archive in 2001. However, the Cambridge collection also contains the partial remains of at least 50 more individuals described as coming from an excavation in Sedgeford during 1960-61 and about which we know nothing - are these individuals also a part of the Boneyard population or do they represent another site as yet unknown to SHARP? This too is a matter that we will be addressing in the 2001 season.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SHARP wishes to thank the Department of Biological Anthropology, University of Cambridge, particularly the curator, Ms Maggie Bellati.



Plate 2. Jewell's excavation team at work on the Boneyard, 1958.

WEST HALL PADDOCK

By Andrea Cox

The fifth season saw the completion of our excavations at West Hall Paddock and the establishment of a firm sequence of events on the site. Work in 1999 had shown that a sequence of boundaries and pathways had existed on the site from the 13th to the 17th centuries, boundaries that are thought to have once separated the land owned by the Priory of Norwich and that of the local lords, the de Sedgefords. The excavation had also uncovered important earlier medieval and Romano-British remains that needed further investigation in the 2000 season.

Below the later medieval boundary system, the 1999 excavations had unearthed what was thought to be the remains of a chapel, probably related to an early manor mentioned in Domesday Book and of possible Late Saxon foundation. Little evidence remained of the structure and our area of excavation was limited, giving us only a part of the structure to study and consequently leaving its function open to debate. A posthole, an area of mortar and flint hardcore with a defined straight western edge, and three equally spaced grave cuts were recorded. The central of the three graves was excavated and revealed the remains of a woman of approximately 30 years of age with severe skeletal deformities: a deformed right leg and scoliosis or curvature of the spine (Figure 5).

THE 2000 SEASON

The wet weather over the 1999/2000 winter had severely waterlogged the site, leaving the eastern half unworkable. Fortunately the most significant deposits lay in the western half and we were able to study them extensively. Further study of the remains of the early medieval 'chapel' in 2000, yielded another posthole cutting the mortar and flint hardcore between two of the grave cuts. We also excavated the northern grave cut, but it failed to produce any articulated human bones for comparison with the 1999 skeleton, having been disturbed, robbed of its contents and immediately backfilled at some point in the medieval period. Why the grave had

been robbed is impossible to tell but it is probable that it took place when the 'chapel' was demolished or dismantled.

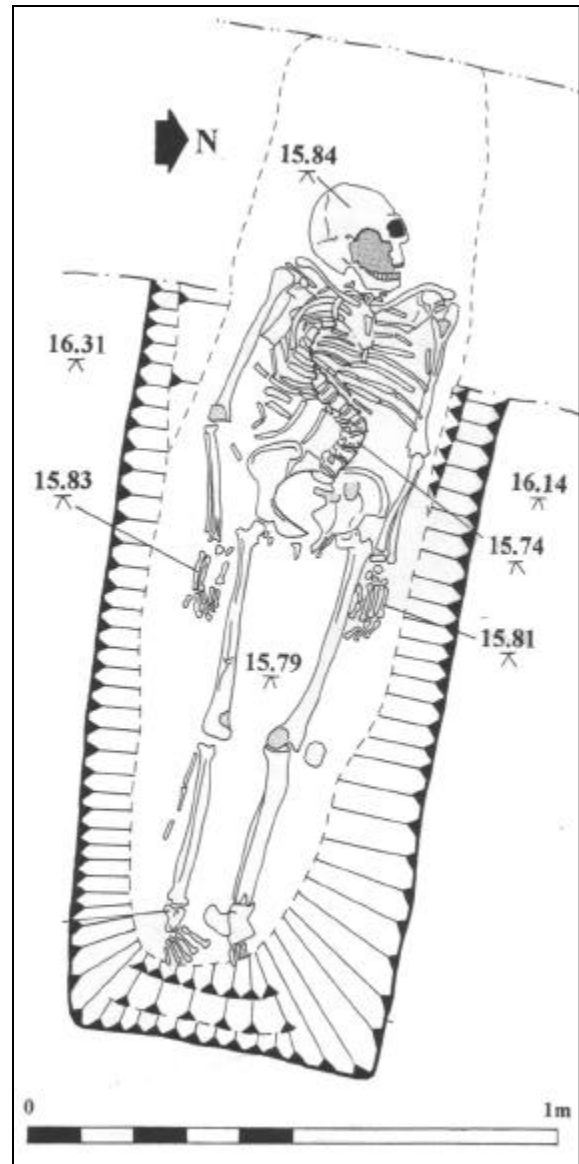


Figure 5. Skeleton S5001 in situ.

