

Sporting finds: (above) gilt or silvered brass 25mm buttons worn by gamekeepers accompanying visiting gentry: 142 Halliday of Henstead; 150 Revett of Ash; 151 Kerdiston of Henham.

(below) 83 collar-plate and 138 livery button of their host, Peter Thellusson, later Lord Rendlesham; 126 intaglio fob of a hound below 'HALLOO'

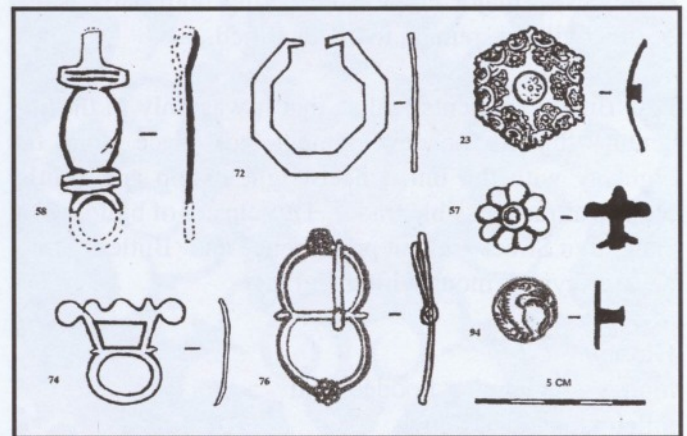
The loss can be narrowly dated because in 1809 Thellusson was created Baron Rendlesham and used his crest thereafter. His choice of device, a greyhound flanked by wings, hints at a passionate sporting interested. The crest occurs on no fewer than five gilt buttons lost in the field. Identical buttons are commonly found on his estates, an indication of the numbers of game keepers who wore the Rendlesham blue velvet livery. Amongst David's finds, flat one-piece brass buttons preponderate. Three-piece buttons include a few 18th and 19th century Royal Artillery uniform buttons, and buttons stamped 'Sporting New Designs'. The latter have charming embossed images of horses or game and were used on everyday waistcoats. A broken fob bears a further sporting motif – a glass intaglio of a running hound with 'HALLOO' above it.

The significance of the finds

Stray Roman coins are unremarkable common losses in local fields. However, in this field there are two gaps, the first of a thousand years before a couple of long cross pennies were lost in the 14th century, followed by another gap until the 19th. The later coins are few and of low value dating from Victoria to George V. Outside those reigns there are two inexplicable losses – a Dutch East India Company *duit* of 1794 and a Swiss 20 cent coin minted in 1964!

The range of artefacts is intriguing, but the periods unrepresented may be clues to changing land use. Absence of Anglo-Saxon losses suggests that there was no settlement in the immediate area. In the Medieval Period, finds which may be associated with the nearby monastery include a seal matrix, a book clasp, a pilgrim brooch, a religious medallion and a rare barrel padlock. Similarly in the 16th and early 17th centuries when the

Warde, Bonde and Hathe families were farming this land, distinctive buckles, belt studs and a girdle were lost.



9. Late Medieval and Early Post-Medieval items of costume.

Copper alloy: girdle-hanger 58; buckles 74 and 76; gilt stud 94; probably enamelled 23.

Lead tin alloy: brooch 72 and stud 57

Simple undecorated items, such as drape (curtain) rings and lead fishing weights have a wide date range, extending to the Post Medieval Period. A couple of padlocks and some eyelets are even more recent. As might be expected, buttons and buckles account for a third of all finds and the majority are undecorated utilitarian fasteners. Chunky brass buckles with offset bars clearly derive from harness and continued to be worn by working horses in the last century.

Women are little represented. Six machine-made thimbles suggest a domestic setting, but I was informed by a Blaxhall grandmother that they were also worn to protect finger-tips when gleaning fields after harvest. A total of three dainty buttons, a cheap brooch, and a gilt, a green glass and a copper alloy pendant imply losses during leisure or courting rather than work. Only a few tiny sherds and occasional clay pipe-stems were found.

Conclusion

While villagers have always been in the habit of reclaiming building materials, a residual spread of broken brick, tile and pottery might be anticipated to provide a clue to the location of demolished houses. Unknown to him at that time, the majority of David Boast's finds did not derive from the area of the present field we now know was occupied by Woodhouse's original four acres, nor from any specific area in the rest of the field. The artefacts themselves are not for the most part characteristic of domestic occupation, nor of arable farming enriched with farmyard waste, but rather