

CHRIS RUDD

346 ANCIENT BRITISH HOARDS

and a big new book about them

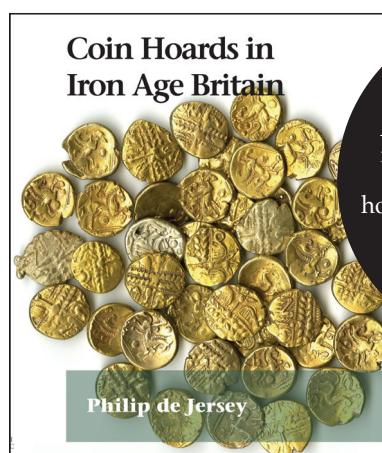
SINCE the mid 17th century at least 346—yes, 346—hoards of Iron Age coins have been found in Britain. Many contained no more than a dozen or so coins, a few comprised well over a thousand. And, of the 241 hoards found since 1971, almost 95 per cent have been discovered as a result of metal detecting. Well done, metdets! These hoards are the subject of a new book by Dr Philip de Jersey who looks behind the statistics and reveals the stories behind them. As a taster, this article retells the stories of five significant hoards of recent years.

A big new hoard book

Let me introduce you to Dr Philip de Jersey of Guernsey, archaeologist, numismatist and author of *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain*. In this mammoth new book he tells you all you could possibly want to know. Hoards in pots, bags, purses, flint nodules, wooden boxes and barrels, beakers and bronze bowls, cow bones and ox bones. Hoards from hilltops, hillforts, south-east slopes, river-bends, old roads, beaches, bogs, cliff-falls, temple-sites and ritual-feasting sites littered with pig bones. Hoards with coin blanks, coin pellets, ingots, gold jewellery, gold neck torcs, small bronze votive shields and a Roman silver parade helmet. Hoards found by farmers, shepherds, gardeners, ploughmen, quarrymen, archaeologists, nice metdets, nasty nighthawks and "Mr Kilmester when ferreting at Holdenhurst". You'll find them all—all 346 of them—in *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain*. All described in great detail with wit and wisdom and human anecdotes.

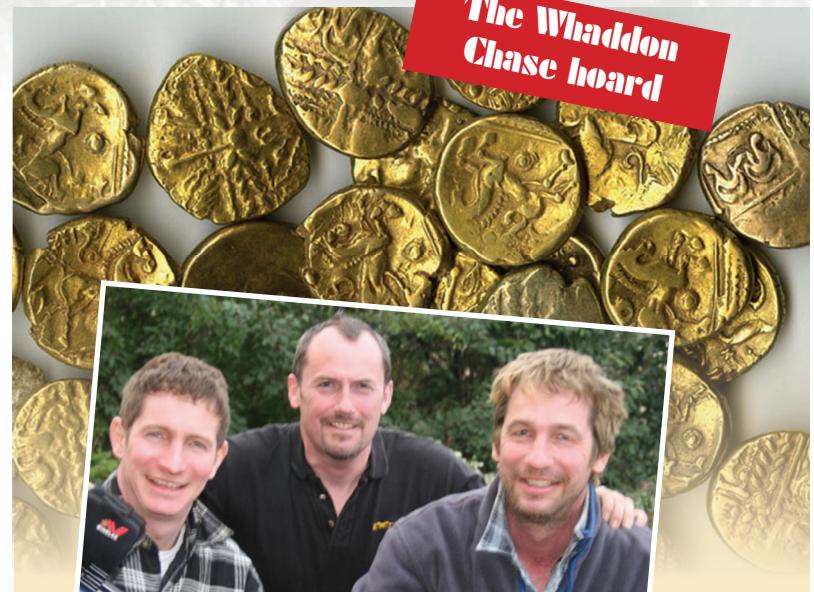
The book is a treasure-chest of juicy gems you won't find anywhere else. For instance, did you know that Britain's first recorded hoard of Iron Age coins—"no small number of silver pieces" found near Norwich—was published in 1658 by Sir Thomas Browne, physician and author of *Religio Medici*, knighted by Charles II in Norwich in 1671? No, I didn't either and I live near Norwich.

