

DISCOVERY OF ROMAN COINS AT  
SIMONSWOOD, IN  
THE PARISH OF KIRKBY, LANCASHIRE.

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SOME interesting "finds" have taken place in the township of Simonswood, which possess especial features of interest for the members of this Society, and for historical students generally. In July, 1893, during somewhat extensive operations connected with the cleaning of what is known as the Simonswood Brook, three most interesting Roman coins were found in the brook, near what is known as Basford's farm.

Each of the coins is a Roman "first brass"; two being of the Emperor Trajan, one of these, well preserved, has on the obverse the Emperor's head and the inscription, *TRAIANO AUG. GER. P.P.*; the reverse bearing a figure of Mars standing. The third coin is of the Emperor Hadrian, but, being in a very poor state of preservation, it is difficult to make anything of it. As specimens, the coins are, no doubt, of very little intrinsic value. They were found about 18 inches below the bed of the brook, embedded in a wet, peaty soil. Every precaution was taken to secure the complete inspection of the bed of the brook, but no other discoveries were made.

Small as the "find" is, it presents a field for inquiry. In a map of 1769, kept in the Estate Office at Croxteth, the course of the brook appears to be very similar to that which it now takes, and there is no local tradition of its having taken any other. Long after the Roman era, the township of Simonswood was mostly a marshy forest, and no doubt this brook is a relic of a once extensive

carr. As early as 1700 the moss-land, near the spot where the coins were found, was being brought into cultivation; and the field names in the neighbourhood, such as "Great," and "Little" "Sand Hey," "The Rushy Meadows," "Water Meadows," "Wet Car," and innumerable instances of "Moss Hey," indicate its former condition.

It is, however, interesting to note that in the adjoining township of Kirkby there were discovered some years ago the remains of a (supposed) Roman pavement, and a crock. Unfortunately, the beneficial influence exercised by the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire was wanting in those days, and the pavement was ruthlessly broken up, while an inquisitive farm labourer destroyed the crock, in the hopes of finding some coins inside. The "little knowledge" in his case proved, if not a "dangerous," a delusive "thing," for none were found. Probably some member of the Society may be able to say how these coins found their way into Simonswood Brook. Are they the sole remains of some belated Roman, swallowed up, as others have been since, in the treacherous mosses of Simonswood? And how came they to be found so far from any known Roman road or station?

W. E. HILL, F.R.H.S.

[Was there ever a Roman road in this neighbourhood? asks Mr. Thompson Watkin in *Roman Lancashire* (p. 215). An amphora, and a vessel of Samian ware were found at Downholland in 1721. A straight line drawn from Downholland to the ferry over the Mersey, at Widnes, to the camp at Halton, would pass through a place called "Windy Harbour," near Cunsough, by Tarbock, where a "find" of coins occurred, and through Ditton, where, too, coins have also been found. So far the late Mr. Watkin. The spot where these three coins were found in Simonswood Brook would not be far out of the same line.—EDITOR.]

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