

The Deposition and Hoarding of Non-Precious Metals in Early Medieval England

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Introduction

It is well known that enormous numbers of metal objects are found every year in Britain both through archaeological excavation and metal-detecting activity.^{1} These include coins and a diverse corpus of other material relating to the daily lives of medieval people. This corpus continues to grow rapidly, with over 20,000 objects of medieval date (c. 410-1500 AD) recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 2014 alone. How should we interpret this mass of data? In reality it is extremely difficult to determine the potential motives behind the deposition of these objects, and it is assumed by most early medieval archaeologists that finds of non-precious metals – and indeed many precious metal objects too – were generally either lost or discarded.^{2} Spreads of ‘refuse’ have been found on many settlement sites, sometimes as levelling material, including at Flixborough, North Lincolnshire, Lechlade, Gloucestershire and Fishergate, York, and many sunken featured buildings (SFBs) are filled with midden material upon demolition (Loveluck and Atkinson 2007: 73; Kemp 1996: 54-9; Bateman *et al* 2003: 40-3). On metal-detected sites, spreads of finds have been used to assess the area of activity, such as at Cottam, East Yorkshire (Richards 1999) or to assess potential zones of activity across a settlement and its vicinity (Davies 2010). It is generally accepted that this combined evidence should be interpreted within a framework of the disposal or loss of objects as part of the patterns of everyday life. However, there are exceptions, some of which are well-known. The most obvious examples are the hoards of gold and silver objects (coins and other artefacts) and material buried with the dead – the Staffordshire Hoard, the Vale of York hoard and the barrow burials at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk for example (Leahy and Bland 2009; Ager and Williams 2011; Carver 2005) – but alongside this, there has been a growing recognition by archaeologists working in both the Roman and early medieval periods that some finds of non-precious metal objects may be important examples of the deliberate deposition of both (seemingly) everyday objects and other groups, including weaponry. It has been argued that at least some of these cannot be explained as the concealment of wealth in times of instability nor of the storage of material for recycling (e.g. Bland, this volume; Hamerow 2006; Hingley 2006; Thomas 2008). This has followed similar debates among prehistorians which have resulted in the general acceptance that votive and ‘placed’ depositions were a widespread practice across settlements and the wider landscape (e.g. Bradley, this volume; Bland, this volume; cf. Garrow 2012).

These deposits of early-medieval non-precious metalwork and their interpretation form the focus of this paper. For convenience they have been divided broadly between deposits in watery locations and those related to settlements while recognising that deposition may involve both of these elements or be more ambiguous.^{3}

Water-related deposition will be primarily explored here through finds from rivers, although further discussion will be made with respect to some settlement-related finds.

Finds from watery locations- the example of rivers

Objects have been deposited in water (rivers, lakes, bogs etc.) or in locations directly associated with water for thousands of years (e.g. Bradley 1990; Booth *et al* 2007: 217-20, 231-4; Yates and Bradley 2010; Lund 2010). While often associated with prehistoric deposits, river and water finds are not uncommon in later periods. The bulk of finds comprise weaponry, although other types of object are also found such as the five Roman pewter dishes from Shepperton Ranges, Surrey, found in a former river channel of the Thames and late Roman lead tanks – possibly baptismal fonts – found in wells across eastern and south-eastern England; early medieval non-weapon finds include the silver pins and hanging bowl from the River Witham (Booth *et al* 2007: 217-20; Petts 2003; Stocker and Evison 2003). It is important to note that these are mostly quite large items, generally found as the result of dredging over the last 100 years or so, and this has likely impacted the retrieval of smaller items.^{4} Finds of early-medieval objects in rivers tend to be clustered geographically towards southern and eastern areas. In eastern England, swords and seaxes have come from the River Colne and Lea in Essex; weapons and stirrups from the fens and rivers of Cambridgeshire and eastern Norfolk; and numerous finds from the River Witham including swords and axes and the other objects mentioned above (Crummy 1980: 19; Wilson 1965: 40; Stocker and Evison 2003; Reynolds and Semple 2011: 43). Many finds have also been made in the River Thames and its tributaries (see below). Fewer finds are known in the south and west, but include stirrups from a tributary of the River Leadon near Gloucester and from the River Avon at Seagry, Wiltshire; and a sword from the River Frome at Wareham (Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 114, 118-9; Wilson 1965: 40). Very few river finds are known from northern England, although a buckle loop and plate were recently discovered in the River Tyne at Corbridge, Northumberland (PAS NCL-B707A4 and NCL-B56E31).

The interpretation of these finds, especially for those of Bronze and Iron Age date has changed greatly in recent years. Previously river finds were often considered to be losses of weapons during battles or river crossings (see Bradley, this volume, and Bland, this volume, for brief resumés; Randsborg 2002 and Painter, this volume, provide critiques of votive deposition in water) but there is now a general acceptance that such deposits are best interpreted within the prism of votive deposition, the act of placing objects into bodies of water rendering them virtually inaccessible and evidence for ritualised



Fig. 1: Distribution of finds from the River Thames and its tributaries in the Upper Thames Valley to the west of Oxford. Note that the findspots for many of the objects are not known precisely and their position on this map should be taken as approximate.

permanent deposition (Bradley 1990; York 2002; Lambrick 2009: 288-9). Recent interpretations of riverine finds of early medieval date also emphasise this permanence of deposition, and the idea of the river as a liminal boundary space where protection may be needed or where dangerous objects could be neutralised (Stocker and Evison 2003; Booth *et al* 2007: 231-4; Lund 2010; Reynolds and Semple 2011). In support of this, argues Lund (2010: 93), is the sheer weight of evidence with '[t]he number of early medieval artefacts found in English rivers...far too high to represent casual losses'. While a number of such studies exist exploring small groups or single objects (often swords), there has been little systematic examination of rivers finds as a whole (although see Stocker and Evison 2003). The following case study brings together one of the largest sets of English data, from the River Thames and its tributaries, in order to explore distribution patterns and their potential interpretations.

River finds from the Thames and its tributaries

Finds of Anglo-Saxon metalwork from the River Thames – alongside those of other periods – have been made for many years, especially during extensive dredging works in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as finds from the mid-late 19th century made in London (Greenaway 2013a: 42). {5} Blair (1994: 99) has remarked on the large quantity recovered between Oxford and Reading, and Booth *et al* (2007: 231-4) noted the concentration around Wallingford Bridge, including spearheads and a sword; and a large number from between Sonning and Taplow. Alongside the Late Anglo-Saxon/Viking material which has received greatest attention (e.g. Wilson 1965; Seaby and Woodhead 1980; Blair 1994; Reynolds and Semple 2011), Booth *et al* (2007: 234) have also highlighted the range of 5th- to 9th-century material found, especially in the Middle Thames, although there is the potential that at least some of this may have been old when it entered the

water (Reynolds and Semple 2010: 42-3). Booth *et al* (2007: 234) have also speculated as to whether some Thames minsters located at crossing points can be seen in relation to these finds, given the potential link between crossings and deposition in the Iron Age and Roman periods, and the correlation seen so clearly in the Witham Valley (Stocker and Evison 2003). However, the early medieval finds from the Thames have not been considered in a systematic way previously, and what follows provides a preliminary examination of this dataset. {6}

The database produced (see Appendix 1) yielded a total of 267 non-precious metal objects recovered from the Thames and its tributaries along its length from Cricklade, Gloucestershire in the west to Tower Hill, Greater London in the east. This included 163 spearheads, 28 axes, 26 seaxes and 37 swords. {7} The distribution of this material is by no means even (Figs. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7), with several clusters of finds, although it is somewhat unclear how this may relate to the episodes of periodic dredging undertaken from which many finds were reported, albeit only as a result of finds made by workmen rather than archaeologists (Greenway 2013a). Indeed, as Grayson (2010: 3) notes, finds were reported to the nearest lock, bridge or inn, and the areas of concentration of Bronze Age objects are not dissimilar to those of Anglo-Saxon date (York 2002: fig. 2).

Few Anglo-Saxon finds have been made to the west of Oxford (Fig. 1). A late Anglo-Saxon sword was found at Ten Foot Bridge, Chimney, less than a kilometre from the location of the very large 10th- to 11th-century cemetery which was on an estate belonging to the minster at nearby Bampton (Crawford 1989), and a Scandinavian type 1a stirrup at Shifford (Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 106, cat. no. 2). Just to the east, a seax was recovered at Standlake, close to the confluence of the Rivers Thames and

Windrush at Newbridge. Several objects have been found in Oxford, where a crossing has existed since at least the Middle Anglo-Saxon period (Booth *et al* 2007: fig. 3.50), although Blair and Crawford (1997) have convincingly argued that the finds of 10th to 11th-century stirrups and other metal objects are more likely to relate to a riverside burial, leaving a spearhead and shield boss dredged up in 1884 as the only potential river finds. On Thames tributaries to the north and east of Oxford, two spearheads – one 5th to 7th century, the other Late Saxon – were found at Kidlington in the River Cherwell and an axe in a bank of the River Thame at Holton.