All reusable or perishable material - flooring, beams or posts, roofing and walling materials - had left little trace in the ground. No flooring surfaces, collapsed building debris or grave markers lay directly above the mortar hardcore and burials; only a thick layer of soil and occupation debris built up over time after the abandonment of the area. The lack of such deposits can partly be attributed to the natural

decay of the organic materials that would have been used for the building. Even so, no evidence of posts having rotted in situ was discovered, suggesting that they had been removed. It is probable, then, that when the 'chapel' went out of use, some of the building materials were reclaimed to use elsewhere, and at the same time the second grave cut was disturbed and its contents removed.

RADIOCARBON DATING

Dating evidence for this 'chapel' structure was equally scarce. Therefore it was decided to get Skeleton S5001 radiocarbon dated, producing a date of 950±40 Before Present (BP, with the 'present' conventionally taken as being AD1950), which can be calibrated to a calendar date range of AD1010 to AD1180. This shows that S5001 probably died between these dates and that the 'chapel' was in use before AD1180 and was abandoned later than AD1010. Although a wide date range, it confirms our ideas that this phase of activity on the site dates to the earlier years of the medieval period, even stretching back to the Late Saxon period.

INTERPRETATION

There was certainly uninterrupted continuity of activity and settlement at West Hall from the Late Saxon period, through the medieval period. Again there were problems of interpreting the data due to the small area of excavation that we were unavoidably limited to and because of disturbance by later medieval activity. Nevertheless the 2000 season uncovered a sequence of clearly dated Late Saxon remains with no hiatus before the construction of the 'chapel'. A substantial soil layer containing occupation debris such as Ipswich and Thetford ware fragments, bone and shell represented the Late Saxon land surface and on to this a rammed chalk surface had been constructed. A large irregular shaped pit was later cut through the surface and was left open to silt up. What the surface and the pit represent remains unknown as their full extent could not be uncovered. It is possible that the pit was in fact a pond; the land being near the river and therefore very wet. Eventually the 'pond' was filled and levelled off when the whole area of the west end of the

Paddock was raised above the water table with a series of dumped sand and soil deposits. The 'chapel' was then built on dry and flat land.

Prior to the Late Saxon activity, it seems that the Paddock was left unoccupied for several hundred years. Work in 1999 had identified Romano-British layers and a small gully running east-west. The 2000 season confirmed the date and uncovered a shallow ditch and another gully, again running east west across the site. They all contained preserved plant remains showing that the area had been waterlogged continuously since the ditch and gullies were dug and that the area was very wet and probably marginal land. It is likely then, that the ditch and gullies were attempts at drainage after the land had become increasingly waterlogged. Eventually nature won out and the area was abandoned until the Late Saxon population of Sedgford decided to utilise it. Unfortunately, the great depth of the deposits, over 2m below the present ground surface and the waterlogging of the site made it impossible to excavate deeper for more Romano-British or earlier prehistoric remains. Even so, Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered from the Romano-British layers suggesting that there had been activity of this date nearby.

Although brought to an end by practicalities rather than lack of archaeology, the five-year excavations at West Hall Paddock have been a huge success. We have identified the boundary between the two medieval manors and discovered previously unknown early medieval, Anglo-Saxon and Romano-British activity in the village. Not only important in their own right, these discoveries have also helped bring us a step closer to fulfilling one of our main research aims: to discover when and why the Anglo-Saxon settlement moved to the site of the modern village on the northern side of the river. The West Hall excavations have shown that, certainly by the Late Saxon period (AD850-1066), people were using the land on this side of the river, and that it is likely that an early manor was also established there during the period. The significance of this is yet to be fully understood but future work in the area and at Boneyard and Reeddam will no doubt elucidate this.

WEST HALL HOUSE

By Pauline Fogarty

As part of larger research into the West Hall area, work has been done this year on West Hall House. A standing building survey was undertaken of the interior and exterior of the building. An investigation into the gardens of West Hall was also done, to look for interesting features, such as the structure of the gardens in the past. A small-scale investigation into the documentary evidence concerning West Hall was also carried out, allowing us to learn much about the manor in the past.

The present West Hall house is believed to stand on the site of a medieval manor, of which there are no structural remains, but many documentary references to an estate of Norwich Cathedral Priory. Therefore, the standing-building survey had a number of important purposes;

- 1) To complement the standing building survey of West Hall Farmyard carried out in 1999.
- 2) To identify the developmental sequence of the building and relate these to the history of the manor.
- 3) To see if any remains of the medieval manor

survive within the present standing building.

