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An Unusual Romano-British Brooch from Norfolk, with a Note upon its Probable Affinities

By D.F. MACKRETH

ABSTRACT

A brooch from Marham, Norfolk, is identified as being a hybrid Colchester Derivative and its relationship with other Colchester Derivatives is discussed. An examination of the basic distribution of the parent of the Marham brooch, the Rearhook, shows that it is of Icenian origin. Discussion of other rare hybrids along with the dating of the parent reveals that, alone of British brooches, the Rearhook has what may be described as an abrupt cut-off date which can be equated with the suppression of the Iceni. Only one hybrid has any development, and that is the one to which the Marham brooch belongs. The fantail foot found on many Rearhooks also has a later history which is examined. The discussion focuses on the dating and distribution of what may be described as ultimate Rearhook derivatives. The early post-Boudiccan history of the Iceni is alluded to and a case presented for the probable deliberate plantation of Icenians at Castleford.

The brooch (FIG. 1) was a metal-detector find from the Parish of Marham.[1] Its pin has a short unilateral spring and is fitted into a slot in the back of the head. The wings are rounded in front, with a groove at the end, and are moulded on the back to simulate a spring. On the head of the bow is a small and shallow platform. The front of the bow is rounded with a beaded ridge down it. The lower bow with the catch-plate is missing. Before dealing in detail with these, it is perhaps advisable to rehearse for the benefit of non-specialist readers the types of brooches which will be referred to.

The prime British brooch at the Conquest was the Colchester.[2] Its characteristics are that the bilateral spring is integral with the body of the brooch, which has wings to protect the exposed front of the spring. The chord joining the two parts of the spring is secured by a forward-facing hook issuing from the head of the brooch. In the period of the Conquest, and beginning most probably before, the pin began to be made separately from the body. This gave rise, in the main, to four chief varieties of brooch based upon their pin-fixing arrangements.

Unfortunately, only one has a generally accepted name: the Polden Hill. In this, there is a pierced plate at the end of each wing. These carry an axis bar through the bilateral spring, the

1 Since this article was first prepared, another example of the type represented by the brooch from Marham has been brought to my notice by Andrew Rogerson. It came from the Parish of Suffield, Norfolk, and is illustrated in FIG. 1.

2 Stead and Rigby 1989, 89, Type C, fig. 48.

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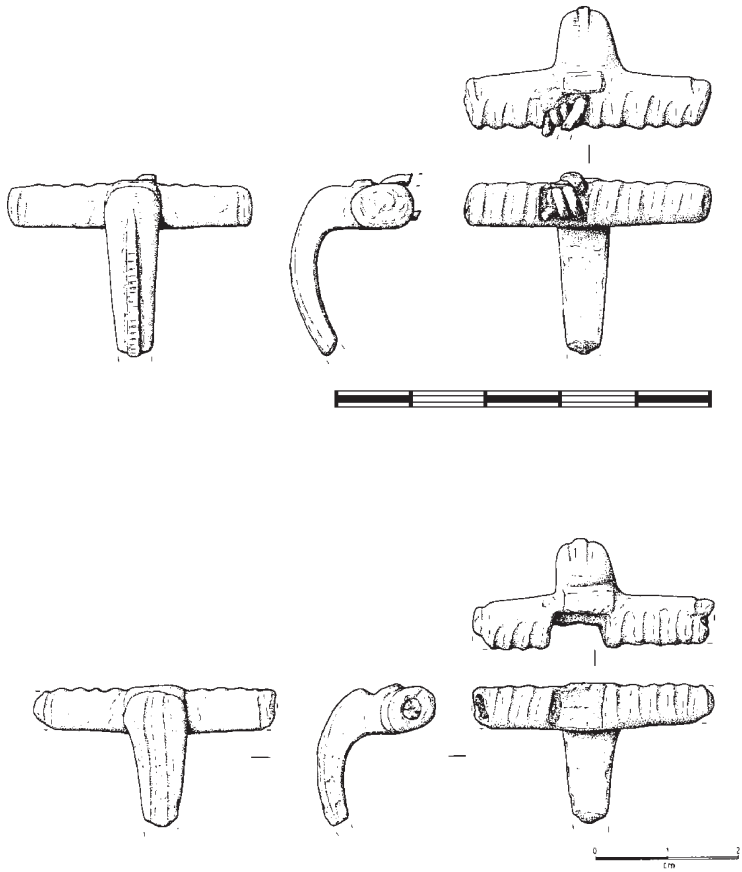


FIG. 1. Brooch from Marham, Norfolk; brooch from Suffield, Norfolk.
(*Drawn by Jason Gibbons*)

chord of which is usually held by a hook behind the head of the bow. The distribution is chiefly in the West of Britain and the type does not figure in what follows.

