

News & Views

Rare Coin Fetches £30,000



On 24 June, Spink auctioned the first gold coin struck in the name of an English king. The Anglo-Saxon gold shilling of King Eadbald of Kent, dating from c.620-635 was sold for £30,000 – it was expected to fetch £8,000.

This is the first gold coin struck in the name of an English king and a rare and important piece of English history. Found near Deal, Kent in 2010, this type of coin was long known to be among the earliest of Anglo-Saxon gold coins with a single example present in the important Crondall hoard found in Hampshire in 1828 which was hidden c.670. However, the conclusive attribution of these coins to King Eadbald of Kent, who reigned from 616 to 640, was only made in 1998.

On the obverse "AVDVARLD REGES" is written and is trans-

lated as "of King Audvarld". The name "Auduarldus" appears in **Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica** completed in 731 in which he wrote about King Eadbald of Kent. The reverse inscription is a corruption of the word LONDENV indicating London as the mint or die source for this coin.

The real significance of these coins, though, is in the obverse inscription which names the historical figure of King Eadbald. This is exceptional for a coin of this period and is only certainly found again at the end of the 7th century with the silver coins of Aldfrith of Northumbria (685-705). As such the Eadbald gold shilling is the earliest coin issued in the name of an English king.

Only six coins of this type are recorded. Of these, five are kept in institutional collections.

New Numismatic Journal on the Internet

Coins Weekly is a new numismatic journal that is published weekly on the Internet. The focus is on Antiquity and European numismatics. Every week a new numismatic-historical article is published. All articles are then stored in the archives for future viewing. The website provides the

user with news – updated every Friday – on current events of the numismatic scene. View the website or subscribe to the newsletter (upper right on the News page) to stay informed. www.coinsweekly.com

CoinsWeekly



Oldest Roman Coin Left on the Shelf

The oldest Roman coin in Britain has been found after sitting on a shelf in a museum undiscovered for a decade.

The silver *denarius* Roman Republic coin dating from 211 BC was found during an excavation in 2000 at Hallaton, Leics.

But the coin sat in storage at a Leicester museum with 5,000 other coins found at the dig, waiting to be dated by experts.

The coin, which would have been the equivalent of a day's pay for a soldier, is more than 250 years older than the Roman Conquest and predates Britain's previous oldest Roman coin by four years.

Helen Sharp, Hallaton Treasure project manager, said it was a big shock to discover they had such a significant find right under their noses.

She said: "The coin had been kept in storage for ten years in a low humidity room, just sitting there on a shelf. It was such a big surprise when we found out it is the oldest Roman coin in



the country – it was dug up a decade ago. It is such a huge task to log and date coins, as the hoard was so large.

The coin was finally dated in 2009, but we didn't realise it was Britain's oldest until now. It is really exciting that treasure discovered ten years ago can still keep surprising us."

The coin is now set to be a star attraction of the collection being displayed at Harborough Museum, in Market Harborough, Leicestershire. (Extract from the *Ipswich & District Detector Club Newsletter*)

Culture Minister Tries Detecting

In early June, Wantage MP and Minister for Culture Ed Vaizey joined the members of the Oxford Blues MDC for his first metal detecting experience. At a farm in Oxfordshire, Ed was shown a good selection of detecting finds and was very impressed with them. He was given the use of a Laser Hawkeye, as club members decided it would be best suited for a first timer to get to grips with.

He quickly got the hang of the machine and after finding



Ken Marshall (Sites Officer) and Ed Vaizey with his find.

aluminium foil and a drinks can top, his persistence paid off and eventually he did find a coin – only a 1971 2p piece, but a coin nonetheless.

Despite not having a lot of time as he had a hectic schedule, he clearly enjoyed the experience.

52,000 Roman Coins Found

One of the largest ever finds of Roman coins in Britain has been made by detectorist Dave Crisp from Devizes in Wiltshire.

The hoard of more than 52,000 coins dating from the 3rd century AD was found buried in a field near Frome in Somerset in a huge jar just over a foot below the surface.

"The coins were all contained in a single clay pot. Although it only measured 18 inches (0.45m) across, the coins were packed inside and would have weighed an estimated 160kg." Dave reckoned.

The hoard, which has been valued at up to 3.3 million pounds, includes hundreds of coins bearing the image of Marcus Aurelius Carausius, the Roman naval officer who seized power in Britain and northern France in the late 3rd century and proclaimed himself emperor until he was assassinated in 293.

Having made many finds over the years, this is Dave's first major coin hoard.

After his detector gave a "funny signal", Dave dug down 14 inches before he found what had caused it. "I put my hand in, pulled out a bit of clay and there was a little radius, a little bronze Roman coin. It was very, very small, about the size of my fingernail".

He recovered about 20 coins before discovering that they were in a pot, and realised he needed expert help.

He reported the find to the authorities, allowing archaeologists to excavate the site and since the discovery in late April, experts from PAS have been working through the find.

"Because Dave resisted the temptation to dig up the coins, it has allowed archaeologists from Somerset County Council to carefully excavate the pot and its contents," said Anna Booth, local FLO.

"The hoard is one of the largest ever found in Britain, and will reveal more about the nation's history in the 3rd century", said Roger Bland, of the British Museum. "The late 3rd century AD was a time when Britain suffered barbarian invasions, economic crises and civil wars," Roger said.

"Roman rule was finally stabilised when the Emperor Diocletian formed a coalition with



Hundreds of the coins bear the image of Marcus Aurelius Carausius.



The coins being removed in contextual layers.

A section of the removed rim.



Dave Crisp, in the centre, oversees the dig.



the Emperor Maximian, which lasted 20 years. This defeated the separatist regime which had been established in Britain by Carausius.

"This find presents us with an opportunity to put Carausius on the map. School children across the country have been studying Roman Britain for decades, but are never taught about Carausius our lost British emperor."

"I don't believe myself that this is a hoard of coins intended for recovery," says Sam Moorhead from PAS. "I think what you could see is a community of people who are

actually making offerings and they are each pouring in their own contribution to a communal ritual votive offering to the gods."

Footnote On 22 July a Somerset Coroner declared the Frome Hoard to be Treasure. The Treasure Valuation Committee is expected to recommend a value for the hoard in October 2010. Somerset County Heritage Services hope to buy it for the Museum of Somerset, which is due to open in 2011.



Dave Crisp examines the coins.

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