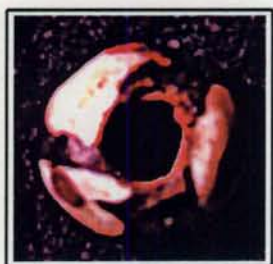


*Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project*

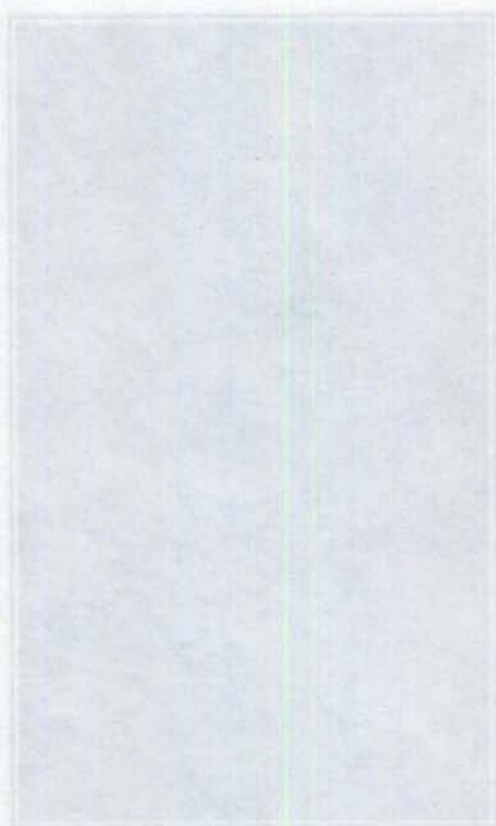
# ***THE REPORT***



**No 2**

**1997**

# THE REPORT



1997

No 2





***Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project  
1997***

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# THE REPORT

No 2 1997

**Interim report of the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project**

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## Second Interim Report, 1997

(Article submitted to "Norfolk Archaeology" in January 1998)

by Andrea Cox, Jonathan Fox and Gabor Thomas

Work in the 1997 season both expanded and consolidated the work of the previous season. It included the establishment of pioneering investigative techniques in the parish survey, more extensive geophysical and landscape surveying, and two more open-area excavations. The work generally concentrated in three locations: the outlying settlement of Eaton (A), West Hall (B), and the Boneyard/Reeddam area (C) (Figure 1).

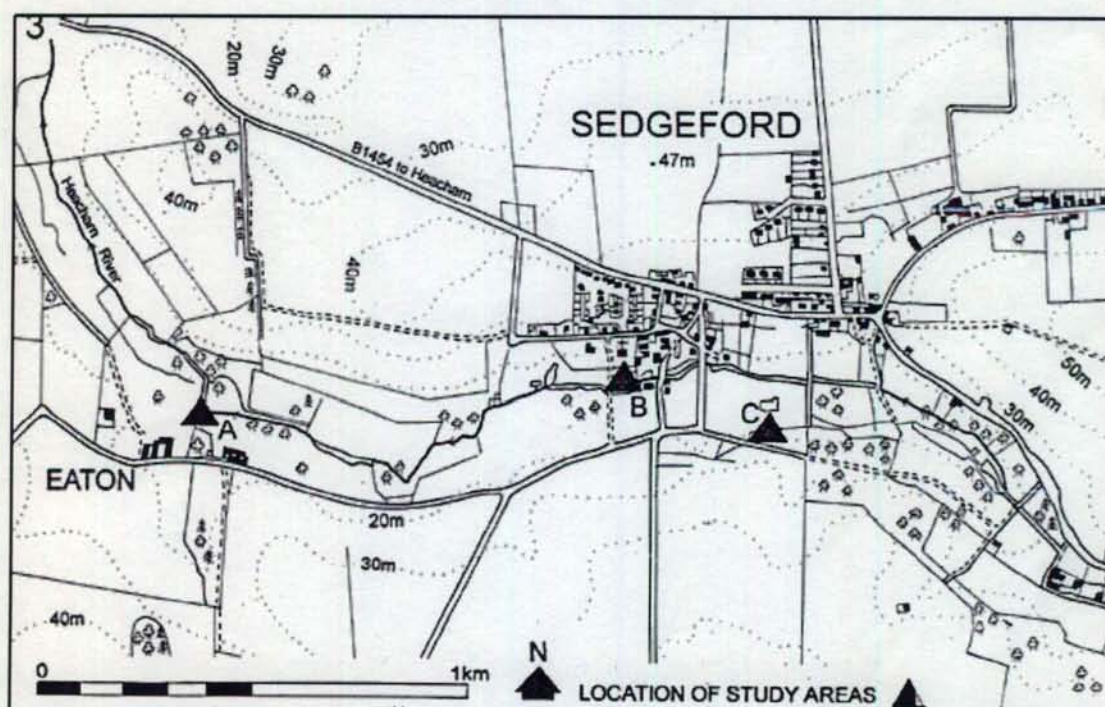


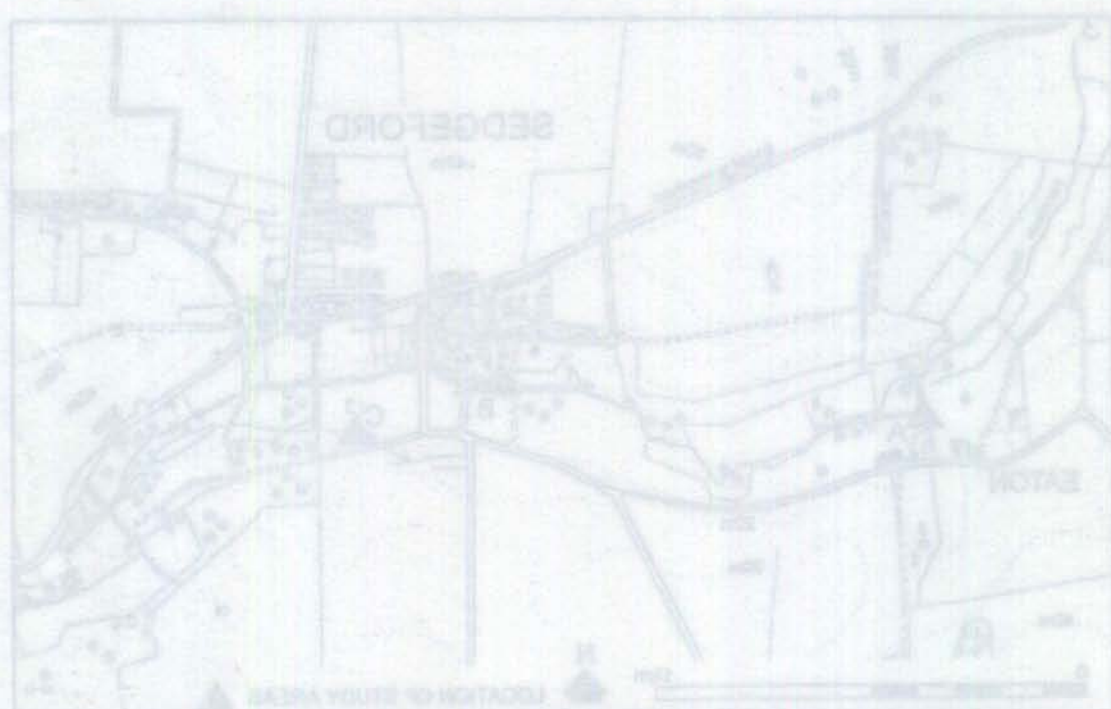
Figure 1

This season the field history team continued to focus on the study and survey of the physical remains and field boundaries of Sedgeford parish. This was partly accomplished by the one-week intensive course run by the team, which concentrated on a survey of the deserted medieval settlement of Eaton, and an associated water-mill. An exploratory field-survey of the latter was undertaken to supplement the documentary evidence studied in the 1996 season. Another significant result of this season's work was the identification of a series of roads and tracks running through the village and its environs by the technique of 'map regression'.

Implemented this season, map regression allows us to piece together a possible interpretation of the development of the village structure, its communications, and past patterns of agricultural land-usage. This has been achieved by a comparison of the full range of maps, from the oldest extant to the most recent, allowing any obvious anomalies and concordances to be recorded and plotted on a modern-day



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map. To date, work in this particular sphere of field history has been most illuminating, especially when used in conjunction with the aerial photographic record.

Additionally, the field history team concentrated its efforts on studying the West Hall area in order to try to determine the sites of the various moats and manorial features recorded in the records of the Prior and Chapter of Norwich Cathedral church to which it belonged. Various techniques were used in the study including a survey of the river from just east of West Hall, westwards to the Lady Well (Figure 2), the primary aim being to plot the contemporary course of the river and to record any evidence for past activity within its banks. It is expected that this will highlight past attempts at artificially controlling the river, through canalisation, and the construction of subsidiary waterways in association with the priory manor complex.