The manor of Sedgeford had a higher value than any of the other manors owned by Norwich Cathedral Priory. It is thought that the West Hall Manor was divided into two courts, with a separate moat around each, but the precise location of these is unknown today. On the present site a stream runs parallel with the north and west walls of the house and there is also evidence of where this stream continued to the south of the West Hall grounds, although it is at present overgrown and dry. This stream may follow the path of a medieval moat, but would have been unlikely for defence purposes, instead representing the status of the manor.

West Hall House may not have any visible structural remains dating back to the manor in the medieval period, but at least six phases of rebuilding can be seen in the fabric of the house itself.

The eastern end is the earliest remaining part of the structure (area d in Figure 6), where there is an original chimney appearing to date from the 16th/17th centuries. Very little of the walls of this eastern section can be seen as they are

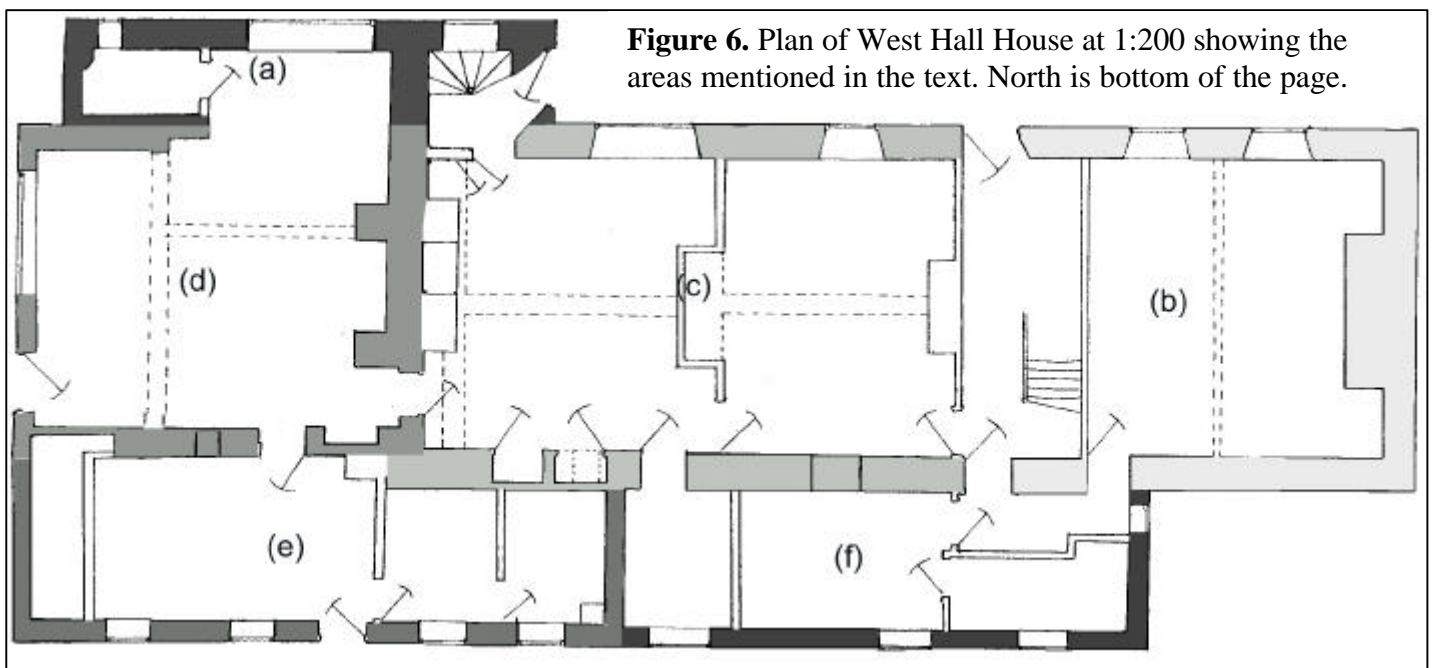


Figure 6. Plan of West Hall House at 1:200 showing the areas mentioned in the text. North is bottom of the page.

concealed by extensions to the north and south, and an extension to the west. The eastern wall that remains unfortunately does not contain many original features, such as windows, but has been subject to many periods of rebuilding. The middle section (area c) of the house is of a later date than the eastern end. The western end (area b) of the house is an 18th century extension; this is clearly visible from the windows and the similarity of the brickwork. The south wall is the front wall of the house and shows the scars of these rebuilding phases. It is probable that at the time of this western extension there were also alterations to the southern front of the house.

