

## PART OF THE PEDDAR WAY IN SUFFOLK.

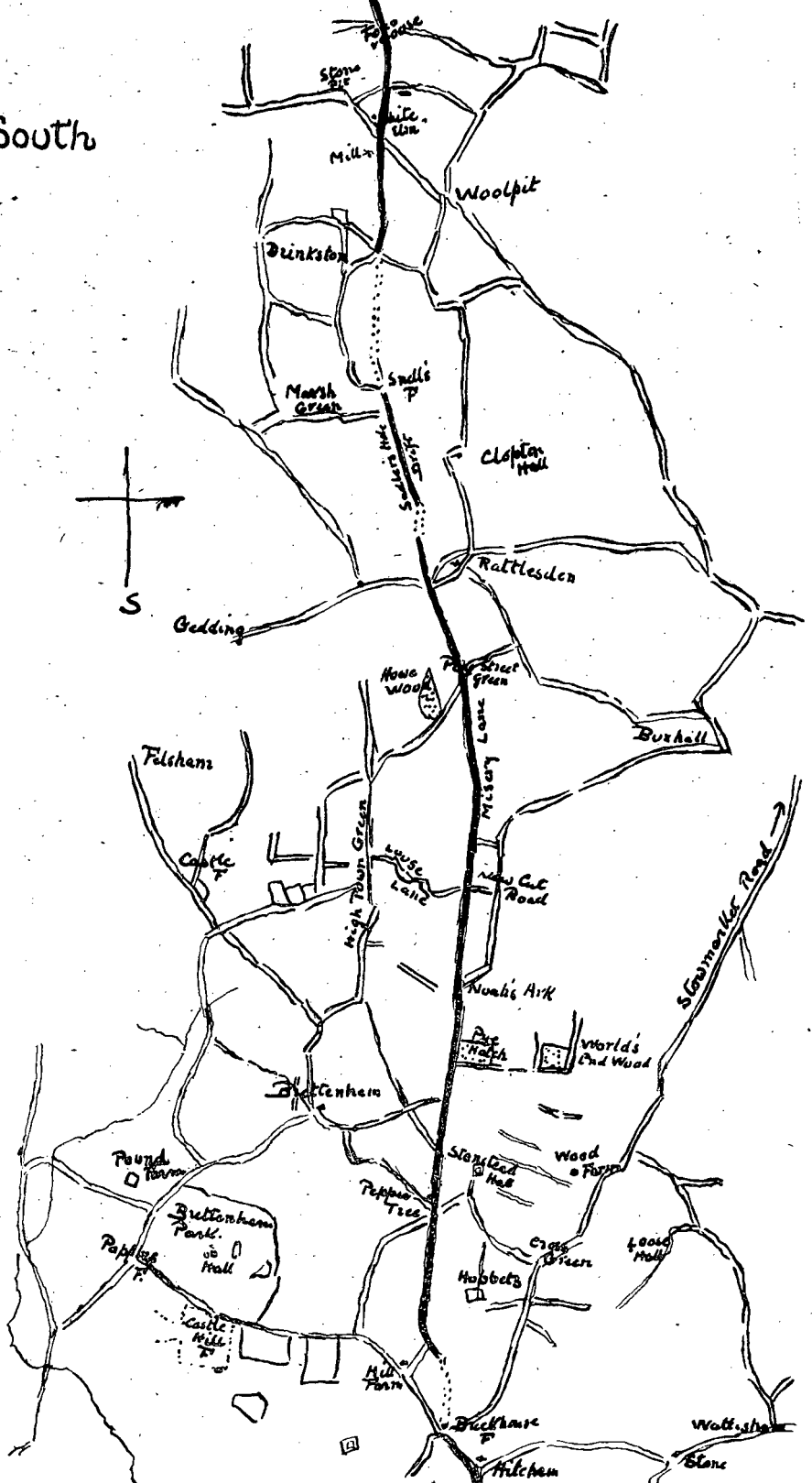
BY REV. H. COPINGER HILL.