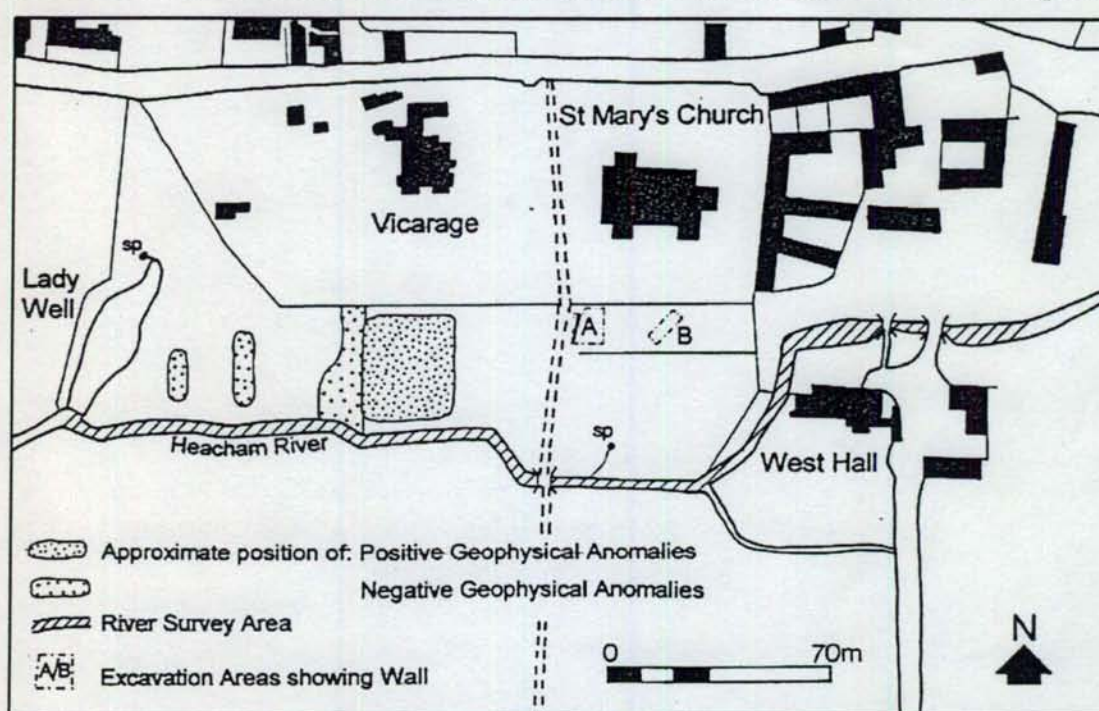


Figure 2

Open-area excavations in West Hall Paddock expanded upon the results of the 1996 test-pitting and geophysical survey, while the geophysics team extended its study area to the adjacent Dovecote Field and the gardens of West Hall. Initially, two excavation sites were opened, A and B. Due to the complexity of archaeological deposits encountered in the former, however, Site B was abandoned during the initial stages of excavation (Figure 2). The excavation revealed a complex sequence of deposits centred on a substantial 1m wide chalk wall, of which 11m was exposed. This survived to a depth of 0.5m below the modern-day ground surface, and was butted to the west by a sequence of superimposed cobbled surfaces, mortar and soil deposits. The flint and cobbles were well worn and the mortar and solid deposits that they sealed yielded painted plaster, roofing tile, lead and Grimston-ware pottery, all suggesting a medieval date. To its east was a large feature containing post-medieval material that truncated two dumped deposits that have also been dated to the medieval period on artefactual evidence. Underlying the wall and all of these deposits was a series of dumped sands which sealed a layer of peat containing well-preserved palaeo-environmental remains.







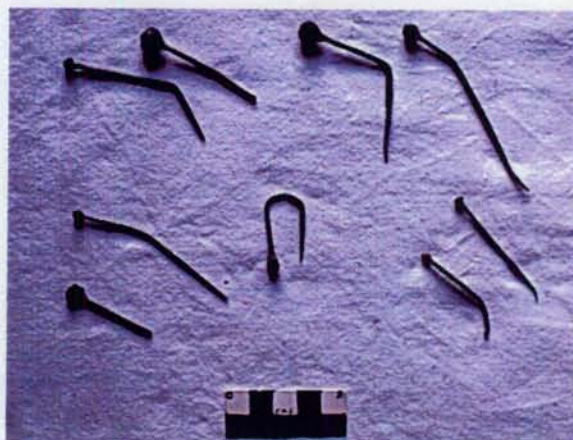
On the basis of this evidence, a preliminary interpretation is that the Paddock was part of an earlier river course or marsh that was reclaimed in the medieval period, when a large high-status structure was built (possibly associated with the manor complex). The longevity of the structure led to several phases of flooring, and after its abandonment a post-medieval feature of uncertain function was dug adjacent to it. It is possible that this feature may have been excavated to obtain soil for the major landscaping of the vicarage gardens in the Victorian period. Further study of the finds and environmental samples and the complete excavation of the site are essential, however, before any conclusive dates and interpretations can be postulated.

The electrical resistivity survey of West Hall's gardens and Dovecote Field, to the south and west of the Paddock, employed a 1m-interval sampling strategy. Preliminary results from the gardens suggest that the wall uncovered in the Area A excavation may continue southwards for several metres, suggesting a substantial structure. The results from Dovecote indicate a large dry rectangular feature towards the centre of the field; a wet linear anomaly running adjacent to it, and beyond these several smaller wet linear features (Figure 2). These confirm the evidence of above ground earthworks, and can best be interpreted as a possible structural platform with an associated ditch. At this early stage, a tentative hypothesis is that these features represent manorial building foundations and associated water features such as boat-bays and/or fish-ponds.

The standing/building survey of the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin was continued this season, by implementing a programme of photogrammetric recording. This will provide an accurate record of the building from which a structural history can be recovered, and has improved upon the time-consuming process of stone-by-stone drawing used on the church survey in 1996.

Excavations continued on the Boneyard field, the principle objectives being to excavate fully the area opened during the 1996 season, to define the cemetery's extent, and to establish the relationship between Middle-Saxon and Late-Saxon/Early Medieval features.

The opening of slots into the unexcavated area to the east, revealed the continuation of the Middle-Saxon N-S ditches and gullies sampled in last season's excavation. That some of these were intercutting, suggests they represent more than one period of usage, though their functions remain unclear. The possibility that they were used to demarcate the eastern boundary of the cemetery is unlikely considering the fact that, in places, they were cut by later burials.



*Figure 3 Middle-Saxon bronze pins. There are characteristic collars beneath many of the pin heads, and others have faceted heads and are decorated with punched dot and ring motif.*







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A total of seventeen skeletons were excavated, and a further six partially revealed but not lifted, increasing the total number of interments from both seasons to forty-three. All skeletons were supine and orientated W-E, denoting Christian rite and the majority, judging by the arm positions and the occasional presence of bone or metal dress-pins (Figure 3), were buried in shrouds. The copper-alloy pins provide an 8th/9th century date, suggesting contemporaneity with some of the Middle-Saxon settlement features. This is suggested further by the presence of burials in the SW corner, and their absence to the east where Middle-Saxon ditches and pits are located. An unusual burial located in the SW corner of the excavation was of a female with a horse, the latter orientated N-S. The head of the female was resting on top of the horse's pelvis, though both the skull and limbs of the horse were missing due to truncation by a later burial. The discovery of an explicitly pagan burial rite of this date suggests that the cemetery could have been serving an Anglo-Scandinavian community.

Excavation to the east revealed a spread of possible occupation debris characterised by rounded flint clasts, pottery, and animal bone. The layer extended across the northern half of the excavation area, thinning out towards the west. Remnants of a rammed chalk surface, supported by a foundation of coarse flint clasts, was discovered in association with the occupation debris and is likely to have formed a floor surface. A possible interpretation for this material is that it represents ephemeral structural remains belonging to a phase of activity or occupation post-dating the cemetery.

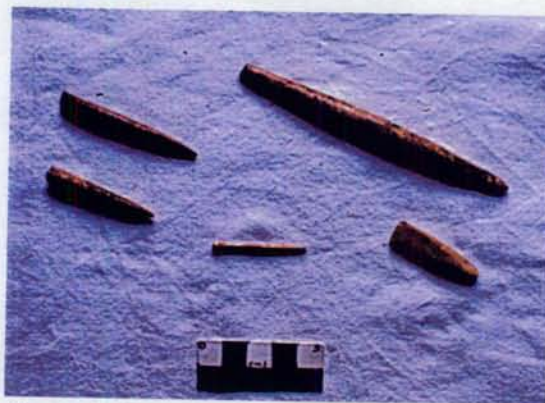


Figure 4 Bone stylus/pin with fragments of other bone styli/pins and small ivory/bone pin.



Figure 5 Three pieces of iron conglomerate with X-ray photographs showing a pair of shears in one, part of a pair of shears in a second and an iron stylus in the third. All similar lumps were X-rayed to check for iron artifacts by the Norfolk College of Art & Technology at King's Lynn for SHARP. Photo courtesy of the Norfolk College & Derek Holmes.







Excavation in the Reeddam for 1997 concentrated on two areas. The first, a main 10 x 5m area was opened up to sample more of the Middle-Saxon midden deposits encountered in the previous season's programme of test-pitting. The second, a N-S 3m-wide trench linking the main Reeddam excavation and the Boneyard site (Figure 12), was designed to establish stratigraphic relationships between the two sites.

As expected, excavation in the former revealed a Middle-Saxon occupation deposit, characterised by discoveries of Middle-Saxon Ipswich-ware pottery, animal bone, oyster shell and other Mid-Late Saxon artefacts including a copper-alloy stylus and a bone spindle-whorl with punched ring-and-dot decoration (both featured on the front cover). This season's excavation in the Reeddam was marked by the unexpected discovery of a dense concentration of burials cut into this Middle-Saxon deposit. Although time precluded the total excavation of the area, a total of 17 E-W orientated, supine inhumations were recorded and lifted. These were interred very close together and in some instances one on top of the other. This evidence suggests contemporary interment in a mass-grave, and it seems apposite at this preliminary stage to interpret these as plague burials. The dating of this phase of burial in the Reeddam was complicated by the homogeneous nature of the deposits, which prevented the accurate definition of grave cuts and fills. Ipswich-ware pottery was associated with some of the burials, and, on this basis, they too have been attributed a general Mid-Late Saxon date. It is most likely, considering the proximity of the excavation to the Boneyard field, that these burials represent a northern extension of the Boneyard cemetery at some time during its use.



Figure 6 Neolithic arrow-head used for wildfowling.



Figure 7 Roman bronze brooch.

Excavation in the linking trench was restricted to two sondages, the first, located at the southern end of the trench, was fully excavated to establish the depth of archaeological deposits. Excavation of the second, located 10m to the north, was terminated on the discovery of a W-E burial which was left *in situ*. Excavation of the southernmost sondage revealed the northern extent of the occupation debris encountered



Figure 8 Roman bronze brooch

in the eastern side of the Boneyard excavation. This overlaid substantial colluvial deposits, over a metre in depth, which in turn sealed a series of closely-spaced W-E burials, some of which were intercutting. The earliest of these is interpreted as a coffin burial on the basis of the discovery of a number of 'L' shaped iron fittings and nails. The burials encountered in both sondages were interpreted on stratigraphic and artefactual grounds as broadly contemporary with the burials discovered in the Boneyard excavation, and they indicate a probable uninterrupted area of interments extending northwards in the Reeddam.