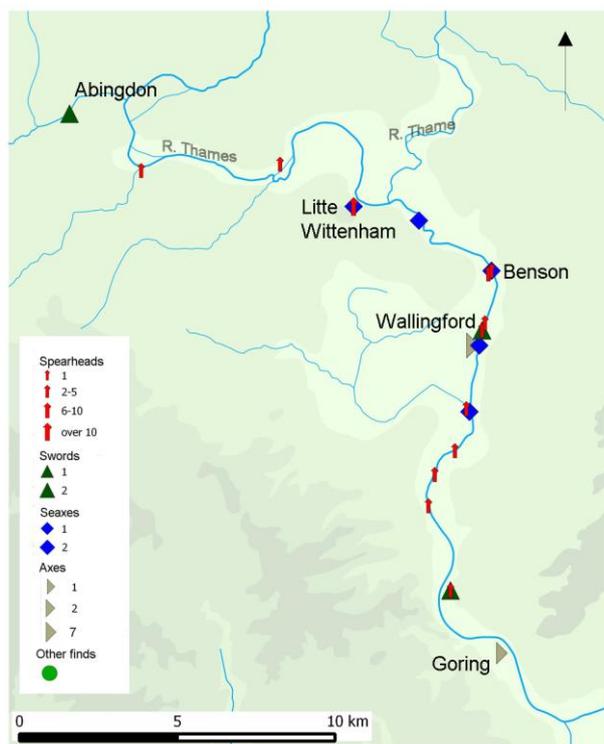


Fig. 2: Distribution of finds from the River Thames and its tributaries in the Upper Thames Valley from Abingdon to Goring. Note that the findspots for many of the objects are not known precisely and their position on this map should be taken as approximate.

The first substantial concentration of finds is located along the stretch of river from Abingdon to Goring (Fig. 2), producing 26 objects (including 16 spearheads, three swords (Fig. 3) and six seaxes), an area well-known to be rich in archaeological finds and sites, especially in the pre-Viking period (Hamerow *et al* 2013). These finds appear to show some relation to crossing points and the confluences with other water courses. A possible crossing identified by Grayson (2010: 6) at Little Wittenham (Day's Lock) coincides with finds of two seaxes and a spear. Around Dorchester-on-Thames, where the Rivers Thames and Thame meet, and the Alcester to Silchester Roman road crosses the latter a seax has been found near Shillingford at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. A seax and three spearheads have been found in the Thames at Benson. There is no evidence for a crossing of the river here but it was the location for the most valuable Domesday manor

in Oxfordshire and an early royal centre (Booth *et al* 2007: 96, 100). At one of the major crossing points in this area, Wallingford, six spearheads and a sword have been found, all apparently of Late Saxon date, including a well-located recent find found less than 100m upstream of the bridge (Dawson 2010; Greenway 2013b). A seax was found a little downstream at Chalmore Ferry, and a spearhead and seax at Bow Bridge, Cholsey in, it seems, a small tributary of the Thames. The crossing of the Thames by the Icknield Way at Goring/Streatley has provided further evidence, with a sword and spearhead recovered from the vicinity at Benson Reach. A number of finds have also been made further downstream around Reading (Fig. 4), with a sword and a number of axes found at the confluence of the Thames with the Kennet, and a spearhead and axe were found in the river Kennet at Reading, the town being a crossing point of the river (see Booth *et al* 2007: fig. 3.52).

The majority of finds on the stretch of the Thames in Berkshire from Reading to Cookham (Fig. 4) consist of spearheads, including Early Anglo-Saxon types from near Marlow, Hurley and Sonning Bridge although axes and a Late Saxon sword have also been found in the river 'near' Twyford and at Henley Bridge, a likely ancient crossing point (Booth *et al* 2007: 42; Wilson 1965: 52, appendix A). A significant quantity of material has also been recovered from Cookham to Staines (Fig. 4 and 5), with over 40 finds recorded including at least 33 spearheads (the number is uncertain owing to unquantified antiquarian finds), four swords and two seaxes. This area includes the rich 7th-century barrow burials at Taplow, and the mid-late Saxon palace at Old Windsor. An unquantified number of spearheads and an axe were recovered from the river near Cookham, a crossing point of the river, and the location of both an Anglo-Saxon minster and a small 10th/11th-century burh on Sashes Island (Blair 1996: 23; Booth *et al* 2007: 256). Spearheads and an axe are known from 'near' Maidenhead but their exact location is uncertain, and a sword and spearhead from Bray, another possible Late Saxon minster (*ibid.*: 259). Two Late Anglo-Saxon swords and at least three Early Saxon spearheads come from Windsor, alongside a copper-alloy and silver sword pommel of 8th- to 9th-century date (Fig. 6) which is decorated with elaborate gold filigree (Hinton 1974: cat. no. 36; Swanton 1974: 89). Many of the weapons found in this stretch of the Thames come from around the mid-late Saxon palace site at Old Windsor with numerous spearheads, including both early Anglo-Saxon and late Saxon types but no swords or seaxes are known. A seax was found further downstream, however, at Magna Carta Island, and a Late Saxon sword, two Early Saxon and two Late Saxon spearheads at Staines, crossing point of the Silchester to London Roman road and confluence of the Rivers Colne and Thames, where a late Saxon town grew up around the minster and which appears to have had some status given the presence of an execution cemetery (*ibid.*: 41,141). Another Late Saxon sword was recorded a little downstream from Staines, near Chertsey, Surrey.



Fig. 3: Late Saxon sword found near Abingdon. Ashmolean Museum accession no. AN 1890.14. Image: © Ashmolean Museum.

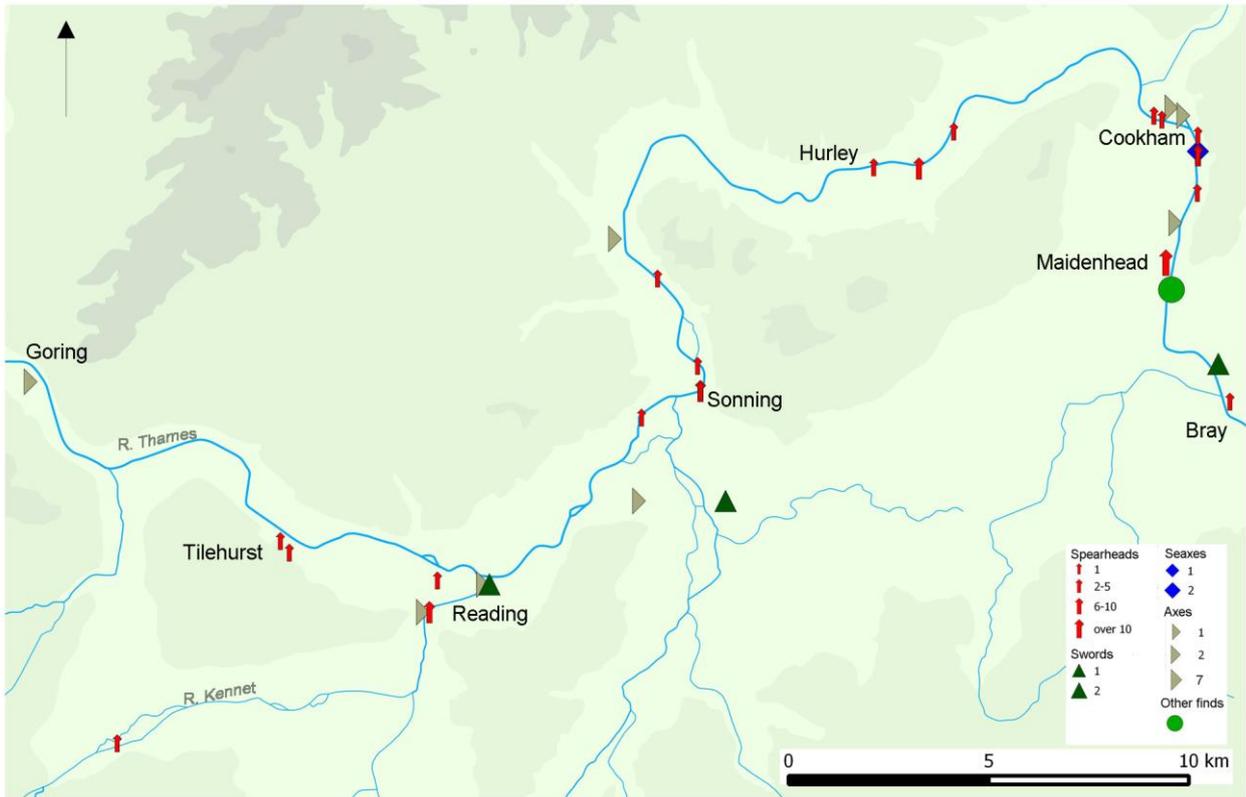


Fig. 4: Finds from the River Thames and its tributaries in the Middle Thames region, Goring to Bray. Note that the findspots for many of the objects are not known precisely and their position on this map should be taken as approximate.

