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HARGHAM ROAD, QUIDENHAM, NORFOLK
FINDS ASSESSMENT

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1. THE FINDS

- 1.1. A moderate assemblage of pottery, worked flint, ceramic building material (CBM) and metalwork was recovered during the archaeological evaluation and following excavation at Hargham Rd, Quidenham, summarized in Table 1 below. Finds recovered are indicative of activity in the vicinity during the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. The most notable component of this assemblage was the Early Iron Age pottery found within the fills of a group of pits initially uncovered in evaluation trench 8, and subsequently excavated in full. Both the Roman and earlier prehistoric assemblages are residual in nature, as may also be true for the small medieval assemblage.
- 1.2. All the finds have been quantified by material type, count and weight in each context, examined with the aid of microscopy or low powered magnification where necessary, and recorded in line with the ClfA Toolkit for Specialist Recording (ClfA 2021, Level 2). Results have been directly input to the Microsoft Access database for the project. A summary quantification is provided in Table 1 and a catalogue in Appendix B.

Table 1 Summary of finds (number / weight in grammes)

Type	Category	Count	Weight (g)
Pottery	Prehistoric	359	2592
	Medieval		
	Post-medieval/modern		
	Total	363	2605
Flint	Worked	14	58
Brick/tile	All	4	95
Metalwork	Iron		

Pottery

- 1.3. A moderate assemblage comprising 363 sherds (2605g) of prehistoric, Roman and medieval pottery was recovered from deposits within five pits and two ditches. Refitting sherds has only been attempted where obvious joins are present within the same context. All results are recorded directly into a Microsoft Access database

forming the catalogue of finds for archive. The prehistoric pottery is recorded in line with PCRG guidance (PCRG 2010), categorised into a site-specific fabric series where the initial letter of a fabric code indicates the dominant inclusions (e.g. F1, flint-tempered). Pottery record numbers (PRN) have been assigned to each sherd, or group of related sherds from a single vessel. Roman pottery is recorded in reference to the Suffolk Roman Fabric Series as published following the excavations at Scole (Ashwin and Tester 2014). The post-Roman pottery is recorded in line with MCRG guidance and with reference to the Suffolk Medieval Fabric Series (Anderson 2020). The pottery is summarised in Appendix B, Table 1, with fabrics of all periods detailed Appendix B, Table 2.

Prehistoric

- 1.4. The prehistoric pottery comprises 359 sherds, weighing 2592g, recovered during hand excavation and the later processing of bulk samples from the fills of five clustered pits (pits 802, 804, 806, 3003, and 3005), in the area of trench 8. By far the largest proportion (296 sherds, weighing 2049g together) came from the fill (803) of pit 802. The assemblage is in good, though fragmentary condition, with relatively little abrasion overall and little sign of pre-burial periods of exposure. Unfortunately no full profiles are present, but in a number of cases joining sherds preserve part profiles from rim to shoulder, or neck to belly.

Vessel form

- 1.5. The fragmentary nature of the assemblage makes close classification of most forms impossible, but enough larger and joining sherds survive to place vessels within the shouldered jar and bowl series of the post-Deverel Rimbury (PDR) tradition, as characterised by Brudenell (2012, fig. 4.1). The assemblage possibly includes shouldered bowls (Brudenell 2012, 121, Form L), round bodied bowls (*ibid.* Form K) and a shouldered jar (Form F); at least one small vessel might be a tripartite cup (Form W) or small bowl (Form O). Shoulders are generally rounded or marked; only one angular shoulder is identifiable, on a small jar/bowl (PRN 26). Few base sherds were recovered, and those present appear to be simple and flat, with no identifiable omphalos, foot-ring or pedestal forms which might provide further chronological indications. Rims are generally upright or slightly out-turned, sometimes thickened with simple rounded or flattened tops over off-set or slightly concave necks. One especially distinctive rim is internally flanged, considered a characteristic of assemblages from the later Early Iron Age in Norfolk (Brudenell 2011, 19-20). Close parallels for this rim can be seen at Bittering Quarry, Norfolk (Ashwin and Flitcroft,

243 Fig 22 P31) and further afield at Linton, Cambridgeshire (Fell 1953, 35, fig. 3 P9), both sharing this sherd's upright neck and sinuous profile toward the shoulder. Even so, the present example shows a distinctly broader and more evenly shaped flange than any parallel found, and is worthy of illustration.