Results from this season's excavation in the Boneyard/Reeddam area have forced us







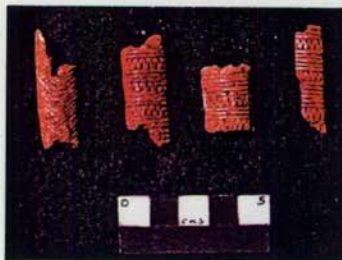


Figure 9 Fragments of Middle-Saxon bone combs. The carving shows Viking influence and has parallels with finds from Lincolnshire and York.



Figure 10 A Middle-Saxon decorative bronze mount, possibly from a book.



Figure 11 Middle-Saxon bronze brooch, safety-pin type, decorated with punched dot and ring motif.

to modify our views on the nature and extent of the Boneyard cemetery. We now know the bounds of the cemetery were appreciably greater than hitherto thought, extending a considerable distance north into the Reeddam. They have also modified our views on dating; stratigraphic and artefactual evidence now suggests that the cemetery had a long period of use extending over several generations during the Mid-Late Saxon period. We must also accept the possibility of a post-cemetery phase of occupation marked by the discovery of ephemeral structural evidence. The excavation of all three open-area sites will continue next season, and the field history team will continue to survey Sedgeford and its environs. Priorities will be to excavate fully the Boneyard-Reeddam linking trench to confirm the relationship between the archaeological features discovered on both sites, to sample the rich environmental deposits encountered in the Paddock, and to concentrate excavation to the north of the Boneyard field where, as the excavation of sondage 1 revealed, we can expect to find the best preservation of archaeological features and deposits beneath the colluvium.

This year some of the preliminary post-excavation findings have been available for incorporation in this report. Improved facilities for handling finds have resulted in a great deal of preliminary work being done during the season, to the great advantage of both the report and the project.



Figure 11. Aerial photograph of the site showing the location of the excavation area. The site is marked with a red 'X' and a red circle.



Figure 10. Aerial photograph of the site showing the location of the excavation area. The site is marked with a red 'X' and a red circle.

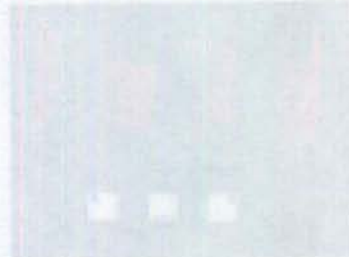


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to modify our views on the nature and extent of the Bonyard cemetery. We now know the bounds of the cemetery were appreciably greater than hitherto thought, extending a considerable distance north into the Redbank. They have also modified our views on dating stratigraphic and architectural evidence now suggests that the cemetery had a long period of use extending over several generations during the Mid-1st to 1st century AD. We must also accept the possibility of a post-cemetery phase of occupation marked by the discovery of ephebral structural evidence. The excavation of all three open areas will continue next season, and the field history team will continue to survey Redbank and its environs. Priorities will be to excavate fully the Bonyard-Redbank linking trench to confirm the relationship between the archaeological features discovered on both sites, to sample the rich environmental deposits encountered in the Redbank, and to concentrate excavation to the north of the Bonyard field where, as the excavation of sondage 1 revealed, we can expect to find the best preservation of archaeological features and deposits beneath the colluvium.

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## Democratic Archaeology At Sedgeford

7

(Article submitted to "Rescue News" in December 1997)

by Neil Faulkner

The Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project is a long-term, multi-period, multi-disciplinary investigation of the whole sequence of human settlement and land-use in a north-west Norfolk parish. It thus provides an ideal context for implementing what we call 'democratic archaeology'. This concept has developed in contradistinction to the development-driven, bureaucratically-controlled and hierarchically-organised fieldwork of the professional rescue-unit.

The latter is, of course, absolutely vital. Everyone in archaeology should stand four-square with units whose core staffs are threatened by public-spending cuts imposed by a government for which heritage is apparently not 'New' enough. But equally, it has limitations, and there needs to be a strong volunteer-based research sector in parallel with it. Unfortunately, the case for this still needs reiteration - though most of the arguments are obvious - principally for the benefit of the high-ranking state officials who have colonised all the best sites and will not let anyone dig on them.

First, lots of essential rescue work cannot be done professionally, and strong, local, volunteer groups, trained in research projects, can plug the countless gaps. The Thames Archaeological Project is a neat example, where the recording of threatened features and deposits lying exposed on the foreshore depends almost entirely on the work of volunteer groups.



Figure 12 An overall view of the Boneyard and the south end of the great trench. At the south end of the trench was a 2m+ deep sondage, dug to find exactly how deep the "natural" lay, and beyond the sondage and a balk, the Boneyard. On the left (east) side of the Boneyard are various gullies and features which seem to be part of the settlement. The subject of picture 2 was found in the top, left corner of the Boneyard.







Secondly, we need a field research agenda generated by the current issues in archaeology, not the boardrooms of the big construction companies. The main issue at Sedgeford, for instance, is the origin of the village/parish set-up in the Saxon period, but this is a question rarely asked, never mind answered, in development-driven fieldwork.

Thirdly, the imperatives of rescue work mean data-collection for its own sake carried out at high speed. There is no avoiding this: the priority is to recover threatened data before they are lost. But the relentless empiricism implicit in this approach has been packaged up and presented as the archaeologically-correct method for all. It is not. You cannot record everything. You must select. You do not dig buried plough-soil in the same way as an occupation-deposit. There must, therefore, be constant interaction between interpretation and technique, between theory and practice, if stratigraphy is to be interrogated effectively. Rescue does not have time. Research can offer, not only a field practice which seeks direct answers to the questions which we have generated ourselves, but one which constantly adjusts both questions and methods to emerging evidence. That idyll of a summer research project - the leisurely debate on the edge of the trench about what it all means - is not mere indulgence. It is part and parcel of a more scientific approach than colleagues in professional rescue-units can allow themselves. To quote the obvious example, could anyone argue that Wroxeter's Dark-Age sequence would have been recovered in rescue conditions? Or to quote an example of our own: in 1996 we mattocked through part of an occupation-deposit which we then succeeded in recognising and sampling properly in 1997, thus recovering vital trace-evidence for an Early-Medieval phase, the existence of which would otherwise have been unknown.



*Figure 13 A group of volunteers working*

A final point is this. We delude ourselves if we think that archaeology is more than entertainment. The rulers of the world have certainly not learnt from history, and the rest of us rarely have the opportunity to show whether we have. We do not study the past to understand the present and improve the future; we study it simply because we are curious and want to know. Archaeology, in short, is for fun, or it is







for nothing, and no one should be denied the chance to join in. Stratigraphy is not some precious treasure which needs protection from the inexperienced hands of hordes of amateurs intent on its destruction. Nature and the construction industry are visiting levels of destruction of the archaeological deposit beside which field research is a bucket in the ocean. Anyway, the buried heritage does not belong to quango-bureaucrats or professional snobs, but to everyone, to be enjoyed by the people generally, or at least by all those who choose to participate in its recovery.

This is our starting point at Sedgeford. Democratic Archaeology can be defined in terms of four principles. The first is that archaeology is there to be dug, and anyone willing to learn how is entitled to participate. The notion that we should save it for the future when techniques will be better is a transparent absurdity, since the future, by definition, can never come. This is English Heritage waiting for Godot. Let them; the rest of us have work to do, for in the long run we are all dead, and before we die we've got a hundred questions we want archaeology to answer. So, as Peter Reynolds once put it to me, it's 'heads down, bums up, and get digging'.

Our second principle is that we do archaeology on a minimal budget. We have no choice: very few research projects can happen if they depend upon professional levels of funding or anything like it. So it is low-budget research or no research at all. There are two major considerations here. First, the bulk of professional fieldwork costs are on labour. A volunteer project does not have these. We oppose the practice on some research projects of charging volunteers for the privilege of digging, and also the practice of leaving volunteers simply to 'fend for themselves' with regard to food and accommodation (both are forms of exploitation which reflect the lack of volunteer opportunities). We nonetheless charge our volunteers subsistence (which covers campsite facilities and all meals), so we have no labour costs. Secondly, the cost of facilities, equipment and consumables can be met largely through contributions in kind if a project is opened up to mass participation. At Sedgeford, all of the following have been donated or loaned by enthusiastic local participants and supporters, or by one or other of our institutional backers: the village hall as a finds-processing centre; a large converted barn complex as a site office and training centre; electrical-resistivity meters and associated computer-processing facilities; photographic equipment and development facilities; a large marquee; a scaffold-tower; a new set of both high-level optical and low-level infra-red photos; and an on-site environmental lab.

This sort of generosity reflects our determination to root ourselves in the local community - our third principle. We encourage active participation at all levels. A local committee of trustees handles all aspects of project administration. Several leading members of the supervisory team are Norfolk amateurs. Many other local people work on site during the season, and some are involved in historical research, field-walking surveys, and post-excavation work out of season. During the summer, the site is open at all times to visitors, and local people are invited to all project events, including weekly lectures and site tours. Saxon archaeology days were organised for parties of local school children. This rooting of the project in the community - banning barriers of red-and-white tape which exclude the people from the recovery of their own heritage - has generated massive inflows of goodwill and







associated contributions of time, skills and resources, without which we could not function.