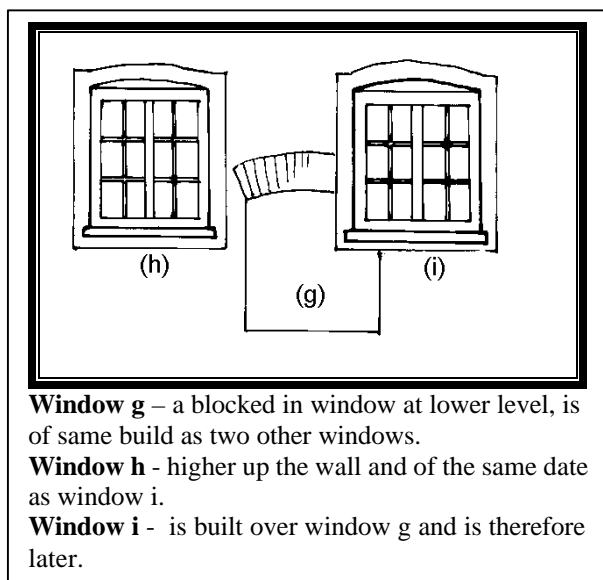


Figure 7. An example of the stratigraphy of standing buildings

These alterations would have been made as it was important for the front of the house to look symmetrical for aesthetic reasons. The front of the house contains at least one set of blocked windows in the middle section. These windows were probably blocked and replaced when the western extension was added, in order for the front facade to remain symmetrical.

There are two additions on the north side. The eastern one (area e) may be of two builds, containing a single storey and the later addition of another storey. There are possible marks on the walls on the west, north and east sides that indicate this. The idea that this has been

extended from a single storey outshut to a two-storey outshut is made probable due to alterations to the heights of windows in the lower level. There were three windows at a lower point, of which one was filled in and replaced by two windows that were slightly higher up, shown in Figure 7. It is likely that this would have been the result of a heightening of the wall that allowed the builders more space in which to place the window.

The northwest outshut (area f) is the most modern part of the construction and contains some renovations where doorways were converted into windows.

There is also an outshut at the front of the house, at the eastern end (area a). This outshut is later in date than the eastern section, but is probably only a little later than the middle extension. The outshut is interesting as it has undergone many renovations. This is typical of any structure that is on the facade of the building. The outshut bears the scar of an old conservatory and the effects of internal reorganisation. In this outshut a staircase has been moved from the eastern to the western end. Where the staircase was added is evident as a doorway has been blocked in and a new door inserted at the foot of the stairs.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WEST HALL MANOR

A manor at West Hall is referred to as 'acquired fully' by Norwich Cathedral Priory in 1205. The manor was owned by Norwich Cathedral Priory, and was worth more than any other Manor owned by the priory, at £76 18s 4½d (Dodwell 1975, xxi). The dissolution of the monasteries spelt the end of the Priory's ownership and the estate was taken over by the Dean and Chapter of Norwich. However, the manor has been leased out privately since at least the late 1420s. It is known the Le Stranges and the Rolfes held West Hall house, the farm and much of its lands. West Hall House was leased by the Le Stranges for a total of 198 years, one of the longest leases given by the Dean and Chapter. In 1538, the manor and rectory of Sedgford was let to Thomas Le Strange on a 99 year lease. In 1562, another 99 year lease was

arranged with Nicholas Le Strange, that came into effect seventy-five years later (Atherton and Holderness 1996, 668).

The Le Stranges not only held West Hall for longer than many of the other lessees, but gained rights that many other tenants of Norwich Cathedral Priory did not share, such as the control of the manor court. The Le Stranges also escaped paying corn rents on the property as these were introduced after their leases were enforced and therefore were not obliged to pay as other tenants were.

The Rolfes held the leases of East Hall and West Hall farm between 1767 and 1889, at which time the lease was refused extension by the ecclesiastical commissioners (Berry 1979). The Rolfes, like the Le Stranges, were also given much freedom concerning the property. This is seen when William Utten told Edmund Rolfe, 'they leave the management of that building to your care and judgement' in 1775 (NRO, DCN 118/5). The property transferred into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (as did most of the Dean and Chapter property) in 1869.

Work to be carried out on West Hall in the future will include looking at the documentary sources for the manors in the medieval period, looking at how the manor's wealth compares with others held by Norwich Cathedral Priory and investigating why West Hall was often undervalued in medieval documents.

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Plate 3. West Hall House from the north east c.1910.

THE PAGAN SAXONS OF SEDGEFORD

By Sophie Cabot

During the 2000 season an investigation into potential Early Anglo-Saxon sites in Sedgeford was put together using antiquarian accounts and museum objects. It was hoped that this would provide some information about the people who predated the Christian Saxons of the Boneyard, where no pre-Christian Saxon material has yet been found.

