

# IMAGES OF TIME

## *A Photographic Record of Finds*

### Rod Blunt

#### Introduction

Having the opportunity to examine quite a large number of detecting finds for possible inclusion in this series provides a good overview of the different classes of artefact found, as well as an idea of their relative scarcity. The range of items actually illustrated is not truly representative in this respect, however, as I seek to avoid repetition. It is nevertheless interesting that of 231 individual items illustrated to date, no fewer than 31 are Roman brooches. This figure compares with 56 buckles, 13 thimbles and 12 buttons. Considering their relatively short period of popularity, the volume recovered seems quite remarkable.

Occasionally when examining finds, an interesting vari-

ation of a particular item comes to light. One such example is illustrated in Fig.119(a). It is a medieval buckle plate with a die-stamped peacock design that I had not previously seen. The majority of buckle plates of this type have a lion design like that shown as item (b) in the same illustration.

All the material illustrated in this series of articles is made available to me by other detectorists, and their continuing support is much appreciated.

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

**Fig.116. Headstud Brooch, Late 1st-2nd Century AD**  
Copper alloy  
73mm long x 26mm wide  
Found in Lincolnshire by Colin Evans



The headstud brooch, a native British product, is named after the decorative stud that normally adorns the top of its bow. In this example, however, instead of the normal metal stud, it has a socket with a hole through to the back to hold a riveted ornament of some kind. This might have been of bone, ivory, a mineral substance, or possibly coral. The decoration on the front of the bow consists of six elliptical cells in deep sunken relief in a zigzag pattern. These, and the sub-triangular cells formed between them, were possibly originally enamelled, but no traces remain to confirm this. Midway between the bottom of the zigzag pattern and the characteristic foot knob, the brooch has a

blind hole drilled into its face. I have been unable to trace any parallel for this feature, but presumably it provided the means for attaching another ornament to complement the headstud. At its head, the brooch has a tapered serrated crest, which terminates immediately above the headstud socket. The wings have the usual grooves, and the pin, of which a fragment remains, is of the hinged type.



**Fig.117. Disc Brooch, 2nd Century AD**  
Copper alloy  
33mm diameter  
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

Probably dating to the first half of the 2nd century AD, this large disc brooch is of a type that is thought to be native to Britain. Of the three main areas of its surface, the inner band is decorated with four dots and four semi-circular cells arranged alternately, while the outer band and central areas are plain. Much original enamel remains in the inner band, where the main field is red and the semi-circular cells are blue. The other two areas would also have been enamelled, but no traces remain to determine their colours. The

brooch has a sprung copper alloy pin supported between two lugs, features characteristic of large disc brooches of this type. At the beginning of the 2nd century AD, plate brooches (of which the disc type is a variety) and bow brooches were equally popular. Towards the end of the century, however, the popularity of bow brooches declined and plate brooches became the predominant type. After the 2nd century, the wearing of brooches in Britain became less fashionable and their variety consequently reduced.



**Fig.118. Oval Plate Brooch, 2nd Century AD**  
Copper alloy  
21mm x 28.5mm  
Found in Lincolnshire by Tony Russell

This 2nd century oval plate brooch was probably imported from continental Europe. It is of moulded construction and originally had six lugs around its periphery. Each lug is decorated with a dot-and-circle pattern, and the periphery of the brooch and the edge of the central boss are knurled. The face of the boss consists of two opposed D-shaped cells

with knurling on their straight edges and a wavy line in sunken relief between them. The D-shaped cells were almost certainly enamelled, although no traces remain to confirm this. No brooches of similar decoration are illustrated in any of Richard Hattatt's four reference books. The brooch has a hinged copper alloy pin, somewhat oddly attached to a single lug.

**Fig.119. Buckle and Plates, 12th-13th Century**  
(a) and (b) Copper alloy  
(a) Buckle 17mm x 31mm, plate 29mm x 25mm,  
(b) 25.5mm x 19.5mm  
(a) Found in Lincolnshire by Dennis Smith,  
(b) Found in Lincolnshire

Both of these items probably date to the late 12th or early 13th century. The buckle is cast, and the plates are made from sheet metal with die-stamped designs. That on item (a) appears to be a peacock in a raised rectangular frame with its tail in splendour and its head turned backwards. The plate has two intact dome-headed rivets, and like the buckle, has traces of gilding on its surface. The buckle is oval with a narrowed offset bar and a notch for the pin between two slight mouldings. The latter may have been decorated, but any detail has now been lost. The design on item (b) is a lion passant guardant in a raised slightly trapezoidal frame, reflecting the shape of the plate. It also



has two intact dome-headed rivets and significant traces of gilding. Unfortunately, it has a contemporary hole punched through it from the top.