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Finally, and crucially, we have a democratic internal structure. This is not a matter of formal arrangements - such as a rigid decision-making procedure. Rather, it means refusing to mimic the restrictive work hierarchies of the factory and office, where talent is bottled up and creativity frustrated, and instead offering the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities which will maximise people's enthusiasm, self-development and contribution. After basic training, volunteers may request assignment to particular parts of the project, and a few fast-developers were promoted to the supervisory team during last season. Many, indeed, are appointed to the supervisory team on the understanding that they will train themselves in the skills required. Supervisors have full autonomy within their areas of work, and are expected to be involved in post-ex and writing up and, ultimately, to bring their work to final publication. There is an informal and relaxed working atmosphere on site, volunteers are expected to demand explanations for everything they are asked to do, and there is a weekly forum open to everyone working on the site and any interested visitors. The educational philosophy underlying this is simple: people learn best when they are treated with respect, when they understand what they are doing, and when they have control and opportunity in their work. The result is a much higher standard of work on the project overall.

Here, we return to our starting point. The professional rescue unit has to work fast. We do not. We can accommodate large numbers of unskilled people, take time out for on-site training, and slow the pace while expertise develops. Equally, we can allow ourselves time to think and discuss, to modify method in relation to changing interpretation, to interrogate our site far more comprehensively than we could if the bulldozers were waiting to get in. Archaeological fieldwork has hundreds of questions to answer and thousands of would-be volunteers willing to help. The case for more community-based, volunteer-run, democratically-organised research projects like Sedgford is unanswerable.







# The Smugglers Of Sedgeford

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by Linda Nudds

Standing in the south porch of Sedgeford church today, it is difficult perhaps to imagine that nearly two hundred years ago this was the meeting place and hideaway of a gang of local smugglers. Throughout Britain at this time, little regard was paid to the laws against smuggling and this corner of Norfolk was no exception. From the highest to the lowest, many in Sedgeford were involved in the smuggling trade. Those not directly involved knew to ask no questions, but to draw the curtains when the gentlemen of the night went by. Some of our local ghost stories may have originated from this time, encouraged by the smugglers to deter villagers from investigating strange noises in the night. In Sedgeford, however, the villagers remembered the events and the people involved in smuggling, and seventy years later the vicar was to record some of these memories in a village history. Many of the men mentioned and their families can be found in the parish registers, census returns and other documents from this period. From these and other sources we can look at the conditions generally at that time and at the personal circumstances of those involved in smuggling in Sedgeford.

In Sedgeford in the early nineteenth century, most of the six hundred inhabitants were agricultural workers, craftsman connected with agriculture, or their families. Almost the entire village was dependent on the unpredictable effects of the seasons, the political situation and the decisions of their landlords or employers. In 1795 some labourers made an effort to improve their lot. A group of them from Heacham, Snettisham and Sedgeford met in Heacham to discuss how they could peaceably obtain redress for their hardships. They produced a document, *The Heacham Declaration*, which proposed "that the price of labour should, at all times, be proportional to the price of wheat, which should invariably be regulated by the price of that necessary article of life". Parliament was petitioned and a Bill was introduced enabling magistrates to fix a minimum wage. It was defeated. "Many families emigrated as famine prevailed." <sup>1</sup>

In 1797 Sedgeford was enclosed causing further hardship. Before enclosure, many villagers kept a cow or pig on the village common and collected fuel there. In Sedgeford, some villagers who had the right to keep two cows on the one hundred acre common were allotted as little as half an acre of land in lieu of their rights of common. Worse, they had to pay their share of enclosure expenses and fence their allotment. Result, poorer villagers were forced to sell their plots to pay the expenses and then had nowhere to keep their cows. Others, who had used the common for grazing and fuel had no legal rights and received nothing. The 30 acre allotment for 'the firing of the poor' was insufficient and the loss to the labouring poor of the free fuel, milk, cheese and meat was devastating.

The years following the Napoleonic wars were especially lean years for the agricultural labourer. Until 1813 the war and continental blockade had kept prices high. After this prices fell, wheat went from 112 shillings a quarter in the summer of







1813 to 52 shillings and sixpence in 1815. Falling prices would normally have helped the agricultural labourer in work as food would have become cheaper. However the farmers of East Anglia, used to high profits during the war, took action to safeguard themselves. Wages were reduced and workers were laid off or only employed when needed. Rev. St John Priest a clergyman in Suffolk said:

*The state of the labouring Poor is very bad, compared with what it was four or five years ago. They can get little employment now and instead of 2s 6d per day as it was at the time stated, they now have only 1s 6d per day.<sup>2</sup>*

Men who had always been in work were forced to apply for poor relief, the equivalent of our modern social security. The Poor Law officials, representing the rate-payers, kept the relief as low as possible.

*Sometimes, too, especially in districts with a surplus population either the relief given or the rate of wages was so low that the total income merely sufficed to sustain life. The principal calculation of the overseer is the amount of what will merely support existence.<sup>3</sup>*

Throughout the early nineteenth century agricultural workers continued to protest at the unfairness of their working conditions and wages. In 1816 there were agrarian riots throughout East Anglia and at nearby Docking and Bircham 800 labourers rioted in 1835. Some labourers, unable to support themselves or their families, turned to crime. Poaching increased and smuggling must have been an attractive proposition for those living near the coast. The goods being taxed on entry to Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were many and included tobacco, snuff, silk, tea, playing cards, most forms of alcohol and even coffin nails. In 1760 there was a list of 800 items on which duty had to be paid and by the early 1800s another 1,300 had been added to the list. Smuggling was not regarded as morally wrong by the men on the beach or the landowners, who took delight in thwarting the efforts of the government to tax their pleasures. Lord Holland speaking in the House of Commons in 1805 during the debate on a bill to suppress smuggling said:

*My Lords, I call it a mischief, for though I am aware I cannot speak of smuggling as a fair trade, yet if it is the necessary consequence of high duties that smuggling should be carried on more or less, it is better it should be carried on by subjects than by foreigners.*

Smuggling had been long accepted among the recognised trades and livelihoods. In 1785 the following advertisement appeared in the Ipswich Journal:

*To be sold on Monday August 8th, 1785, the property of Richard Chaplin, a very useful cart fit for a malster, ashman or smuggler. It will carry eighty half-ankers or tubs. One small ditto that will carry forty tubs, also two very good loaden saddles, three pads, straps, bridles, girths, horse clothes, corn bin, a very good vault and many articles that are useful to a smuggler.*

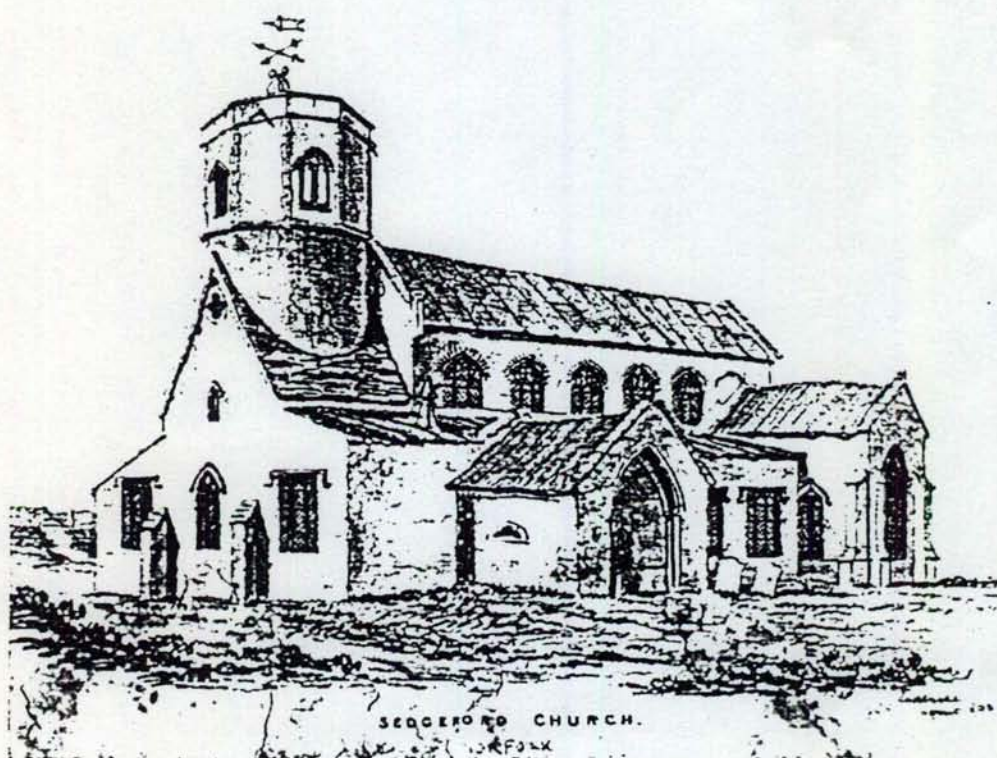






The land owners, government officials, parsons and many more turned a blind eye to the "Free Traders" and were often involved themselves as the recipients of brandy or other goods. Parson Woodford, Vicar of Weston Longville wrote in his diary of receiving rum, gin, tea and silk from smugglers, several of whom were his parishioners. Ordinary people did not condemn smuggling either. In a trial in 1784 two smugglers were charged with the murder of an excise officer at Hunstanton and although clearly guilty, they were pronounced not guilty by the jury. A retrial took place with a new jury and the same verdict reached. Prosecuting Counsel declared:

*If a Norfolk jury were determined not to convict persons guilty of the most obvious crimes, simply because, as smugglers, they commanded the sympathy of the country people, there was an end to all justice.*



Sedgeford had its fair share of smugglers. Little official record exists of the smuggling activities of these men, but the memory remained with the villagers of Sedgeford. The Rev. Ogle, Vicar of Sedgeford, wrote a village history at the end of the nineteenth century and included tales known to many still living at that time.