Work started with extensive desktop research into the previous finds and excavations of early Saxon material in Sedgeford, most notably by an owner of Sedgeford Hall, Holcombe Ingleby. A keen antiquarian, he wrote extensively of life in Sedgeford before the First World War in *The Charm of a Village* (1920), in which he also discussed his many archaeological activities.



Plate 4. Urn excavated before 1826. (Ingleby, 1920, 31).

PREVIOUS PAGAN SAXON FINDS

As a result of this work, it seems likely that over the years at least six cremation burials in urns have been excavated in a fairly discreet area of the parish, the surviving finds being mainly in the collection of Norwich Castle Museum. The earliest recorded Pagan Saxon find is a row of cremation urns discovered in a gravel pit c.1826; two of these urns are believed to survive

and one has been published (Myres 1977, p.282).

Another urn was discovered by the Reverend Ogle in the area of Eaton Farm during the 19th century (Norfolk SMR No. 13882). Although this urn is not thought to survive, Ogle's urn is one of a pair of finds from Eaton. At another point in the 19th century the finding of a plain urn, without contents was recorded (Norfolk SMR No. 11262). This urn is now held by Norwich Castle Museum, and Sedgeford is identified as the find spot in their records.

Moving into the 20th century, in 1913 Holcombe Ingleby found an urn (Norfolk SMR No. 1613) '...on the west side of the valley' (*Norfolk Archaeology* 19). This may be one of those he illustrates in his volumes, but there is no way of knowing whether it actually is. Ingleby also excavated a group of inhumations in 1913, which he discusses in *The Charm of a Village*. A sketch map of the grounds of Sedgeford Hall drawn by Ingleby's daughter, locates the area, but the Saxon identification of these finds is highly dubious. The map is of more interest for its incidental recording of a number of other locations of Pagan Saxon finds in the area.

In 1917 Ingleby discovered another urn (Norfolk SMR No. 1612) probably in a location close to No. 1613. This urn is probably that illustrated in *Norfolk Archaeology* 19.

In 1952 a 'probably AD...' and possibly Saxon socketed iron spearhead was found at Eaton, the only other early Saxon find from there (Norfolk SMR No. 356635). This is now in Norwich Castle Museum, and has also been published (Swanton 1973, Fig. 29, p.88).

Finally, in 1997, half of an early Saxon copper alloy brooch, was discovered by SHARP in the field to the south of the Boneyard. This find had been disturbed by ploughing and is shown in Figure 8.

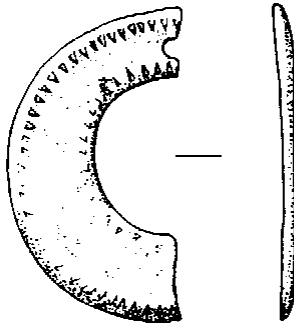


Figure 8. Sixth century brooch found by SHARP field walkers. Scale approx 1:1.

On the basis of these finds, fieldwork was concentrated on an area to the east of the village, close to Sedgeford Hall, identified from the records of the above excavations and finds.

TRIAL EXCAVATIONS

The identified area is in Hall Wood, and was not suitable for geophysical survey due to dense tree cover, so three small trenches were used to assess the archaeology. These were placed so as to cover the top, bottom and slope of the abandoned quarry in the wood where some of the urns were thought to have been found. It was hoped that evidence of a cremation cemetery would be uncovered, but given the difficult conditions it was expected that preservation might be poor. In fact, no cremation remains were discovered in these test excavations, and very little archaeology of any sort. The trenches were excavated by hand to natural glacial gravels, and two small field boundary ditches were found in the southernmost one. These appeared to be post medieval, dated by a single sherd of glazed Grimston ware. In the other two it appeared that quarry activity had destroyed any archaeological deposits. Over the whole area the soils were remarkably devoid of residual archaeological

material which might have indicated proximity to any kind of site.

It rapidly became clear that the area studied could not be the location of the antiquarian finds, and it has now been decided that an area to the south of the woodland is a more probable location, closer to the discovery site of the brooch illustrated in Figure 8. The issue had been clouded by the Ingleby sketch map, which relates to inhumation burials, and it seems increasingly unlikely that these were in fact Pagan Saxon burials at all. Overall, the success of this season has been in disproving the existence of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground at this location, where it has long been advertised, even on Ordnance Survey maps.

It is hoped that some work in this new location will be possible in future seasons.

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THE BOWLING GREEN EVALUATION

By Naomi Payne

In 1913 Holcombe Ingleby installed a bowling green about 150 yards to the north west of Sedgeford Hall. In his book *The Charm of a Village* (1920) he states that during the construction of the green he “discovered that the workmen were turning up pieces of British and Roman pottery” (p.27). He then describes how he went on to find quantities of pottery in various parts of the Sedgeford Valley, but he does not specify where precisely he dug.