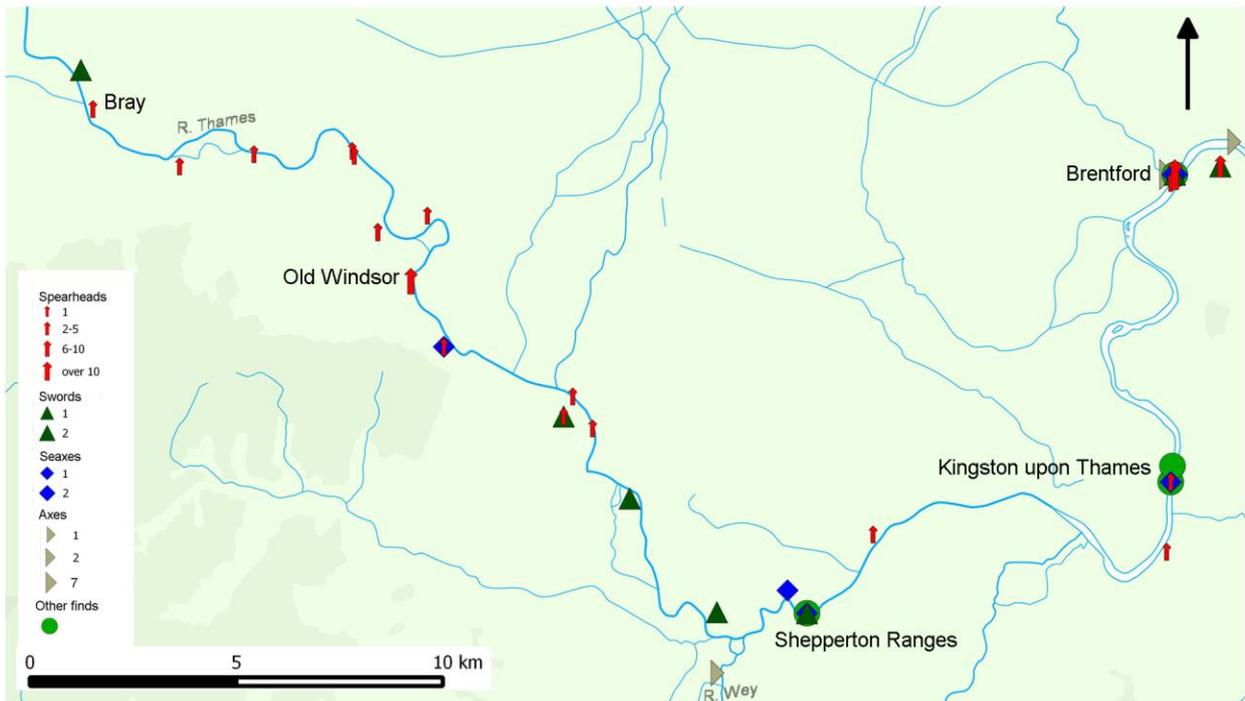


Fig. 5: Finds from the River Thames and its tributaries in the Middle Thames region, Bray to Kingston Upon Thames. Note that the findspots for many of the objects are not known precisely and their position on this map should be taken as approximate.



Fig. 6: 8th- to 9th-century sword pommel from the Thames at Windsor. Ashmolean Museum accession no. AN 1909.518. Image: © Ashmolean Museum.

The area around the confluence of the Rivers Wey and Thames (Fig. 5) appears to have been a location of long-term importance. Booth *et al* (2007: 232-3) have outlined recent work on the Shepperton Ranges where two swords, a seax, spearhead and axe have been recovered from the Thames and silted palaeochannels (alongside finds ranging in date from the Middle Bronze Age to Roman periods), and within a short distance of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Upper West Field. A Late Anglo-Saxon axe was also found at the bridge over the Wey on the western side of Weybridge town. Another river junction – this time between the Thames and the Hogsmill – and crossing point at Kingston-on-Thames has produced a Late Saxon seax and spearhead, and five Early Saxon spearheads. Abdy and Williams (2005: 14, cat. no. 3) note that ten 6th-century gold *tremisses* were found in the Thames at Kingston in the 19th century although little else is known about the find. A late Saxon stirrup was also found less than a kilometre downstream at Hampton Wick.

As the Thames passes through Greater London (Fig. 7),{8} many more objects have been recovered from the river, both from antiquarian activity, dredging and the actions of the collectors and metal-detectorists working on the foreshore. Many of these are small objects, probably mostly casual losses, with around 3,000 finds (of all periods) recorded by PAS to date including early medieval pins, coins and strap-ends.{9} Other early medieval small finds may be (perhaps) seen differently, however. Two examples will suffice- the first is an 8th-

century zoomorphic drinking horn terminal was found on the foreshore at Lambeth (PAS LON-EFCF31; Fig. 8). Drinking horns were prestigious items – they have been found in ‘princely’ burials including Sutton Hoo Mound 1, Taplow and Broomfield, Essex, and it is known that they were bequeathed in wills of the Late Anglo-Saxon period (Leahy 2003: 60; Hinton 2005: 145) – and it is possibly all that remains of a drinking horn deliberately deposited in the river. Secondly, a 6th to 7th-century fish-shaped shield mount was found on the foreshore at Barnes and it is now impossible to tell if this entered the water on its own or still attached to its shield but it could be seen within both the remains of the weapons found in river and as casual losses of smaller finds (Cohen 2011: fig. 58). Regardless of how we interpret them – and these two examples show how difficult it is – these small finds are illustrative of the amount of material which can be recovered from English rivers and that the larger objects, especially the weaponry, must be considered against.

However, numerous early medieval weapons have been recovered in the stretch of the river from Brentford to Tower Hill. At Brentford, a crossing point of the River Brent from at least 705 (Mills 2010: 75), and confluence of Brent and Thames, a Late Saxon sword and a spearhead have been recorded, and numerous Early Saxon spearheads. There are regular findspots along the river into central London. These include an axe at Hounslow; two Early Saxon spearheads and a Late Saxon sword at Kew; seven Early Saxon spearheads and two seaxes from Mortlake; several spearheads and a sword

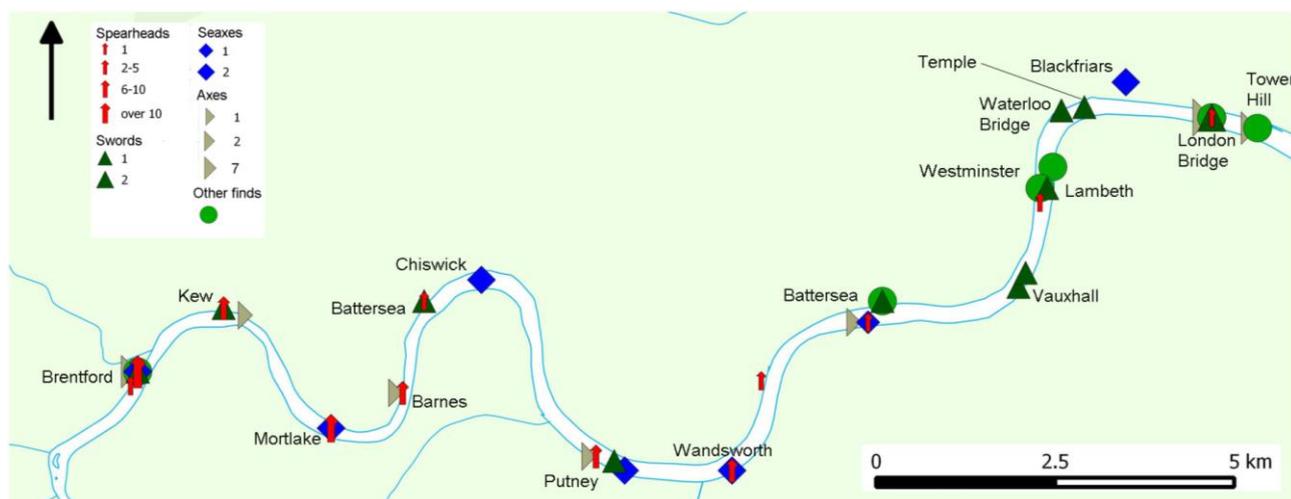


Fig. 7: Finds from the River Thames and its tributaries in Greater London. Note that the findspots for many of the objects are not known precisely and their position on this map should be taken as approximate.



Fig. 8: An 8th-century zoomorphic drinking horn terminal found on the Thames foreshore at Lambeth. PAS LON-EFCF31. Image: K Sumnall (PAS).

pommel from Chiswick Eyot; and at Putney spearheads (Fig. 9), an axe and a broken sword, at least some only a short distance upstream of the Thames confluence with the Wandle. A Late Saxon seax inscribed in runes, sword and stirrup and five Early Saxon spearheads have been recovered from Battersea, the stretch of river where the Falcon joins the Thames, {10} and swords from Vauxhall around its confluence with the Effra (Ackroyd 2011: 40,49). The stretch of the river through Westminster to the City has long been known for its rich finds assemblage. Late Saxon swords have been recovered at Westminster – where the abbey was important by the time of Edward the Confessor (1042-66) (Vince 1990: 32-3) – and at Lambeth, some seemingly around the junction with the River Tyburn on the north bank. Also found in the river ‘near’ Westminster Bridge is a runic inscribed silver fitting for the scabbard of a knife or seax (Webster and Backhouse 1991: cat. no. 179). Numerous axes and spearheads, including a possible hoard of six spearheads, and ‘one or two swords’ (Wilson 1965: 51) have been found in the vicinity of London Bridge at the City, Wilson (*ibid.*: 50) speculating that some of the axes may have been lost by carpenters working on the bridge. A type 2cii Late Anglo-Saxon stirrup and two axes were found at Tower Hill.{11} Finally, to the north of the Thames, on one of its tributaries– the River Lea – Late Saxon swords have been recovered from Enfield, Edmonton and Walthamstow.



Fig. 9: A 9th-century spearhead from the Thames at Putney. PAS LON-920814. Image: K Summall (PAS).

This brief overview of the finds from the Thames and its tributaries has highlighted the large number of early medieval objects which have been recovered from it. As mentioned above, the distribution is not dissimilar to that outlined for those from earlier periods (York 2002; Lambrick 2009: 288), although there is variation in the locations of clusters of artefacts between periods. This may indicate real differences in the assemblages, suggesting that the patterns seen do reflect something of past activity rather than being a function of the haphazard, unsystematic nature of recovery during the dredging of the 1950s and 60s. This can only be properly assessed through multi-period study. However, the relative dearth of material from all periods recovered upriver from Dorchester-on-Thames requires further investigation to assess the levels of likely recovery bias, including the extent of dredging in comparison to other stretches of the river.