*In the early part of the present century the inhabitants of Sedgeford seem to have had very little respect for the Excise laws. Most of them were more or less concerned in smuggling; the labourers, the farmers, and probably the squire too, all had a hand in it. Shareholders of £10 or £20 or more, formed themselves into a Joint Stock Company; and arranged for a cargo of spirits from Holland which in due course was landed on the beach. All hands were then employed. The farmers sent their wagons, and opened their houses and barns for the reception of the tubs, as they were called. The head of the first tub was knocked out, and the contents consumed upon the*







*spot amidst pledges of secrecy. Then the work of transport began. There are some who may remember hearing of it from those who took an active part in the business; perhaps have heard old John Williamson, who was born with the century, tell the story of it. John's wife was Catherine Frary. Her father was parish Clerk. Frary's secular avocation was that of team man to Farmer Samson of West Hall Farm; and when the time came, his special business was to take his team to the beach, and return with a load of tubs. John himself at times conveyed a couple of them strung across his dickey (donkey). Mr Durrant's farm premises found Storage for some. Mr Sampson's for others. Some having to be carried further inland had to wait the arrival of carts: and it was found convenient to stow them temporarily in the South Porch of the church. They don't seem to have met with any opposition generally; so many were concerned and interested in it. The farmer required his supply, and probably the Squire his; and the labourer purchased it readily at two shillings a bottle; and the consumption was large. Among the ringleaders Harry Wells and John Nobes, and Beckerton and Allison and the 3 Burtons were prominent men.<sup>4</sup>*

Information can still be found about these young ringleaders of the smuggling gang.

Harry Wells was the son of one of the largest local farmers. All the other conspirators were from the poorer inhabitants of the village. Harry is conspicuous by his absence in his father's house and the village by 1841, but all the other children are still there. John Nobes was the son of a local shepherd. His father William was one of the participants in the Heacham Declaration of 1795. John would have been in his early 20's when engaged in smuggling. He obviously did not make a lot of money from it, because in 1832 he was receiving aid from the parish in the form of a midwife for his wife. In March 1835 aged 31 he was sentenced at Norwich Assizes to transportation for life, not for smuggling but for stealing two ewes. He sailed from London in October on the steam ship *Recovery*, arriving in New South Wales four months later. From his indent he seems to have been quite an ugly fellow. He is described as being 5'9", sallow complexion, pock pitted with a large scar on his left hand and a missing front tooth. He disappeared into the vast expanse of Australia and no other records can be found of him.

John Nobes left behind a wife, Mary and a son James. Rather than go back to her family in Docking Mary stayed in the village and set up house with Elizabeth Beckerton a young lady of rather dubious morals. Elizabeth had no husband, but produced children on a regular basis, most of which died young. In the parish registers most single mothers are discreetly recorded as singlewomen when their children are baptised. In Elizabeth's case her children are flatly described as bastards. Obviously it was felt that discretion was not necessary where Elizabeth was concerned. In the census of 1841 she is described as of independent means. As she was only 25 it is unlikely she was receiving a pension, so one wonders where she got her money from. Mary on the other hand describes herself a pauper, but by 1851 she







has given up on John and is calling herself a widow; she died in 1853. James married a local girl and moved away for a few years, but had returned to the village by 1881.

Of Beckerton, it is a little difficult to pin down which one it is. There are several likely candidates as there were several families of Beckerton living in Sedgeford at the time. The Nobes and Beckerton families were obviously quite close as they often appear as witnesses to each others marriages. There was also some intermarrying between them. Allison must have come from outside the village as the name does not appear at all in the parish registers or census returns. All three Burtons came to a bad end. Davis Burton died after being detained in Burnham after a drinking binge in 1823; he was 31. His death was suspected of being caused by his fellow conspirators to stop him talking. He was buried, with a headstone to mark the spot in the north of Sedgeford churchyard, but no comment concerning the circumstances of his death was made in the parish registers. The other two were transported to Australia for stealing pigs and robbing a pigeon house in Snettisham. It was not the first time they had been caught stealing! Henry Fox of Sedgeford turned King's evidence against the Burtons. He left the village soon after. Perhaps public opinion was against him. It would have been upsetting for the parents of Tom and Will to have seen him going about the village. Life was indeed hard on their parents John and Susan. They had had eight children. Three had died and two had been transported. By 1829 Susan was bedridden, but they managed to keep a shop. News came back some time later that Tom had not reformed and had been hung. After Susan died in 1832, John moved in with his widowed daughter-in-law and he died in 1841.

It is obvious that the life of these people was a hard one. What made them turn to smuggling is not clear, although poverty must have been a contributory factor. Apart from Harry Wells they were all of the lowest strata of village society and not inclined to be law abiding to start with. Harry was from a respectable farming family but was younger than the rest of them and may have joined for the excitement.

It is interesting to note that none of the men transported were transported for smuggling. With farms and the church being used to provide transport and storage, the local landowners, farmers and clergy must have been aware what was going on. They probably had their fair share of the booty. It was not in the best interest of the local Justice of the Peace (who lived in the village) and other officials to have men appearing in front of them charged with dealing in smuggled goods when they themselves may have been among the recipients of these goods. It must have been a relief when smugglers committed other crimes, for which they could then be sentenced to transportation, thus removing a possible cause of embarrassment. It may have been the destiny of many of the men involved in smuggling to end up in the colonies, their fate being decided perhaps, not on the crime which they had committed, but on the desire of the magistrate to remove them from the locality.







Notes

1. Plaque commemorating the Heacham Declaration located in Heacham
2. **Peacock** Bread or Blood p.41
3. **Hasbach** History of the English Agricultural Labourer p.208
4. **Ogle, Rev.** Sedgefordiana p.51-62

Primary Sources

**Census Returns 1851/1841, Sedgeford.** Transcribed by Janet Hammond & Linda Nudds

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**Poor Law Records**

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**H. Benham** - The Smugglers Century (Essex Record Office 1986)

**S. Jarvis** - Smuggling in East Anglia, 1700 to 1840 (Berkshire 1987)

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**J.L. & B. Hammond** - The Village Labourer 1760-1832 (Stroud 1987)

**W. Hasbach** - History of the English Agricultural Labourer (1908)

**H. Ingleby** - The Charm of a Village, An Account of Sedgeford (London)

**A.J. Peacock** - Bread or Blood, The Agrarian Riots in East Anglia 1816 (London 1965)

**A. Young** - General view of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk, Reprint (Devon 1969)

**A. Ogle, Rev** - Sedgefordiana - Unpublished manuscript, Sedgeford Parish Chest. (Transcribed Janet Hammond)

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**A.W. Greer, Dr** - Research on Convicts and Transportation. (Unpublished)

**M. Whitehead** - Smuggling in West Norfolk, A Family Connection? (Unpublished)

On the third Thursday in the month there is a meeting of the Local History Group at Hill Farm. Telephone 01485 571153







(Oral accounts of Sedgeford transport in the first half of the twentieth century)

by Sue Crump and Diana Lewton-Brain

This brief report is based on extracts from the 18 tape-recorded interviews with residents and former residents of Sedgeford conducted to date as part of the SHARP Oral History Project. Most of those so far interviewed were born between 1900 and 1930: although their recollections therefore span almost a hundred years, we have chosen here to concentrate on the period from 1900 to 1950.

At the turn of the century, few of the population of 658 actually needed to leave the village during the course of the week. Virtually all those in work were employed within the village, as craftsmen, shopkeepers, agricultural workers, or in domestic service, while the village elementary school catered for all children up to the statutory leaving age. Most essential goods could be purchased in one or other of the village shops and, for entertainment, there was a choice of three inns or the Institute.

The Heacham-Wells branch line, through Sedgeford, had opened in 1866, and for decades the railway transported most goods in and out of the village. *"All the cattle, the pigs and the sheep, and the bullocks, when they went to market from this area, they were all loaded onto trucks in Sedgeford station. The sugar beet was loaded into trucks too and the coal was always unloaded there"* (Mrs G Carter). *"I've been there, throwing beet in: that's blooming hard work"* (Mr R Middleton). *"If any parcels or other goods came on the train, it was the porter's job to deliver them all over Sedgeford on a little iron barrow, a porter's barrow, what we used to call a sack barrow. He had to do that between the times of the trains"* (Mr R Marshall). *"All the big parcels, such as furniture, that came by train had to be delivered by a sack barrow. We had our furniture delivered that way"* (Mrs L Wagg). One Sedgeford woman used to do the washing for a large boarding-house in Hunstanton. *"She used to bring washing home in a great big wicker basket and take it back once a week. She used to put it on an old push chair and push it down to the station"* (Mr R Marshall).

Those children who later went on to secondary school travelled by train. Mrs Carter started at Fakenham High School in 1927 and there were others going to Kings Lynn, to King Edward VII Grammar School, or to the Girls High School. It was only after the railway closed down in 1964 that school buses were introduced. The railway also provided employment for some: when he first left school, Mr Jackson worked as an engine cleaner. *"I've been up and down this old line lots of times - on passenger trains, goods trains, everything. I always remember going up there one day with a goods train and Bob Middleton, he was on the field, he couldn't believe it. He said, 'Look, there's old Peter, on the engine!'"* (Mr P Jackson).







The railway was the scene of a number of incidents, including several fires which were started by sparks from the engine. Mr Barnard was responsible for opening the level-crossing gates: *"One day he overslept and the train ran through the gates: there was quite a to-do about it. It was in the morning and I suppose it was dark and it went charging into the gates"* (Mrs G Carter). During the hard winter of 1947, the snow caused problems: *"By the time we finished up that winter - it was on a long, long while - there was two trains and six engines stuck down there, all in the snow. They kept coming down, try and pull the other one out, they'd get stuck. They did it in the finish: they got a snow-plough down, one of the snow-blowers, and he managed to clear the track and get the trains out"* (Mr D Frost).

Few could usually afford the luxury of excursions by train, but special rates applied on bank holidays. *"On bank holidays nearly everyone used to take their children and spades and buckets and sandwiches down to the station and go by train to Heacham or Hunstanton. It was a very low fare, very little to pay"* (Mrs G Carter). *"When Lynn Mart was there, you could get a cheap day ticket if you walked down the station, to go to Lynn for the Mart. That was a day out for a lot of people"* (Mr D Frost).