Vessel fabric

- 1.6. The fabrics in the assemblage represent a continuum of quartz sandy wares with varying proportions of crushed calcined flint added, occasionally with very rare, probably incidental flint and stone gravel. These range from those with no added flint or only rare finely crushed flint (used mainly in relatively fine wares) to those with poorly sorted, angular, coarsely crushed flint temper up to 4mm (generally in more robust, coarse wares). Where large or joining sherds were identified, many displayed inconsistent distribution of inclusions across areas of the vessel, often with finer or fewer coarse inclusions towards the rim; as such, fabric definitions are relatively broad regarding inclusion frequency, to avoid obscuring possible connections through over-differentiation of smaller sherds. Sandy fabrics with rare or no finely crushed flint (Q1) comprise a small proportion of the assemblage by weight (106 sherds, 440g); this is broadly comparable with the quantity of the coarsest fabric category, with added crushed flint up to 4mm (F2), which includes fewer but larger sherds (59 sherds, 715g). The greatest proportion by both sherd count and weight is tempered with medium crushed flint up to 2mm (F1), accounting for well over half the assemblage (194 sherds, 1437g). The majority of the assemblage is fully or mostly unoxidised, with only a minority showing any oxidation, mostly on the external surface and often inconsistent across the visible area. Overall, the continuity between fabrics is suggestive of close contemporaneity of vessels within and between the pit groups, and both the firing and fabrics support an Early Iron Age date for the assemblage.

Surface treatment and decoration

- 1.7. Limited areas of very light burnish are seen on a large proportion of the finer fabrics, though in most cases it is barely present and usually restricted to the area of the rim or internal surface. Coarser vessels more often show smoothed or wiped surfaces, occasionally appearing possibly scratched. Some vessels may be fingertip-and-nail rusticated, in addition to vessels with decorative bands of fingertip impressions. Approximately a quarter of the assemblage shows some level of decoration, almost exclusively on the flint tempered sherds; the most commonly occurring motifs are linear scored grooves and fingernail impressions. Less frequently, sherds show

lattices of shallow scored grooves, random scoring, tool impressions and, rarely, possible comb-dragging. Of the 15 rims recovered, only two are decorated: one with interior and exterior edges finger-pinched, and one with a fingertip-impressed rim top.

Discussion

- 1.8. Many features of this assemblage suggest a link to the 'Harling-type' pottery assemblages of the Early Iron Age, beginning in the 8th century BC and remaining current into the 6th, and possibly the 5th centuries BC, with one radiocarbon date suggesting this style may have pervaded as late as the 4th century BC (Brudenell 2011, 17-19). These features include the prevalence of decorative techniques and surface treatments such as shallow scored lattices, and bands of fingertip-and-nail impressions at the rim and shoulder, techniques both seen at Valley Belt, Trowse, Norfolk, as well as the wiped or possibly scratched surface treatments mentioned above (Percival 2000, figs 141-2). However, in addition to shouldered vessels with bands of fingernail impressions at the shoulder, the present assemblage includes vessels where those impressions also occur at the neck (for example PRN 10) or more often this surface treatment extends below the shoulder across the body of the vessel, creating a rusticated surface (PRNs 68, 80, 82, possibly 71). Taken together, the sherds of the latter vessels may suggest the presence of a jar type specifically distinctive of Norfolk pottery in the later Early Iron Age, c.600-350 BC (Brudenell 2011, 21, fig. 7), exemplified by a jar from Bittering Quarry, Norfolk (NHER 13023; Ashwin and Flitcroft 1999, 244, fig. 23 P34). A second Bittering assemblage (ibid, Fig 23; NHER 15910) associated with the same period provides parallels for PRNs 32 and 56 with vessels displaying random scoring and broad horizontal grooves. The deeper, relatively broad, linear scored grooves in the present assemblage, however, may be in some cases better compared with pottery from Linton, Cambridgeshire (Fell 1953, 36, fig.4 P16-18, 22-24), associated with the Darmsden-Linton style of pottery, thought to be later than the West Harling group and typically identified on pottery from sites to the south (Brudenell 2011, 21; Cunliffe 1968, 178-81; 2005, 76-77).
- 1.9. The current assemblage probably does not belong with the Darmsden-Linton group, especially since it is disputed whether the style is actually present in Norfolk at all (Brudenell 2011, 21); however, the similarities may again tangentially support a date toward the later Early Iron Age. Certainly the relative absence of angular bipartite and tripartite form, sharply shouldered bowls and a lack of certain decorative features such as cordons appears in line with this suggestion. It should be noted, however,

that such typological comparisons for dating purposes have significant limitations given the vagueness of current understandings of Norfolk's chronology in this period, particularly in the transitional period from between Early and Middle Iron Age.