The remaining three are simple. The Hinged Pin needs no special attention. However, the other two do. The important one for this paper is the Rearhook. Here, the wings are curved to seat the spring which is, superficially, held only by a rearward-facing hook behind the head of the bow. The other system is know to the writer as the Harlow because of the numbers from the Holbrooks site there, which also produced the only example of a typical Harlow bow coupled with a Colchester-type spring. The Harlow has a plate with two holes projecting behind the head of the bow; the upper hole secures the chord, the lower the axis bar through the coils.

To return to the subject of this paper, there are two unusual features here: firstly, the style of making the pin; secondly, the simulated spring. Of the two, the second is the rarer. That it is a variant of the Rearhook family is shown by the simulated spring, of which more anon. It is little known that the separately-made spring of the Rearhook was fixed in position, not so much by the hook, as by a blob of solder behind the left-hand wing. The distribution of the Rearhook is given in Table 1.

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TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE REARHOOK, NENE GROUP AND FANTAIL

	Rearhook	Nene Group	Fantail a	Fantail b	no Fantail	late Fantail
Hertfordshire	4	4				
Essex	17		1			2
Suffolk	25	2	1	1	6	4
Norfolk	259	4	3	3	18	15
Cambridgeshire	38	16			5	4
Northamptonshire	10	21	2		4	5
Lincolnshire	23	4	2	2	4	13
Leicestershire	2	8	1		3	3
Nottinghamshire	4	8	1		1	4
Derbyshire		4				
Oxfordshire	9					
Warwickshire	4	3				1
Gloucestershire	16					
Shropshire		1				
Staffordshire	1	1				
Middlesex	2					
Kent	2					2
Sussex		1				
Hampshire	5					2
Berkshire						1
Bedford/ Buckinghamshire	2	2				1
Dorset	4		1			2
Wiltshire	2	2				2
Devon	2					
Somerset	1			1		1
Yorkshire	2					9
Wales	2					
The North					1	3

Even allowing for a bias in favour of East Anglia in collecting for the corpus, nothing can hide the great number from Norfolk. The main distribution spreads out, down to Essex, north to Lincolnshire, and across the Fens into Cambridgeshire and so into Northamptonshire. The large number from Gloucestershire might just be related to the military there, but it would be unwise to push this too far. The Rearhook was clearly an Icenian type.

To return to the present brooch and its closest relatives, an indication of how rare these brooches are is that, out of the 462 Rearhooks recorded by the writer, only four are of great

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rarity, along with six with triple hooks. Examples are shown in FIG. 2. No. 1 (13647)[3] shows that the solder has been replaced by a cast-in simulated spring. As for the Marham brooch, its appearance from the front resembles a Rearhook; even the platform on the head could be said to represent the hook. Next comes FIG. 2, No. 2 (9940), from Orston, Notts., which is ostensibly a straightforward sprung-pin brooch, except that the hinged pin was fitted from the beginning. FIG. 2, No. 3 (13650), from Kingscote, Glos.,[4] is another triple hook, only this time the axis bar through the spring was secured by a pair of cotter pins. FIG. 2, No. 4 (12015), from Saham Toney, Norfolk, has triple hooks and a complete loop behind the head of the bow to carry an axis bar through the spring. This loop is taken from an early stage of the Harlow: FIG. 2, No. 5 (1094), from Wangford, Norfolk, has the loop and the rearhook above. Once the hook and loop become joined, the ordinary Harlow is born.