Regarding the early medieval finds, it is immediately apparent from the maps that there is variation in the distribution of different object types. Spearheads are the most common and most widespread weapons found along the Thames and its tributaries, and have been found in all location types (crossing points, confluences, high status/defensive sites and ‘open’ stretches of water). Conversely, swords and seaxes appear more constrained. The chronology of deposition may play a part here- while swords, seaxes and axes mostly date to the 9th-11th centuries many, although by no means all, of the spearheads are Early-Middle Anglo-Saxon types, probably deposited before the 9th century, and represent a different depositional period perhaps unconnected with the later swords and seaxes. Of the later finds, most swords and seaxes were recovered from within the vicinity of confluences with other waterways and at crossing points, although the findspot details for many of these finds are not hugely precise given the date and circumstance of recovery. Other locations include the sword from Chimney found near to the large Late Saxon cemetery, and the seax in the stretch of river passing the royal estate at Benson. In fact, clusters of finds within the vicinity of important royal centres (Benson, Old Windsor, Kingston, Westminster and St Pauls) appear to be an important feature of the depositional geography. The concentration of seaxes in the Dorchester-on-Thames to Cholsey area certainly also warrants further investigation. Axes are rarer as river finds – excepting the numerous finds at London Bridge – but exhibit similar patterns of deposition, with the majority around crossing points or confluences.

Overall, these finds are comparable to Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman finds, indicating the long-term ritual importance of the riverine landscape. Medieval documentary sources highlight the spiritual significance of the river to Christian communities of the Thames Valley (Ackroyd 2007: 84-5) but there is little in the evidence to suggest a link between the siting of minsters and the location of deposition as witnessed in the Witham Valley (Stocker and Evison 2003). Rather, it seems to be certain features of the river – confluences and crossing

points especially – which are important and the repeated deposition in these types of location suggests that this activity was structured by certain conventions. Is it possible that those objects which were considered the most powerful – swords, for instance – were deposited at what may have been perceived, physically or psychologically, as the most dangerous or vulnerable points on the river. This may point to deposition as a form of protection. Christie (2013: 143) has suggested that weapon deposits can be ‘linked to the vision of the river Thames as a boundary and frontier – territorial, physical and mental’ and Lund (2010: 54-6) that the crossing was more than a mere physical movement but rather that it could ‘signify entering the area of another owner, an assembly place or the land of the dead’ (*ibid.*: 56). Rivers were, of course, also significant communication routes, and so this combination of physical and mental worlds produced an ambiguous space, liminal and accessible, important for social, political and commercial activity (Semple 2011: 747-56). Such ‘protection’ may be, of course, only one reason for deposition, with Christie (2013: 142) neatly summing this up in suggesting that river deposits can be read at various levels including ‘martial’, ‘personal’ and ‘ritual’ and it is not unreasonable that the deposition of objects would occur at similar locations but for different reasons. The execution of a man in the Thames accompanied by his sword (Reynolds and Semple 2011: 46) highlights this, as do groups of other objects, such as late medieval pilgrims’ badges which appear to have been thrown into the water deliberately, perhaps as thanks for reaching the shrine at the end point of a pilgrimage, including in the River Stour at Canterbury (Egan 2007: 74; Garcia 2009).

A further element of the riverine landscape which warrants attention is the relation of river finds to features on land. I outlined above some instances where river finds are close to contemporary cemeteries (e.g. Chimney, Shepperton) and ecclesiastical or royal sites (e.g. Westminster, Kingston-upon-Thames) but there was also an extant and visible prehistoric landscape. The early-medieval re-use of prehistoric monuments is well known with burials and stray finds known at numerous sites (e.g. Williams 1997; Semple 2013), and along the Thames clusters of Anglo-Saxon finds also coincide with concentrations of monumental prehistoric activity, such as the area between Abingdon and Goring or from Windsor to Staines where large numbers of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments are known (Garwood *et al* 2011: fig. 14.9 and fig. 14.24). Hamerow (2012: 142-3) has also noted a correlation in the locations of early Anglo-Saxon settlements and cemeteries with earlier monuments, especially in the Thames Valley.

This short case study has illustrated the huge potential for sustained study of the finds from the Thames and other rivers. Given the numbers of finds from the Thames, their distributions and patterns of deposition, I have highlighted what I consider the likely ritual character of their deposition. With this in mind, it is now appropriate to turn our attention to review the evidence for the

deliberate deposition of non-precious metals in other places.

Settlement-related and other deposition

In the introduction to this paper, I briefly outlined changing attitudes to the interpretation of the deposition of objects in Roman and early medieval contexts, and how ideas from prehistoric archaeology are shaping new thinking for historic periods. Hamerow’s thought-provoking work gives an important basis for discussion (2006; 2012: 120-43). Examining the deposition of animal and human bone in the 5th to 8th centuries, she highlighted a number of trends suggesting that some of the bone found was likely deposited in a manner which could not be explained through rubbish disposal or the infilling of dismantled structures or other features. Describing such deposits as ‘special’ or ‘placed’, Hamerow (2006: 29) argued that these could be linked to the fertility of the settlement, and especially structures such as ‘sunken featured buildings’ (SFBs) which may well have been grain stores. She found that closure deposits were far more common than foundation deposits (although these were not unknown), and that the placement of many ‘special deposits’ was linked to certain locations, especially boundaries, entrances and certain structures, notably SFBs. Given this and other recent work undertaken on iron and lead hoards (e.g. Thomas 2008; Ottaway 2009; Cowgill 1994; 2009a, 2009b; Leahy 2013) it is worth reviewing the evidence here and examining the interpretations proposed. This section is intended to provide an overview discussion of a range of finds which were outside the focus of Hamerow’s work and which have been, so far, mostly only discussed within specialised excavation reports. I will start with some of the most visible and spectacular deposits of non-precious metal objects – the hoards of iron tools (and other objects) which have been found around Britain, sometimes within lead tanks – before discussing some more general site finds.

Hoards of iron objects

Leahy (2013: table 1, 231-3) has listed 11 recorded groups of iron objects, of which he suggests at least nine as hoards, four associated with lead tanks (in three cases the iron objects were inside the lead tanks). All date within the period of the 8th-10th centuries, except Nazeing, Essex which may be as late as the 11th century. The hoards consist predominantly of tools, the objects relating to a range of activities including woodworking and agriculture (cultivation and harvesting) with fewer metal-working related items and weapons, although the latter were still found in over half of the deposits (*ibid.*, 233). As many include elements of scrap metal, they have traditionally been seen as metalworkers’ hoards buried for future recycling such as those from Nazeing, or Crayke, East Yorkshire (Morris 1983: 36; Sheppard 1939: 279). However, such an interpretation can be challenged. The presence of scrap items does not necessarily indicate a group of objects intended for recycling – the deposition of scrap in the burials at Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire and Barton-on-Humber,

Lincolnshire (Hinton 1998: 5, 15), illustrates that such material can still possess meaning and symbolism; Thomas (2008: 386) argued that the association of some finds – Hurbuck, County Durham, Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire {12} and Nazeing – with watery locations was itself suggestive that re-assessment of their deposition was overdue; and Lund's (2010: 58) linking of myths surrounding legendary smiths living near water obstacles and the deposition of tool chests on river banks in Scandinavia bears serious consideration, especially considering at least one deposit (Nazeing) is from just such a location. Two recently published hoards – Flixborough and Bishopstone, East Sussex – have highlighted this shift in emphasis in attempts to explain the nature of the deposition of particular finds. Both were found in relation to major excavations (Ottaway 2009; Thomas 2008), although, unfortunately, only the latter has good contextual information.

The excavations at Bishopstone uncovered a high status settlement occupied from the 8th century into the Late Saxon period. Within the settlement a large, square feature proved to be a cellared structure, interpreted as a free-standing tower. The iron hoard was discovered in a post-hole located in the cellar of this structure, where it was probably deposited during the tower's dismantling, as a possible act of 'ritual closure' (Thomas 2008: 349-55, 391-3). As a deliberate deposit, buried without the intention of recovery, Thomas argued that the 25 objects in the hoard were specially chosen 'to represent important aspects of an estate's economy or source of wealth' (*ibid.*: 391) with the groups of objects relating to different aspects of the estate, including both agricultural activities and household. The hoard from Flixborough, 8th to 10th-century in date, was also discussed within the remit of material buried symbolically without intention to recover (Ottaway 2009). Only discovered during quarrying after excavations of the settlement were completed, the hoard lacks any stratigraphic information but its location, seemingly some way west of the settlement focus, suggests it cannot be considered in quite the same manner as the Bishopstone hoard. Consisting of 12 carpentry tools, two cultivation tools, a bell, and iron suspension rings all placed within two lead tanks (*ibid.*: 256), Ottaway considered the combination of the bell, incised with a star-like eight-armed cross, and the woodworking tools to represent a possible Christian element to the deposit. He argued that the objects may be related to the construction of the possible church on the site (Building 1a, dating to the early-mid 8th century), rendering them spiritually charged objects and their further use inappropriate or that the 12 objects may have symbolically represented the 12 apostles or Christ the carpenter (*ibid.*: 261). Both of these hoards are interpreted as closely related to the long-term well-being of the settlement and Thomas's (2008: 390) argument that the deposition may 'mark a transition in the intertwined narratives of a settlement's inhabitants and their built environment' is a strong one. A word of caution, however, comes from Leahy (2013: 229-35) who has highlighted the difficulty in understanding the

motives behind the burial of tool hoards. A number of them may, indeed, not even be hoards but rather are just spreads of settlement debris, such as the metal-detected assemblage from Lea Green, North Yorkshire and Torksey, Lincolnshire. It is important to note, though, that the objects in many cases are not old and worn even if some are crushed, and this adds further complications to their interpretation if they were perfectly useable tools which were, for some reason, discarded or marked for recycling (Leahy 2013: 235). Another way to consider these finds is, perhaps, in looking at early medieval perceptions of iron. It was viewed with suspicion and considered magical, as were those who worked with it (*ibid.*; Hinton 1998:15). Whether this means that iron could simply be discarded or had to be disposed of in certain ways remains open to question. Cameron's work on Anglo-Saxon medicine (1988: 208-9) shows that a number of medicinal recipes either include iron - in some cases, through modern eyes, for good physiological reasons - or expressly forbid any objects of iron to be used in its preparation. As such, the deposition of iron objects could be explained through potential taboos towards the metal, perhaps intensified in certain objects which, through the way in which they had individually been used, may have become magical, precious, tainted or dangerous. Ultimately, however, it is only with more hoards discovered in secure contexts that we will be able to more fully explore these ideas, and try to demarcate between those deposited permanently without any intention to recover, those which may be better explained as temporary stores of a smith's raw material, and those representing discard or loss.