The book took eight years to compile. It's as thick as a brick. It weighs nearly four pounds (about 300 gold staters) and it runs to almost 500 fact-packed figure-filled pages. By any standards *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* is a colossal, decade-defying reference book of monumental yet meticulous scholarship. This is the first comprehensive account of Ancient British coin hoards—the first you can truly trust, because Philip returns to



*Coin
Hoards in
Iron Age Britain*
is a large hardback with
474 pages, 39 tables, 22
hoard maps all in colour, 15
illustrations in text.
£65 + p&p
from Chris Rudd

*It's as thick as a brick, weighs
nearly 4lbs and costs £65.
"Worth every penny" says
Dr John Sills.*



Top: Early Whaddon Chase type gold staters (ABC 2433) from Whaddon Chase hoard, 2006. Minted to pay tribute to Rome c.53–51 BC? (Image courtesy Ros Tyrrell, Bucks County Museum/PAS.)

Above: Finders of the Whaddon Chase hoard, 2006—Gordon Heritage, centre, with metdet brothers Edward and Andrew Clarkson. (Image courtesy Gordon Heritage.)

In 1849, the year after gold was first discovered in the Sierra Nevada, California, a large hoard of gold staters was found at Whaddon Chase, Bucks. News of the find spread fast and attracted many gold diggers who indulged in a four-week frenzy of treasure hunting. Many of these gold prospectors in this gold rush were employed by the landowner. In a report titled "California in Bucks" the *Bucks Herald*, March 17, 1849, said: "Whaddon Chase, which has long been the resort of Nimrods for hunting deer and foxes, has become the land of gold hunters." At the Treasure Trove inquest only 200 coins were declared, a small fraction of the "nearly 2,000" estimated by John Evans in 1864. Who bagged the bulk of the hoard? Who pocketed the cash from converting "a vast quantity" of the coins into gold bullion? We'll never know. In 2006 three metdets—Edward Clarkson, Andrew Clarkson, Gordon Heritage—rediscovered the old Whaddon Chase hoard site and unearthed a further 75 gold staters. How did they feel? "Ed was giggling like a schoolgirl", says Gordon (COIN NEWS, May 2007). I

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The Alton hoards

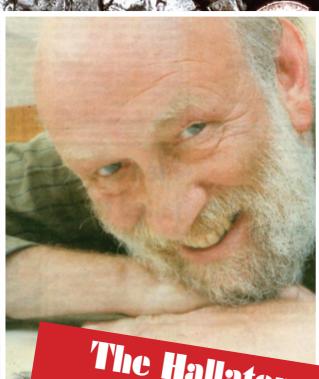


Left: Before this Tincomarus gold stater (ABC 1052) was discovered in the Alton hoards the ruler's name was thought to be Tincommius. In 2007 Chris Rudd sold one for £7,700. (Image courtesy of the British Museum.)

Above: Peter Beasley, left, and Peter Murphy with some of the 256 gold staters they found near Alton, 1996. (Image courtesy John Rogers.)

In 1996 two gold hoards, located just 20 to 30cm apart, were found near Alton, Hampshire, by two metal detectorists, Peter Murphy and Peter Beasley (COIN NEWS, July 1996). The two hoards comprised a total of 256 gold staters, all struck by kings of the Regni and Atrebates, plus a gold finger ring and part of a gold bracelet. First came the ecstasy. "I've found an 'oar', Pete!" yelled Murphy to Beasley. Then came the agony of waiting for a valuation. Beasley couldn't sleep at night, Murphy couldn't keep his temper. They thought their hoards were worth £3 to £4 million. I thought this was insanely high and valued the coins, without the jewellery, at £110,000. In the end they were awarded £103,000. Pete wasn't pleased, neither was Pete. "It makes a mockery of our honesty," they said. I

Some of almost 5,000 coins to emerge over eight years from the 16 Hallaton hoards. 1,756 of them are of a Corieltavian ruler known as Aunt Cost. (Image courtesy of the British Museum.)



The Hallaton hoards

Above left: Dubno (Togodumnus?) gold quarter stater (ABC 3008) from the Hallaton hoards, type previously unknown. In 2014 Chris Rudd sold one for £10,200. (Image courtesy of the British Museum.)

Above right: Ken Wallace and some of the coins from the Hallaton hoards. (Image courtesy of Debbie Allen. Leicester Mercury.)

