SOME DOUBTFUL ST. PETER HOARDS
C. E. BLUNT

‘DERBYSHIRE’ (Dolley no. 64)¹

The only evidence for this hoard that I have traced is a passing reference by Jonathan Rashleigh in his paper on the coinage of Northumbria, published in 1869, to two Sword type St. Peter pennies in his collection having been ‘found together, I believe, in Derbyshire’.² These two coins were lots 185 and 190 in the Rashleigh sale of 1909 where, curiously, the former is described as ‘found near Boxmoor, Herts’ and ‘presented to the late owner by Sir John Evans’.

Is there a possibility that the ‘Boxmoor’ hoard can be equated with the ‘Derbyshire’ hoard and, since, as the next note in this paper argues that Boxmoor is unlikely, that ‘Derbyshire’ was the source of both? The idea may be superficially attractive but must surely be rejected if for no other reason than that there is no mention of the ‘Derbyshire’ provenance in the Rashleigh sale catalogue which was prepared by Mr. Saml. Spink, who would have had access to Rashleigh papers and coin labels when preparing it, nor has any mention of it been found since among his papers of which a quantity have survived.

The question is whether there is any other circumstantial evidence which might support the case for there having been a ‘Derbyshire’ hoard of St. Peter coins found around the middle of the nineteenth century.

In this connection Mr. Pagan has very kindly called my attention to the following lots in the 1853 sale of a deceased Derbyshire resident, Mr. Charles Hurt of Wirksworth:

Lot 39. Burgred, St. Eadmund, Eadweard (2), Æthelred II, Eadweard Confessor, as Hawk. n. 233, all desirable pieces 7 Browne 1.10.0
Lot 40. St. Peter’s penny, varied from Hawkins, n. 132, rare and fine 1 Rashleigh 4.13.0
Lot 41. St. Peter’s penny, varied from Hawkins, n. 133 very rare and very fine 1 Chaffers 4.13.0
Lot 42. St. Peter’s penny, also varied from n. 133, equally rare and fine 1 Chaffers 4.10.0
Lot 43. St. Martin’s penny, two varieties, from Hawkins n. 138, uncertain, probably foreign, all rare and fine 4 Rashleigh 8.12.6
Lot 44. Cnut, all fine and varied 14 Curt 2.0.0
Lot 45. Cnut, as the preceding 14 Christmas 1.8.0

Lots 44 and 45 look like being a parcel from a hoard but not, of course, the one this note is discussing. Lot 39 is, as Pagan describes it,³ ‘a miscellaneous selection such as any non-specialist collector of this date might have amassed’ but he comments on the presence of two examples of Edward the Elder, coins which would have been contemporary with those in lots 40–3. These last lots, Pagan suggests, are likely to have been acquired as a group from a find. Lots 40–2 are three Sword St. Peters, two with

¹ References are to the list of hoards in SCBI Hiberno-Norse, pp. 48-54.
² NC 1869, p. 99, illustrated pl. ii, nos. 20 and 28.
³ In a letter to the writer.
hammer reverses, one with cross. Lot 43 presents more of a problem. The St. Martins must surely be a mis-description. It can be demonstrated by detailed study of the very few surviving specimens that there were not two specimens available for sale in 1853. The one in the Rashleigh sale of 1909, with a pedigree going back to the Hollis sale of 1817, came from the Cuff sale of 1854, and Rashleigh would hardly have bought this had he acquired two in the preceding year. The probability is that the two alleged St. Martins were Sword St. Peters, and the Rashleigh sale catalogue reveals that one of the other coins in the lot, either the 'uncertain' or the 'probably foreign' (unless they are one and the same), was in fact one of those great rarities, a Head type of 'Raienalt', now at Oxford.4

Few will quarrel with Pagan's argument that this parcel of coins consisting of certainly three, and probably five, Sword type St. Peters, a Raienalt, and, possibly, one or two of Edward the Elder must (in the context of this collection) have come from a common source, quite possibly a local hoard. The question is the identification of the hoard.

There are two obvious possibilities: Rashleigh's 'Derbyshire' hoard and the Bossall/Flaxton hoard of 1807. The case for the 'Derbyshire' hoard must rest on the fact that Hurt was of a Derbyshire family and would thus be well placed to acquire coins from a local hoard if it were being dispersed. The case for Bossall/Flaxton rests on the composition of the Hurt parcel which fits in neatly with what we know of this hoard:5 that Bossall is accepted as the prime source of coins of 'Raienalt'; and that the hoard came from a county adjoining Hurt's residence. It was discovered in 1807, when he would have been aged twenty-five, and it was certainly dispersed. Hurt came of a well-to-do family—his father was sheriff of Derbyshire—and he would have been in a position and of an age to have secured a parcel from Bossall.