Ingleby certainly found a large quantity of pottery; Plate 5 shows tables in the village hall covered in his pottery finds. Unfortunately the pottery does not survive: local folklore has it that it was crushed and used in the hard core of the road between Sedgeford and Snettisham. Apart from the brief references in *The Charm of a Village*, Ingleby’s discoveries were not systematically recorded or published.

In Week 2 a small team of diggers was deployed to the old bowling green site, aiming to discover what Ingleby had found and assess whether any of the deposits have survived. The bowling green has not been in use for at least half a century and has been planted with trees. However, the position of the rectangular green is still evident, with slight banks to the north west and south east, a more defined bank to

the north east and a drop towards the Heacham river to the south west.

A five metre trench was placed across the north east bank, and test pits were positioned off the green to the north east, south west and north west. The sequences discovered and profiles surveyed on and off the bowling green suggest that the green was constructed by cutting into the natural slope to create an appropriately sized flat surface. The material removed appears to have been deposited fairly evenly to the north east, building up the bank. Few finds were recovered by hand from this material, but when the spoil was sieved, numerous small sherds of Iron Age and later pottery were recovered. It seems that when Ingleby’s workmen excavated the bowling green they missed these small sherds, just as we did when excavating by hand.

We concluded that the construction of the bowling green had removed the archaeological deposits containing the Iron Age and Roman pottery that Ingleby found. However, the quantities of pottery recovered do suggest there is an Iron Age site somewhere in the vicinity and a programme of investigation into the Iron Age at Sedgeford was initiated during the 2000 season.



Plate 5. Ingleby’s pottery from *The Charm of a Village*.

FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION FROM SKULLS

By Dominic Andrews

This year experiments were carried out in the field of facial reconstruction from the skulls found in Sedgeford. The aim was to bring these people 'to life' so that we might have a better idea about their appearance and make a more direct link with the past. Such reconstructions are normally done in three dimensions using a cast of the skull and layers of clay to build up a convincing model of the head in life, and are generally very expensive. Our aim was to attempt to duplicate this method in two dimensions at relatively little cost.

PRINCIPLES OF FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION

There are certain characteristics of a face which can be deduced from a study of the features of the skull, as they are determined entirely or in part by the shape of the skull (or, more correctly, they grow together with the skull). The skull can tell us the shape of the head, brow and jaw, and the dimensions of the cheekbones and chin; it is possible also to deduce, to a certain extent, the approximate shape and size of the eyes, nose and mouth, as well as the general degree of robustness.

Other features, however, cannot be determined, as the skull structure can provide no evidence of their appearance. Details such as the shape of the eyelids, the end of the nose, the size and shape of the ears, and the lips can only be guessed at. Similarly, the pigmentation of the eyes, hair and skin cannot be revealed. Other characteristics of a face, such as the amount of subcutaneous fat, the complexion and the patterns of lines and wrinkles cannot be known, being the products of the subject's environment. Educated guesses, though, can be made, with references to the known facts about the person's lifestyle. Generally these features must all be drawn from the imagination of the reconstructing artist.

There are also features which are vital to a person's visual identity, but which have no direct connection with a person's genetically determined appearance; these are the hairstyle worn by the subject, the style and presence of

facial hair, and also skin blemishes (such as warts, acne, freckles or scars).

THE PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION

In principle this is basically the same as for three-dimensional reconstruction, although a lot quicker. The first stage, and the most important, is to produce an accurate sketch of the skull from a given angle; accuracy is essential, but by no means unattainable, given sufficient experience. Reference must constantly be made to the skull during the procedure, and the artist must keep a 'feel' for the skull and its features. It is important to keep in mind, at all times, a three-dimensional picture of the head and features, as it is easy to distort the features when transferred from brain to paper.

Over the outline of the skull are drawn such features as the eyeballs, nose and the main muscles of the head; the shape of the skull, and the size and position of muscle attachments are used as a guide. The line of the mouth is added, using the width of the jaw and the arrangement of teeth as indicators (the width of the mouth is roughly the distance between the canines). The eyes are then given lids (the form of which can be estimated from the size and shape of the sockets and the age of the person), and now the face begins to come 'alive'. After this, soft tissue is added to the head in various thicknesses, as appropriate, and ears are drawn in. From this point, it is simply a matter of adding and removing pencil lines; wrinkles are added, and the face is rendered, with shadows, and final touches, to turn it from a diagram into a portrait. Lastly, hair is added, with reference to contemporary fashions, and the head is given a neck to complete the illusion.

