A HOARD OF SILVER COINS OF THE ICENI FROM HONINGHAM, NORFOLK

By R. Rainbird Clarke, M.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.

I. CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISCOVERY

In 1954–5 a hoard of 340 silver coins of the Iceni came to light in the parish of Honingham, Norfolk, eight miles west of Norwich. This is the first hoard of this type recorded to have been found for nearly 70 years and the first in which it has been possible to examine any associated objects and excavate the actual site. Though this hoard has yielded no dramatic revelations about the silver coinage of the Iceni, it provides an opportunity for a brief survey of similar hoards and their chronology.

The hoard was found in an arable field on the south side of the Norwich-Mattishall main road about 330 yards south-east of Grange Farm (O.S. 6 inch Norfolk sheet 62 NW.; National Grid map reference TG/102112). On 27 July 1954 the farmer, Mr. P. R. Rolph, was hoeing sugar-beet in this field when his hoe dug in deeper than usual and pulled to the surface the base of a small pot from which fell a group of corroded silver coins, of which he collected 100. The next day he dug over the top soil, which had been ploughed to a depth of 12 to 14 inches for the first time in the previous March, and on finding 202 further coins reported the discovery to the Castle Museum, Norwich. I visited the site on the following day and excavated the area around the site, finding 11 more coins and fragments of the pot. The discovery was then reported to the local police for the attention of the district coroner, who held an inquest on 19 August on the 313 coins, at which a verdict of treasure trove was recorded. Subsequently, in March 1955 when the crop had been lifted, I was able to re-excavate the site on a larger scale and recover a further 27 coins and other fragments of the pot which had been dispersed by the plough. This brought the total of coins recovered to 340, but in view of the fact that much of the upper part of the pot which contained the hoard is still missing, other coins from it may have been scattered more widely, though the bulk of the hoard is likely to have been found in view of the size of the container. The full market value of the coins has been paid to Mr. P. R. Rolph as an ex gratia payment for reporting the discovery.

II. ASSOCIATED FIND

From the finder’s evidence, most, if not all, of the coins in the hoard were originally contained in the small pot of which the base remains intact and of which some fragments of the upper portion survive. This association is confirmed by the impressions on the inside of the base.

For detailed report of inquest see Eastern Daily Press, 20 August 1954.
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resulting from contact with the debased silver coins. The pot (partly reconstructed in Fig. 1) is a well-known type of ovoid butt-beaker in brown ware decorated with horizontal cordons framing faint vertical combings. The form is derived from a Gallo-Belgic original and local copies in this and similar wares have been found in quantity at Camulodunum where Form 112 c21 is analogous. The chronological range of the type at this site is Periods I–IV corresponding to A.D. 10–61. The Honingham pot may have been made in Norfolk or imported from the Camulodunum area.

III. Catalogue of the Coins

References are to Evans, *The Coins of the Ancient Britons*, 1864 and 1890; Mack, *The Coinage of Ancient Britain*, 1953

Weights are in grains

|Mack 407 (Evans, xvi. 11)| 1 coin
- 17'3

|Mack 408 (Evans, xvi. 10)| 4 coins
- 18'9, 18'7, 18'4, 17'0

|Mack 409 (Evans, xvi. 9)| 14 coins
- 19'5, 19'4, 19'3 (2), 18'7, 18'4, 18'2, 17'8, 17'7, 17'6, 17'5, 17'4, 16'1, 11'8

|Mack 413 (Evans, xvi. 7)| 84 coins
- 20'9, 20'3, 20'2, 20'0 (2), 19'9, 19'8 (2), 19'7 (2), 19'6 (2), 19'5 (2), 19'4 (5), 19'3, 19'2 (5), 19'1 (4), 19'0 (6), 18'9 (7), 18'8 (7), 18'7 (2), 18'6 (2), 18'5 (6), 18'4 (2), 18'3 (5), 18'2 (5), 18'1 (2), 18'0 (2), 17'6, 17'5, 17'4, 17'3 (2), 17'2, 16'2, 13'3, 12'4
- Var. (see p. 3) 1 coin
- 17'6*

|Mack 415 (Evans, xvi. 1)| 4 coins
- 19'5, 18'4, 18'0, 17'7

|Mack 419 (Evans, xv. 9)| 5 coins
- 20'0, 19'7, 18'6, 18'3, 17'8

|Mack 420 (Evans, xv. 10)| 10 coins
- 20'0, 19'1, 19'0 (2), 18'7 (2), 18'2, 18'1 (2), 18'0