Roman

- 1.10. A single sherd of Roman pottery (8g) was recovered from the topsoil of trench 2. It is a sherd from the rim of a grey coarseware vessel, likely a bowl.

Medieval

- 1.11. Three sherds (weighing 5g together) of early medieval pottery were recovered from the fills of ditches 501 (deposit 502) and 404 (deposit 405). All are small body sherds of hard-fired, thin-walled vessels in fine-medium sandy fabrics. Though no diagnostic formal features are present, the fabric and overall appearance of the sherds suggests a 11th-12th century date of manufacture (Anderson 2020). However, given the small quantities and sherd sizes present, the pottery cannot be relied upon to date ditches 501 or 404, as the material may be residual or intrusive. The pottery from ditch 404 was accompanied by small fragments of ceramic building material which may suggest a date later in the medieval or post-medieval periods.

Lithics

- 1.12. Five worked flints were recovered via the hand excavation and bulk soil sampling of four deposits (fills of pits, a ditch and a pond). All are made from fine or relatively fine-grained flint and cortex is present on three. This is chalky on two flakes and abraded on one, indicating the exploitation of both chalk and secondary (such as river gravel) sources. The underlying geology at the site is chalk of the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation, Newhaven Chalk Formation, Culver Chalk Formation and Portsdown Chalk Formation (BGS 2023), so good quality chalk flint would have been readily available. The lithics consist of four flakes and an end-and-side scraper. None of the flakes display any chronologically diagnostic features, so only broad prehistoric dating is possible for these. The end-and-side scraper has been rather crudely made using a thermal blank and steep, irregular retouch along two edges. The use of a thermal blank and the relatively poor quality of the retouch would both be most consistent with dating in the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age periods (Butler 2005, 155). However, the dating of a single object which is not a chronologically diagnostic tool type, must be tentative. The lithics from fill 803 of pit 802 and fill 805 of pit 804 were recovered in association with pottery of Early Iron Age date, the end-and-side scraper with medieval pottery and medieval/post-medieval

ceramic building material, and most of the flints are moderately edge damaged. Therefore, it is likely that all of the flints are residual.

Ceramic building material

- 1.13. Seven fragments (97g together) of ceramic building material (CBM) came from the single fill (405) of ditch 404. The assemblage includes two fragments (43g) of possible brick, four fragments of probable roof tile (53g), and one undiagnostic flake (1g). All the CBM is in highly fragmentary condition, with few diagnostic formal features remaining.
- 1.14. The roof tile fragments are flat and range between 12mm and 15mm thick, likely representing peg tile though no peg holes are present. The tiles are handmade, in medium sandy fabrics, some of which include rare flint 1-2mm in size. Some small patches of adherent sandy mortar are visible on one surface of one of the fragments. Mortar is not typically used with peg tile, and the presence of this small quantity is probably incidental rather than indicative of the tile's use. The possible brick fragments are in a fine sandy fabric with rare grog, in an orange clay matrix with cream swirls. Only one sanded surface remains, somewhat irregular in shape.
- 1.15. The fabrics and overall appearance of the fragments point to a broad date in the medieval or post-medieval periods.

Metalwork

- 1.16. Nine metal objects weighing 24.07g were recovered. Eight are copper alloy and one is silver, all being recovered from the topsoil layers of 6 trenches across the site via metal detecting. The overall condition of the objects ranges from poor to fair. They have been packed in perforated bags and stored in an airtight box with silica gel.

Roman

- 1.17. Seven copper alloy objects are of Roman date, comprising six coins and an incomplete bow brooch.
- 1.18. The bow brooch (Registered Artefact (Ra.) 5, topsoil 1200 of trench 12) is of the Colchester Derivative Rearhook type (Mackreth 2011, CD R) a form which dates from AD 43-100. Missing its pin/spring mechanism and lower bow, the brooch has a winged head – each wing decorated with a singular diagonal groove. The bow curves strongly in profile, its midpoint adorned with three beaded longitudinal moulded ridges enclosing two grooves that extend to the point at which it truncates. It is broadly

comparable with an example published in Mackreth's corpus (Mackreth 2011, 43, pl. 40, no. 910).