There are several factors which must be decided upon when a reconstruction drawing is being produced: decisions must be made concerning the angle of the head, the direction of gaze and the expression, as well as the state of their health and level of cleanliness, and their 'character'.

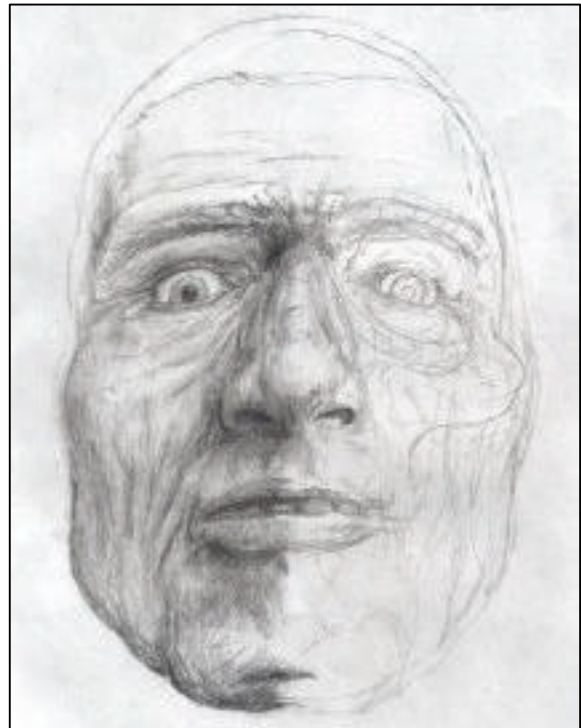
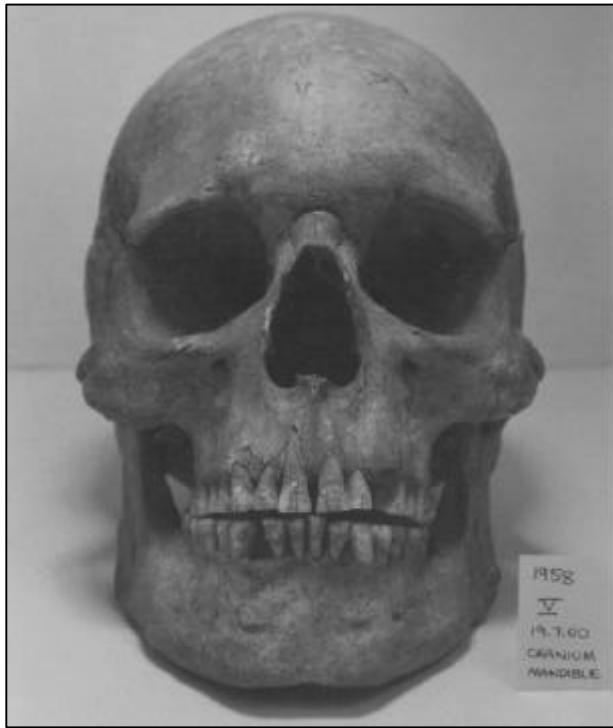
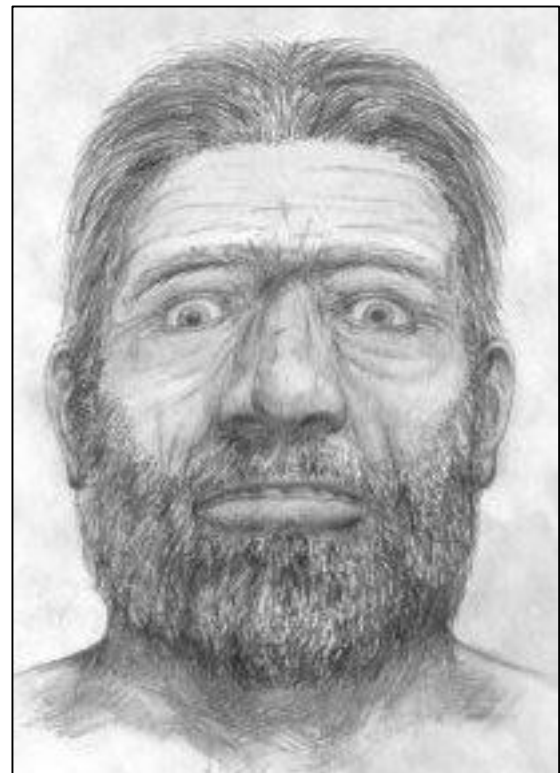
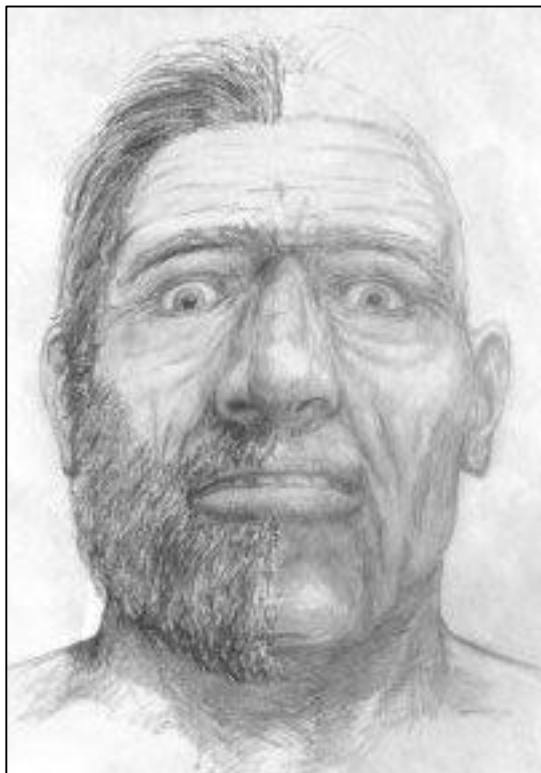