1 Hawkes and Hull, *Camulodunum*, 1947, Pl. lvii.
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Var. a (see p. 4) 39 coins

Var. b (see p. 4) 4 coins
19-9, 18-8, 18-2, 12-9

Mack 423 (Evans, xv. 12) 20 coins
19-9, 19-8, 19-4, 18-9, 18-4, 18-0

Var. (see p. 4) 20 coins
20-0, 19-7, 19-6, 19-0, 18-9 (3), 18-8 (2), 18-6, 18-2 (2), 15-8, 12-9

Mack 424 (Evans, xv. 1, 2) 33 coins

Mack 425 (Evans, xv. 3) (object on horse's shoulder is trefoil) 21 coins

Mack 427 (Evans, xv. 5) 22 coins

Mack 428 (Evans, xv. 6) 6 coins
19-7, 19-0, 18-9, 18-3, 12-8, 8-9 (chipped)

Mack 429 5 coins
19-1, 19-0 (3), 18-2

Var. (see p. 4) 1 coin
19-5*

Mack 432 (Evans, xv. 8) 5 coins
19-5, 15-0 (2), 11-8 (broken), 10-5

Mack 433 (Evans, xv. 7) 1 coin
18-0*

Mack 434 (Evans, xv. 14) 1 coin
18-5

Uncertain
Mack 419 or 420 (Evans, xv. 9 or 10) 16 coins
19-6, 19-3, 19-2, 18-6, 18-5, 18-4, 18-2, 17-8, 17-6, 17-5, 17-1, 16-8, 16-6, 15-8, 13-0, 11-5

Mack 423 or 424 (Evans, xv. 1, 2, or 12) 28 coins

Mack 419–29 (Evans, xv. 1–13) 15 coins
20-8, 19-8, 19-0, 18-8 (3), 18-4, 18-3, 18-2, 18-0, 17-9 (3), 17-8, 15-0

The coins marked with an asterisk have been acquired by the British Museum, the remainder by the Norwich Castle Museum.

IV. THE HOARD AND ITS DATE

All the types of silver coins in this hoard have been illustrated previously except for varieties of Mack’s types 413, 420, 423, and 429.¹ These are illustrated in PI. XIV and are as follows:

413 var. Obverse—Crude human head to the right. (PI. XIV, 4)
Reverse—Horse to right with pellet below tail and beaded rosette above with triangle over mane. (PI. XIV, 5)

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420 var. (a) As Mack's description except on reverse three pellets in line sloping downwards from trefoil under horse. (Pl. XIV, 1)

var. (b) As Mack's description except on reverse three pellets in horizontal line between T and D. (Pl. XIV, 2)

423 var. As Mack's description except on reverse three pellets instead of two beneath horse. (Pl. XIV, 3)

429 var. Obverse as Mack's description. Reverse—Horse to the right with seven-beaded rosette and trefoil above. Three pellets in sloping line beneath horse with tripetalon below. Pellet beneath horse's tail. (Pl. XIV, 6, 7)

Minor corrections should be made to the descriptions published by Mack of his types 424 and 429. On the reverse of his type 424 there are three, not two, pellets beneath the horse, as is clearly shown on Evans (1864), Plate xv, i and 2. The reverse of type 429 is described as having a "peculiar I-shaped object" beneath the horse, but this is obviously a tripetalon.

Mack has stated that the weight of the inscribed silver coins of the Iceni ranges between 15 and 20 grains, but the evidence of the more extensive series available from the Honingham hoard shows that the weights of both the inscribed and uninscribed silver coins are generally between 17 and 20 grains. In describing the hoard from Santon Downham, Suffolk, Evans noted that the range of weight was from $18\frac{1}{4}$ to $19\frac{1}{2}$ grains.

Apart from the Honingham hoard, silver coins of the Iceni have been found in six other hoards, of which only that from Santon Downham, containing 107 coins with 2 dupondii of Claudius, has been adequately published. Of the remainder, 43 coins with three consular denarii, in museum collections or published illustrations can be identified from the hoard of between 150 and 300 coins from Weston, Norfolk; three and a half miles north of Honingham; six coins are identifiable from the hoard of 40 to 50 coins from March, Cambridgeshire; and fifty from a hoard found at Stonea, Wimblington, in the same county. Five coins from Brettenham, Norfolk, probably come from a hoard of which nothing else is known, and three coins from a hoard of unknown size from Battle, Sussex, can also be identified.

