IMAGES OF TIME

Rod Blunt

A Photographic Record of Finds

Introduction

As is sometimes the case with items included in this series, I have been unable to trace any closely similar references to two of this month's finds. On stylistic grounds, the items shown in Fig.133 and Fig.142 can be fairly accurately dated, but identification is vague for the first and tentative for the second. Any further information regarding these items would be gratefully received.

I always endeavour to include as wide a range of material as possible in Images of Time, and am fortunate this month to be able to represent the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon, Medieval, Tudor and later periods. In covering such a wide range of items, I am always conscious of the risk of errors, both of dating and identification. If any attribution is thought to be incorrect, I should be pleased to hear so that appropriate corrections can be published.

On the subject of corrections, Mrs Barbara Miles has kindly written to advise me that the leg illustrated as Fig.97b (March 2001) is a doll's limb, not a pipe tamper as I had identified it. She also explained that the porcelain heads and limbs of these dolls were stitched into a body of fabric stuffed with sawdust. Particularly interesting was the fact that Barbara had bought such dolls as a child, thus making them far more recent than I had imagined. The information is gratefully received and I am pleased to record the correction.

All items are dimensioned in millimetres and their numbering follows on sequentially from the previous Images of Time.

Fig.133 Lipped Ring, Circa 1st Century AD
Copper alloy
38mm dia.
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

While this ring is almost certainly dateable to the late Iron Age, I am less sure about its exact purpose. It is decorated with seven lipped mouldings symmetrically arranged around its circumference. Located centrally between two of these mouldings there is a groove, which may be the result of wear. There are also traces of iron rust on one side of the ring. It does not have the usual attachment bar sector of a terret ring, but was very probably used in some harness-related application.

Fig.132 Buckles, Circa 15th - 16th Century
Copper alloy
(a) 34mm dia. (b) 33mm dia.
(a) and (b) Found in Lincolnshire

Item (a) is a plain circular frame buckle with a central bar. It is of a type that was in use for a long period of time and cannot be closely dated. It could be up to a century earlier or later than the indicative dates given above. Item (b) is in the form of a five-petalled flower, and is commonly referred to as a rose buckle. It can be dated much more closely than item (a), to the period c.1450-1550.

Fig.134 Buckles, 13th - 15th Century
Copper alloy
(a) 40mm dia. (b) 25mm x 18mm
(a) and (b) Found in Lincolnshire

The slenderness and sharpness of the pin on item (a) appear to indicate a large annular brooch rather than a buckle. However, the frame of a brooch normally has a constriction at the point where the pin is attached, and this feature is absent on the present example. The buckle, which is tinned all over, dates c.1250-1500. Item (b) is a trapezoidal buckle dating to the 14th or 15th century. The cast frame and pin have bevelled edges and the latter has transverse grooves. Like item (a), the buckle is tinned all over.

**Fig.135 Bow Brooch,
Circa 1st Century AD**
Copper alloy
48mm x 8mm
Found in Lincolnshire

Lacking any significant decorative features, this brooch resembles a modern safety pin. The type is not represented in any of Richard Hattatt's reference books, but it is closely related to the Birdlip brooch of the early 1st century AD. In common with that type, the present brooch has a small bow and a long tapered foot with the pretence of a flange at its top. Absent, however, is the tongue-like protuberance next to the flange, which is a characteristic Birdlip feature. The brooch has a hinged pin, a plain catch-plate and a small flanged foot terminal.

Fig.136 Hooked Fasteners, 16th - 17th Century
Copper alloy
(a) 17mm x 31mm, (b) 18mm x 38.5mm
(a) and (b) Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell
(See also IOT 11, 95, 108 and 126)

The range of designs on these attractive little items is quite extensive, and I suspect that if we knew their exact use, they would become even more popular with collectors. Of these latest examples, item (a) has stylistic similarities with the silver example I illustrated as Fig.95. It has a hollow-cast decorative front, which is riveted to a sheet-metal back comprising the attachment loop and hook. Item (b) is yet another variety of the solid-cast openwork type.

**Fig.137 Strap-Ends,
Circa 9th - 10th Century AD**
Copper alloy
(a) 14mm x 48.5mm, (b) 9.5mm x 47.5mm
(a) and (b) Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell
(cf. IOT 87 and 109)

These two strap-ends with moulded animal-head terminals are cast, and have a bifurcation at the attachment end to accommodate the strap. Above its terminal, item (a) is decorated with a symmetrical pattern of curved and straight lines. Item (b) is plain above the animal's head, except for three engraved arcs at the opposite end. Interestingly, it also has four (one now missing) purely decorative silver rivets, one passing centrally through the animal's snout.