Of the chief Roman roads in this country, Icknield Strete and the Peddar Way are especially connected with the history of East Anglia; the former by its name and entrance into Norfolk, the latter by name and course through Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. Roman roads in these parts are imperfectly known; they exist, and undoubted lengths still remain in their primitive state. Other side pieces are from time to time uncovered or unearthed, leaving a good "cross-road" puzzle awaiting a solver. Mr. W. G. Clarke, F.G.S., of Norwich, has lately issued a very interesting and helpful account of the Peddar Way in Suffolk, following on a similar story of its route through Norfolk, where he rightly claims a more intimate knowledge of his subject. The following notes are the result of considerable investigation of the route from Hitcham to Ixworth; North and South of these places are rather beyond the limits of a "push-bike" from Buxhall, at present. Mr. Clarke states that "the section from Poy Street Green (Rattlesden) to Hill Farm (Hitcham) is the determining section as to the objective of Peddar's Way." It has been generally agreed that this Way was in existence before Roman times, as an early British track, though a great authority is issuing an opposite opinion. Along the route we have pre-Roman settlements, or sites near by, such as the "Warbanks" at Cockfield, Milden Castle, Haughley Castle, Barton Mere, and probably others at present

unknown, or uncharted, in Suffolk, suggesting that the track way was the work of the early inhabitants, not forgetting, of course, the larger settlements along the coast in the neighbourhood of Waybourne and Hanworth (Norfolk) and the numerous "tumuli" on either side of the River Ouse, together with the many Hoos, Haughs, and Howes further South. If the Romans took over, improved and straightened lengths here and there, making a macadam road, probably under P. Ostorius Scapula, about A.D. 51, did these numerous settlements referred to mean severe fighting with the Iceni and in consequence the existence of the many (reputed) Roman camps near the road—such as at East Bergholt, Lindsey, Brettenham, Wattisham, Woolpit, Stowlangtoft, Thetford—pointing to short marches and sharp fighting from a base near at hand? Or was the road of later date when Branodunum (Brancaster) was a walled fort under the Count of the Saxon shore? Again, this road might have afforded a shorter means of communication with Lindum (Lincoln) by crossing the Wash to the neighbourhood of Wainfleet and thus avoiding the fen country via Camboricum (Cambridge)? The direction of the Way starting from Ad Ansam (6 miles from Colchester) is practically due north allowing for detours to avoid the "meres" (further north).

The present road from Stratford St. Mary (Ad Ansam) to Hadleigh and Hitcham is very much in a valley and of a winding nature. It however keeps a regular distance from the Bret and its tributary, and probably appealed, by its direction, to the Roman surveyor. Being a main road in regular use, repairs or widening operations may bring to light useful information on this point. The route up to Hitcham is similar to that from Woolpit to Ixworth, i.e., the valley of a stream, and this latter portion is undoubtedly our road.

South



Stratford St. Mary is, of course, the Ad Ansam of the Antonine Iter (No. IX.) serving, first, the Peddar Way and then that to Venta Icenorum, perhaps a later road.