D. F. Allen has arranged the silver coinage of the Iceni in a chronological sequence on stylistic grounds and has suggested that its range in time is from about 15 B.C. to about A.D. 45 with uninscribed types preceding inscribed. The contents of the seven hoards listed above have been arranged in tabular form (p. 10) in chronological order of the issues according to Allen's analysis. The proportion of uninscribed

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3 Smith, Num. Chron. xv, 1853, 98–102; Norf. Arch. iv, 1855, 357–9; Evans, 1864, 361; Arch. Journ. xcvi, 1940, 78–80, 106.
4 Akerman, Num. Chron. i, 1839, 89; Fox, Arch. Cambridge Region, 1923, 88.
5 Evans, 1890, 586–7; Carlyon-Britton Collection (Sotheby's Sale, 17 November 1913, lots 84–87); V.C.H. Cambs. i, 1938, 300.
6 Clarke, Arch. Journ. xcvi, 1940, 103 (only three coins then known).
7 Akerman, Num. Chron. i, 1839, 89.
8 Archaeologia, xc, 1944, 44–45.
to inscribed coins in both the Honingham (4:9) and the Santon Downham (3:8) hoards is very similar, as is the general range of types represented. In the other hoards the proportion of uninscribed to inscribed coins is roughly equal, but the total number of coins represented is too small for great reliance to be placed on the relative frequencies. In general the composition of all these hoards is remarkably uniform and must reflect a cross-section of the tribal currency circulating at the time of deposit. On purely numismatic evidence only, the date of concealment of the Santon Downham hoard can be suggested within narrow limits. The dupondii of Claudius which it contained were minted in A.D. 41 and the date of deposit is probably a few years subsequent to this. Evans suggested A.D. 50–55 as a probable date, and I have pointed out that this hoard and that from Weston are likely to have been buried in the troubles associated with the rising of Boudicca in A.D. 61. The Weston hoard contained Roman republican coins of the Antonia, Cassia, and Claudia families not minted later than 30 B.C. and therefore older than the associated Icenian coins. If, however, Allen’s chronology is correct, and it probably is, then the inclusion of the coin of the AESU issue, with which the Santon Downham series also terminates, must be held to argue for the deposition of the Weston hoard after A.D. 40. The latest coin in the Honingham hoard is the single specimen of the SAEMU issue dated by Allen c. A.D. 45 and presumably struck, in any case, before the abortive Iceni revolt of A.D. 47–48 probably put an end to an independent coinage, for the names of neither Prasutagas nor Boudicca appear in the numismatic record. How long after c. A.D. 45 the Honingham hoard was concealed is a matter for conjecture, but it may well fall into line with those from Santon Downham and Weston and have been concealed during the Roman repression of Boudicca’s revolt of A.D. 61. To judge from the clay soil at the Honingham site, the immediate area probably carried heavy woodland at the date suggested and this isolated hoard far from any known settlement of the period may have been buried there by a refugee.

The continued circulation of Icenian coins even after Boudicca’s revolt has been noted at the Roman town at Caistor-by-Norwich where four uninscribed silver coins were found on a site not occupied till about A.D. 70. The Brettenham hoard comes from a site likewise not occupied before A.D. 61–70 and must reflect the activities of the native population, whether as coinage or bullion, during the second phase of romanization which followed Boudicca’s revolt. The hoards from the Fens, at March and Wimblington (Stonea) in Cambridgeshire, are likely to represent the activities of the native population after the Roman invasion as there is virtually no trace of pre-Roman Iron Age occupation in this area. The coins in these hoards are likely to have been taken into the Fenland after A.D. 61 by conquered rebels.

1 Num. Chron. 2nd ser., ix, 1869, 325–6.
2 Arch. Journ. xcvi, 1940, 79.
4 Norf. Arch. xxiv, 1931, 134.
5 Norf. Arch. xxvi, 1937, 144.
A Hoard of Silver Coins of the Iceni from Honingham, Norfolk of the tribe of the Iceni from farther east in Norfolk or north-west Suffolk, taken, as Professor Richmond has suggested,¹ to labour at the construction of canals for drainage and transport, thus creating a vast area of fertile agricultural land² out of the waste which the Fens had been in the Iron Age. The Wimblington hoard ends with examples of

A Hoard of Silver Coins of the Iceni from Honingham, Norfolk

the AESU and SAEMU issues and so is probably later than c. A.D. 45 on internal evidence alone.