Lead tanks and vessels

Alongside the hoarding of iron, and sometimes associated with it, are finds of lead containers or tanks. Most have been found in Lincolnshire and East Anglia with outliers in the Midlands and northern England, no doubt reflecting the distribution of lead out from its source in the Derbyshire Peak District (Loveluck 1995; Cowgill 2009a: 273-4). They are, however, not easily interpreted. At least some are poorly constructed, and often appear unfinished, which may have rendered them unsuitable for containing liquids, with Cowgill suggesting all were simply scrap items waiting to be recycled, possibly having been originally used in the measurement of grain or other dry goods (*ibid.*: 274-6). However, examples from Westley Waterless and another from near Corby, Northamptonshire (Fig. 8) include decorative panels, the latter quite ornate, and others, including Flixborough, have incised decoration (Fox 1923: 300, pl. xxxv no. 3; PAS WAW-A4D8D4; Ottaway 2009). While Cowgill (2009a: 270) considers that it is inappropriate to equate Anglo-Saxon examples with the Late Roman vessels which may have acted as baptismal fonts – many of which appear to have been deposited in a votive manner (Petts 2003) – others disagree. John Blair (2010: 160-1) concurs that the finishing of the tanks makes their attribution as baptismal fonts somewhat difficult, but he



Fig 10: Decorated Middle Saxon lead tank from near Corby, Northamptonshire. PAS WAW-A4D8D4. Image: A Bolton (PAS).

still considers that the water-related depositional environment of some to be indicative of ritual practice, suggesting that other potential uses for them could also have carried great meaning, including the preparation of medicines or as vessels for the undertaking of ‘ordeal by hot water’. Gilchrist (2008: 125) has also noted the use of lead in medieval ‘magico-medicinal’ practice and as the preferred material onto which amulet or charms were inscribed. The poor construction and finishing could simply indicate that this element was of little importance for their overall function in many cases. Indeed, Cowgill (2009a: 270-2) admits that they could be made water-tight by the addition of a lining and also that the jagged edges seen on some indicate they were used only sporadically or for short periods at a time. Both possibilities are compatible with the potential functions suggested for the vessels by Blair (2010).

Alongside this, the locations of deposition are interesting. Thomas (2008: 386) lists the iron hoard associated with a lead cauldron at Westley Waterless as a water-related deposit (although we have seen this may not be the case), but it is possible to suggest a water-related element to at least three others in some way. The Willingham, Cambridgeshire tank included in Cowgill’s (2009a: fig. 7.11) Flixborough report, is from a parish on the fen edge with the River Ouse framing two sides of the parish boundary. Peat fen and alluvium form the northern part of the parish. Before draining in the 17th century, it would have likely been substantially flooded every year (Wright and Lewis 1989) and could have been buried in one of

these peaty or regularly inundated areas. It is also possible to consider the Flixborough hoard as associated with water- environmentally, the site is located at the interface of the peat bogs and marshland of the Trent and the Lincolnshire Edge (Loveluck 2009b), and with the hoard found downslope of the main settlement area towards the wetlands it may be that its situation is more intimately related with water than initially thought. At Bottesford, the tanks found in the southern boundary ditch were only *c.* 200m from the current route of the Bottesford Beck which runs into the River Trent although it is difficult to necessarily associate their deposition to the river except that they were located on the riverward side of the settlement. However, as Yates and Bradley (2010) have shown for certain Bronze Age hoards objects do not have to be *in* water to be associated *with* water. The tanks excavated from Riby Cross Roads and Bottesford were both found within ditches, the former in the latest phase of the ditch of enclosure 2 (Steedman 1994: 226), and the latter *c.* 0.5 m apart at the base of a ditch terminal (Boyer *et al* 2009: 68), and this may also suggest similarities of practice. Although Cowgill (2009b: 84) interpreted the deposition of the tanks in practical terms – in that she argued they could be easily re-discovered for recycling or exchange – Bottesford’s excavators were less certain, suggesting reasons behind their deposition remain open to debate (Boyer *et al* 2009: 102).

Deliberate, ritual deposition within boundary and enclosure ditches has a long history with continuity from

later prehistory into the early medieval period at least (Haselgrove, this volume; Hingley 2006: 230-4, 240-52; Hamerow 2006). In Hamerow's (2006: 12) discussion of the Early Anglo-Saxon evidence, boundary ditches were one of the foci for deposition, and the continuation of this practice into the 8th century at least with the lead deposits at Riby and Bottesford would not be out of place. The careful placing of the Bottesford bases close together in a ditch terminal, folded and oriented in exactly the same way (Boyer *et al* 2009: 68), along with the Riby example found folded and horizontal in the final fill of an enclosure ditch (Cowgill 1994: 267) also suggests that the objects were carefully placed. Given their potential uses within medicinal or judicial practice (Blair 2010: 160-1), such vessels were objects which may have been perceived as powerful or meaningful to the community and appropriate for deposition without the intention to recover, perhaps akin to other 'closure' deposits discussed by Hamerow (2006). It is unfortunate that so few lead tanks have been recovered archaeologically and so we remain unaware of the context of deposition for most examples. However, given the similarities of depositional location in the excavated examples, possibly including the way they were placed within the feature, alongside a water-related element to at least three others, I would argue that there are strong reasons to suggest that these were 'placed' deposits buried without the intention to recover.

Other deposits

As we have seen, deposits on settlements that can be interpreted as 'placed' are not confined to iron hoarding and lead vessels. Diverse evidence for the deposition of animal and human bone is also known, within structures, entrances and boundaries (Hamerow 2006), and in this context it is worth considering the deposition of other metal objects in such locations. Hamerow (2006: 21-2) highlighted some finds of metalwork, including a 5th- to 6th-century axe hammer and ring, incorporated into the trackway leading to the entrance at Cadbury Castle, Somerset, and a possible shrine in the entrance at Cadbury-Congressbury, Somerset whose post-holes contained amphora handles, bone and a copper-alloy pendant, suggesting these deposits may have been 'intended to confer supernatural protection to the entranceway into the settlement' (*ibid.*, 22). Catholme, Staffordshire provides another interesting example. Here, excavations of a 7th to 9th-century settlement uncovered three burials (two human, one bovine) at entrances to enclosures, and these have already been interpreted as 'placed' deposits (Hamerow 2006: 10). Additionally, however, a number of metal objects were found which warrant further consideration: near to the base of pit [3370], dug into the ditched enclosure D21 in Zone VII, a barrel padlock, a possible seax, and two knives were discovered in a charcoal-rich deposit; a pair of shears was found in the bottom of ditch [3227], again in ditch D21; and another knife was found in a pit dug into ditch D39 part of which forms the inner side of entrance E7 and trackway T5 (Losco-Bradley and Kingsley 2002: fig. 3.97). One wonders if such finds should be considered

within the remit of the larger iron hoards discussed above, and illustrates the potential importance of the placement of single objects within features. {13}

Within the settlement space, Hamerow (2006) also argued that buildings, especially 'sunken featured buildings' (SFBs), were another focus for 'placed' deposits, often in their final abandonment phases and I have already discussed the important tool hoard deposited during building demolition at Bishopstone (see above). Alongside likely 'special' deposits of bone, Hamerow also commented that some examples of metal objects may have been deposited within acts of closure and abandonment. At Mucking, a charcoal-rich layer contained two 7th-century brooches, one on the base of the hollow in SFB GH 42, and three late 7th to mid-8th-century silver coins – sceattas – were found on the floor of GH 168; a Roman coin, plus pins, an amber bead and weaving-beater on/just above the floor of an SFB at Puddlehill, Bedfordshire (*ibid.*: 21-2; Hamerow 2012: 136-8). A third example of coinage found within structural elements of a building includes the hoard of three 8th-century silver sceattas from Fishergate, York discovered in the foundation trench of Structure 2 as part of a general abandonment/levelling deposit found across the site (Kemp 1996: 32-4, 57-8), perhaps mirroring the type of deposit seen at Mucking. While this layer of material was finds-rich, including other coins, it is nevertheless interesting that a small hoard was recovered from a structure and would not be out of place as a closure deposit, although its placement within the beam slot (i.e. the base or elsewhere) is not described in the report. Finally, another site where likely 'placed' deposits of animal bone are known, Cresswell Field at Yarnton, Oxfordshire also includes evidence for the potentially deliberate placement of metalwork. In SFB 7325, of 8th-century date, the skulls of a cow and two horses, and mandibles of at least five horses were considered as votive by the excavators, and in the same feature, pin beaters (of different sizes), a bone comb and an iron knife were all found close to the bottom of the fill (Hey 2003: 75; Bell 2003: 184-5; Dodd 2003: 297). These objects may all relate to animal husbandry and production at the settlement, and can perhaps be considered under the aegis of its fertility and continued prosperity as was perhaps the case at Bishopstone (Thomas 2008: 390-1). These few examples illustrate the variety of deposition within early medieval settlement contexts, and it appears likely that at least some of this must be considered to have ritual significance often relating to abandonment and change, although we have also seen that notions of protection may likewise be important.

Lastly, along with these finds from settlements (and water-related deposition discussed above), are those discovered at other locations. Semple (2013: 77-83), for instance, has examined the occurrence of Anglo-Saxon weapons at prehistoric monuments. These include weapons left in isolation at monuments such as barrows, and groups of weapons left at hillforts or linear landscape features. Such deposits appear to span the Anglo-Saxon period, much as they do in rivers, although prehistoric

monuments seem to have been a focus in the 6th and 7th centuries. She argues that such deposits fit into a long-term pattern which began prior to the early medieval period and extending into the modern day, relating to 'visitation, curiosity and veneration' of such monuments (*ibid.*: 78).