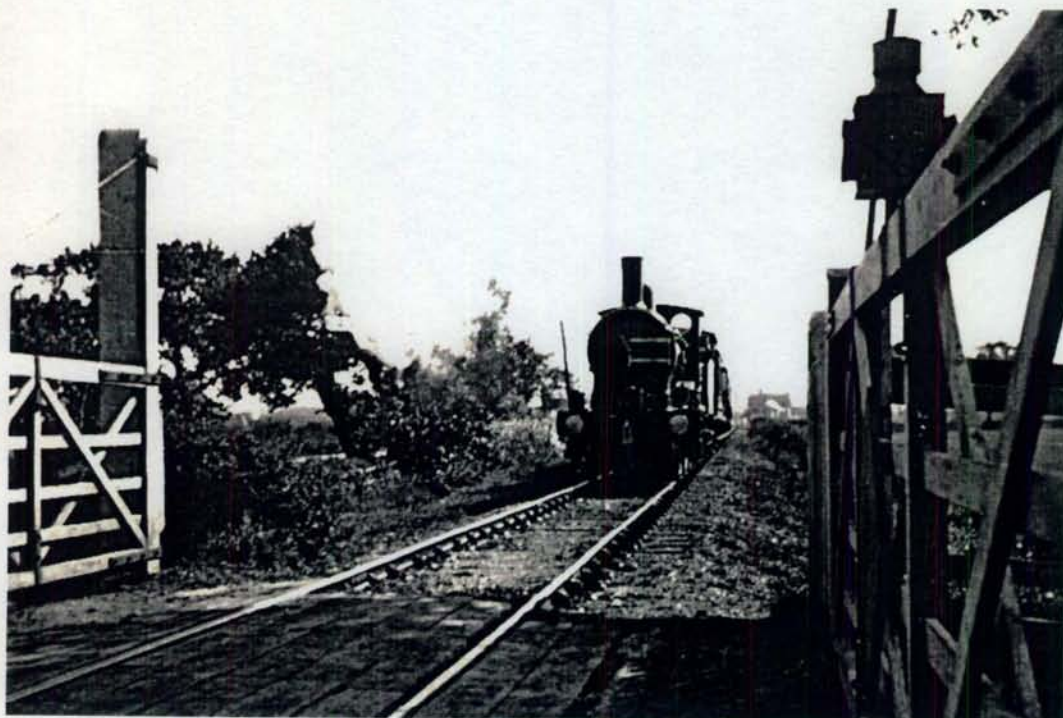


Figure 14 Train leaving Sedgeford for Docking; Sedgeford station in background c.1909.

In the early part of the century, horse-drawn wagons were more likely to be used for excursions: *"We used to go on outings to Ringstead Downs - I think those were with the school - with horses and wagons. And since I grew up and could use horses, I've taken loads of grown-ups from this village to Fakenham Show"* (Mr S Raines). *"Bank Holidays, people would go to Hunstanton - that was a big day out. My father used to get a couple of horses and a wagon and take a load of them and they were quite happy, singing as they went"* (Mr J Cox). Often, a trip to the beach meant a walk: *"If we went to the seaside, that was with Mum and Dad, to Heacham, and we used to walk"* (Mr S Raines). *"I've seen people pushing pramfuls of children down onto Heacham beach for the day - walk to it, you see"* (Mrs E Cox).







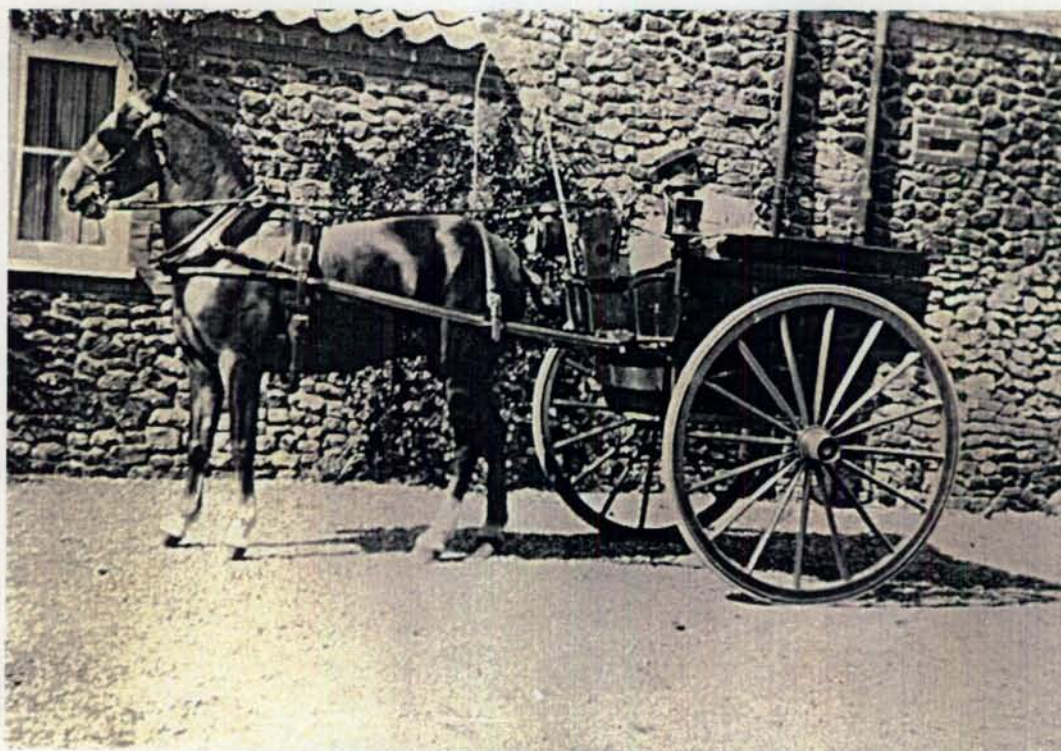


Figure 15 Mr T Brown with pony and trap in near West Hall Farmhouse c.1909.

*'In all the villages, there were people who let out pony traps and here at Sedgeford, Jack Francis, he had a number of ponies and traps and people visiting the district, they would hire one to go out and visit their relatives' (Mr G Teeling). Several shopkeepers, such as Mr Binks the baker, had their own carts: 'I used to go with him every weekend, with his horse and cart, through Ringstead and Holme, delivering bread' (Mr S Raines). 'My father had a horse and cart. He kept his horse in a field near the cemetery, called Peter Pits Field. I had to get it up in the morning, riding it with a single halter down to the Washpit, where it got it's drink (Mrs L Wagg). 'The Washpit was a playground for children: the only traffic on that Snettisham Road in those days was the mail cart which came early in the morning and went back at 4pm, and you could hear the horse's hooves and the iron tyres grinding for miles before it got here. I remember the doctor from Snettisham running over a little girl on the Washpit: his cart had rubber tyres on and we kids couldn't hear it. This little girl got onto the road and was bowled over by his horse and trap. There was great shock at the time because they thought it was blood but it turned out the little girl was wearing red underwear!'* (Mr G Teeling).

A few families could afford to keep ponies for their children. Miss Torrey, a great-niece of Holcombe Ingleby, frequently visited Sedgeford Hall: *'I remember there was the side entrance, past the chalk pits, and you go into the middle of Sedgeford Park. We'd go in that way and the horses were always spooky when we went past that field (i.e. the 'Boneyard'). I just recollect that they would shy at things'* (Miss S Torrey).

During the 20s and 30s, an increasing number of people acquired bicycles. *'I saved up and bought my first new bicycle: it was a Raleigh Roadster and cost £4 19s 6d, from Sam Dye who had a blacksmiths and cycle shop next to the Methodist chapel on the Docking Road'* (Mr G Teeling). *'Mr Jacobs had the Post Office. He used to*







*deliver all the mail and small parcels by cycle*" (Mrs L Wagg). The bicycle gave greater freedom of movement to this generation: *"Jack and I used to go to Hunstanton pictures once of a time. I used to go on the step of his bike, we went miles like that then"* (Mrs L Wagg). *"On Saturday morning, we'd say, 'Where shall we go? Well, we'll go to Norwich, see what's happening there.' I've even biked from here to Wisbech, to get a few strawberries"* (Mr D Frost).



Figure 16 Sedgeford Carnival 1905

When Mr Mace began to work for an insurance company in the late 1930s, he went around the neighbouring villages on a bicycle, but: *"Within about two or three months I bought a car for £67 10s, which was only a year old, a Ford Sports"* (Mr S Mace). Throughout this period, there were very few cars in the village: the various inhabitants of Sedgeford Hall had cars and by the 1930s so did a few others - some of the farmers and shopkeepers, the schoolmaster, Mr Roberts, and the vicar. Mr Pearmain ran a taxi service from the 20s to the 50s and Mr masters also had a taxi. By the latter part of the period, tractors were replacing horses on the farms and freight was increasingly transported by lorry. In the early 20s, Mr Bates opened a garage on the Heacham Road. *"There were two petrol pumps, one each side of the gate. Course they were hand pumps - electricity wasn't in the village then"* (Mr G Teeling). Mr Teeling was apprenticed to Mr Bates, who travelled the district repairing cars and other motor vehicles. *"It's not often they were brought to the garage. I've been with him as far as Stanhoe, Fakenham, all around the district - so he didn't rely on just the cars in Sedgeford"* (Mr G Teeling).

Until the early 60s, maintenance of the roads in and around the village was the responsibility of the "lengthmen" or roadmen, employed by the Highways Department. *"Charlie Walden, he was the roadman. We didn't know what potholes were because he mended them before they got there. The villag was swept and everywhere edged. Everywhere was clean and tidy and he paid particular attention to the road outside the church and chapels - it was wonderful"* (Mr G Teeling). Like his father and Mr Walden before him, Mr Marshall was a roadman:







*"We kept all the gullies clean. If there was trouble overnight, say very heavy rain, we used to go to "black spots" next morning. There used to be sand on either side of the road on very bad corners" (Mr R Marshall).*

Most people lived very close to their place of employment, and a change of job usually meant moving house. Many of our informants had moved several times, usually within the village or to neighbouring villages, but some travelled much further afield. Mrs Herring's parents had emigrated to Australia in the 1890s: *"He used to work on the railway, but then he got very ill and they told him that the climate weren't suiting him, so Mother thought the best thing to do was come back"* (Mrs M Herring) - and she herself lived in Yorkshire for a while. Mr Jackson's father had been in India before his marriage, and his brother Ray emigrated to Australia in 1949. And of course a number of Sedgeford residents were in the forces abroad during the first and second world wars.