V. The Tribal Area of the Iceni

The limits of the tribal area of the Iceni have been discussed by numismatists¹ and archaeologists² on the basis primarily of the distribution of their coinage, but all the distribution maps³ of this area require modification in some form or other, so that a fresh assessment of the evidence is given here in cartographical form (Fig. 2). In 1940 I pointed out that “only north-west Suffolk, west, north and north-east Norfolk can definitely be considered Icenian with a possible extension of control to the Fen islands of north Cambridgeshire”.⁴ The latter suggestion should now be abandoned in view of the observations made in the preceding section. The distribution pattern attributable to the period c. B.C. 15–A.D. 47–48 shows that the area effectively controlled by the Iceni consisted of the modern county of Norfolk, apart from the Marshland district west of King’s Lynn, and comprised also the Breckland portion of north-west Suffolk as far south and east as Ixworth and Pakenham. This main Icenian concentration in Breckland was separated from south-east Suffolk, which formed part of the Trinovantian tribal area, by a heavily forested area of boulder clay in central Suffolk, while the Devil’s Ditch on Newmarket Heath, admittedly a Dark Ages construction, seems to preserve the line of the Icenian frontier with the Catuvellauni to the south-west, as Fox demonstrated.⁵

VI. Findspots of Iceni Coins

(apart from silver hoards) (Fig. 2)

Detailed references to most of these finds are given in Arch. Journ. xcvi, 1940, 103–6, 110–13. Subsequent discoveries or additions are noted here.

Norfolk

ACLE (near): Evans, Pl. xiv. 13 (gold).
BRANCASTER: Evans, Pl. xv. 7.
BURNHAM THORPE: Probable small hoard of uninscribed silver—now lost.
CAistor-BY-Norwich: Evans, Pl. xvi. 7; xvi. 8 (2 specimens); xvi. 9–14.
CAWSTON: Evans, Pl. xiv. 14 (gold).
INGOLDISTHORPE: Probably one uninscribed silver.
IRSTEAD: Mack 404 (gold ½ stater), now in Norwich Museum.
MIDDLETON: One silver coin.
NORWICH (near): Evans, Pl. xiv. 11; Pl. xiv. 12 (two specimens) (gold).
OXNEAD: Evans, Pl. xiv. 10 (gold).
SAHAM TONEY: One gold coin.

¹ Evans, 1864, 357; Allen, 1944, 39; Mack, 1953, 115.
² Fox, Arch. Cambridge Region, 1923, 90; Antiquity, 1929, 152.
³ Brooke, Antiquity, vii, 1933, Map xii (Iceni and Addedomaros); Clarke, Arch. Journ., xcvi, 1940, Pl. xxii (Iceni and other types in Norfolk and Suffolk); Allen, Archaeologia, xc, 1944, Map vii (Iceni with Durotriges and Dobuni); Mack, The Coinage of Ancient Britain, Map 17 (Iceni only).
⁴ Arch. Journ. xcvi, 1940, 81.
⁵ Fox, Arch. Cambridge Region, 1923, 90.
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THORPE-NEXT-NORWICH: Numerous coins including probably Evans, Pl. xv. 1-6; xv. 9/10; xv. 14; xvi. 7 (all now lost).

THREXTON: Evans, Pl. xv. 2.

WALSINGHAM: Evans, Pl. xvi. 9-14.

WALTON, EAST: Evans, Pl. xvi. 11 (private possession, 1955).

SUFFOLK

BURY ST. EDMUNDS (near): Evans, Pl. xviii. 2 (gold).

FARNHAM: Evans, Pl. xvi. 10.

FRECKENHAM: Hoard of 90 gold coins, including Evans, Pl. xiv. 12 (1); xiv. 13 (49); xiv. 14 (20); xxiii. 6 (8). One coin now in Norwich Museum.

ICKLINGHAM: Evans, Pl. xiv. 14 var.; Pl. xxiii. 4 (gold); Pl. xv. 3; Pl. xvi. 11; Pl. xvi. 5; Pl. xvi. 10 (contemporary forgery); Also Pl. xvi. 7/8 and Pl. xvi. 10 in British Museum.

IXWORTH: Evans, Pl. xvi. 7-9.

LAKENHEATH: Evans, Pl. xvi. 8; Pl. xv. 9 in Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

MILDENHALL (near): Evans, Pl. xxiii. 4 (gold); Pl. xvi. 7; Mack, 431 (not illustrated).

PAKENHAM: Evans, Pl. xvi. 10; xvi. 8.

WANGFORD, near Brandon: Evans, Pl. xvi. 9.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

WISBECH: Near North Station—one silver coin (Wisbech Museum, 1950). (This cannot now be found.)

