



Book Reviews

LATE BRONZE AGE HOARDS: NEW LIGHT ON OLD NORFOLK FINDS BY ANDREW J. LAWSON

East Anglian Archaeology 186, Norfolk Historic Environment, 2018, 104pp, 64 B&W figs, 11 tables, pb, ISBN 978 0 905594545, £20.00

This volume follows the well-known clear and attractive format of the East Anglian Archaeology series and presents details of a number of Late Bronze Age Hoards from Norfolk. It ‘...unashamedly concentrates on the basic recognition and description of bronze hoard finds of the Late Bronze Age period.’ (p.1) and deals with ‘...hoards recorded in Norfolk before 1950 – and a few more for good measure.’ (p.56). The book is notable for its extensive illustration not only the numerous modern drawings of the material from the hoards but also fine photographs by a prominent local 20th-century photographer, Hallam Ashley. Also included are engravings, sketches and paintings of the early finds of Bronze Age metalwork together with portraits of the antiquarian collectors and, in several cases, their houses as well. Clearly this book will be useful to anyone interested in Bronze Age metalwork, particularly those concerned with the material from the east of England, but is also of more general interest.

Chapter 1 the ‘Introduction’ provides a summary of current understanding of Late Bronze Age metalwork and an overview of the history of recording such material in Norfolk. There then follow four chapters (2–5); ‘Eighteenth-century beginnings’ covering the earliest finds from Norfolk, ‘Nineteenth-century antiquaries’ which provides short biographies of collectors and ends with the beginnings of public collections in the latter part of the century and is followed by ‘Nineteenth-century discoveries’ describing the finds made in that century. Chapter 5 covers ‘Twentieth-century finds’ prior to 1950 and concludes with a useful summary of ‘The later twentieth century and beyond’. There then follow three appendices, which actually take up more than a third of the main body of the book, and fully publish five more Norfolk hoards found in the second half of the 20th century. Appendix 1 deals with material from a relatively small area of north-west Norfolk around Snettisham and publishes two hoards from Snettisham and another from nearby Shernborne. It also summarises the remarkable concentration of Late Bronze Age metalwork from the area (there are five hoards from Snettisham alone). The proximity of the Wash is noted and comparison made with the concentration of Late Bronze Age material from various locations around that other great east of England estuarine complex, the Thames estuary. Snettisham is, of course, famous for an extraordinary concentration of Late Iron Age coins and jewellery including the ‘Snettisham treasure’ and the author suggests that the concentration of Bronze Age

metalwork may be an earlier expression of the significance of the local area. Appendices 2 and 3 describe, illustrate and discuss two more hoards from Hockwold and Great Melton respectively.

The discussion in Chapter 5 of the way in which Norfolk hoards were recovered includes a chart (Fig. 5.4 p.53) which may be compared with a similar one prepared some years ago for another of the eastern counties, Essex (Brown 1998, fig. 9). The nature of antiquarian collecting between the two counties was similar, but the two charts reveal some clear differences in rates of recovery. In Norfolk there were a few finds in the late 19th century and hardly any in the first half of the 20th century. By contrast in Essex about as many hoards were recovered in the 40 years between 1870 and 1910 as were recovered in Norfolk before 1900. In Norfolk most hoards were recovered during agricultural work, in Essex agricultural work and casual finds played a significant part in hoard discovery but many seem to be derived from brickearth, sand and gravel extraction, which supplied both local construction and the nearby London market. In Essex the more structured collecting and recording of the late 19th and early 20th century became increasingly focused at museums, notably those at Colchester and Southend which had substantial areas of mineral extraction in their hinterlands. Hoards continued to be recovered in Essex between 1910 and 1940, but in smaller numbers, perhaps a reflection of decline in extraction and construction as a result of the recession after World War I and the depression of the 1930s. Increased hoard recovery in Essex in the '40s and '50s probably reflects construction and mineral extraction associated with World War II defence construction and post war reconstruction. In Norfolk a steep decline in the number of hoards found in the 1970s probably reflects initially poor relations with metal detectorists. In Essex that steep decline happened earlier, in the 1960s, and may reflect the scale and completeness of mechanisation of mineral extraction; thereafter through the '70s,' 80s and first half of the '90s the rate of hoard recovery rose almost exponentially due to the use of metal detectors.

Reading the short biographies of 19th-century antiquaries the structuring importance of class and gender is obvious. All the antiquaries were men, some of the sketches and paintings are by women. The case of Dawson Turner illustrates the point, a banker who, besides his antiquarian interests, was an active scientist and patron of the arts. Many of the illustrations of his collection are by his wife and their six daughters; artistic accomplishment no doubt being considered appropriate to their sex and status; by contrast the two sons '... were probably encouraged in more academic pursuits.' (p.16). It appears the daughters were defined by their marriages 'Most of the Turner's daughters married well: Maria (1797–1872) married the celebrated botanist, Sir William Jackson Hooker in 1815; Elizabeth (1799–1852) married Francis Cohen (later Sir Francis Palgrave) in 1823; Mary Anne (1803–1874) remained single; Harriet (1806–1860) married the local geologist and antiquary, Rev. John Gunn; Hannah Sarah (1808–1882) married, in 1839,

Thomas Brightwen, a partner in the Bank and Eleanor Jane (1811–1895) married the Rev. William Jacobson, later Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford University.’ (p.16).

Money, closely linked of course to class, was another important factor, security of income or the lack of it, in an age without effective social security was paramount. That is clear from the career of the antiquary Samuel Woodward, he was apprenticed to Alderman John Herring of Norwich who gave him ‘... a limited education and, importantly, access to a private library.’ (p.13). One wonders what the political opinions were that caused him to be sacked from his job in the Norwich Union Fire Office. Fortunately he was immediately employed by the Gurney family bank, Hudson Gurney, being a prominent Norfolk antiquary, Gurney and Dawson Turner sponsored publication of Woodward’s papers. When he died Norwich museum purchased his collection by subscription ‘for the benefit of his widow and family’ and his grandson later said ‘Never did he gain sufficient of this world’s goods to place him in a position of pecuniary ease’ (p.13). It would be interesting to know more about how our own ways of working are shaped by class, gender, and indeed money, given the erosion of the social security system created in the 20th century and the entry into our language of the term ‘precariat’. My impression is that metal detecting is predominately a male pursuit, though not exclusively so, as the finder of the Hockwold Hoard demonstrates.

The mould valve from the Barling hoard (Crowe 2003), notable for its elaborate external decoration, is missing from the list of metal moulds from the eastern counties on pages 28–9. From comparison with Figure 4.16 it appears that the attractive image on the front cover has been reversed. Those are minor and untypical slips, what characterises this book are careful scholarship and clear presentation; it uses records from the last three centuries, and it is itself likely still to be a useful work of reference a hundred or more years from now.

References

- Brown, N. 1998. “All’s well that ends well”: a Late Bronze Age Hoard from Vange’ *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 29, 1–18
- Crowe, K. 2003. ‘Two Late Bronze Age hoards from south-east Essex’ *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* 34, 1–18

Nigel Brown

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Editor