The deposition of objects in settlement contexts is inevitably difficult to assess, as is distinguishing between intentional deposition, waste disposal, and accidental loss, especially on finds-rich sites such as Flixborough or Fishergate, York where ironwork and copper-alloy objects were relatively common. In some cases this is compounded by a lack of detail in the published excavation report, including the location of objects within the fill, or even the discussion of the features themselves. A useful approach has been applied to Iron Age and Roman iron deposition by Hingley (2006: especially figs. 6-7), and this may be an appropriate method to apply to the early medieval evidence. Regardless, from the few examples listed here evidence exists for the deliberate, 'placed' deposition of non-precious metalwork on early medieval settlements and for these such evidence needs to be tested and explained. Most importantly, perhaps, is the recognition that single finds as well as hoards or groups of objects can have interesting depositional histories which cannot be dismissed as the disposal of unwanted items.

Conclusion

The aim of this broad and relatively brief review of the deposition of non-precious metals in early medieval England is to note that there is a strong body of evidence suggestive of deliberate deposition of metalwork without the intention of recovery, which can be interpreted within a 'votive' framework. This is not surprising given the evidence for the long-term processes of deposition extending from early prehistory to the concealment of objects such as 'witch bottles' in post-medieval houses (e.g. Bland, this volume; Merrifield and Smedley 1958), and fits in well within the broader parameters of 'placed' or 'special' deposits in early medieval Britain as outlined by Hamerow (2006; 2012: 120-43). It is also possible that the deposition of single objects, or small groups, as seen at Catholme, can be explained within such a scheme, thus extending this type of deposition beyond the larger hoards such as those found at Bishopstone or Flixborough which have provided the focus for previous discussion. The link between deposition of objects and places related to water or in water is no surprise and, indeed, has been made on other occasions (e.g. Stocker and Evison 2003; Booth *et al* 2007: 231-4; Lund 2010). The recent discovery of a potential 7th-century ritual landscape, away from domestic settlement, consisting of platforms around a waterlogged hollow at North Ferriby, North Yorkshire adds further evidence to the likely importance of water to people's perceptions of landscapes in the early medieval period (Fenton-Thomas 2011). The additional possibility that some finds from dry land may be related to water has been made here, although this requires further study.

Within these discussions questions relating to religion, and how the deposition of objects might relate to religious practice, are important. It is possible that some of the finds discussed in this paper represent the continuation of folk traditions adhering to pagan practices. The finds of 10th- and 11th-century weapons in rivers may themselves be indicative of a pagan Scandinavian presence in Viking-Age England (Lund 2010:60). The 11th-century edicts and lawcodes of Wulfstan of York and King Cnut outlawing pagan rituals – especially relating to veneration in watery places – do show that such activity was still prevalent among at least some of the population (Thomas 2008: 383; Lund 2010: 59). However, there is also strong evidence to suggest that these activities are not, in fact, inconsistent with early-medieval Christianity (e.g. Stocker and Evison 2003; Hamerow 2006: 27-8; Thomas 2008: 383-91; Ottaway 2009: 258-61; Lund 2010: 59-60). Such activity can be seen as the re-negotiation and appropriation of earlier practice to adhere to an early-medieval Christian world view, as perhaps seen most strikingly through the finds on causeways by the minsters along the Witham Valley, depositions which continued well into the later medieval period (Stocker and Evison 2003). A number of finds include Christian iconography – the lead tank and iron bell from the Flixborough hoard and the sceattas found at Mucking and Fishergate, York for instance – but by no means all, and depending upon an object's use or specific function it may have become imbued with elements relevant to, for example, Christian beliefs or folk magic. In fact, it seems increasingly likely that after the 8th century – with the exception of the span in the 10th-11th centuries – activities and rituals which may have had some kind of origin in earlier pagan practice still did not equate to pagan beliefs, rather that they were expressed afresh through medieval Christianity (Hutton 2011). Further work is certainly needed to contextualise many of these finds, especially relating to the broader landscapes of the river finds, which will provide a framework for a more complete understanding of their deposition and the potential reasons behind them. A fuller study of iron finds in the landscape is also needed using a far larger sample of sites to test the interpretations I have made here.

While interpretation remains difficult and is dependent on both good recording and publication which allows full assessment of the context of deposition, it is possible to bring out some broad trends here. Finds of weapons from rivers tend to cluster near potentially dangerous locations such as crossing points and confluences; and boundaries or entrances are favoured locations on settlements, as are periods of change when buildings are demolished and backfilled. While recognising that myriad reasons and varied beliefs may lie behind such deposits, it does appear that notions of 'protection' are important, be that of the community (i.e. the continued prosperity and fertility of the settlement and its land), or protection from harm, which may constitute protection from the dangers of the river or perhaps protection by the river from the objects deposited in it. All of these point to the burial of some objects for the long-term good of the community.

Iron and lead seem to be especially important (see above for a brief discussion of the perception of iron in Anglo-Saxon England), although it is clear that copper-alloy and precious metals are not absent or neutral in these types of deposit.

In conclusion, the proportion of objects discussed here in comparison to the overall corpus of material recovered remains small, and there is little to suggest that the bulk of objects were anything other than refuse. {14} This includes bone, ceramics and metal objects. Such a wide range of material suggests there is a need to carefully assess the nature of the deposition of finds made during excavations or metal-detector surveys/fieldwalking, although the latter is inevitably more difficult (but see Anderson 2010 and Kelleher 2012 for late medieval examples examining ampullae and bent coins respectively); the depositional and landscape contexts of precious metal hoards (including coinage) also warrant further investigation although such discussions are, unfortunately, outside the scope of the present article. In this paper, I have tried to illustrate that the deposition of non-precious metals in early medieval England was not a 'neutral' activity, even in some cases where the discard of material is the intended action, and that a more complete appreciation of the motives behind their burial can only come from placing each object into its landscape and settlement context.

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Endnotes

{1} Finds reported through PAS and Treasure are summarised each year in a number of publications, most notably for medieval artefacts in the journals *Medieval Archaeology* and the *British Numismatic Journal*, and in the *PAS Annual Report*. See also annual summaries in *Britannia* (Roman) and *Post-Medieval Archaeology*. The Portable Antiquities Scheme website can be found at finds.org.uk.

{2} Many spreads of early medieval material appear to represent some form of occupation, including permanent settlement, others perhaps of a seasonal nature relating to markets or meeting places. Alongside this, however, the importance of manuring of fields cannot be underestimated. See, for example, Jones (2005).

{3} This is not to say that deliberate deposition did not take place elsewhere, which it undoubtedly did. See, for example, the interesting cases of later medieval ampullae

and bent coins found in the countryside (Anderson 2010; Kelleher 2012), or finds of early medieval objects at prehistoric monuments which are briefly discussed below (Semple 2011).

{4} The find of a small Jellinge-style disc brooch by a metal-detectorist working on dredged river spoil in eastern Lincolnshire (PAS PUBLIC-9AA0E3) and the numerous small finds made by 'mudlarks' on the Thames foreshore in London attest to the presence of these smaller objects in rivers (see also endnote {9}), as do the Witham pins. However, definitively considering these as anything other than casual losses is difficult unless there is a particular reason to do so, as seen for instance in the large numbers of late medieval pilgrims badges found in the River Stour through Canterbury at the Eastbridge (Egan 2007, 74). It should be noted that along the Upper and Middle Thames, Booth *et al* (2007: 217-20) note that a number of small Roman and Iron-Age objects have been found, but this does not appear to be the case for the early medieval period.

{5} See the annual reports on material dredged from the Thames and reported in the *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* for this period. For material from other periods see Lambrick (2009); York (2002); Booth *et al* (2007: 217-20).

{6} This case study is based on a search of published literature on the region (see Appendix for a list of finds including references) with the addition of a brief search of the various county Historic Environment Records (HER) databases and English Heritage Pastscape database accessed via www.heritagegateway.org.uk (last accessed 1-10-14) and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk; accessed 1-10-14). While I am confident the majority of finds are included and correctly dated, the results must remain preliminary until detailed study can be undertaken.

{7} The figures provided for spearheads and axes are certainly an underestimation as a number of antiquarian reports list only 'spearheads' or 'axes'.

{8} It should be noted that the Thames flowing through London today has a very different topography to that of the early medieval London region, and is narrower, deeper and has its tidal reach is now further upstream than during the Anglo-Saxon period when this probably only extended as far as The Strand area (*Lundenwic*) (Cohen 2003).

{9} Collecting of material from the Thames foreshore through London has a long history and the Thames Mudlarks have been very active since the 1970s. It is important to note that the 3,000 finds recorded by PAS since 1997 represents only a small proportion of the total number of finds made on the foreshore over the years. My thanks to Roger Bland for this observation. See also Wheeler (1927; 1935) for examples of small objects found in the rivers of London.

{10} Marsden (1980: 147 and 212, endnote 24) mentions a group of pewter ingots stamped with the Chi-Rho and the inscription 'SPES IN DEO' (Hope in God) as well as a name SYAGRIVS. These have been dated to the 5th century on the basis of the name in relation to a Gaulish ruler of the same name, although Marsden argues a 4th-century date is just as likely.

{11} Marsden (1980: 74-5) notes large numbers of Roman objects found in this area, apparently votive offerings 'linked to water spirits of gods associated with the Thames and the Walbrook' (*ibid.*: 74). These include a wide range of objects coins, tools, statuettes, jewellery and incense burners found on sites by the current course of the river and through dredging. Bland and Loriot (2010: 61) note that three gold Roman coins were found at London Bridge which 'must represent either chance losses or offerings to the god of the river'. My thanks to Roger Bland for bringing these to my attention.