The suspicion must be that these rare brooches were transitional in form and had in themselves no real *floruit*. The task then is to see what forms of brooch developed which of these traits. The triple hook has no followers; the hybrid using a Harlow element, again, has no followers. The short, unilateral spring and pin, however, does have an afterlife, if not particularly long. It occurs in a polythetic group of brooches which are at home at the south-western end of Northamptonshire and spread along the Nene to the Fens and which I know as The Nene Group, see Table 1. FIG. 2, No. 6 (2427), from Weekley, Northants.,[5] has the same basic pattern as the Marham brooch with the addition of a foot-knob of a particular form which marks the group out.

Although the commonest form of embellishment of this group, the bulbous triangle at the head of the bow (e.g., FIG. 2, No. 7 (2399), from Ware, Herts.), is not found on a Rearhook, it frequently has the unilaterally sprung pin. A close comparison can be made between a Rearhook, FIG. 3, No. 8 (12007), from Wymondham, Norfolk, and one from the Nene Group, FIG. 3, No. 10 (2410), from Sapperton, Lincs., and again another from a related group in which the fantail foot is much more prominent, and in that sense, closer to the Rearhook parallel: Dragonby, Lincs., FIG. 3, No. 9 (13886).[6]

Clearly, there is a series of hinged-pin types which derive from Rearhook types. Only one other strand is going to pass in review here and it is a combination of two Rearhooks: the first, FIG. 3, No. 11 (972), from North Berkshire,[7] has the fantail foot divided by a bow ending in a point; the second, FIG. 3, No. 12 (9752), from Fincham, Norfolk, has a bow made up of bead-and-reel. These are combined in FIG. 3, No. 13 (2838), a hinged-pin brooch from Wansford, Northants., which has the fantail and the bow ending in a point coupled with bead-and-reel.

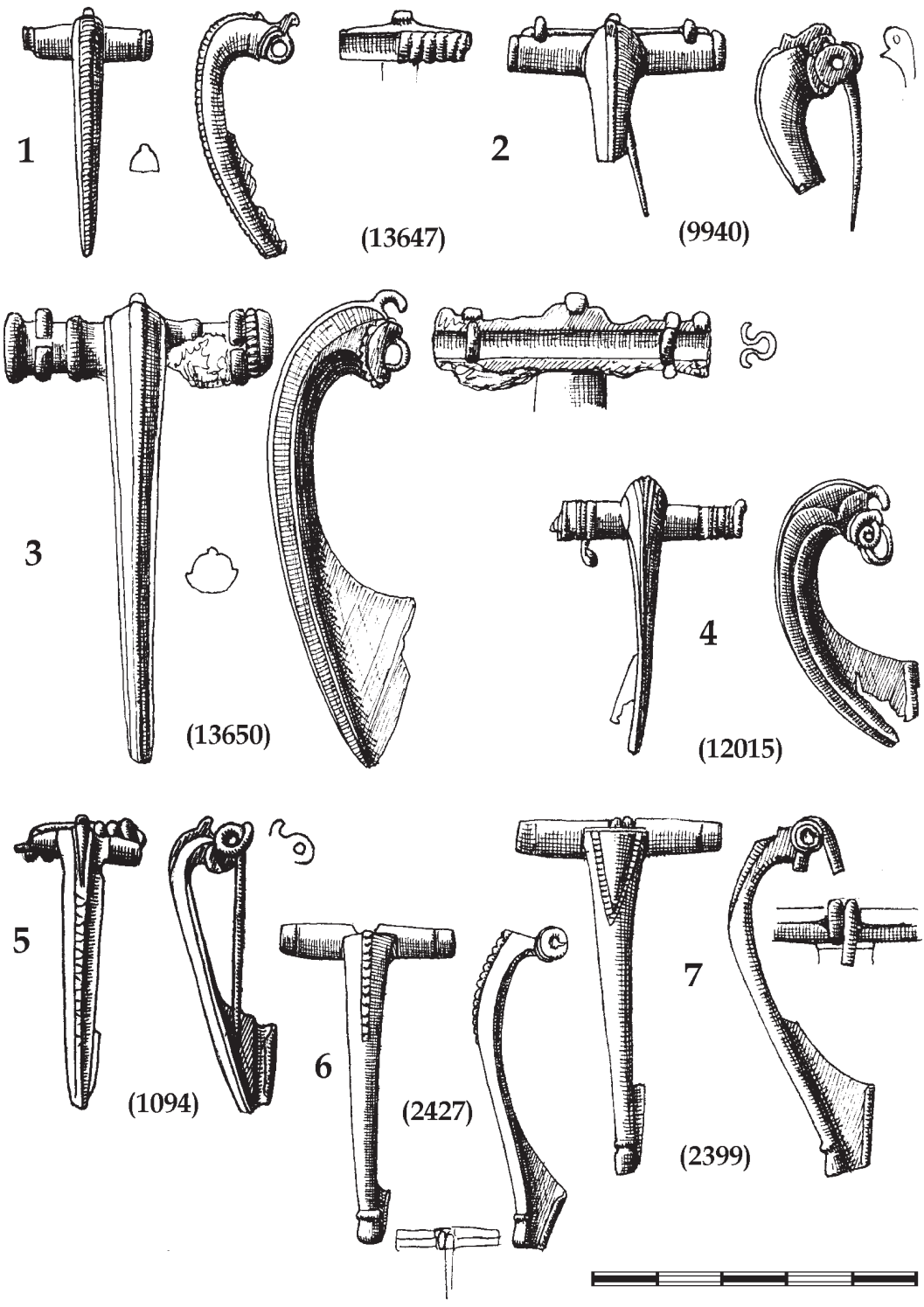
Having postulated these relationships, there is a need, firstly, to establish the dating of the Rearhook, and secondly, to establish the initial dates of the hinged types. The fact that most

