

SHORTER CONTRIBUTIONS

A BRONZE AGE PIN FROM BOXFORD

by Andrew J. Lawson

The pin was found in 1977 by Mr K. W. Jarmin of 1 Ash Street, Boxford by using a metal detector on mud dug out from a small tributary of the river Box in repairing the road bridge which crosses it in Ellis Street, Boxford (TL 964405). The mud was actually dumped in a nearby street and Mr Jarmin discovered the pin there.

The pin (total length 14.1cm, weight 14.3gm) consists of a long, slightly bent shank of circular section (0.38cm diam.) surmounted by a flat loop (internally 2.3cm × 2.4cm, 0.48cm max. width) with flanged edges (0.25cm high). The surface bears a dark green patina with little corrosion. Mr Jarmin has generously presented the pin to Moyses Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds (accession no. 1980.5).

The pin belongs to a native type of the Taunton or early Penard industrial phase that marks the end of the Middle Bronze Age in southern Britain, but probably dates to the 12th century B.C. (Burgess 1976; Lawson 1979 (a), 64). This type, the 'quoit-headed pin', is one of only two native ornament types made at this time in Southern Britain¹ in response to the importation and copying of foreign ornament types. Examples of the type are not common; only twenty-two other examples have

previously been recorded with a distribution principally in the south and south-west (Lawson 1979 (b), Fig. 2). However, five examples are known from eastern England, four from Norfolk and one from Cambridgeshire.² This is the first find of the type from Suffolk,³ and geographically is situated between the Norfolk group and an example from the Thames at Hammersmith (Rowlands 1976, no. 2007). The Suffolk example, in common with the Norfolk pieces, is distinguished by its flanged head, although the Norfolk pins are larger and are sometimes elaborated with incised decoration. It is probably of local manufacture in the regional style. Although this example is small it compares in size with that from Chilton Polden, Somerset (12.4cm long; Evans 1881, Fig. 452) and the unprovenanced example in Devizes Museum, Wiltshire (14.4cm long; Annable and Simpson 1964, no. 618). Both of these are isolated finds, although other quoit-headed pins are known from hoards. The presence of the Boxford pin in a river deposit may be explained as casual loss whilst fording the stream, as a deliberate votive offering (Burgess 1974, 195–7), or as having eroded from a more extensive prehistoric site on the adjacent bank (cf. Wallingford, Oxon.; Wymer 1960).

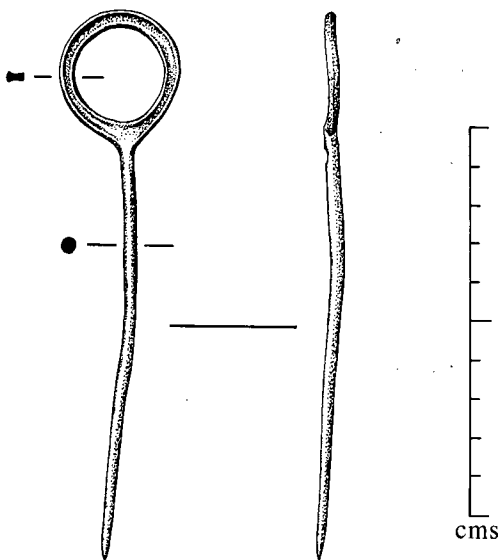


FIG. 21— Bronze Age pin from Boxford.

Notes

¹ The second native type, the 'Sussex Loop', is only found in a restricted area along the south coast.

² This find from Maxey has previously (Lawson 1979 a,b) been erroneously placed in Northamptonshire.

- ³ A loop-headed pin from Mitchell's Hill, Icklingham (Edwardson 1969, no. 177) has been claimed to be of Bronze Age date, although it is more probably Roman.

References

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