- 1.19. All the coins are of late 3rd to early 4th century date. Five date to the period of AD 275-296/Reece (1995) period 14, and the last from AD 336-341/Reece period 17. Most are preserved relatively poorly, being worn and/or corroded. Two were found in topsoil 1000 (Ras 2-3, trench 10), a further two in topsoil 1700 (Ras 8-9, trench 17) and the remaining two as singular finds in topsoils 1100 (Ra. 4, trench 11) and 1500 (Ra. 6, trench 15).
- 1.20. Registered artefacts 3, 6, 8 and 9 are all barbarous radiates dating c. 275-285, representing a coin type commonly found as site finds from Britain. Two of these clearly copy official prototypes of the Gallic separatist emperors; whereas Ra. 6 probably copies a PAX AVG reverse type (Pax standing left with palm and long sceptre) struck for either Tetricus I or Victorinus (Bland et. al 2009/Normanby 194, no. 1406 or 196, no. 1473), Ra. 8 appears to be imitating a SPES AVG/AVGG/PVBLICA reverse of Tetricus I or II - Spes walking left holding flower, lifting hem of skirt (Bland et. al 2009/Normanby 195, no. 1471, 197, nos. 1526 or 1533). A better preserved radiate (Ra. 4) is an official issue of the British usurper emperor Allectus (AD 293-296) struck at the mint of London with the VIRTUS AVG (galley left with rowers) reverse type, cf RIC vol V, part II, 563, no. 55 (Webb *et al.* 1933). Lastly, a corroded *nummus* (Ra. 2) represents the latest coin within the group – corresponding to the GLORIA EXERCITVS reverse type (two soldiers standing either side of one standard) and dating c. AD 336-341. The mint cannot be identified.

Medieval

- 1.21. A somewhat worn English silver shortcross type penny of either John or Henry III was found in topsoil 300 (Ra. 1, trench 3). This coin is of class 6a and dates to the period 1208-1218, struck by the moneyer Walter at the mint of London (see North 1994, 222, no. 974).

Post-medieval

- 1.22. A complete but somewhat bent buckle was found in topsoil 1700 (Ra. 7, trench 17). This example is a double looped form, preserved with its strap bar and wound pin intact. Each loop is decorated with a barrelled central knop flanked by curvilinear mouldings demonstrating a single punched annulet, further smaller knops and paired transverse ridges adorning the sides of the frame as they curve towards the knopped terminals of the strap bar. No exact parallel for this buckle could be found, though it

is very similar to an example published by Whitehead (2003, no. 427). This form of buckle and its decoration are indicative of a post-medieval date, c. 1550-1650.

Discussion

- 1.23. Excavation at Hargham Road produced a moderate assemblage of stratified finds indicative of prehistoric activity at the site, as well as topsoil finds indicative of nearby activity in the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 1.24. In the prehistoric period, residual flints may tentatively suggest activity nearby in the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age. The pottery from a group of pits in the area of trench 8 derives from Early Iron Age occupational activity. While this assemblage bears many similarities to West Harling-type pottery of Earliest Iron Age pottery, a number of the forms and decorative motifs present are more closely associated with assemblages of later Early Iron Age date, c.600-350BC.
- 1.25. Roman metalwork and a single sherd of Roman pottery, although present as residual finds in the topsoil, are suggestive of some level of nearby activity in this period. However, the very low quantity of pottery would seem to suggest the focus of this activity was probably not located within the site itself. Spatial analysis suggests a slight trend towards the southwestern corner of the site, perhaps indicating a concentration of activity in this vicinity. The focus on the late 3rd and early 4th centuries in regards to the Roman coins is perhaps indicative of small scale rural settlement, sites of this nature typically peaking in Reece 14 and 17. However, this interpretation is tentative given the small size of the assemblage thus far.
- 1.26. The small assemblage of medieval and post-medieval metalwork and CBM, as well as early medieval pottery, recovered from topsoil and the fills of ditches 404 and 501, are also likely indicative of continued use of the local area in later periods, though there is little to indicate the nature of that activity. The CBM and pottery are both likely to have entered the archaeological record residual in nightsoils, and it is likely that the metalwork objects of the Roman and post-Roman assemblages entered the archaeological record as either casual losses or discarded debris.