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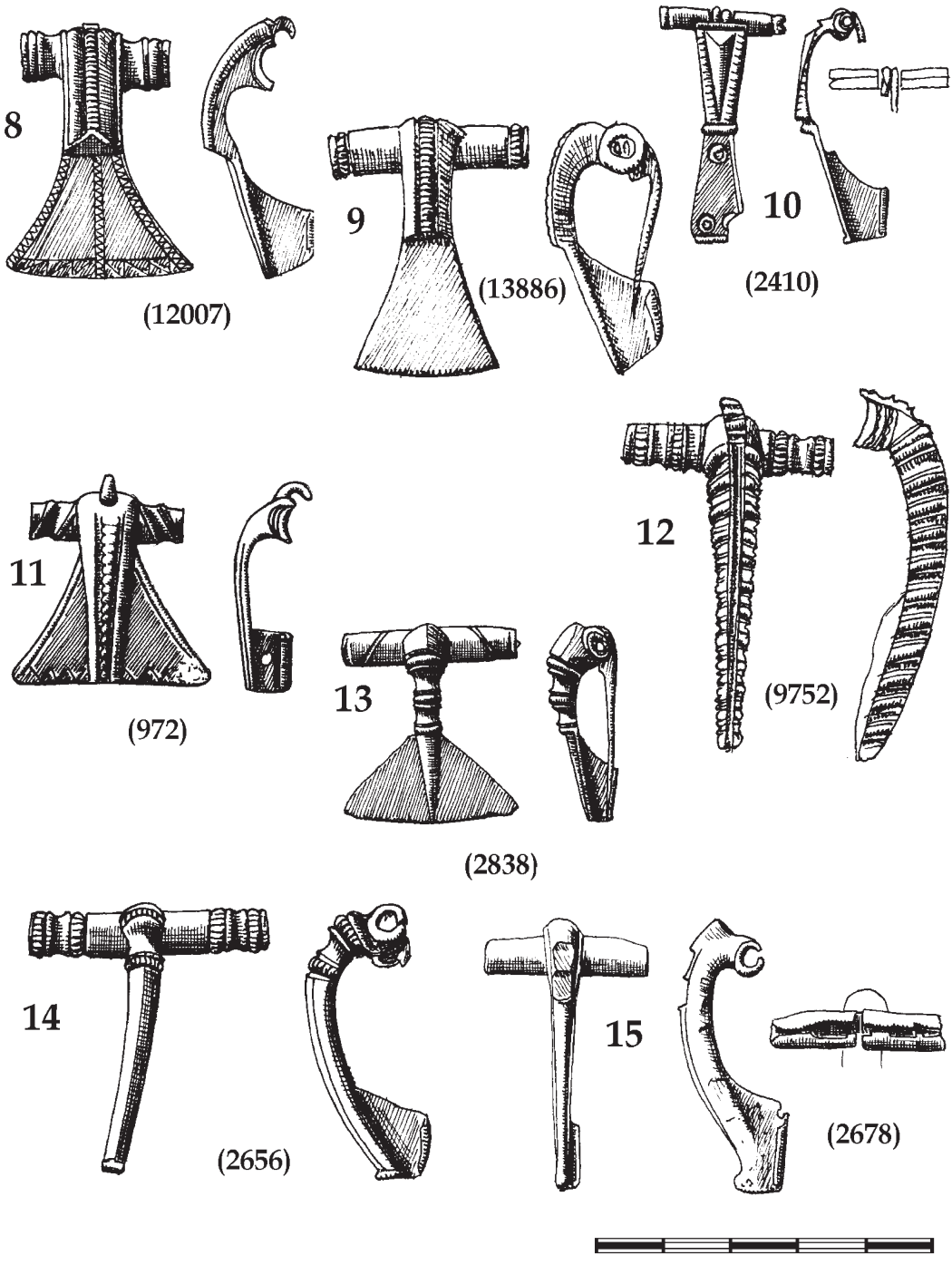
FIG. 2 (opposite). 1. Fring, Norfolk, private collection, (13647), Rearhook and half simulated spring; 2. Orston, Notts., private collection, (9940), triple hook with spring and separate hinged pin *ab initio*; 3. Kingscote, Glos. (Timby 1998, 116, fig. 65, 6), (13650), three hooks plus cotter pins; 4. Saham Toney, Norfolk, private collection, (12015), three hooks and lower part of Harlow; 5. Wangford, Norfolk, Cambridge Museum Archaeology & Anthropology (83 CAS 493), (1094), early Harlow with hook and loop in line underneath; 6. Weekley, Northants. (Jackson and Dix 1987, M76, fig. 23, 15), (2427), Nene Group; 7. Ware, Herts., excavations by C. Partridge, unpublished, (2399), Nene Group.