Plate 6 (above left) - Skull V from Jewell's 1958 excavation of the Boneyard, now in Cambridge.

Figure 9 (above right) - The right side of the face, as we see it, shows the outline of skull, eyes and facial muscles, whilst the left side of the face shows rendered facial features.

Figure 10 (below left) - Fully rendered face, with the partial addition of facial hair.

Figure 11 (below right) - The finished reconstruction.



The parts of a face which cannot be determined from the skull should be kept fairly nondescript in a reconstruction, in order not to distract the viewer from the parts of the face for which there is real evidence; at the same time the face must appear realistic, and retain its character.

THE FACES FROM SEDGEFORD

The first attempts at reconstructing the skulls from the Boneyard were made using photographs of the surviving intact crania. These were followed by 'life' drawings from the skulls, from different angles, with the process being refined each time. These earlier efforts are clearly far from perfect, but continued work has allowed a regular methodology to be established, which has since led to the production of pictures such as those illustrated here, which show the stages in reconstructing skull No. V from the 1958 excavations.

The drawings of the Saxon people from Sedgeford were created with certain points in mind to lend a general background 'feel' to the pictures. The bones found show that these people lived an active and healthy, if hard life, and were generally tall and well-built, with few signs of disease. The faces are therefore drawn with a lean look, and slightly weathered, as befits those with an outdoor life. It is assumed, though, that they would have aged faster than modern populations, as they lived in a world which would have been extremely stressful, without the benefits of modern science.

Another interesting experiment involved the reconstruction of a skeleton full length: this was done with the remains of the burial from the West Hall site. This subject was of particular interest as she had suffered from several deformities, such a badly curved spine, deformed ribcage, and a withered right leg. The resulting pictures were deemed to be a success, and there are plans to do more full-length reconstructions next year. It is hoped, too, that we might also attempt some 3-D modelling.

COMMENTS ON THE 2-D METHOD

The initial drawing of the skull is made sometimes by direct tracing from a photograph, but usually through observation. Measurements

are not taken, but this does not mean that the picture created is inaccurate, for it is perfectly possible to create a precise sketch, with minimum distortion. Taking measurements would also be impractical for this purpose, as well as difficult without specialised scanning equipment.

The hardest part of the process is the 'application' of eyes, muscles, fat, skin and hair to the 2-D skull. This stage must be completed correctly, and so it is vital to be able to apply a sense of three dimensions to the two dimensional representation. This, again, does not pose a real problem - examination of a skull provides much useful information on the features to be created in 2-D.

The purpose of facial reconstruction, in an archaeological context, is to present the public with a picture of someone from the past. They therefore need to see a *real person* who lived, breathed, ate, slept, thought and felt. The face must convey the impression that he or she is alive and thinking, so that we might make connection with the person in the picture. The face, therefore, must have character, expression and feeling; it must be a *person*, not just a *representation*. Expression is crucial to give the picture life; it is unnerving to see a totally relaxed face staring vacantly.

In the end, it must be acknowledged that the artist can only create an illusion, rather than a true image of the person. The picture produced will have some features in common with the real person, but is still fantasy, at least in part. The only purpose, after all, of these reconstructions is to give the viewer a face to go with the archaeological remains being uncovered.

As mentioned above, the results of the pictures produced this year show promise, and it is therefore planned that this work will be continued and expanded-upon next year, with life-size modelling and full-colour pictures.

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