After more than eight years of fieldwork, archaeological excavation and laboratory excavation at the British Museum (2000–09), no fewer than 16 separate hoards of almost 5,000 coins—mostly silver coins of the Corieltaui—were recovered from a hilltop near Hallaton, Leicestershire. The hoard site was originally discovered by Ken Wallace after 26 years of fieldwalking (COIN NEWS, June 2003). "I'm not excited about the money," he told me. "I'm just pleased we have found a perfect piece of community archaeology which will help people to learn more about

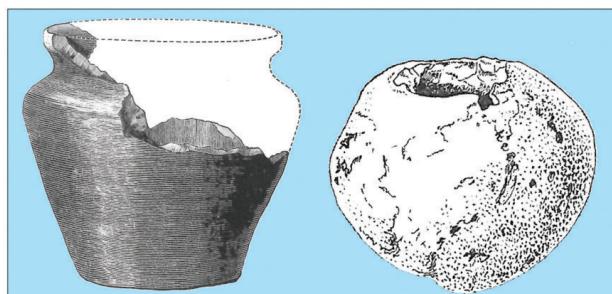
primary sources, often correcting antique errors; the first that you'll keep consulting, because it's a delight to use. Indeed, it's a numismatic treasure that will keep giving pleasure.

"Has proved invaluable"

Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain is by definition a specialist reference book of special interest to certain well defined specialist groups. "Initially it sounded a little specialised to me," says collector Dominic Helps. "What made me invest was that I thought the book would help me to understand the tribal demarcations in the area where I live. Philip's book has proved invaluable and I am sure will become an old friend." As a dealer, I too deem it indispensable and use it daily when cataloguing. What of Iron Age scholars? What do they think? I asked three:

John Talbot, a specialist in Icenian coins, says: "*Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* has immediately become an essential aid to any study of British Iron Age coinage. Having a list of all known hoards and their contents up to a recent date would have been valuable in itself, but this work is far more than that. Philip is our leading expert on the entirety of the earliest British coinage and this book also benefits from his overview and interpretation of the material. By going back to original sources Philip has in some cases resolved ambiguities and in others identified problems that we didn't know existed. Particularly impressive in my area of study is the lengthy section which gives the fullest possible analysis of the coins from the 'Bowl Hoard', which was found at Snettisham and dispersed without being declared".

Dr David Woods, a classical scholar and numismatist, says: "*Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* is an indispensable research



Freckenham hoard "crock", Suffolk, 1885 (left), and hollow flint containing a hoard of 11 gold staters found at Higham, Kent, 1911. (Image from Procs Soc. Antiqu., 1889 and 1912.)



Angular Bull type cast potin (ABC 171) from Takeley hoard, found in gully of Iron Age roundhouse at Stansted Airport, Essex, 1987. (Image courtesy Celtic Coin Index.)

guide. It provides an accurate and detailed record of the circumstances surrounding the discovery of every hoard, and a salutary warning that the current rate of discovery surely cannot continue for much longer. The fact that it refers to all coins by their ABC reference (rather than BMC) will make it much easier to use than it might otherwise have been, and highlights the value of ABC itself in providing an up-to-date reference tool as the start of other forms of research."

"Monumental treasury"

Dr John Sills, co-author of *Ancient British Coins* (Chris Rudd, 2010), says: "Philip de Jersey's monumental treasury is the most thorough and detailed assemblage of coin hoards I know of for any series of coins anywhere in the world. No-one other than the author has, or perhaps ever will have, the all-round mastery

Bookshelf special feature

of the field necessary to do work of this breadth and exactitude. Many finds have been reconstructed partly or wholly from diverse trade and private sources and to do this requires an encyclopaedic knowledge of the material. In the case of older hoards the existence of a *corpus* that removes the need to constantly revisit the original sources will save academics a huge amount of time and greatly accelerate progress in the subject. Almost every one of the many thousands of coins listed has its own unique Oxford Celtic Coin Index (CCI) number, a large proportion recorded by Philip himself in the course of nearly two decades work there, and the book is a testament to the central importance of this unique resource to Iron Age studies."



Dr Philip de Jersey, archaeologist in Guernsey, was formerly keeper of the Celtic Coin Index at Oxford for 15 years.

What of the muddy-booted fieldworker with cans on his head? Will this book be of "central importance" and a "unique resource" to him? Yes, it could be. Charles Brown, an experienced metal detectoist, says: "If you want to find a Celtic coin hoard, *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* is where you begin looking, not in a field. It could save you years of fruitless and frustrating research, because Dr Philip de Jersey has already done most of the mind-grinding deskwork for you. His 22 maps and hundreds of grid references (many of them six-figure) pinpoint the places where you're most likely to find a new hoard or stragglers from an old hoard. Some sites have produced two or three different hoards, Hallaton has delivered no fewer than 16. *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* acknowledges the crucial contribution made by metal detecting. Philip reveals that 88 per cent of the hoards discovered since 1971 have been found as a result of metal detecting; if the archaeologically-excavated Hallaton hoards are included, that figure rises to almost 95 per cent."