3 All numbers given in brackets are those assigned in the writer's database, a CD of which will be published.
4 Timby 1998, 116, fig. 65.6.
5 Jackson and Dix 1987, M76, fig. 23.15.
6 May 1996, 257, fig. 11.11.114.
7 Hattatt 1985, 49, fig. 21.297.

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Rearhooks come from Norfolk and most of those were metal-detector finds, means that dating from the county is at a premium. There is, therefore, no point in going through the varieties one by one. In what follows, the brooches have been arranged in order of the initial date of the range assigned to each; the initial numbers are those of the brooches themselves in my corpus.

DATED REARHOOKS:

890	Puckeridge	A.D. 40–65	Partridge 1979, 38, fig. 6.10
11969	Wilcote	Claudian	Hands 1993, 27, fig. 23.3
892; 994	Bagendon	*c*. A.D. 43–50	Clifford 1971, 172, fig. 31.1, 4
792	Longthorpe	Claudian-Neronian	Frere and St Joseph 1974, 49, fig. 21.297
889	Braughing	A.D. 45–55	Potter and Trow 1988, 46, fig. 19.46
819; 912	Thetford, Fison Way	before A.D. 60–65	Gregory 1992, 122 no. 343, fig. 112.10, 12
1000	Hod Hill	before A.D. 50	Brailsford 1962, 7 no. 68, fig. 6.C13; Richmond 1968, 117
857; 903; 937	Colchester	A.D. 49–61	Hawkes and Hull 1947, 312 no. 385, pl. 92.44, 46, 51
813	Colchester	*c*. A.D. 49–60/1	Crummy 1983, 13 no. 179, fig. 8, 62
995	Bagendon	A.D. 50–60	Clifford 1961, 172, fig. 31.2
829; 868	Colchester	*c*. A.D. 50/55–60/1	Crummy 1983, 12, fig. 6.56, 57
971	Colchester	A.D. 50–65	Crummy 1983, 12, fig. 6.57
931	Leicester	mid-first century	St Nicholas Circle report
935	Colchester	A.D. 61–65	Hawkes and Hull 1947, 311, pl. 91. 45
834	Lockleys	before A.D. 60/70	Ward-Perkins 1938, 352, fig. 2.1
801; 992	Goltho	A.D. 50–100	Beresford 1987, 171 no. 54, fig. 153.3
867	Canterbury	A.D. 70/80–125	Blockley *et al.* 1995, 961, fig. 403.21
13402	Wilcote	first century?	Hands 1998, 49, fig. 18.29
894	Harlow temple	A.D. 80–100?	France and Gobel 1985, 79, fig. 41.68
916	Canterbury	A.D. 70/80–100/110	Blockley *et al.* 1995, 961, fig. 403.20
825; 854; 941	Snettisham	?late first–early second century	Flitcroft 2001, 55, fig. 31.8, 10

All others were clearly residual in their contexts.