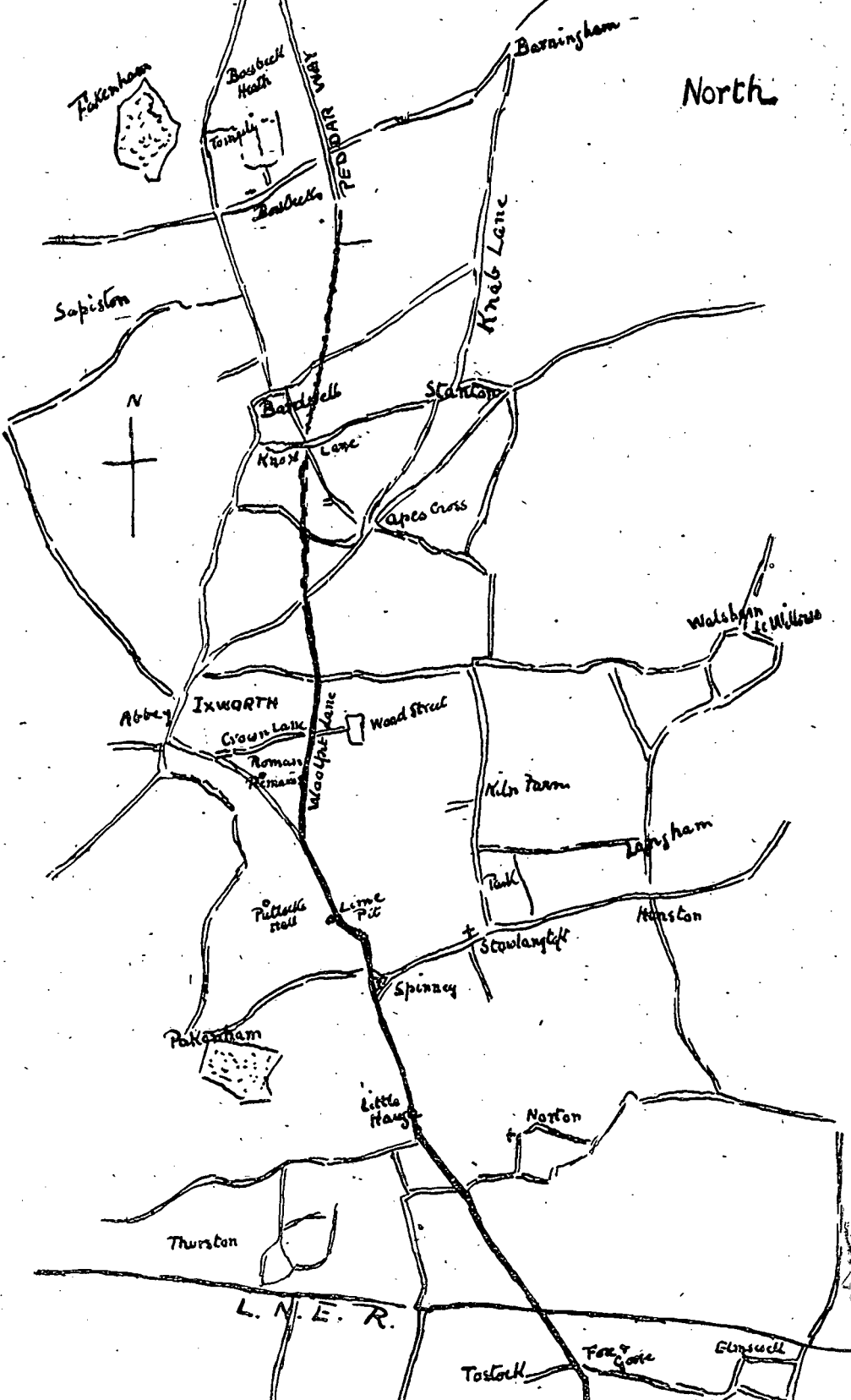
Col. Colby's map (1838) the earliest Ordnance Survey, marks the most Southern trace of the Way as ceasing just N.E. of Bardwell. From Hitcham to this point is 14 miles.

Just behind Hitcham "White Horse" is Brick House Farm, forming a hill, at the top of which stands Hill Farm. Traces of a road are to be found round the meadows at the foot of the hill on the East connecting up the road on the North by a short lane. But as this farm affords fresh "finds" on almost every visit, amongst them being traces of two occupation roads—one on the actual line of the Peddar Way—this latter  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile may require alteration.

From near Kerridge's Farm the line of present road runs due North (traces of old road found under grass at the sides) for little more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to cross roads at Cook's Green and Pepper Tree Farm. A grant of land, 22 Edward I., has "with moiety of a lane called Peperis lane in Hecsham, in the hamlet called Lose abutting on the highway called Snayllishalestrete by Walter Choney of Hecsham to Robert de Brissete, Clerk."