It was during the first world war that an airfield was constructed, along the Docking Road. Mr Raines helped to build it: *"I worked with my Uncle Tom with his horses, and my cousin, his son"* (Mr S Raines). It was used for training purposes - cricketer Jack Hobbs was one of those stationed there - but was also a flying field. *"They went on these missions, over to Germany and so forth. The aeroplanes were hellish things when I was a kid - you'd expect them to come down on top of you at any time"* (Mr G Teeling). And there were some tragic moments: *"One Sunday morning, a pilot that I was rather friendly with crashed and drowned in that pit, along Docking road"* (Mr S Raines).

In one short article we have been able to include only a small sample of the many anecdotes and reminiscences so far recorded - but we plan to follow this with further reports, each highlighting a different aspect of village life. In the meantime, the programme of recordings continues: if you would like to participate, please let us know.

The Oral History Group is always interested to hear from local residents, past and present, who are willing to reminisce to a tape recorder. Or for that matter anyone interested in doing either some recording or transcribing recordings already made. Telephone Sue Crump on 01484 570377 or Diana Lewton Brain on 01485 571229







## SHARP Round-Up

22

(Last season's achievements and ideas for the year ahead)

by Neil Faulkner and Janet Hammond

The end of our second season found SHARP far more firmly established than in 1996 for two reasons. First, the project had become better known and succeeded in attracting the support of many generous benefactors as well as a group of excellent trustee/administrators and some of the best volunteer field-workers in Norfolk. This firm local rooting has given us tremendous reserves of labour, skill and resources that we can call on. These resources include our Friends who, at a phone call, turn out to wash back-logs of finds and who, at the end of the season, carefully cleaned and dried with hair-dryers a group of very fragile, dirty, waterlogged skeletons which were lifted from the Reeddam in the last week of the dig. After drying, the skellies were securely packed into boxes for the trip to Sheffield University where Vic Parsons, our human remains supervisor, is working on them. Second, there being a consensus around the concept of democratic archaeology, the policy was successfully implemented, and we were able to maximise the talents and enthusiasms of participants at every level. Result, a great atmosphere and first rate fieldwork. The strength of the project was recognised by many visitors and the recognition has been reflected in various ways. Many experts have offered their advice and expertise free of charge. The backing of the Institute of Archaeology, London, has been confirmed with the visit of Professor Peter Drewett this summer. Peter Wade-Martins, Andrew Rogerson and members of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology staff are a never failing support in innumerable ways. Oliver Gilkes of the Centre for World Archaeology at UEA came one blustery day in spring and went away full of enthusiasm for the project. Also from UEA, Peter Murphy has offered help with the environmental archaeology of the Reeddam, and Tom Williamson, of UEA's Centre of East Anglian Studies, is only a phone call away when the resident field historian is in need of encouragement or advice. *Norfolk Archaeology* is offering a regular slot for the short interim report which is first printed in our own annual Report, and *The Archaeological Journal* has expressed interest in a paper on Saxon-settlement stratigraphy. Last season we welcomed volunteers from four of the five continents, and our first enquiry for the coming season arrived in December from Russia. SHARP goes global!

The extremely happy, successful day which Sedgeford School spent with us in the first season encouraged us to expand and offer a 'day with the archaeologists' to other local schools last season. This proved very popular and every day available before the schools broke up for the summer holidays was filled with a group of about 40 children coming to learn about excavation, cleaning and drawing finds, and a little of how the Saxons lived. Many, as they left, said they would be coming again this year. Equally popular was the Friday afternoon tour round the sites. Begun in 1996 as a tour for the volunteers and supervisors so all could see what was happening on the various, well spread-out, sites, in 1997 an invitation was extended to the general public, in particular the people of Sedgeford, to join us. This they did in such encouraging numbers we were soon mounting exhibitions of the back-room work in the church



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The end of our second season found SHARP far more firmly established than in 1996 for two reasons. First, the project had become better known and succeeded in attracting the support of many generous benefactors as well as a group of excellent volunteer administrators and some of the best volunteer field-workers in Norfolk. This first local meeting has given us tremendous reserves of labour, skill and resources that we can call on. These resources include our friends who, in a phone call, turn out to wash back-logs of food and who, at the end of the season, carefully cleaned and dried with hair-dryers a group of very fragile, dirty, waterlogged skeletons which were lifted from the Redburn in the last week of the dig. After drying, the skulls were securely packed into boxes for the trip to Sheffield University where Vic Pennam, our human remains supervisor, is working on them. Second, there being a consensus around the concept of democratic archaeology, the policy was successfully implemented, and we were able to maximise the talents and enthusiasms of participants at every level. Result: a great atmosphere and first rate fieldwork. The strength of the project was recognised by many visitors and the recognition has been reflected in various ways. Many experts have offered their advice and expertise free of charge. The backing of the Institute of Archaeology, London, has been confirmed with the visit of Professor Peter Dawson this summer. Peter White-Manning, Andrew Rogers and members of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology stand as a never failing support in innumerable ways. Oliver Gilkes of the Centre for World Archaeology at UEA came one birthday day in spring and went away full of enthusiasm for the project. Also from UEA, Peter Murphy has offered help with the environmental archaeology of the Redburn, and Tom Williamson, of UEA's Centre of East Anglian Studies, is only a phone call away when the resident field historian is in need of encouragement or advice. Norfolk Archaeology is offering a regular slot for the short minutes report which is first printed in our own annual Report and the Archaeological Journal has expressed interest in a paper on Season-environment interplay. Last season we welcomed volunteers from four of the five continents, and our first enquiry for the coming season arrived in December from Russia. SHARP goes global!

The extremely happy, successful day which Sedgwick School spent with us in the first season encouraged us to expand and offer a 'day with the archaeologists' to other local schools last season. This proved very popular and every day available before the schools broke up for the summer holidays was filled with a group of about 40 children coming to learn about excavation, cleaning and drawing finds, and a little of how the season lived. Many, as they left, said they would be coming again this year. Equally popular was the Friday afternoon tour round the site. Began in 1996 as a tour for the volunteers and supporters so all could see what was happening on the various, well spread-out sites, in 1997 an invitation was extended to the general public, in particular the people of Sedgwick, to join us. This day did in such encouraging numbers we were soon mounting exhibitions of the back-room work in the church



pottery and small finds, human remains, environmental archaeology, geophysics, and field history (maps and documents), to illustrate more fully the range of activities happening on the sites and in the various buildings we use in the village. Last year we also ran courses in basic excavation techniques, field history, and geophysics for beginners; these proved very popular, and the modest fees helped with finances. Now, with the project firmly rooted in the local community, providing excellent opportunities to volunteers at all levels, and enjoying a high degree of academic credibility and official support, we can plan for the third season in 1998 with confidence.

This year we will again be offering both basic and specialist courses and we will be improving our on-site finds processing and analysis for pottery, animal bones, oyster-shells, human remains and archaeo-environmental remains to complete even more of the basic post-excavation work during the season. Local Friends and volunteers who do not feel that digging is their *forte* can be of great help in this and will be welcome at the village hall on a 'drop-in' basis, to assist in the cleaning, sorting, marking up and general processing of many of the finds, thus allowing specialist volunteers to spend more time on finds analysis. It would also allow our regular volunteers more time, excavating which would be of great help to the project. (**Please note** anyone interested in archaeology can sign on as a regular volunteer, even on a daily (8.30am-5pm) basis.) At present the facilities we have for washing - bodies and clothes etc. - are stretched to full capacity, so we are unable to greatly increase the number of volunteers camping on site, but a group of local volunteers helping out with some of the lighter jobs would enable us to deploy the younger and more vigorous volunteers with mattocks, shovels and wheelbarrows.

The said mattocks, shovels and wheelbarrows will be well used again this year. The discovery of skellies in the Reeddam as well as on Boneyard means we are dealing with two parts of a single site and we need to establish the relationship between the two areas. So, before the season starts, we will have machinery in to remove the top metre plus of soil - which has washed down the hill and is more or less barren of finds and totally barren of stratigraphy - from the area between the present excavation on Boneyard and that on Reeddam. This will take us to close to the settlement/cemetery remains, but the remaining soil over what is going to be a very large area will have to be removed by hard labour. We do, however, expect great rewards from all the effort expended. Last season we had many exciting small finds from the Boneyard/Reeddam sites. There was a specialised flint arrowhead used by Neolithic man for shooting wildfowl, and a gold coin, probably part of the pay of a pre-Roman Briton who went over to Gaul to help fight the advancing Roman armies circa 50 BC. We also found much Ipswich-ware type pottery and contemporary Middle-Saxon metal-work, a great deal of it similar to material from Bawsey, near King's Lynn, Brandon and more distant parts of East Anglia. They also show links with Middle-Saxon and Danish settlements of Lincolnshire and York, reminding us Sedgeford was part of the Danelaw and leading us to the most exciting find of all, the ?Danish lady buried with her horse in a Christian cemetery.

At West Hall we shall continue our excavation of the main area, which has remained open from last year, and resume the excavation of Trench B which we had to abandon from lack of time/labour. We may also do some test pitting in West Hall farmyard to



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The said mattocks, shovels and wheelbarrows will be well used again this year. The discovery of skulls in the Reddam as well as on Bonnyard means we are dealing with two parts of a single site and we need to establish the relationship between the two areas. So, before the season starts, we will have machinery in to remove the top metre plus of soil - which has washed down the hill and is more or less barren of finds and totally barren of stratigraphy - from the area between the present excavation on Bonnyard and that on Reddam. This will take us to close to the settlement/enclosure remains, but the remaining soil over what is going to be a very large area will have to be removed by hand labour. We do, however, expect great rewards from all the effort expended. Last season we had many exciting small finds from the Bonnyard/Reddam area. There was a specialised flint arrowhead used by Neolithic man for shooting wildfowl, and a gold coin, probably part of the pay of a pre-Roman Briton who went over to Gaul to help fight the advancing Roman armies circa 50 BC. We also found much Iron Age pottery and contemporary Middle-Saxon metal-work, a great deal of it similar to material from Bawsey, near King's Lynn, Lincoln and more distant parts of East Anglia. They also show links with Middle-Saxon and Danish settlements of Lincolnshire and York, reminding us Bede's was part of the Danelaw and leading us to the most exciting find of all, the Viking lady buried with her horse in a Christian cemetery.