FIG. 3 (opposite). 8. Wymondham, Norfolk, private collection, (12007), Rearhook; 9. Dragonby, Lincs. (May 1996, 257, 11.11, 114), (13886), Fantail foot; 10. Sapperton, Lincs., excavations by B.B. Simmons, unpublished, (2410), Nene Group; 11. N Berkshire (Hattatt 1985, 49, fig. 21, 297), (972); 12. Fincham, Norfolk, private collection, (9752), Rearhook; 13. Wansford, Cambs., private collection, (2838); 14. Wicklewood, Norfolk, private collection, (2656); 15. Near Leicester, Jewry Wall Museum (36.72 or 76), (2678).

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TRIPLE HOOKS:

773	Snettisham	mid-first century	Flitcroft 2001, 52, fig. 30.14
771	Snettisham	late first–early second century	Flitcroft 2001, 55, not illus.
766	Baldock	A.D. 120–150	Stead and Rigby 1986, 112, fig. 44.82

From this it can be seen that there is a steady progression until the later first century is reached. Normally, the date-range tends to shade more gradually until fairly well into the second century, thus making it hard to establish when the end of an item being commonly in use occurred. Here, there is a marked absence of any in the middle or later second century, in fact, none unequivocally second century at all. This adds up to as near as one can get in ordinary archaeological terms to a sudden end of manufacture, with only a very few surviving in use for a short time afterwards. Here surely is a sign of the savage repression of the Iceni after the defeat of Boudicca. This Icenian brooch type had become a souvenir or a bleak survival.

Now we take a look at the distribution of the Nene Group. The main area can be seen to be up the River Nene and spreading out along the Fen edge, especially to the north-west. The dating is:

2416	Bannaventa	late first–early second century	Dix and Taylor 1988, 334, fig. 19.3
2427	Weekley	late first century–*c*. A.D. 175	Jackson and Dix 1987, M76, fig. 23.15
2425	Rocester	A.D. 125–50	Esmonde Cleary and Ferris 1996, 130, fig. 46.3
2388-9	Verulamium	before A.D. 150	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 206, fig. 43.17, 18
6300	Wroxeter	up to *c*. A.D. 160	Ellis 2000, 149, fig. 4.33, 17
2405	Derby	Antonine	Dool *et al.* 1985, 285, fig. 125.12
2415	Leicester	before A.D. 220	Kenyon 1948, 249 no. 451, fig. 80.10
2426	Stonea	after A.D. 220	Jackson and Potter 1996, 301 no. 427, fig. 93.10

All later ones were clearly residual in their contexts.

The curve for the start dates of the date-ranges is much more normal. Gone is the precision of dating in the first few decades of the Roman occupation and we have the imprecision of the late first and second centuries. The dating after *c*. A.D. 220 is more a function of the stratification on the relevant sites than a reflection of reality. There should be little doubt that the initial date for the Nene Group lies at the end of the first century, and so, in a sense, it becomes a true successor of the Rearhook, of which more anon.

Now we can turn to the Fantail foot. Two strands have been noted: one represented by FIG. 3, No. 13 (2838), and the other by FIG. 2, No. 9 (13886). Starting with the first (Table 1, Fantail a) there is no dating as yet. For the second (Table 1, Fantail b) it is:

13886	Dragonby	later first into second century	May 1996, 257, fig. 11.11, 114
2843	Chew	second century or later	Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, fig. 114.9

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Not an encouraging picture; Norfolk figures as one might have guessed and also the peripheral areas.

However, each group leads to distinctive results. In the first instance, it is the decoration at the head of the bow which remains while the fantail disappears, FIG. 3, No. 14, (2656), No. 15 (2678); in the second, the upper bow becomes more standard and acquires a loop, FIG. 4, No. 16 (12154), No. 17 (2866).