From other grants this Robert lived at or near the present Brick House Farm which extends thus far. (Subsidy Return 1327). There may be a connection, in the name of this street, with the parish of Knattishall further North, perhaps a copyist omitted to cross the "tt's." The boundary of the Hundreds and of the parishes of Buxhall and Rattlesden now follows the road for some way. Pye Hatch wood on the East probably derived its name from the Pye Street here (a

name also to be found on the Roman road at Coddenham). At Noah's Ark corner the road is a muddy lane for 135 yards, but, with the parish boundaries, crosses the fields for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. Here the steam plough last autumn turned up the base of the road at the "headland" in great quantities. Just before reaching the dip down over a former "Wash" or ford at Louse Lane ("Louisa" field nearby is more euphonious) it crosses a meadow 110 yards wide and is practically entire for this length, having been protected by a thick growth of blackthorn, etc. A trench has been cut across, showing a width of road 15-ft. with centre of camber 18-in. (above a layer of flints, laid level) tapering to 3-in. The upper part, below 3-in. of humus, was gravel (12-in.) but has lost its substance, the lower was rammed material, small chalk, stones, etc., a small ditch on either side. On the East side about a yard from the ditch were larger stones set on end, as if to mark a pathway. At the ford, numerous "setts" with a flat top have been picked up and draining operations (in March) produced very much larger flints. In 1845 when Louse Lane was connected up with a parallel road to the Peddar Way on the East the foundation of the old road was utilised in making the new. Evidently it has been a raised causeway, as, on the North the hollow is still there, 5-ft. deep or more, gradually decreasing as the road went up the hill to a spot where the dismantling of the old base ceased. After two more fields a junction is made with Misery Lane (Micherie and Mikel-wode). Here excavation at once showed the old road immediately before and after the junction. 150 yards further North a slight bend suggested a further dig. The level was found at 18-in. down, extending to actual edge of present ditch on the East, where larger stones were *in situ* set up on end to prevent the thrust of the road into the ditch (Buxhall). Still on the parish boundary a sunken stone, on being inspected, proved to be Carn-stone



North



L. N. E. R.

with its red streak (? from Heacham, Norfolk) with signs of mortar and either a crack or part of a letter. After Poy Street Green the road runs steeply down by Kempistone Hill into Rattlesden, crossing the "Via Regia" of map by Agas, and the "Orwell" stream by the school, up the hill pointing for a junction with Sadler's Hole Drift, but is missing for 620 yards (a footpath and cart track lend a hand). The drift continues on, in the right line for Snell's Farm, by Marsh Green, helped by a parish boundary. Here to the West for 150 yards is a very narrow sunken track connecting up with a road which winds up over the rise above marshy ground and down again to the right line. But on the direct line to the East of the marshy spot the owner of the land in making a shed, came on evident signs of the road. Either route connects with a lane past the mill on West of Woolpit to cross the main Woolpit and Bury road at the "White Elm." Just short of this spot, on the West, "Deadman's Lane" connects the road with the Drinkstone stone pits. On the East of this stone hill are signs of very old workings. This is, so far, the only stone pit on the route for flint and gravel.

"Cecilia de Stan Mersch" lived here in 1327 (Subsidy Return). From the hill big marshes extend North to Tostock Bridge and the Peddar Way diverges East to avoid the wet ground or "mere" in early days. From the "White Elm" the road goes down to an old timbered house, still known as the "Fox and Geese," gradually recovering its line due North. From here it follows the present road—under the railway arch to Stowlangtoft. Widening of the road being the order of the day (January-March) the surveyor and men interested themselves in the question and in several places found clear traces of the old foundation on the Norton side of the arch. Further discovery may be made before work is finished up to the "White Elm."

On the East Stowlangtoft Church standing in an old camp.