{12} Leahy (2013: 230) suggests this may be a mistake with the Westley Waterless hoard found while digging field drains rather than during marshland reclamation.

{13} An iron knife was also found in the 'make-up of the causeway dump at the same entrance [as the burials]' (Dawson 2002: 111) although it is unclear quite what type of deposit this is. Another feasible example could be the complete axe and handle found in an 11th-century pit at Milk Street, London, not far from St. Paul's, and although little stratigraphic evidence is forthcoming from the report, the axe was located well within the pit (Pritchard 1991: 135).

{14} However, even this may not be the simple discarding of waste. In examination of the midden dumps at Flixborough, Loveluck (2009a) has argued that they are so extensive in comparison to most settlement deposits that they could be seen as a form of conspicuous consumption in themselves, discarding material which could easily have been recycled and reused.

Appendix: Finds from the River Thames and its tributaries

All finds from Thames unless otherwise stated. The catalogue is arranged in geographical order along the Thames from west to east. It should be noted that this forms a preliminary list based on published sources and a short, targeted search of the online heritagegateway.org.uk (last accessed 1-11-14). It is likely that further and more in-depth study will reveal additional finds and also that some listed here should be discounted. Any errors and omissions remain my own.

Abbreviations: *BAJ*: Berkshire Archaeological Journal; *WANHM*: The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine; *VCH*: Victoria County History; *HER*: Historic Environment Record.

1. *Castle Eaton near Kempford, Wiltshire*
Stirrup of Seaby and Woodfield (1980) Type 2cii 'probably from silt dredged from the Thames'; *WANHM* 78 (1984): 133 (no. 75).
2. *Ten Foot Bridge, Chimney, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon sword; also known as the 'Shifford Sword' (Oakeshott 1994); Grove 1938: 254-6; Oakeshott 1994; Blair 1994: 98, fig. 59.
3. *Shifford, Oxfordshire*
Two Early Saxon spearheads, (Swanton types E4 and H1); Swanton 1974: 71 (listed as 'Old Shifford').
Late 11th- to early 12th-century spur; Jope 1956: 40 (cat. no. 5).
4. *Sansom's Ford, Shifford, Oxfordshire*
A Late Saxon stirrup of Type 1a; Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 106 (cat. no. 2).
5. *New Bridge, Standlake, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon Seax; Blair 1994: 99, fig. 59.
6. *Moreton Swifts, Oxfordshire*
A Late Saxon axe described as coming 'from the Thames at Moreton Swifts'. This location may be just east of Newbridge, Standlake as shown on 1945-7 OS map as 'Moreton' and the location of Moreton Farm. Given the lack of certainty this find has not been mapped; Collins 1948-9: 19.
7. *Gosford Bridge, Kidlington, Oxfordshire (River Cherwell)*
Early Saxon spearhead of Swanton type C2; Sauer 1998: 20; Swanton 1974: 59.
8. *Kidlington, Oxfordshire (modern footbridge over River Cherwell)*
Late Saxon spearhead (Petersen type M) found in River Cherwell; Sauer 1998: 20.
9. *Oxford, Oxfordshire*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type E2); Swanton 1974: 72.
10. *Magdalen Bridge, Oxford, Oxfordshire*
Early Saxon shield boss and Late Saxon spearhead found in River Cherwell in 1884 along with a number of Viking objects with which they do not appear to be associated. The latter are now re-interpreted as derived from a riverside burial; Seaby 1950:31-3; Blair and Crawford 1997.
11. *Holton Mill, Holton, Oxfordshire (River Thame)*
A late 11th- to early 12th-century axe found in the bank of the river; *Oxoniensia* 17-18 (1952-3): 226.
12. *Quarrendon, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire (River Thame)*
Early Saxon seax and Mid-Late Saxon spearheads; Babb 1996: 148.
13. *Sandford Lock, Sandford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire*
8th- to 9th-century spearhead; *BAJ* 65 (1970): 60.
14. *Bog (or Bugg) Mill, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (possibly on River Ock)*
Late 9th-century sword with broken blade; Hinton 1970; Hinton 1974: 1-7 (cat. no. 1); Backhouse *et al* 1984: 34-5 (cat. no. 14); Blair 1994: 99, fig. 58; Ashmolean Museum accession number: AN1890.14.
15. *Culham Weir, Culham, Oxfordshire*
8th- to 9th-century spearhead; *BAJ* 1970: 60.
16. *Clifton Weir, Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 63 (1967-8): 75.
17. *Day's Lock, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire*
Two seaxes and a Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 59 (1961): 59.
18. *Keen Edge Ferry, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell (Shillingford), Oxfordshire*
A Late Saxon seax of Wheeler type III; Evison 1963-4.
19. *Benson Lock / Benson, Oxfordshire*

- Seax; *BAJ* 61 (1963-4): 108.
Three spearheads (1xSwanton type F2; 1x Swanton type I2; 1x Late Saxon); Swanton 1974: 33; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Greenaway 2013b.
20. *Wallingford Bridge, Wallingford, Oxfordshire*
Six Late Saxon spearheads; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Dawson 2010; Greenaway 2013b; Booth *et al* 2007: 231.
Late Saxon sword, end missing; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Evison 1967; Greenaway 2013b; Booth *et al* 2007: 231.
21. *Chalmore Ferry, near Wallingford, Oxfordshire*
A small bent seax; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Greenaway 2013b.
Late Saxon axe (Wheeler type VI); *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75.
22. *Bow Bridge, Cholsey, Oxfordshire*
Seax; *BAJ* 61 (1963-4): 108; Greenaway 2013b; Booth *et al* 2007: 231.
Two Late Saxon spearheads; *BAJ* 61 (1963-4): 108; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 74; Greenaway 2013b; Booth *et al* 2007: 231.
23. *Littlestoke Ferry, South Stoke, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Greenaway 2013b.
24. *Moulsford Railway Bridge, Moulsford, Oxfordshire*
Two Late Saxon spearheads; *BAJ* 62 (1965-6): 75; Greenaway 2013b.
25. *Benson Reach Cleeve near Goring, Oxfordshire*
A broken sword of 'Danish type' and Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 61 (1963-4): 108-9; Greenaway 2013b; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
26. *Basildon, West Berkshire*
Late Saxon axe (Wheeler type II); Collins 1948-9: 19.
27. *Appletree Eyot, Tilehurst, West Berkshire*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 57 (1959): 119.
28. *Roebuck Ferry, Tilehurst, West Berkshire*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 58 (1960): 62.
29. *Sulhampstead, West Berkshire (River Kennet)*
Late Saxon spearhead found in old dredgings beside lock; *BAJ* 63 (1967-8): 73.
30. *Stratfield Saye, Hampshire (River Loddon)*
A Late Saxon sword with silver wire decoration (Petersen Type L); *BAJ* 66 (1971): 132.
31. *Reading (River Kennet)*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types E2 and E4); Swanton 1974: 75.
32. *Reading, mouth of River Kennet*
A Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (Appendix A); Grove 1938: 251; 'battle-axes in the Reading Museum come from the mouth of the Kennet'; *VCH Berks* I (1906): 246.
33. *Reading (River Thames)*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type H3); Swanton 1974: 75.
34. *Twyford, Wokingham (near)*
Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (Appendix A); Grove 1938: 252-3.
35. *Twyford, Wokingham (River Loddon)*
Axe found in River Loddon; Peake 1931: 236.
36. *Temple Lock, Bisham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Late Saxon spearhead found between Temple Lock and Bisham Church; PastScape record no. 248354 (pastscape.org.uk- accessed 1-11-14).
37. *Shiplake, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon spearhead, with an 'elaborately decorated' blade; *BAJ* 57 (1959): 119-20.
38. *Sonning Bridge, Sonning, Wokingham*
Late Saxon spearhead found 'approximately 600 yards [c. 550 m] downstream from Sonning Bridge' (*BAJ* 56: 54); *BAJ* 56 (1958): 54; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
39. *Sonning, Wokingham*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton types I2); *BAJ* 57 (1959): 119-20; Swanton 1974: 83.
40. *Wargrave, Wokingham*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 56 (1958): 56; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
41. *Marsh Lock, Henley-on-Thames (near), Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 56 (1958): 54; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
42. *Henley Bridge, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire*
Late Saxon axe (found by a diver, not dredged); *BAJ* 65 (1970): 58; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
43. *Hurley, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early Saxon spearhead of Swanton type D2; Swanton 1974: 87.
44. *Great Marlow/Marlow, Buckinghamshire*
Three Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types C1, C4 and I2); Swanton 1974: 66; Babb 1996: 144-5; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
45. *Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types D1 and I2); Swanton 1974: 42.
46. *Hedsor Weir, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early medieval axe; *BAJ* 57 (1959): 121.
47. *Hedsor Wharf, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
A late Saxon 'winged' spearhead; *BAJ* 57 (1959): 119.
48. *Sashes Island, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
An unidentified number of Late Saxon spearheads and other weapons including at least one axe recovered during dredging from the 1850s-1890s; Brooks 1964: 80; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
49. *above Cookham railway bridge, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Late Saxon 'winged' spearhead; *BAJ* 57 (1959): 119.
50. *Cookham Weir, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Late Saxon spearhead; Buckinghamshire HER 00532.00.000
51. *Babham Ferry (ford just south of), Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
A 'Saxon spearhead'; Underhill 1937: 35.
52. *Boulter's Reach, Cookham, Windsor and Maidenhead*
5th- to 6th-century spearhead; *BAJ* 66 (1971-2): 134.
53. *Cliveden, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type C1); Swanton 1974: 42;

