

# HER 2081 BINHAM PRIORY

## The Metal Finds

by Andrew Rogerson and Steven Ashley

Fifty-five metal objects, including six coins and jettons and seven fragments of monumental brass, survive from the 1930s clearance work (Norwich Castle Museum accession number 1958.188). The numismatic items and the brass are treated in separate notes. Fifteen objects, seven of copper alloy, four of lead and four of iron are either undatable or recent and are not described below. What has come down to us is a misleadingly sparse sample. It can be assumed that many pieces were not seen during the work, and it is quite likely that others were retrieved but not retained. Two shortcomings of the assemblage are particularly striking, the scarcity of iron objects and the presence of a solitary lead window came. The book mount (No.1) and the three objects with religious associations (nos.2-4) are not only appropriate in their general context but also highly suggestive of what else may have been missed during the work.

Ancient Monuments Laboratory reference numbers are given, where known, at the end of each entry.

No. 1. Incomplete gilt copper alloy mount, probably from a book. Part of two original outside edges survive of a square plate with a large circular central bezel (diam.30mm) with incomplete elaborate engraved scalloped sheet sides and four drilled holes continuing the concentric line where part of the side is missing (possibly for a repair). The glass or stone setting is missing and there is a large irregular perforation in the centre. A broad concentric band around the central setting contains the remains of four (of originally eight) confronted wyverns on a field of chip-carved lines. The outside edges of the mount are scalloped with engraved decoration with a bordering line within which the surviving angle is occupied by engraved foliate decoration. This is partly obscured by an oblique line of three separate bezels, one rectangular flanked by two ovals. Each is riveted to the plate and contains the fragmentary remains of a blue/green glass setting. Another edge of the plate is broken obliquely across the remains of two (of originally three) rivet-holes for equivalent settings where an outer angle is missing. There are two further perforations for rivets through the outer border, one in the angle and one at the mid point of the surviving side. >61 x >52mm. *c.* 1400. (7310710).

No.2. Oval copper alloy foil plaque, probably a pilgrim badge. Small parts of the outside edge are damaged and there is a horizontal cut at the apex and a crack on one side. The plaque may once have been sewn onto clothing, although there are no surviving means of attachment. The repoussé decoration comprises a representation of Mary seated at the foot of the cross cradling the deposed Christ across her lap. Her face is damaged by an irregular perforation. Above her is the upper end of the cross with the crown of thorns resting on the cross bar, and the attached inscribed label: INRI (*Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum*, 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'). Below her feet are the skulls and bones of Calvary. She is seated between two trees which may represent the two flanking crosses. The background to the scene is comprised of multiple tiny pellets. The face of the plaque has an even dark olive green patination whilst the reverse retains a fresh golden colour. 36 x 43mm. Very similar pelleted backgrounds can be seen on badges found in London (Spencer 1998, nos. 151c and f) and Exeter (Allan 1984, fig. 190 no. 50). Foil badges, of Continental origin, were most popular at Walsingham (Egan 2005, 206). Thickness of less than 0.25mm. *c.* 1500. (78100518)

No.3. Cut sub-trapezoidal lead sheet impressed with a counter-relief stamp or seal depicting the Annunciation. Mary is seated to the right of a vase containing lilies with the angel to the left. There are traces of radiating rays behind Mary and above the lilies, but the area behind the angel is blank. A horizontal line at base defines a semicircular department which may contain the remains of an illegible inscription, part of which has been removed by the cut lower edge. The cut edges are echoed by tooling marks around the central impression. This may have been part of a larger object which was rather crudely cut down to preserve the religious scene for personal devotion or use as a token of good luck or a prophylactic. 33 x 28mm. *c.* 1400. (78100579).

No.4. Crudely cast and corroded lead standing female figure with hooded robes. The front face is cast in relief with a slightly hollowed flat back, which has been bent back at the edges to create additional depth for the piece. The head of the figure is inclined slightly downward and to her left. Her right arm is bent horizontally at the elbow with her hand resting on her stomach. There is an open oval moulding which appears to represent the opening of her left sleeve within which is a horizontal moulding with the broken stump of an oval moulding above, perhaps the remains of her left hand. The stiff folds of the robe fall to rest in more expanded oblique and horizontal folds obscuring her feet in base. The reverse has an obliquely set tubular fixing for attachment at approximately one third up from the base. The figure might represent Mary standing at the foot of the cross and therefore may have formed part of a composite group for use as a retable on the altar or as an antependium in front of it. 51 x 144mm. Cf. Ashley et al (2000). Perhaps 15th century. (78100488).