**Fig.120. Single Loop Buckles, Late 12th-14th Century**  
(a) to (c) Copper alloy  
(a) 19mm x 25.5mm, (b) 22.5mm x 29.5mm,  
(c) 27mm x 33mm  
(a) to (c) Found in Rutland  
(Ross Whitehead, **Buckles 1250-1800**,  
cf. Items 98, 103 & 110)

The three items illustrated are typical medieval strap-end buckles, and all would probably have been fitted with plates. Item (a) has an oval frame with a narrowed offset strap bar and an ornate outside edge. The latter consists of four knobs with a ridge between each of the outer pairs, and a pin notch at the centre. Knopped buckles of similar type have been found in dateable contexts from the late 12th to the late 14th century. Item

(b) is of a similar type, but with a different form of decoration. It has a notched lip flanked by a pair of ridges each side. It is of a type that was in use at least from the early 13th to the late 14th century. Item (c) is a sub-triangular buckle that originally had three knobs at the angles of its frame. These were formed by dome-headed rivets, one of which survives in situ. The buckle probably dates to the same period as the previous item.



**Fig.121. Mirror Case, 13th-14th Century**  
Copper alloy  
29mm diameter x 37mm  
Found in Rutland  
(Museum of London, **Dress Accessories**,  
cf. Items 1714-1716)

Medieval mirror cases of this type were, until quite recently, attributed to the Roman period. They are constructed from two similar cast discs with a single lug at one end and a pair at the other. The single lug on one disc fitted between the pair on the other, and these were drilled and riveted to form a hinge. The lugs at the opposite ends fitted together when the case

was closed and prevented any side strain on the hinge. The paired lugs on the present single disc are not drilled, indicating that its hinge was at the single-lug end, the point at which it evidently broke. Judging by other finds, the glass mirror originally cemented in the case would have been leaded on its back to provide the reflective surface, and slightly convex to give a magnified image.



**Fig.122. Bar Mounts and Suspension Loops, 13th-14th Century**

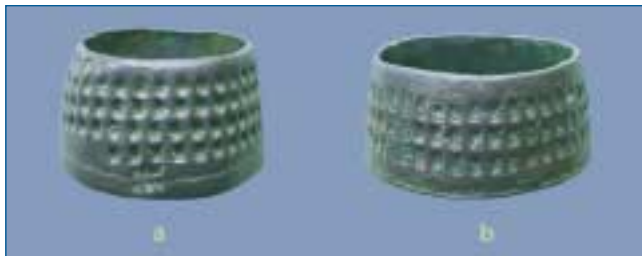
Copper alloy

- (a) Bar 4mm x 16mm, loop 19mm x 19.5mm,
- (b) 9.5mm x 18mm,
- (c) Bar 5mm x 15mm, loop 20.5mm x 17.5mm,
- (d) 10.5mm x 34mm

(a) Found in Cambridgeshire;  
 (b), (c) and (d) found in Lincolnshire

During the medieval period, bar mounts, along with mounts of other shapes, were used as decorative devices on belts. They were fitted transversely, often quite closely together, and were secured by rivets. Some of the mounts like items (a) and (c), were cast with an extended bottom end that was formed into a hook for attaching a suspension loop. After fitting the loop, one of the mount rivets was

passed through the top of the hook, thus permanently linking the two items. Loops of various shapes are known, including quatrefoil, D-shaped and round, as well as the trefoil and lozenge-shaped examples illustrated. They were used to suspend purses, knives, and possibly other small items. A pair of this type would typically be included on a belt, the remainder of the mounts being purely decorative.