For the first group, the dating is:

2652	Ringstead	late first–early second century	Jackson 1980, 29, fig. 10.2
2659	Maxey	late first–late second century	Pryor *et al.* 1985, 164, fig. 111.4
2813	Old Winteringham	before A.D. 200	Stead 1976, 198, fig. 100.16

Here, the dating is relatively consistent, late first century to the latter part of the second. Although one must remember that virtually all native bow brooches had ceased to be made *c.* A.D. 150 or just after. The distribution (Table 1, no Fantail), shows that the type is basically confined to Norfolk and the peripheral areas, especially the western Fen margins.

The Fantail group is more numerous and its dating better:

2853	Waddon Hill	*c.* A.D. 50–60	Webster 1960, 97, fig. 7.17
13543	Castleford	A.D. 71/4–86	Cool and Philo 1998, 45, fig. 10.51
13886	Dragonby	later first into second century	May 1996, 257, fig. 11.11.114
13544	Castleford (2)	A.D. 85/90–135/40	Cool and Philo 1998, 45, fig. 10 and unillus.
2858	Richborough	earlier second century	Bushe-Fox 1926, 43, pl. 12.4
13545	Castleford (2)	A.D. 140–180	Cool and Philo 1998, 45, fig. 10.55 and unillus.
2857	Harlow temple	before A.D. 175/200	France and Gobel 1985, 76, fig. 39.18
2843	Chew	second century or later	Rahtz and Greenfield 1977, fig. 114.9
2862	Rudston	after late second century	Stead 1980, 95, fig. 61.15
2863	Old Winteringham	third century	Stead 1976, 198, fig. 99.10
2867	Tripontium	third century	Cameron and Lucas 1973, 131, fig. 23a.1
2873	Thistleton	fourth century	Butcher 1977, fig. 10.29

This is the full panoply of dates to be expected of any type beginning in the first century and running well into the second, and being made in sufficient numbers for examples to occur in dated contexts. The evidence supports a date beginning shortly before or after the Rearhook

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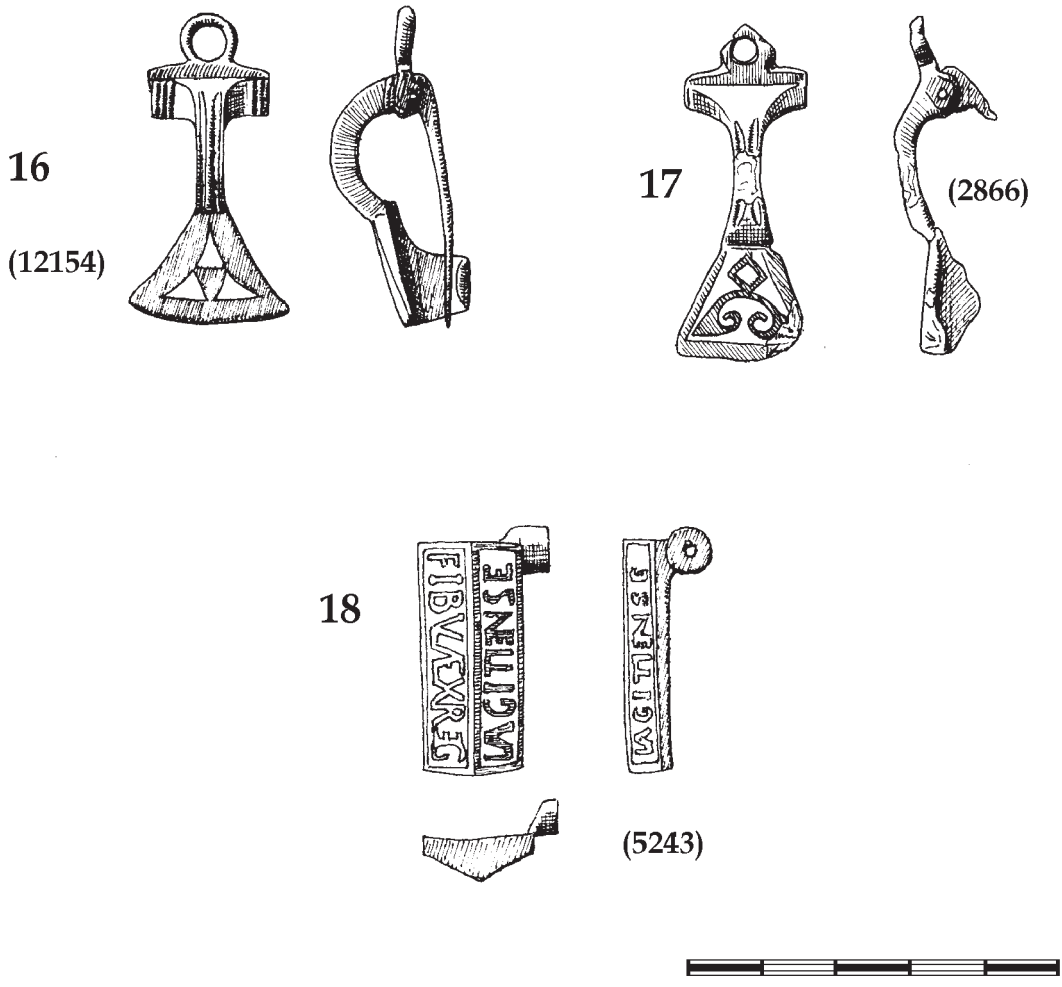