Leaving Stowlangtoft on the East the road bends slightly West to avoid marshy ground, passes the "lime pits" and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Ixworth (near the remains of a "hypocaust") follows a very wide and well cambered grassy lane, known as Davids' and Woolpit Lane, to recover its direction once more. The name "Woolpit" suggests that the pilgrims of later time used this cut—missing out Ixworth, on their way from Walsingham to the famous shrine of Woolpit. Joining the main road N.E. of Ixworth all traces of a road due North now cease, except that Hodkinson's map carries it on to junction with Knox Lane still pointing for junction with Colby's most southerly point. The route has been on low-lying land up to Hitcham; on a ridge of high ground (clay) to Woolpit; lower, and gradually lighter soil to Stowlangtoft; light, probably chalk up to the county boundary, nowhere above 300-ft., highest point near Pye Hatch Wood.

Parishes concerned are Higham, Shelley, Raydon, Laygham, Hadleigh, Semer, Nedging, Bildeston, Hitcham, Brettenham, Buxhall, Rattlesden, Drinkstone, Woolpit, Tostock, Norton, Stowlangtoft, Ixworth, and Bardwell.

"Streets," so called, en route, are Benton, Coram (Carham), Stone, High, Low, Aldham, Brad, Holstreet, Brokestrete, Stretesend. Brettenham and Hitcham have remains of a large wood—the latter stubbed up in 1860.

Beyond the town of Hadleigh the road passes through no village, as such. Bildeston probably was centred round the Church on the hill to its West.



Maps consulted. Radulph Agas, of Rattlesden parish (end of 16th century); John Speed, 1610; Jansenius, 1640; H. Overton, 1713; J. Hodskinson, 1787; Bryant, 1826; Colby, 1838.

Field names, etc., awaiting derivation, etc. Brycht-wildesfeld, Collewallelong, Purtepool, Hacstonesdone, Cunnefer, Pepper (Hitcham), Hwynermersh (Whyner-) (Nayland); Barrebregge, Causewode, Mews Edge (Whatfield); Pilecokedune Srete (Hadleigh); Walschestreet highway (Boxford); Benton Street and Lane, Nayleford medwe (Layham), Brastreet and Brastead; Baten Haugh (Hunston), Hobbets, Hoppets, Hubbards, Hoggards, Haggards; Puttocks (Pakenham); Great and Little Copt (Bildeston); Machunesbregge (Layham), Pipers Vent (Raydon); Judgments; Little Loes (Norton).

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#### ADDENDA.

##### TRACES OF THE ROMANS NEAR THE PEDDAR WAY.

*Castle Hill Farm, Brettenham.* The parish boundary here is very curious. A large square has been taken out of Hitcham and made to connect with Brettenham by a blunt wedge-shaped entrance; numerous burials have been found near this entrance. On the S.E. corner of the square is the faint trace of a fosse, drained by a ditch ending in mid-field, on similar lines to the Pound Farm site.

*Castle Farm, Felsham.* Here are the "drums and capitals, etc.," of carved columns, whose history is unknown, but worth close inspection. The site is moated and may have been the home of "Barthol: de Castello" in Thorpe Morieux (Subsidy Return 1327), as the parish boundary is adjacent. These stones may have been preserved in the moat. Situation about 1 mile W. of the "Way," and at the end of "Duck Street."

*Brettenham Church* Registers have some very interesting references to Combretonium, which may form the subject of another paper.

Inhumation burials. Brettenham Park and its Orchard, Castle Farm (Felsham). Cinerary burials—on Popple's Farm, Castle Hill, Brick House Farm. The following is extracted from "Notes on the Brettenham Estate" by Sir Courtenay Warner, Bart. "1902-03 The New Library, etc. is built on the site of an old burial ground, probably Roman; the body in every case had been cremated. I examined about six very carefully but could find nothing but a few fragments of bone amongst the wood ashes and burnt earth. I also dug out two at the side of ditch between the Park and Popple's Farm. W. Bull, the tenant of this farm, says he has found a Roman coin in some, also several when cleaning out his moat (signed W.N.)" A diagram of the burials shows the shape of a large amphora, with longish and wide neck, i.e., 3-ft. 4-in. high by 2-ft. 6-in. at widest part. The site on Pound Farm, Brettenham (also Ordnance Map) gives a square, inner sides 124-ft., present greatest depth of fosse 2-ft. 5-in. (Vict. Hist. of Suff. says "Roman coins found here)." Broken tiles, pottery and oyster shells can be picked up now.