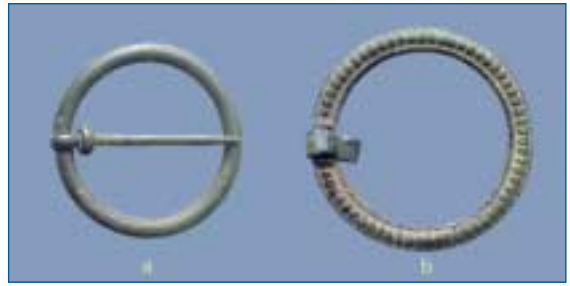


**Fig.123. Sewing Rings, 16th Century**

- (a) and (b) Copper alloy
- (a) 18mm x 10.5mm, (b) 19.5mm x 9.5mm
- (a) and (b) Found in Lincolnshire

Like a present-day tailor's thimble, these sewing rings were clearly designed to apply the pressure sideways. They are also known as open-top or ring-type thimbles, and have complemented their more conventional counterparts from the earliest times. Both the present examples have hand-punched indentations in a spiral pattern, forming four rows on (a) and three on (b). Below the start of

the spiral on item (a), there is a maker's mark, but it is unclear. Various different marks are known, including an anchor, cloverleaf, dagger, flower, goblet, and key, but the individual makers cannot be traced. There is no rim on either of these sewing rings, but item (a) has an engraved circumferential line below the indentations. They are probably both English and date to the early 16th century.



**Fig.124. Annular Brooches, 13th-14th Century**

(a) and (b) Copper alloy

- (a) 25.5mm diameter (b) 35.5mm diameter
- (a) and (b) Found in Rutland

(Richard Hattatt, **Brooches of Antiquity**, cf. Item 1337, See also "Images Of Time" 107)

As indicated in "Images Of Time" 107, brooches of this type were often worn at the neck, where they either fastened the clothing, or were used purely for decoration. They were also used on undergarments, and were worn by both men and women. During the 13th century, those worn at the neck were visible, but during the 14th century fashion changed, and outer garments often covered them. Presumably the more ornate types would have been reserved for the visible applications, and the plainer ones employed in a predominantly functional

role. Item (a) has a plain circular section ring, its only decorative feature being a small penannular loop of wire pushed up against the head of the pin. Item (b) is virtually identical to Hattatt's 1337. It has a rounded back and a flat face with a central radially grooved circumferential rib, which gives the appearance of a ring of small knobs. The remnants of the pin, which are located on a reduced section of the ring, indicate that it was made from sheet metal. Both items probably date mid 13th to late 14th century.

**Fig.125. Strapend Hook, 16th Century**

Copper alloy  
 51mm x 22mm max.

Found in Rutland  
 (Gordon Bailey, **Detector Finds 2, Sword-Belt Fitments**, cf. Item 1)

This strapend hook with its characteristic vine-leaf design is of a type believed to have been used as a sword-belt fitment. Gordon Bailey, in the above reference, states that they would have been riveted to the slings of the scabbard. The scabbard was then suspended from the sword belt by passing the hooks through corresponding loops on the underside of a mount riveted to it. These mounts, or belt bars, are



known with matching designs, and with up to three loops along their bottom to accommodate the hooks.



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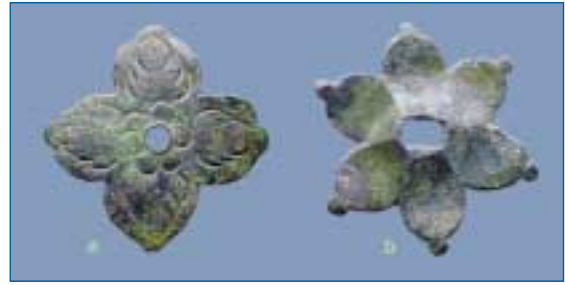
**Fig.126. Hooked Fasteners, 16th-17th Century**

(a) to (c) Copper alloy  
(a) 30mm x 15.5mm,  
(b) 35mm x 15mm,  
(c) 32.5mm x 17mm  
(a) to (c) Found in Rutland  
(See also IOT 11 and IOT 116)



As indicated in the earlier "Images Of Time" entries referenced above, these attractive little items are fairly common metal-detecting finds. Although they were probably used to fasten clothing, I have not seen any contemporary illustrations in which they are depicted. This is possibly because they were used on undergarments, but the decorative nature of most examples suggests otherwise. Many variations of design are known, all with

an attachment loop and hook. The present group contains a further example, item (c), with a (possibly religious) bust at its centre.