Fig.138 Barrel Tap, 18th - 19th Century
Copper alloy
128mm x 83mm
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

Although fragments and damaged barrel taps are fairly common detecting finds, it is unusual to recover a complete tap in such good condition as the present example. The wooden barrels, into which the taps were fitted, were often used at outdoor events and social gatherings, thus explaining their presence on farmland today. The protrusion on the front of the spout was provided to enable the tap to be hammered into the barrel without causing damage.

Fig.139 Drawer Handle, 18th Century
Lead alloy
20mm dia. x 21mm long
Found in Norfolk
(cf. Gordon Bailey, Detector Finds 2, Furniture Fittings, Item 58)

This attractive drawer handle is in the shape of a daisy with eight petals. It appears to have been attached to the drawer by passing the stem through a hole in the wood and riveting over the end from inside, evidence of which can be seen in the side view.

Fig.140 Belt Fitting, Circa 1st Century AD
Copper alloy
18mm wide x 31mm long
x 15mm deep
Found in Lincolnshire
by Tony Russell
(cf. Richard Hattatt,
Ancient Brooches and
Other Artefacts, Part II,
Item 41)

The boss-and-double-petal design of this belt fitting is characteristically Celtic, and displays the classic feature of conjoined trumpet mouths where the two sides of the fitting meet at the central ridge. It is closely similar to certain button-and-loop fasteners of the same period, except that the latter have a boss and single petal. The integral loop at the back of the fitting would originally have been rectangular in form but, as can be seen from the illustration, only one limb of the loop remains.

Fig.141 Buckle Plate, Circa 2nd Century AD
Copper alloy
71mm x 35mm
Found in Cambridgeshire by Peter Chamberlain

Apparently quite scarce, this cast buckle plate was originally enamelled in each of its four recesses. The crescent-shaped area at one end of the plate still contains a considerable amount of red enamel, but the others retain only traces whose original colour is uncertain. The missing buckle was attached to the plate via a hinge arrangement, the pin of which evidently failed. The back of the plate has two studs for attaching it to the belt. The rear one has a large flanged end, which would have been pressed through a lengthwise slit in the belt. The forward one is plain and would have registered in a suitably located piercing. The decorative feature of three lugs around a crescent-shaped end has parallels with certain plate brooches of the 2nd century AD. This similarity, and the use of enamelling, suggests that the buckle plate dates to the same period.

Fig.142 Strap-End, 4th Century AD
Copper alloy
50.5mm x 35mm
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

This openwork artefact appears to be the terminal section of a large hinged strap-end. It is unlikely to be either a buckle or buckle plate, because there is neither a suitable point from which a pin could pivot, nor any means of attachment to a belt. It dates to the late Roman period and has no fewer than six zoomorphic features. These consist of a pair of animal heads with open mouths at the in-turned ends of the frame, a pair of duck (?) heads protruding from the front of the frame, and a bird on each side. This last feature is paralleled on a buckle illustrated by Nigel Mills (item R200) in Celtic & Roman Artefacts.

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Fig.143 Scabbard Chape, Late 15th - 16th Century
Copper alloy
28mm x 37mm
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell
(cf. London Museum Medieval Catalogue, Fig.87, III.
See also IOT 8)

This scabbard chape is one of a number of types that can be dated to the period shown by contemporary representations and archaeological evidence. Its lower part is in the form of a scallop shell with three circular perforations arranged in a triangle. The upper portion is separated by a transverse rib, above which is a central heart-shaped perforation. Chapes were used to reinforce the end of the scabbard, but were probably more decorative than functional. This type is often described as a sword chape, but those used on dagger scabbards were of similar style. There is, therefore, some uncertainty in the attribution.

Fig.144 Pastry-Cutter Wheels, 17th - 18th Century
Copper alloy
(a) 33.5mm dia. (a) 25mm dia. (b) 34mm dia.
Found: (a) Cambridgeshire, (b) and (c) Norfolk

Although plastic has largely replaced metal as a material of construction, pastry cutters have changed little in principle over the centuries. These wheels were originally fitted in the forked end of a handle, which often had a secondary tool at its other end for creating patterns on the pastry. Item (a) is possibly the earliest of this group, and has a cutting edge with intermittent zigzag and straight sections. Items (b) and (c) are 18th century, have continuous zigzag cutting edges, and are very alike in all respects except size. It is something of a mystery that, while they are not common detecting finds, such household items have found their way into the fields in some quantity.

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Fig.145 Game Counter, 19th Century
Copper alloy
21mm dia.
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

Although dated 1788 and displaying the bust of George III, this game counter was probably struck during the 19th century. It is in imitation of a half guinea but, as is evident from the reverse inscription, was not intended to deceive. Counters of this type were produced in very large numbers in one guinea and half guinea sizes, and with a variety of reverse inscriptions. When it became fashionable for Victorian gentlemen to wear a guinea on their watch chains, the less affluent made do with these counters. As a result, many of them are pierced for attachment.