FIG. 4. 16. Yarwell, Northants., private collection, (12154); 17. Heckington, Lincs., excavations by B.B. Simmons unpublished, (2866); 18. N Alford, Lincs., private collection, (5243).

ceases to be made and it is only a matter of chance that none has come from a context dating between A.D. 60 and 70.

The distribution (Table 1, late Fantail) shows clearly that the core area is Norfolk and the western Fen margin up into Yorkshire, but that examples are to be found fairly widely scattered.

What I have tried to show is that the tight-knit distribution of the Rearhook was destroyed, but not before hinged-pin variations had developed in the same area. What might be descried here is the effect of the suppression of the Iceni at the end of the Boudiccan episode during which it is agreed that the tribe was heavily, if not savagely, treated. However, the core brooch-making trade was not actually destroyed. It is true that the mark of the tribe, the Rearhook, was more or less abandoned, but the newer, hinged-pin, types were taken into the areas around and made there.

One aspect of the suppression of the Iceni which seems not to have received much attention

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is what, precisely, the punishment handed out was. It seems that the brutal acts under Suetonius Paullinus were stopped and a more ameliorative attitude introduced under the new procurator Classicianus[8] and a new *civitas*, *Venta Icenorum*, formed *c.* A.D. 70, the troops holding the territory being removed at about the same time.[9] Now as it happens at least seven hinged-pin Colchester Derivatives of the Fantail type discussed came from Castleford. North Alford in Lincolnshire has produced a second example of the only type of brooch with an inscription saying it is a brooch, which in addition comes from the region of Castleford: a Knee type having FIBVLA EX REGIO LAGITIENSE (FIG. 4, 18) on scrolls reserved in two enamel panels. The type is basically second-century in date, but what it has to say of the place and its area is of interest.

Information on *regiones* in Britain is sketchy: one in charge of an unspecified region, but presumably one in which Bath lay, is recorded as having made good a religious place there;[10] another lay around Ribchester and is associated with the settlement of Sarmatians in A.D. 175.[11] A.H.M. Jones points out that there were large blocks of imperial land in the East known variously as *regiones*, *tractus* or *saltus* which were not part of the territory of any city. He suspects that they were in the main old royal lands, in which case they would date back into the first century.[12] It would be foolish to see this as having been the case in Britain, but there remains the possibility that some lands had been forfeited to the *Patrimonium*, perhaps in the lands of the Brigantes, and there also remains the possibility that members of a disaffected tribe might be moved to some supervised area, a kind of enforced diaspora. Thus it might be that skilled metalworkers from amongst the Iceni had been transferred to Castleford. The earliest date for one of the hinged-pin Fantails from there is *c.* A.D. 71/4, which accords well with the possible termination of military occupation of Norfolk and the foundation of Castleford. It would seem to follow that there is a strong likelihood that the unit which founded Castleford came from Norfolk

We know so little about the organisation of trades and workshops that the displacement of some brooch types should not be passed over tacitly: they *may* represent deliberate plantation, but how is the case to be proved one way or another?

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Peterborough
dfm@globalnet.co.uk

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