Professor Dolley and Mr. C. N. Moore weigh up the respective claims of the 'Derbyshire' and Bossall hoards as the source of the Hurt parcel and come down in favour of the former, which they suggest might have been discovered 'in the early 1850s—even the late 1840s',6 but, in the opinion of the present writer, the case for a Bossall provenance seems, for the reasons given above, the stronger. If this is accepted, then the Hurt parcel has no relevance to the problem of the 'Derbyshire' hoard.

Another collection in which examples from an Anglo-Saxon hoard found in Derbyshire in the late 1840s or early 1850s might be expected is that of Thomas Bateman of Lomberdale House, Youlgrave, Co. Derby, who died in 1861. The collection, which contained small parcels from several identified hoards, was dispersed in 1893 and there was no more than a single St. Peter coin in the catalogue.

The case for the 'Derbyshire' hoard being a reality is greatly weakened by the absence of any reference to it in the Rashleigh sale catalogue. It would seem that Rashleigh must have developed doubts about the Derbyshire provenance; had he been satisfied about it, he would surely have noted it either on a coin label or in one of the various papers that he left.

The conclusion of this note is, therefore, that the sole evidence for Rashleigh's 'Derbyshire' find is the passing comment in his 1869 paper, and that it looks as if he himself subsequently rejected it. This being so, that it would be prudent to delete

4 SCBI 226.
5 Now quite a lot, see an article in the forthcoming volume Coinage in Tenth Century England.
6 BNJ xliii (1973), 49.
'Derbyshire' entirely from our hoard lists, unless some new evidence to support it should come to light.

'BOXMOOR' (Dolley no. 61)

The evidence for the 'Boxmoor' hoard rests entirely on the provenance given to four St. Peter coins in the Rashleigh sale catalogue of 1909, lots 185–7, Sword types, and lot 197 without sword, which are described as 'found near Boxmoor, Herts.', and 'presented to the late owner by Sir John Evans'.

The find-spot is unexpected for a type of coin associated with the northern and eastern parts of the country, but must not be rejected out of hand as impossible. There are, however, several factors which must arouse suspicion. One of the coins described in the sale catalogue as from Boxmoor is illustrated on pi. ii, no. 28 of Rashleigh's 1869 paper and there described as one of two 'found together, I believe, in Derbyshire'. The possibility that the Boxmoor can be equated with the Derbyshire hoard has been discussed in the preceding note and dismissed.

A compelling factor in casting doubt on the Boxmoor hoard is that the only coins recorded as being from it were those presented to Jonathan Rashleigh by Sir John Evans. Evans lived in Hertfordshire, the county in which the find was allegedly made; Anglo-Saxon coins were one of his special interests. It is unlikely that he would have wanted to part with coins in a series in which he was so much concerned and which came from a local find, and it is unthinkable that he should have done so without retaining at least a selection in his own cabinet. In fact there is no record of any St. Peter coins with this provenance in the Evans collection that was acquired by J. P. Morgan. The plates prepared for the auction that in the event did not take place show that the first St. Peter's coin was to be lot 153. The next coin illustrated is an Egbert (a forgery incidentally) lot 159. There were therefore probably six lots of St. Peter coins. Three Evans coins were acquired by the British Museum (BMA 320–2) one of which has an Irish find-spot; the other two are without provenence. A fourth coin was lot 3614 (b) in the Lockett sale, a light piece that may have been thought to be a half-penny, a view clearly not taken by Brooke who rejected it for the British Museum. This too has no provenance.

There is no evidence that Evans regarded any of the St. Peter coins in his collection at the time of his death as having a Boxmoor provenance, and in view of this and of the unlikelihood of such coins being found in Hertfordshire I suggest that the Boxmoor hoard should, unless more positive evidence comes to light, be eliminated from lists of hoards of this period.