No.5. Possible mount with two incomplete integral rivets. The oblique undecorated end is complete. No parallel has been found apart from a fragmentary surface find from Fransham, Norfolk (HER 20508), which comprises the decorative terminal and is broken across the first small lateral moulding. Perhaps 16th century. (78100471)

Oval copper alloy buckle frame with offset narrowed bar and one side badly distorted. The outside edge is lipped and notched for the pin between two pairs of moulded ridges. All the area between the ridges is decorated with oblique and longitudinal filed grooves. The form is similar to that of a smaller example from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991, no.300). 25 x 39mm. Second half 14th century. (78100465)

Domed circular copper alloy belt mount with two separate rivets (one missing) and central circular aperture. Diam. 31mm, cf. a much smaller example from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991, no. 899). Late 13th – 14th century. (78100496)

Part of a possible lace chape of thick copper alloy sheet bent into a tube with an edge-to-edge seam. The narrower, closed end is missing. Length >30mm. Diam. 5mm. 13th – 14th century (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 286-90). (78100504)

Copper alloy purse bar of Ward Perkins' (1940) Type B3. Length 115mm. Height at the central loop 54mm. Early 16th century. (78100466)

Two joining fragments of copper alloy fig-shaped spoon bowl. Width 37mm. This form was current between *c.* 1400 and *c.* 1650 (Homer 1975, 20). (no number)

3 distorted fragments of cast copper alloy vessels, all edges broken, one with sooted exterior. 14th–17th century. (78100482, 78100499, 78100500)

Distorted and incomplete pan of probably cast copper alloy ladle. Parts of the rim, including the handle junction, are missing. Diam. *c.* 85mm. Not closely datable. (78100467)

Copper alloy trade weight for one ounce avoirdupois, stamped with a crowned Lombardic ‘h’ for Henry VII or VIII. A central blind hole and a circumferential groove on the front face indicates that it is lathe turned. On the reverse there are profuse file marks cut by six roughly gouged blind holes. This may indicate a deliberate reduction of weight, which now stands at 0.934 ounce. 1495 – 1549 (Biggs 1992, 48-9). (78100513)

Copper alloy disc with file marks and scratched lines on both faces. Probably a filed down jetton, possibly for use as a weight. Diam. 24.5mm, weight 30.4 grains. 16th or 17th century. (78100512)

Copper alloy harness mount, circular with central domed boss and circumferential groove. There is no evidence for attachment apart from two asymmetrically placed secondary attachment holes, one round, the other sub-square, roughly pierced from the front. Diam. 68mm. Cf. an example from Somerset, dated to the late 15th–16th century (Read 2001, 29, fig. 23 no. 343). This piece is probably of the 16th or 17th century. (78100495)

Four thin fragments of molten copper alloy, each with one rough concave and one smooth convex surface. Probably casting waste. Weights 7.13g, 1.78g, 0.96g and 0.73g. (78100505)

Discoidal cast lead weight. There are a few roughly engraved lines on one face. Diam. 37mm. Thickness 2mm. Weighing 0.7740 ounce avoirdupois / 0.7055 ounce troy. Possibly underweight for  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce avoirdupois, if so then postdating the late 13th century (Biddle 1990, 911). (78100484)

Incomplete lead trough-like object, both ends missing, very poorly cast. Length >350mm. Width 48mm. Height 35mm. Weight 1.156kg. Date uncertain. (78100479)

Fragment of X-shaped window came junction. Knight’s (1985) type B. 13th–14th century. (78100503)

Iron whittle-tang knife with remains of tubular bone handle. The tip and all of the cutting edge are missing. Length >118mm. Length of tang 55mm. 13th–15th century.

Iron scale-tang knife with plain bolster. The tip, part of the cutting edge and most of the tang is missing. The latter, broken across a rivet hole, is abnormal in being set at right angles to the blade. A similar example was excavated from an early 17th-century context in Norwich (Goodall 1993, fig. 97 no. 887). (78100488)

Incomplete socketed iron tool, perhaps a baker’s paddle or peel. From the incomplete socket a flat rectangular sectioned shank leads to a wide, thin and entirely flat “blade”, most of which is missing. Length >330mm, length of shank 150mm. Date uncertain. (78100509)

Iron possible awl with rectangular sectioned tang, central swelling and bent rectangular sectioned point. Length 81mm. Not closely datable. (78100486)

Five iron rotary keys for mounted locks of Goodall's (1990) Type 8, four with kidney-shaped bows, lengths c.180mm (bow distorted), 134mm, 128mm and 122mm, one with heart-shaped bow, end of stem missing, length >123mm. This type is not closely datable, twelfth century to post-medieval (Goodall 1990, 1007-8 and 1032-3). (78100478)

Iron nail with very large sub-rectangular head. The tip of the rectangular sectioned shank and the long edges of the head have been hammered over. Length 98mm. Head 77 x 50mm. Date uncertain. (78100481)

Iron horseshoe of type 4 in Clark's (1995) medieval typology. This type endured into the early 17th century (Egan 2005, 179). Length 98mm. Width 105mm. (78100480)

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