**Fig.128. Furniture-Handle Escutcheons, Late 17th-Early 18th Century**

Copper alloy  
(a) 42mm max. (b) 40mm max.  
(a) and (b) Found in Norfolk  
See also IOT 40(e) for furniture mount with similar design to item (b)

Escutcheons, or back furniture handles to provide decoration, and protect the adjacent wood. Item (a) is flat, has four leaves, and is crudely decorated with punched vein markings and a central "daisy". The hole through which the handle was attached is small and round, suggest-

ing the matching handle was possibly a knob. Item (b) has six leaves, is raised in the centre, but has no applied decoration. Its central hole is rectangular and larger, suggesting a drop-handle was used, possibly of the type previously illustrated as IOT 12. Both items are cast.



**Fig.127. Double Loop Buckles, 17th Century**

(a) to (d) Copper alloy  
(a) 41mm x 25.5mm, (b) 32mm x 21.5mm,  
(c) 41mm x 28mm, (d) 53mm x 36mm  
(a) to (d) Found in Rutland  
(Ross Whitehead, **Buckles 1250-1800**,  
cf. Items 486, 523, 441 & 529)

All four of these buckles are very similar to those referenced above in Ross Whitehead's book, and the dating for each one is taken from that source. Item (a) has a rectangular frame with moulded pin rests on each loop, and lobed protrusions on the ends of the strap bar. It dates c1600-1700. Item (b) has a trapezoidal frame with shallow-pointed ends, ovoid knobs at each corner, and lobed

protrusions on the ends of the strap bar. It dates c1620-1680. Item (c) has a frame with rounded ends, tongue-like protrusions near each corner, and lobed ends to the strap bar. It dates c1600-1720. Item (d) has a trapezoidal frame with ovoid knobs at each corner and decorative trefoils extending outwards from the centre of each of its four sides. It dates c1620-1680.



**Fig.129. Pocket-Watch Keys, 18th-19th Century**

Copper alloy  
(a) 30mm x 15mm, (b) 27mm x 12mm,  
(c) 35mm x 32mm, (d) 23mm x 13mm  
Found: (a) to (d) unrecorded

Pocket-watch keys, along with accessories such as fob seals and pierced coins, were often attached to their owners' watch chains. They were usually made of brass with a steel end, the latter invariably destroyed by corrosion when they are recovered. Of those illustrated, item (c) is the earliest. It is a cranked type dating to the 18th century. The others probably all date to the 19th century, although the standard

plain type, represented by item (b), was still being made in the early 20th century. Item (d) is an example of a key bearing the manufacturer's name and address. The face that is not illustrated carries the inscription JOHNSON - RAILWAY WATCH - MANUFACTURER. The illustrated side has the address ORCHARD STREET PRESTON, and a central design of an early locomotive. Items (a) to (c) all have traces of gilding.



**Fig.130. Keyhole Cover, 18th-19th Century**  
Copper alloy  
21.5mm x 30.5mm  
Found in Rutland

This solid-cast keyhole cover with moulded lion's head design is very robust and heavy, and was probably made for a large door lock. However, a total absence of wear in the pivot hole, and on the surfaces generally, suggests that it saw very little use.



**Fig.131. Buttons, Circa Late 19th Century**  
Copper alloy  
(a) 23mm diameter, (b) 19.5mm diameter  
Found: (a) and (b) unrecorded

These attractively decorated dress buttons with fine surface detail are die-struck in copper alloy and silver-plated. They probably date to the last few decades of the 19th century when silver dress buttons became fashionable. The fashion was quite short lived, however, because the silver marked the clothes. The plated buttons may have been less susceptible to this problem than their solid silver counterparts, but their popularity was equally short lived. The makers are unknown, as neither button is back-marked.

### Images of Time

- Figs.1-14 TH August 2000 issue, pages 6-9
- Figs.15-28 TH November 2000 issue, pages 62-65
- Figs.29-42 TH December 2000 issue, pages 38-42
- Figs.43-63 TH January 2001 issue, pages 18-23
- Figs.64-85 TH February 2001 issue, pages 20-25
- Figs.86-100 TH March 2001 issue, pages 18-21
- Figs.101-115 TH April 2001 issue, pages 45-49



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