LANCASHIRE, 1734 (Dolley—)

The Minute Books of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society record that, on 19 December 1734, Mr. Beaupré Bell communicated 'the drawings of 28 Silver Saxon pennys found this Year in Lancashire, collated by the Seer, with S' Andrew Fountaines Tables at the End of Dean Hickes Dissertations in his Thesaurus Linguarum

7 NC 1869, p. 99. 8 Professor Dolley's omission of Boxmoor on his map of St. Peter hoards in Some Irish Dimensions to Manx History (Belfast, 1976), reflects, he tells me, his agreement with the views here put forward.
SOME DOUBTFUL ST. PETER HOARDS

Septentrionalis Vol I from the Lord Abp Sharpes Collection of Saxon Antiquities. With the Variations between these & those published marked hereon in Red Ink by ye Sec'y.

The Minute Books of the Peterborough Gentlemen's Society record that, on 15 January 1735, the Secretary communicated copies of twenty-eight Saxon coins 'found last year in Lancashire' neatly drawn by Beaupré Bell several 'the same with those of Sr And. Fountains Tab ix in Hicks's Thesaurus Septen'.

From these entries one would expect to be able to identify with complete confidence the general types of coins in the find and, possibly, if the notes by the Secretary in the Spalding copy of Hickes are as detailed as the minute suggests, provide a full account as well.

In the event neither has proved possible. There is no longer a copy of Hickes's Thesaurus at Spalding and it is not known where the Society's copy has gone. The ninth of Fountaine's plates contains the last 6 (of 12) coins of Offa; 7 St. Peters; 2 Archbishop Plegmunds; 2 Sihtrics; 1 'Sycfred' (in fact a St. Edmund Memorial penny); 1 Wiglaf; and 11 Incerta.

It is unlikely that the reference is to coins of Offa, quite apart from the improbability of twenty-eight being found in Lancashire, because if it were there would have been a reference too to the preceding plate on which another six of his coins are figured. The Incerta include two St. Edmund Memorial coins and are otherwise a mixed (and most interesting) lot. The largest group on the plate is the seven St. Peter coins, and it is to this group that it seems most likely that reference is being made.

At Spalding there are twenty-six letters from Beaupré Bell but none of them contains any reference to this Lancashire find. There is Beaupré Bell material in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Mr. Graham Pollard was kind enough to examine this for me but could find nothing relevant. On the other hand, there is in the Fitzwilliam Museum a manuscript entitled 'Catalogue of the Medals in Trinity College Library' by Dr. Mason. This has a section 'Saxon & English Coins from Mr Bell'. The Saxon are listed as follows: 'Eadbert, Edwardson, Knute, Edward Conf., 3 unknown'.

If we could only find the drawings that Beaupré Bell exhibited or the Spalding copy of Hickes's Thesaurus, the issue could be settled. Meanwhile, it seems reasonable to believe that the 1734 Lancashire find did in fact consist of coins of the St. Peter issue although at present we can give no details of them. Mr. Pagan has suggested the likelihood of there having been one or more hoards found in the eighteenth century or earlier containing St. Peter coins. Though 1734 is too late for coins in such collections as Thoresby, Cotton, Devonshire, and probably Pembroke, and in Fountaine's publication, the Lancashire, together with the Bossal/Flaxton hoard of 1807, may well be the source of many of the unprovenanced coins in the British Museum, acquired before regular registers were started in 1838, and of some of those in the Hunterian collection at Glasgow.

SIR SIMONDS D’EWES

Mr. Pagan has drawn my attention to the presence in the collection formed by Sir Simonds D’Ewes (1602–50) of a group of St. Peter coins, both with and without sword.

9 BNJ xxxvi (1967), 52 and n. 2.
and accompanied by one of the very rare St. Martin coins. The manuscript catalogue of Sir Simond D’Ewes’s collection in which these coins are recorded (Harleian MS. 255) appears now to lack the section of the original catalogue which listed the coins of the Wessex rulers of this date, thus leaving it uncertain whether he also possessed coins of Edward the Elder and Athelstan which might have derived from the same source as his St. Peter coins; but the descriptions of the St. Peter coins in the D’Ewes catalogue are detailed enough in themselves to suggest that the coins derived from one of the ‘highly relevant hoards found two centuries or more ago’ of which Mr. Ian Stewart surmised the existence in an article on the St. Martin coins written a decade ago. The exact number of coins involved is not certain, for there are some repetitions in the D’Ewes listing, but Sir Simonds seems to have possessed nine St. Peter coins without sword, at least seven with sword (of which one was of a variety with mallet or hammer reverse type), and one St. Martin coin which may be identified as Lockett (1955) 451, the known provenance of which already goes back to the time of Thomas, 8th Earl of Pembroke (died 1733).