Brick House Farm, Hitcham, has plenty of very interesting mediæval history, besides the old house. On the hill which forms the farm are distinct traces of two roads uniting at right angles, at a spot where some large pieces of roof tiles (*tegulæ*) and half-round imbrices were ploughed up last autumn. The *tegulæ* show the up-turned edge and have a diamond pane pattern underneath (? to hold to the mortar); enough of the imbrex to give shape and taper.

Draining her some years ago brought to light a leaden model of Trajan's column, broken in two, unfortunately, by the spade, length 12-in. Part of the top and base are missing, but the figures are quite distinct. However, the highest authorities are against its Roman origin "at present." Close to the roads, a drain cut into a burial, near a "suspicious" hollow. Quantities of broken tile litter the ground. Part of a quern was picked up and is to hand. Where the fields reach the low-lying meadows further exploration in dry weather will be necessary as there are seven queer hollows. An 80-ft. length of wall or flooring in another field is being examined (March), Roman pottery having been found above it, and the remains of a child's skull and Samian ware.

Agrarian roads. The lie of the land North of Hitcham Church suggests a Roman colony from the numerous indications of roads in the fields. The space covered is 4 miles long by 3, narrowing to  $1\frac{3}{4}$  near Rattlesden. The whole of this plateau seems divided up by existing roads, lanes and many traces of occupation or agrarian roads. On Stanstead Hall on a meadow is a length in good order, cambered and ditched, with a right angle turn to

connect up with others on the adjoining Wood Farm. This latter in 1860 was all that was left of Hitcham Wood. Colby's map shows 5 roads there and these can still be traced. One was actually uncovered when the wood was stubbed up and in making a pond there a large vase was found. These roads have been found by the plough, draining, and "mole" plough. The latter method unearthed one on Boarded Barn Farm, Finborough, last spring, 2-ft. below surface, 15-ft., wide with a slight camber, composed of large flints, running diagonally across a field called "Council Yard." Another can be seen on a meadow at Cock Farm, Brettenham. At High Town Green, House Farm, is a remarkable collection of five "drifts," radiating from an oblong space in centre of farm; the widths vary from 15-ft. to 40-ft. and in lengths, run at 566 (3), 280 and 200 yards, whilst on Wood Farm adjacent is another of 650 yards. One of the former rejoices in name of "Ditch" road and ends in a field called "the Ditch." On Agas' map the oblong centre is marked as "the Road." These grassy drifts have evidently had their ditches newly planted, but history is silent about them. The 650 length runs to within a few yards of the Peddar Way. Indications of other similar roads are to be found in this area.

Numerous large boulders occupy suggestive points, one on Wattisham Hall Farm (not "the Stone" on the maps) being 7-ft. 3-in. long, 18-in. deep, 3-ft. 3-in. wide; another on Plains Farm, Hitcham was found at the junction of agrarian roads, a third on edge of the Peddar Way.

Many other objects and points of interest have been noted for examination as time and weather permit.

The following coins have come to hand along the route of the Peddar Way:—Denarii of M. Plaetorius Cestianus B.C. 68 (Rattlesden); Trajan, M. Aurelius (Buxhall); Elagabalus (Ixworth); Brass, large Trajan (2) (Rattlesden); Middle, Hadrian (Brettenham); Small, Victorinus (Brettenham); Carausius, Constantine II. (Woolpit); Maximilianus (Hitcham); Constantine I. (2) Valentinian I. (Rattlesden); Tetricus I., Victorinus I. in Gaul (Ixworth); besides a small Venetian silver, dug up in Woolpit churchyard of "Doge Agostino Barbadigo" (1485-1501) and a "sterling" of Jean d'Avesnes of Hainault (1280-1304). All vouched for by the British Museum.

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