Potential and recommendations

- 1.27. All finds have been fully recorded to archive standards and should be retained.
- 1.28. The ceramic chronology for the Early Iron Age remains poorly understood in Norfolk, so an assemblage of this moderate size and good condition may provide a useful addition to current typological understanding. Brudenell (2011, 23) has encouraged

radiocarbon dating of Early Iron Age assemblages from Norfolk; it is therefore recommended that a radiocarbon date is sought for pit 802 if possible, to provide a valuable addition to regional data in a relatively poorly understood area. Any further research might also attempt further refitting of sherds within and between the pit groups, to establish which, if any, features may have been in use contemporaneously. A small number of vessels from the assemblage could be illustrated, most notably the unusually broad internally flanged rim (PRN 56).

1.29. X-radiography is also recommended for the metal objects.

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APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 2 : Finds concordance

Feature	Context	Sample	Material	Fabric/Description	Ct	Wt (g)	Spotdate
Topsoil	200		Roman pottery	GX	1	8	
Topsoil	300		Metalwork	Ra 1 Medieval silver coin	1	1.25	
Ditch 404	405		Medieval pottery	EMW	1	3	Med/PM
			CBM	Brick?, roof tile (inc. one with adherent mortar)	7	97	
			Worked flint	End-and-side-scraper	1	19	
Pond 406	409		Worked flint	Flake	1	3	Residual preh.
Ditch 501	502		Medieval pottery	EMW	2	1	C11-12, likely residual.
Pit 802	803		Prehistoric pottery	F1	134	939	EIA/ ?Later EIA (600-350BC)
				F2	28	236	
				Q1	70	301	
			Worked flint	Flake	1	3	
		2	Prehistoric pottery	F1	27	149	
				F2	25	374	
				Q1	12	50	
			Worked flint	Flake	1	1	
Pit 804	805		Prehistoric pottery	F1	17	282	EIA/ ?Later EIA (600-350BC)
				F2	1	5	
				Q1	7	27	
			Worked flint	Flake	1	1	
		3	Prehistoric pottery	Q1	3	4	
Pit 806	807		Prehistoric pottery	F1	11	52	EIA/ ?Later EIA (600-350BC)
				F2	5	100	

Topsoil	1000		Metalwork	Ra 2, Roman copper alloy coin (1.06g); Ra 3, Roman copper alloy coin (0.81g)	2	1.87	
Topsoil	1100		Metalwork	Ra 4, Roman copper alloy coin	1	2.49	
Topsoil	1200		Metalwork	Ra 5, Roman copper alloy bow brooch	1	4.62	
Topsoil	1500		Metalwork	Ra 6, Roman copper alloy coin	1	1.61	
Topsoil	1700		Metalwork	Ra 7, copper alloy post-medieval buckle (10.03g); Ra 8, Roman copper alloy coin (1.51g); Ra 9, Roman copper alloy coin (0.69g)	3	12.23	
Pit 3003	3004		Prehistoric pottery	Q1	2	15	EIA
		1	Prehistoric pottery	F1	4	2	
				Q1	11	36	
Pit 3005	3006		Prehistoric pottery	F1	1	13	EIA
				Q1	1	7	

Table 3 : Pottery fabrics by period

Period	Fabric Code	Description	Ct.	Wt. (g)	Fabric Date
Prehistoric	F1	Sparse-common moderately sorted calcined flint temper <2mm, with moderate-common fine-medium quartz sand. Very rare or no poorly sorted gravel/coarse sand of flint and stone, probably incidental.	194	1437	EIA
	F2	Sparse-moderate poorly-moderately sorted calcined flint temper <4mm, with moderate-common fine-medium quartz sand. Very rare or no poorly sorted gravel/coarse sand of flint and stone, probably incidental.	59	715	EIA
	Q1	Sparse-common fine-medium quartz sand, very rare or no fine calcined flint or coarse flint sand.	106	440	EIA
Roman	GX	Coarse greywares	3	5	Rom

Post-Roman	EMW	Fine/medium sandy thin-walled handmade wares. Coarser quartz present in some, but generally not visible on surface. Occasional calcareous, ferrous, organic and flint/chert inclusions may also be present. (Anderson 2020)	1	8	11-12th C
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