- Late Saxon seax; Berkshire HER 00317.00.000 (listed as 'Thames opposite Cliveden'; accessed via heritagegateway.org.uk; 1-11-14).
54. *Boulter's Lock, Taplow, Buckinghamshire*
Late Saxon axe; Babb 1996: 150; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
55. *Maidenhead, Windsor and Maidenhead (near)*
Seven Anglo-Saxon spearheads; Peake 1931: 126, 211; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
56. *Maidenhead Bridge, Maidenhead, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early Saxon knife; Babb 1996: 150; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
57. *Bray, Windsor and Maidenhead*
A Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
Anglo-Saxon spearhead; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
58. *Surly Hall Point, Windsor, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type H2); Swanton 1974: 86.
59. *Clewer, Windsor and Maidenhead*
An Anglo-Saxon spearhead; Foreman *et al* 2002: 13 (cat. no. 10).
60. *Old and New Windsor, Windsor and Maidenhead*
At least six Anglo-Saxon spearheads 'found in the Thames at New and Old Windsor', all antiquarian finds; PastScape record no. 251133 (pastscape.org.uk- accessed 1-11-14).
61. *Old Windsor, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Early-Middle Saxon spearhead (Swanton type F2). It is not clear if the find listed in Swanton is the same as that published in *BAJ*; Swanton 1974: 71; *BAJ* 59 (1961): 60.
62. *Windsor, Windsor and Maidenhead*
An 8th to 9th-century sword pommel of copper-alloy and silver with panel of elaborate gold filigree decoration; Hinton 1974: cat. no. 36; Webster and Backhouse 1991: 225-6 (cat. no. 180).
Two Late Saxon swords (one not certainly Late Saxon); Wilson 1965: 44 (cat. no. 11, Appendix A).
63. *Victoria Bridge, Windsor, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types B1 and E1), and one of Early-Middle Saxon date (Swanton type F2); Swanton 1974: 89; Booth *et al* 2007: 234.
64. *Magna Carta Island, Wraysbury, Windsor and Maidenhead*
Late Saxon seax; Collins 1948-9.
Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 60 (1962): 119.
65. *Staines, Surrey*
Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types C1 and C3); Swanton 1974: 83-4;
Late Saxon 'winged' spearhead from 'Staines Road Bridge'; *BAJ* 56 (1959): 56.
66. *Riverbank Flats, Staines, Surrey*
A Late Saxon spearhead; *BAJ* 56 1959: 54.
67. *'Mixnam's Pit', Chertsey, Surrey*
A Late Saxon 'Ulfberht' sword (Petersen type S, Wheeler type III); East *et al* 1985; Pearce 2002: 98; Booth *et al* 2007: 232.
68. *Weybridge, Surrey (River Wey at Wey Bridge)*
A Late Saxon axe and a spearhead found in the reach below Wey Bridge. Swanton lists one spearhead from Weybridge (type D3); Gardner 1912: 133; Swanton 1974: 88; Booth *et al* 2007: 233.
69. *Shepperton Ranges, Surrey*
Two Late Saxon swords, two seaxes and a spur found at various locations along Shepperton Ranges near confluence with the Wey; Booth *et al* 2007: 232-3; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
70. *Sunbury Weir, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey*
Late Saxon spearhead; Collins 1948-9: 17.
71. *Hampton, Greater London*
Seax; Wheeler 1935: 181.
72. *Surbiton, Greater London*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type I2); Swanton 1974: 86.
73. *Kingston-upon-Thames, Greater London*
Late Saxon seax: Greater London HER 102097/00/00
Late Saxon axe: Greater London HER 102010/00/00
Five Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types C1, D3, E2, F2 and L); Swanton 1974: 60.
Late Saxon spearhead; Collins 1948-9: fig. A.
Hoard of ten 6th-century gold coins; Abdy and Williams 2005: cat. no. 3.
74. *Hampton Wick, Greater London*
Late Saxon stirrup of Seaby and Woodfield type 2cii; Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 116 (cat. no. 29).
75. *Brentford, Greater London*
44 Early Saxon spearheads; Swanton 1974: 36-40.
A Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
'Francisca' axe; Wheeler 1935: 142.
Late Saxon 'Carpenter's' axe; Wheeler 1927: 25.
76. *Strand-on-the-Green, Hounslow, Greater London*
Mid-Late Saxon axe of Wheeler type III; Wheeler 1927: 26.
77. *Kew, Greater London*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types E1 and H1); Swanton 1974: 59.
Late Saxon sword (Petersen type O); Pearce 2002: 90.
78. *Mortlake, Greater London*
Seven Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types D1, D2, F2, H2, I2 and J); Swanton 1974: 69;
Two seaxes; Wheeler 1935: 180.
79. *Barnes Railway Bridge, Barnes, Greater London*
Late Saxon/early Norman axe; Wheeler 1927: 26.

80. *Barnes, Greater London*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton type C5 and K2); Swanton 1974: 31.
Early Saxon fish-shaped shield mount; Cohen 2011: fig. 58.
81. *Chiswick Eyot, Chiswick, Greater London*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types H1 and H3); Swanton 1974: 41.
8th-century sword pommel; Webster & Backhouse 1991: 226 (cat. no. 181).
82. *Hammersmith, Greater London*
Two Late Saxon seaxes (Wheeler type IV); Wheeler 1935: 180-1.
83. *Fulham, Greater London*
Two Late Saxon seaxes (Wheeler type IV); Wheeler 1935: 180.
84. *Putney Railway Bridge, Putney, Greater London*
A Late Saxon sword inscribed with INGELRII; Wheeler 1927: fig. 16 no. 6; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Museum of London accession number A2373. Published by both Wheeler and Wilson under 'Wandsworth' but listed as Putney by the Museum of London.
85. *Putney, Greater London*
Four Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types G1, H1, I2 and L); Swanton 1974: 74
9th-century Saxon spearhead; PAS LON-920814.
Late Saxon axe; Wheeler 1927:25.
86. *Wandsworth, Greater London*
Three Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types D3, E4 and I2); Swanton 1974: 88.
87. *Chelsea, Greater London*
Late Saxon axe of Wheeler type VI; Wheeler 1927: 26.
8th-century silver ring with engraved zoomorphic decoration; Webster and Backhouse 1991: 222 (cat. no. 175).
88. *Battersea, Greater London*
Five Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types B2, F2(x2) and I2); Swanton 1974: 32
Late Saxon stirrup (Seaby and Woodfield type 2cii); Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 114 (cat. no. 22)
Late Saxon seax with runic inscription; Wheeler 1935: 180; Backhouse *et al* 1984: 100-1 (cat. no. 94).
Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 32 (cat. no. 1).
89. *Vauxhall, Greater London*
Three Late Saxon swords; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A). Wilson cites four swords in his appendix, Wheeler (1927) two swords and Laking (1920) two swords. One of the Laking swords listed as 'Wandsworth Reach' (Laking 1920: fig. 19d) is the same as the sword listed by Wilson under 'Wandsworth' and previously published by Wheeler (1927: fig. 16 no. 6) and has been removed from this list.
90. *Thames foreshore, Lambeth, Greater London*
Early Saxon spearhead (Swanton type D1); Swanton 1974: 60.
Copper-alloy 8th-century drinking horn terminal; PAS LON-EFCF31.
91. *Westminster, Greater London*
Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 42-4 (cat. no. 10).
Late Saxon stirrup (Seaby and Woodfield type 2cii); Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 116 (cat. no. 28).
92. *Palace of Westminster, Westminster, Greater London*
Late Saxon sword; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Dunning and Evison 1961.
93. *Westminster Bridge, Westminster, Greater London*
Silver gilded fitting for a knife or seax scabbard; Webster and Backhouse 1991: 225 (cat. no. 179).
94. *Waterloo Bridge, Lambeth, Greater London*
Late Saxon sword (Wheeler type I); Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Wheeler 1927: 36.
95. *The Temple, City of London*
Late Saxon sword (Petersen type L var.; Wheeler type VI); Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Pearce 2002: 80.
96. *Blackfriars, City of London*
Two Late Saxon axes; Wheeler 1927: 26.
97. *London Bridge, City of London*
'One or two' Late Saxon swords, a group of six spearheads (Petersen type K); Wilson 1965: 50-2 (incl. appendix A).
Late Saxon spearhead with Ringerike decoration; seven axes, iron tongs and 'grappling hook'; Wheeler 1927: 18.
98. *Tower Hill (near), City of London*
Two Late Saxon axes; Wheeler 1927: 26.
Late Saxon stirrup (Seaby and Woodfield type 2cii); Seaby and Woodfield 1980: 116 (cat. no. 25).
99. *Edmonton, Greater London (River Lea)*
Late Saxon sword (Petersen type U; Wheeler type VII); Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Pearce 2002: 110.
100. *Enfield, Greater London (River Lea)*
Late Saxon sword of Wheeler type II; Wheeler 1927: 53; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
101. *Walthamstow, Greater London (River Lea)*
Two Late Saxon swords; Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A).
- Finds listed with vague provenance*
102. *Thames (Oxfordshire). Note: county here refers to pre-1974 region.*
Three Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types C3 and E4 x2); Swanton 1974: 86-7.
103. *Thames (Berkshire). Note: county here refers to pre-1974 region.*
Two Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types D2 and E3); Swanton 1974: 87.
104. *London, not further defined*
Five Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types B2, C2, E2, H2 and I2); Swanton 1974: 62.
Two Late Saxon swords (one pommel only); Wilson 1965: 52 (appendix A); Wheeler 1927: 54.

Early Saxon Bronze bowl; Wheeler 1935: 147.
Large Late Saxon seax; Wheeler 1935: 181.
Two Late Saxon axes; Wheeler 1927: 26.

105. *Thames*

Fifteen Early Saxon spearheads (Swanton types B1 (2), C2 (2), D3 (2), E2 (2), E3 (3), F1 and F2 (3)); Swanton 1974: 87.

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