Collectors, dealers, scholars, metdets. They're applauding the birth of *Coin Hoards in Iron Age Britain* after a protracted pregnancy. And they're congratulating its indefatigable father whose actual son, Sam, was born on April 19, 2014, just a few days before the text was finished. Congratulations are richly deserved. This book is the bible of Ancient British coin hoards and its author is a saint for undertaking the task. To quote another magnificently meticulous numismatist, Rainer Kretz, if Philip de Jersey wasn't already up there with the two gods of Celtic numismatics—Sir John Evans and Derek Allen—he is now.

Images courtesy of Chris Rudd unless otherwise stated.

the Corieltaovi." Ken's wife Hazel said: "We were bursting to tell people, but we knew we couldn't" in case "nighthawks" raided the site, which they did anyway, stealing hundreds of coins). Liz and I valued the coins and artefacts, including the remains of a Roman parade helmet, at £450–460,000. The sum awarded was £300,000. Ken was understandably disappointed. I

Cranborne Chase silver staters (ABC 2157) from Brightstone hoard, after cleaning and conservation by Chris Rudd.

In 2005 a huge hoard of 967 Durotrigan silver and silver-plated staters, together with the base and lower part of the hoard pot, were unearthed by metdets near Brightstone on the Isle of Wight (COIN NEWS, February 2006). This was an important hoard because it included over 300 examples of

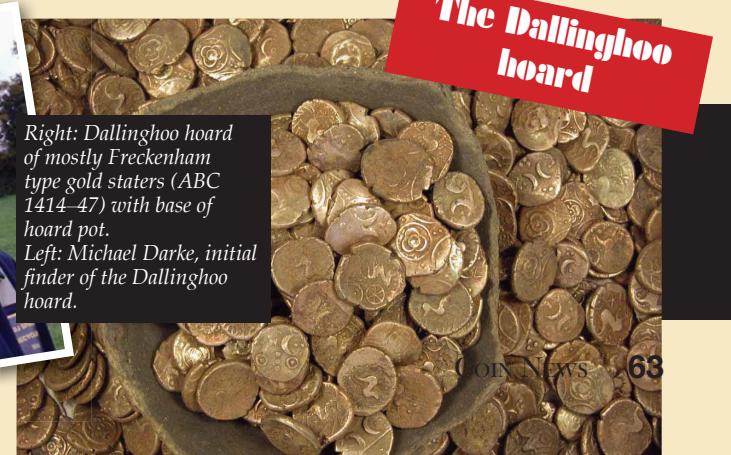
the once very rare Spread Tail type (ABC 2160) and because it was responsibly recovered and reported, allowing the hoard to be examined by the British Museum. The initial finder was a 74-year-old retired postman, Albert Snell. "I just knew I'd hit the jackpot," he said. His wife Barbara told me: "When he was talking about it the next day he was so choked up he just sat down and cried and cried." Liz and I were pleased to be able to buy Albert's share of the hoard. I



The Brightstone hoard

Retired postman Albert Snell with Brightstone hoard, as excavated. (Image courtesy Isle of Wight County Press.)

In 2008–09 a large hoard of 840 gold staters, all but five issued by the Iceni, was excavated at Dallinghoo, Suffolk, 52 of them by archaeologists (COIN NEWS, January 2009). It's one of the biggest hoards of Iron Age gold coins, if not the biggest, ever found in Britain and one of the most valuable—numismatically, archaeologically, commercially—because it was unearthed virtually in situ, where it was buried 2,000 years ago in an earthenware pot. The metdet who discovered the hoard, Michael Darke, told me "My machine suddenly went doolally and I knew for sure I was standing right on top of a crock of gold." I asked him how it felt to find a gold hoard. "Like winning the lottery," he replied. "But it's not the money that interests me. It's the history that turns me on." Michael's sweet taste of success turned sour when his friend and fellow metdet, Keith Lewis, claimed half of the finder's award (COIN NEWS, June 2011). The hoard was valued at £300,000 (very low, in my view), which meant that Michael—the initial finder, the man who first discovered the hoard—ended up with only £75,000. I felt sorry for him. I



The Dallinghoo hoard

Right: Dallinghoo hoard of mostly Freckenham type gold staters (ABC 1414–47) with base of hoard pot.
Left: Michael Darke, initial finder of the Dallinghoo hoard.