

Recent finds of Roman coins from Lancashire: Fifth report

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Roman coin hoards

New hoards have been reported, and additional information provided about hoards that are already on record:

1. Chorley: It is reported that in the early 1960s, construction work in Brooke Street led to the discovery of a small group of coins of the Roman period; these consisted of two Alexandrian *tetradrachms* of the third century AD and one Diocletianic '*folles*'. The position of the coins left no doubt that they had been deposited in the earth a very long time ago, presumably during the Roman period; they were found in the broken base of a reddish-brown pot, and there were no signs of any other pottery debris, suggesting that the coins and the pot-base may have been contained in some kind of wrapper. Whilst it is easiest to assume that the coins represent a small hoard, it remains a possibility that they constituted a votive deposit, especially since they were found in close proximity to a stream. Since all three coins, which were in good condition, were of eastern origin, they serve to emphasise that the most western province of the Roman empire had contacts, perhaps through commerce, with the eastern Mediterranean, a point confirmed by the discovery in the north-west of other groups of coins of eastern origin—for example, the hoards of fourth-century date from Knott Mill, Manchester,¹ nearby Brindle,² and, most recently, Distington in Cumbria.³

¹ D. C. A. Shotter, *Roman coins from north-west England* (Lancaster, 1990), pp. 139–44.

² Shotter, *Roman coins*, p. 150.

³ I. D. Caruana & D. C. A. Shotter, 'A hoard of Roman coins of the third and fourth

The coins (for abbreviations, see end of note):

<i>Tetradrachm</i> of Claudius II, AD 268	Milne, no. 4205
<i>Tetradrachm</i> of Constantius Chlorus, AD 295	Milne, no. 5151
<i>Follis</i> of Diocletian, AD 294–5	RIC VI (Antioch), no. 44a

2. Knott End (Hackensall Hall): Information has come to hand from the grandson of one of the original finders of this hoard (in 1926) to the effect that the coins were found in a leather bag underneath a flat stone at approximately three feet below the ground-surface; they were *not*, as previously suggested, in a stone-lined cist. The leather bag had evidently survived sufficiently well for the coins simply to be ‘tipped’ from it onto a table. It is clear that at an early stage the finder gave a considerable number of the coins to those who were interested in them. The number of coins, therefore, in private possession would appear to be potentially much larger than originally thought.⁴ The same source has provided details of one coin in his possession—an issue of DIVVS CLAVDIVS (RIC 262).

3. Lancaster (Hornsea Pottery): It appears that, in the 1970s, a number of Roman coins was found during construction work on the car-park. Two of these have recently been presented for examination—one each of Constantine I (LRBC I.51) and of Magnentius (LRBC II.221). Although it cannot be regarded as certain that these coins represent part of a hoard, the circumstances of discovery, as related, suggest it as a strong possibility.

4. Lathom: In 1999, fourteen coins were recovered—thirteen *denarii* and a single *sestertius*. The *denarii* consist of the following:

Era	No. of coins	Reference
Vespasian	2	inc. RIC 39
Titus	1	RIC 23
Domitian	2	RIC 92, 140
Trajan	4	inc. RIC 80, 121, 169
Hadrian	4	inc. RIC 264, 332, 334

centuries from Distington, Cumbria’, *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmoreland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society (TCWAAS)*, II (2002), pp. 67–78.

⁴ Shotter, *Roman coins*, pp. 156–58; Shotter, *Roman coins from north-west England: First supplement* (Lancaster, 1995), p. 51; Shotter, *Roman coins from north-west England: Second supplement* (Lancaster, 2000), p. 137.

The *sestertius* is an issue probably of Trajan. The coins may represent the whole of a small hoard, in which case the *denarii* will probably have been stored in a narrow-necked flagon, with the *sestertius* serving as a 'stopper'. These coins were found at a relatively short distance from Ottershead Farm where, in 1949, a much larger group of *denarii* of similar date was found.⁵ Anecdotal evidence holds that the coins found at Ottershead Farm may have represented a redeposition of coins originally found in the nineteenth century; if this 'tradition' is true, then it is possible that the coins found in 1949 and 1999 all belong to a single hoard and that the findspot of the 1999 coins represents the original place of concealment.⁶ I am grateful to Nick Herepath and Simon Bean of Liverpool Museum for information relating to the 1999 find.

5. Lytham: In 2000, six *aes*-coins of fourth-century date were found on or near the shore-line; the coins consist of an issue of Delmatius (*RIC* VII (Heraclea) 155), two of Constans/Constantius II (FEL TEMP REPARATIO—'Phoenix on globe' type), one each of Magnentius and Decentius ('Two Victories' type), and one of Constantius II (FEL TEMP REPARATIO—'Fallen Horseman' type). The overall date-range is thus AD 335—c.355; there are parallels in north-west England for hoards of this period—Hackthorpe⁷ and Ravenglass.⁸ That the present coins represent a part or the whole of a hoard is a possibility at this stage, though this cannot yet be regarded as a certainty. I am grateful to Dr Keith Sugden of The Manchester Museum for information relating to this find.

6. Preesall Hill: A further coin has been reported, which appears to have come from this hoard which was found in the 1930s; the present coin is a radiate copy of Victorinus (*RIC* 115).⁹

⁵ Shotter, *Roman coins*, pp. 159–60.

⁶ Shotter, *Roman coins: First supplement*, p. 52.

⁷ Shotter, *Roman coins: First supplement*, p. 60.

⁸ Shotter, *Roman coins*, p. 206.

⁹ For other finds, see Shotter, *Roman coins*, pp. 160–61; Shotter, *Roman coins: First supplement*, p. 52.

Casual finds of Roman coins

1. Halton-on-Lune: In 1997, a *denarius* of Domitian as Caesar (*RIC* (Vespasian), 242 of AD 77–78) was found close to the site of the Motte-and-Bailey.
2. Ribchester: Four coins were reported in 1998 as having been found within the area of the known fort—two of Tetricus I (as *RIC* 52 and 139ff), one unassignable radiate copy and a Constantinian *GLORIA EXERCITVS* (one standard) issue (as *LRBC* I. 87ff).
3. Ribchester: In c.1970, a contemporary copy of a *dupondius* of Claudius I (for Antonia Augusta: *RIC* I (2) 92) was found.¹⁰
4. Rufford, Old Hall: Three coins were reported to have been found in 2001; they are two *sestertii* (one probably of Hadrian, the other illegible) and a worn unassignable Radiate copy (Information from B. J. N. Edwards).
5. Tewitfield: In 1998, a little-worn *sestertius* of Hadrian (*RIC* 583 of AD 119–21) was recovered, together with a little-worn *denarius* of Faustina II (*RIC* (Marcus), 710).
6. Walton-le-Dale: In 2001, a worn and damaged *denarius* of Vespasian was reported; although the coin could not be precisely identified, the obverse head indicated the coin as an issue of AD 69–71.

Abbreviations

- LRBC*: P. V. Hill, R. A. G Carson and J. P. C. Kent, *Late Roman Bronze Coinage* (London 1960).
- Milne: J. G. Milne, *A Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins* (Oxford, 1971).
- RIC*: H. Mattingly, et al., *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (London 1923–).

¹⁰ For the significance of finds of such coins in north-west England, see Shotter, 'Rome and the Brigantes: Early hostilities', *TCWAAS* 2nd ser. XCIV (1994), pp. 21–34.