At West Hall we shall continue our excavation of the main area, which has remained open from last year, and resume the excavation of Trench D which we had to abandon from lack of time/labour. We may also do some test pitting in West Hall farmyard to



assess the archaeological potential and to try to establish the position on the ground of medieval buildings and other features known to have existed. We also need to survey the buildings in the yard, in particular the older ones and those due for redevelopment; again this is an area where local friends could be of great assistance, as a standing-building survey could be part of a weekend/Sunday programme during the spring and early summer before the summer excavation begins on 12th July. West Hall has also produced some interesting finds, but so far it has also thrown up as many questions as it has solved and we are hoping that we can put in sufficient labour this year to get to the bottom of it; quite literally! We have many ideas from a physical survey of the river and the geophysical survey of both the West Hall site and garden, and the field between the vicarage and the river known as Dovecote Piece, on which geophysics showed a very large raised platform (?medieval manor house) between lower and much damper areas. Yet another site for future exploration/excavation - but certain answers, we have none!

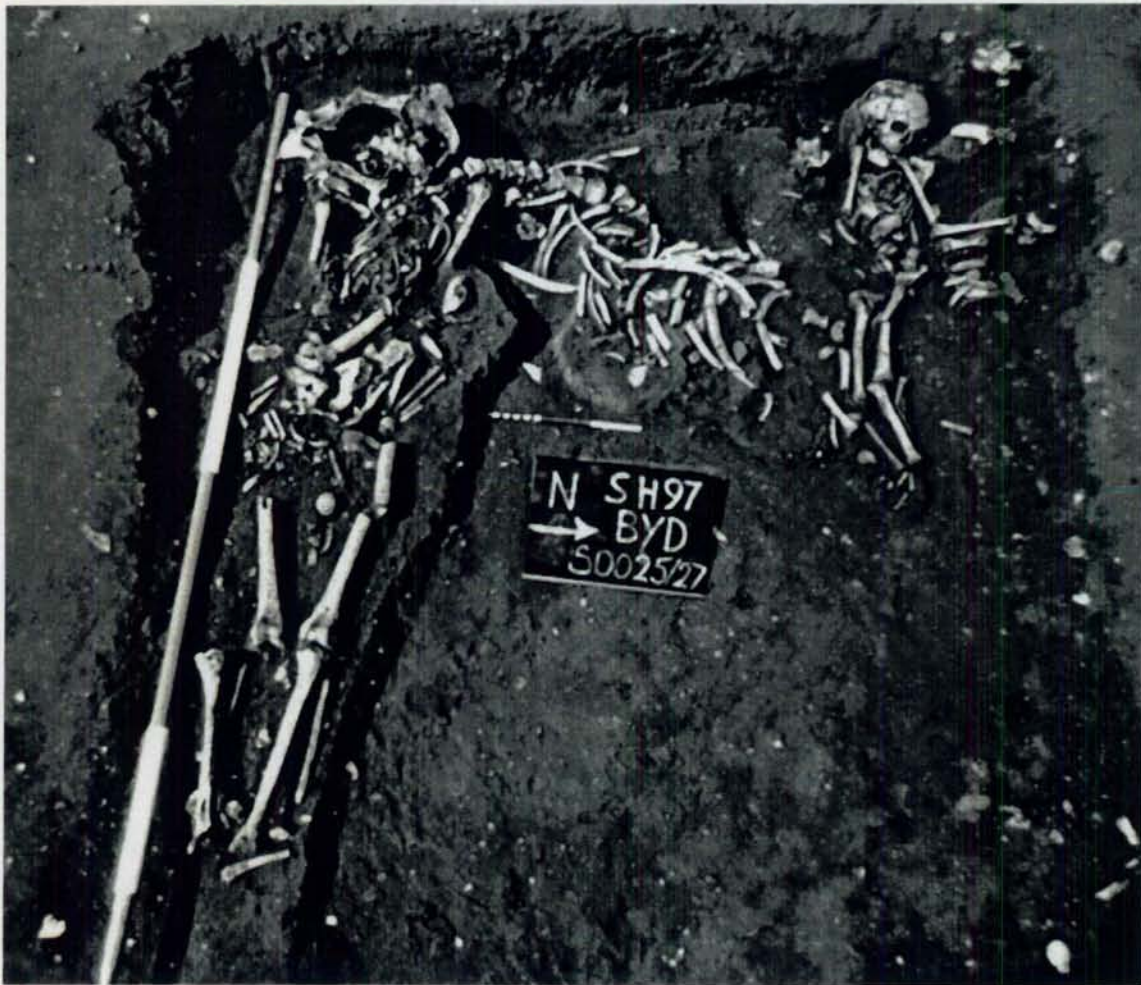


Figure 17 Skeleton of ?Danish lady lying with her head on pelvis of a horse from Middle-Saxon cemetery (skull of horse removed by later child burial)

As well as the excavations on Boneyard/Reeddam and West Hall, at Hill Farm we will be continuing the field history programme. Last year we began plotting information from earlier maps of Sedgeford onto 25" OS maps (map regression) to build up an accurate picture of past courses of the river, routes of roads and lanes, positions of settlements, and many other details which come to light. Because the three earlier maps, which cover the whole village, were made for different reasons and using



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Figure 17. View of the river from the vicarage garden. The boat is a small rowing boat. The garden is in the foreground.

As well as the excavations on Honeycomb Hill and West Hall, in Hill Farm we will be continuing the field study programme. Last year we began plotting information from earlier maps of Sedburgh onto 12" OS maps (map references) to build up an accurate picture of past courses of the river, routes of roads and lanes, positions of settlements, and many other details which come to light. Because the three earlier maps, which cover the whole village, were made for different reasons and using



different scales, this is not as straightforward a task as might be assumed. So far we have only a part of the Tithe Map (1840) plotted to the 25" scale; there are still the Enclosure Map 1795 and the Le Strange Estate Map (c1630). However work has been done on the Le Strange Map, which represents land ownership/tenancy of its own date, but which discloses a field pattern of one hundred years earlier or more. This shows a great difference between the rest of Sedgeford and what was then called the 'fields of Eton' which lay around the deserted medieval settlement. Last year we surveyed part of that settlement and the remains of a water-mill close by in the river. This year we hope to survey more of the area and possibly use geophysics to explore beneath the turf for the foundations of structures and other features. The long list of early Sedgeford field names, which had been built up over many years, was analyzed and we are delighted that we have not only a working dictionary of the field-names which will be of considerable help to the project and of interest to everyone when they have been transferred from the 1630 map to the OS - but also that one supervisor gained an MA degree and another a BA degree for their work on it.

It has been decided that when the excavation of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery has been completed, and after the finds have been evaluated, all the skeletons will be reburied on Boneyard, with a suitable memorial to commemorate them and their contribution to the project. The matter of excavating graves has been of some concern to both the public and to some archaeologists recently and in a letter to the Times in October 1997, regarding the Mildenhall Anglo-Saxon warrior buried with his horse and our 'lady with the horse' burial, Anthony Maynard made our intention known. In the November 1997 issue of British Archaeology, published by the Council for British Archaeology, the subject was taken up and Anthony's letter quoted. The disquiet was also the subject for debate/discussion in one of the Thursday forums last season. The participants were unaware of the committee's earlier decision when, at the end, the majority voted in favour of reburial. Our venture into 'democratic archaeology' (see page 7 *Democratic Archaeology at Sedgeford*) and the on-going project were also the subjects of another mention in the archaeological press in December when SHARP was one of a round-up of a dozen sites visited by the editor of *Current Archaeology* in 1997.

Last season we were able to set up at Hill Farm an environmental archaeology lab/human remains assessment centre, also a small lecture hall/room for meetings of all sorts, including a gathering every Thursday evening to which everyone, including the general public, was invited to participate in a general forum where a lively discussion on all aspects of the project took place. These discussions, as well as the popular series of Tuesday lectures in the Village Hall, will be continued in 1998.



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### Calendar 1998

Sundays from: 12 April to 21 June	Shovel testing and test pitting led by John Ames and Ray Ludford.  Possibly also standing-building survey of West Hall farm buildings.
Sun 28 June & 5 July	Working parties at Hill Farm to finish preparations for summer season
9 July	Arrival of supervisors
11 July	Arrival of volunteers
12 July to 22 August	<b>Excavation in progress.</b>  Open to all during the period of the excavation
Tuesdays 7.30pm	Lectures on aspects of archaeology & field history at Village Hall - subjects to be published later.
Thursdays 7.30pm	A forum for supervisors, volunteers, students and visitors to discuss all aspects of the excavation and courses at Hill Farm.
Fridays 3.30pm	Site tour starting at the Boneyard
Sunday 16th August 2pm	Friends annual guided group visit to site - with tea and cake archaeologist-style!

Friends and visitors are welcome on site at all times but, depending on the exigencies of the dig, there may not always be someone available to explain what is happening. We will do our best, so please bear with us.

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Sundays from: ~13 Sept to Easter 1999	Possible further volunteer test-pitting followed by field-walking and metal-detecting when the fields are available. Please check nearer the time Telephone 01485-571153
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# SHARP

## Calendar 1998

Shovel testing and test-pitting led by John Ames and Joy Laidford.	Sundays from: 12 April to 31 June
Possibly also standing-bulldozing nearby of West Hall farm buildings.	
Working parties at Hill Farm to finish preparations for summer season.	Sun 28 June & 2 July
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