

AN IRON AGE TERRET FROM RUSHMERE

by Tony Gregory and Edward Martin

An enamelled bronze terret ring was found in Rushmere, near Lowestoft (TM 4943 8705; S.A.U. index no. RMR 004) by Mr J.G. Oldrin of The Hollies, Rushmere, and was reported to Norwich Castle Museum in 1977, where it is now on loan (acc. no. L.1978.6).

The terret is a cast bronze ring 74mm high, 84mm wide and 125gm in weight. The attachment bar is narrow and saddle-shaped in section, set between two large ovoid stops. A groove at the base of each stop is clearly visible around three-quarters of the perimeter, but is absent from the inner edge of the stop. The stops are at an angle of about 9° to the horizontal. The inner edge of the ring is a moulding three-quarter round in section, tapering from the stops towards the top. Outside this is a crescentic flange of rectangular section with almost identical decoration on each face: it consists of a central palmette-derived motif flanked by scrolls, the whole design being symmetrical about the vertical axis. The field is filled with red *champlevé* enamel (or, more correctly, opaque red glass, cf. Hughes 1972), which now only retains its colour in a few places, the rest having changed to a dull buff. Since the enamel is still intact it is impossible to say whether the sides of the recesses are vertical or not, or whether the surface of the metal was prepared in any way before the enamel was applied. The rim of the flange bears two parallel longitudinal grooves close to the edges, and the ridge between them is left plain.

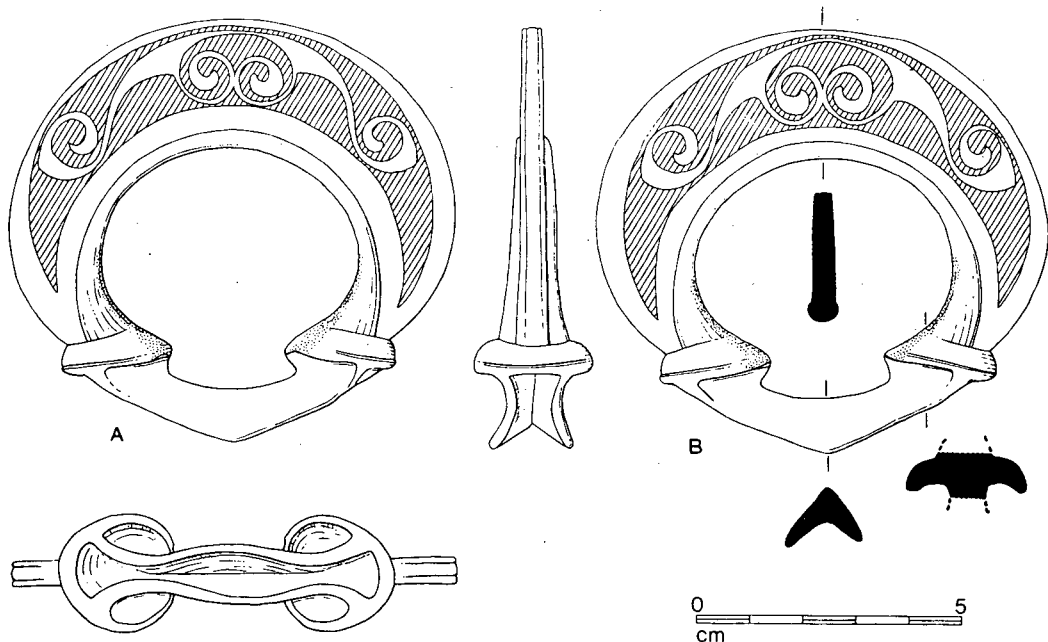


FIG. 3 — Enamelled bronze terret from Rushmere.

There is a slight wear facet on the inner edge of each stop, on face A, as if the stops had been in contact with a vertical object with edges 24mm apart. There is a slight suggestion of similar wear on face B. The attachment bar shows some roughening of the surface on face A, and the underside of the bar on this face is also slightly roughened: this might be the result of wear rather than corrosion alone; the top of the attachment bar and face B show no similar signs.

The Rushmere terret is very similar to that from Weybread (Martin 1978) and also to the large terret from the Westhall hoard (Clarke 1939, 68 and Pl. XVII), both in Suffolk. It is smaller than both of these, being 74mm high as opposed to 83mm (Weybread) and 95mm (Westhall), but in its turn it is larger than any of the small terrets in the Westhall hoard. The stops, at an angle of 9° to the horizontal, resemble those on the Weybread terret (7°) more closely than those on the Westhall terret (20 and 25°); the attachment bar is much narrower than those on the other two terrets; and the decoration lacks the punched dot triangles and the outer elements of the scrolls. Nevertheless the Rushmere terret is so similar to the Weybread and Westhall terrets that it is likely that all three were made in the same workshop, if not by the same craftsman. Terrets of this type have been dated to the mid-1st century A.D. (Spratling 1972, 307).

Within Suffolk finds of enamelled bronze terrets and other pieces of horse harness have been made at Lakenheath, Stanton, Norton, Rattlesden, Weybread, Westhall and Rushmere, all in the northern half of the county, and the distribution pattern continues with finds from Santon, Ashill, Saham Toney and Cawston in Norfolk. This area corresponds with the tribal territory of the Iceni and therefore these items of colourful horse harness were presumably used by them rather than by their neighbours in south Suffolk and Essex, the Trinovantes.

References

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