WISBECH ST. MARY (near): Evans, Pl. xiv. 10 (gold); Evans, 1890, 579.

ESSEX

COLCHESTER: Camulodunum Excavations—Evans, Pl. xvi. 8; Pl. xvi. 9; one related to Evans, Pl. xv. 1 or xvi. 1/2 (Hawkes and Hull, *Camulodunum*, 1947, 135, 141: Pl. xvii. 3).

OUTSIDE EASTERN ENGLAND (not mapped)

BERKSHIRE, Wallingford (near): Evans, Pl. xv. 3/10; Evans, 1890, 587; Seaby, *Berks. Arch. Journ.* xliii, 1938, 84 (10c); xliii. 1939, Pl. iii. 3.

DORSET, Sherborne: Evans, Pl. xv. 4.

HAMPSTEAD, near Portsmouth: Evans, Pl. xv. 1/2; Pl. xv. 12.


YORKSHIRE, Elmswell: Evans, Pl. xvi. 9 (British Museum), Hull Museum Publication, No. 198, 1938, 40.

Other coins previously mapped as Icenic are now in all probability to be attributed to the Coritani, as Mr. D. F. Allen kindly informs me. These include coins from:


Bygrave, Hertfordshire, Evans, Pl. xvi. 12.

Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, Mack 410.

Castor, Northants, Evans, Pl. xvi. 12.

Bridgnorth, Shropshire, Mack 414—unique at present—no real evidence for Icenian origin.

The gold uninscribed coin from Barrington, Cambridgeshire, previously attributed to the Iceni (Fox, *Arch. Cambridge Region*, 1923, 88) proves to be a Morinic stater (Evans, Pl. b. 8).
The Icenian coin hoard marked on Allen's distribution map in north Shropshire (*Archaeologia*, xc, 1944) results from a draughtsman's error.

**Acknowledgements**

I am indebted to Mr. R. H. M. Dolley for contributing the catalogue of the Honingham coins to this report: to Mr. D. F. Allen for freely placing at my disposal his wide knowledge of the British Iron Age coinage, and to the authorities at the British Museum and Norwich Castle Museum for permission to publish the Honingham hoard and to those at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and at Wisbech Museum for facilities for examining the Wimblington hoard, not previously published in detail. I am also grateful to Mr. D. R. Howlett for re-drawing Fig. 2.
<table>
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<th>Evans 1864</th>
<th>Mack 1953</th>
<th>Allen's typology and dating 1944</th>
<th>Honingharn present paper</th>
<th>South Downham N.C.</th>
<th>Weston, B.M. unless noted otherwise</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>Battle</th>
<th>Wimblington, W.M. unless noted otherwise</th>
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| XV. 14 | 434 | CAMUL DURO (B.C. 15-0) |                                 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| XV. 11 | 419 |                                 |                                 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| XV. 9  | 420 |                                 | 53                       | 2 | 2+2 N.C.M. | 2 (N.C.) | 4+4 (C.B.) | 1 |
| XV. 10 | 421 |                                 |                                 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| XV. 12 | 423 | ED (A.D. 10)                  |                                 | 20 | 2 | 2 (N.C.) | 4 | 1 |
| XV. 1, 2| 424 | ECE (A.D. 15)                |                                 | 33 | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| XV. 3  | 425 |                                 | 21                       | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| XV. 4  | 426 |                                 |                                 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| XV. 5  | 427 |                                 | 22                       | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| XV. 6  | 428 |                                 | 6                        | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| XV. 7  | 429 |                                 | 6                        | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| XV. 8  | 432 |                                 | 35                       | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 |
| XV. 7  | 433 |                                 | 1                        | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Uncertain but Inscribed | 419/20 | 16 | | | 16 | | | |
| | 423/4 | 28 | | | 28 | | | |
| | 419/29 | 15 | | | 15 | | | |
| | 425/7 | 10 | | | 10 | | | |
| Total Inscribed | 232 | 78 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 37 |

| Totals | 340 | 107 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Roman | 2 Claudius (B.M.) | 3 Consular (B.M.) | Antonia: Cassia: Claudia | 337 N.C.M. | 21 B.M. | 39 B.M. 5 N.C.M. | 2 B.M. | Unknown | 36 W.M. 2 F.M. | 5 B.M. |

Present locations | 337 N.C.M. | 21 B.M. | 39 B.M. 5 N.C.M. | 2 B.M. | Unknown | 36 W.M. 2 F.M. | 5 B.M. |