

## TWO ROMAN PIGS OF LEAD FROM DERBYSHIRE

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In July 1975, Derbyshire County Council workmen excavating for drains just south of the village of Yeaveley found two inscribed pigs of lead on land belonging to Mr. Frederick Potter of Stydd House Farm (SK 18503990). The discovery was reported eventually to Derby Museum. According to the workmen's account, the pigs had been found at a depth of 3 or 4 ft. in the natural subsoil, Keuper Marl. There was no associated material and it seems a fair assumption that the lead had been deliberately buried in antiquity. The site of the find is one mile north of the Roman road, now known as Long Lane, which connected the Roman forts of Little Chester and Rocester (Margary route 181).

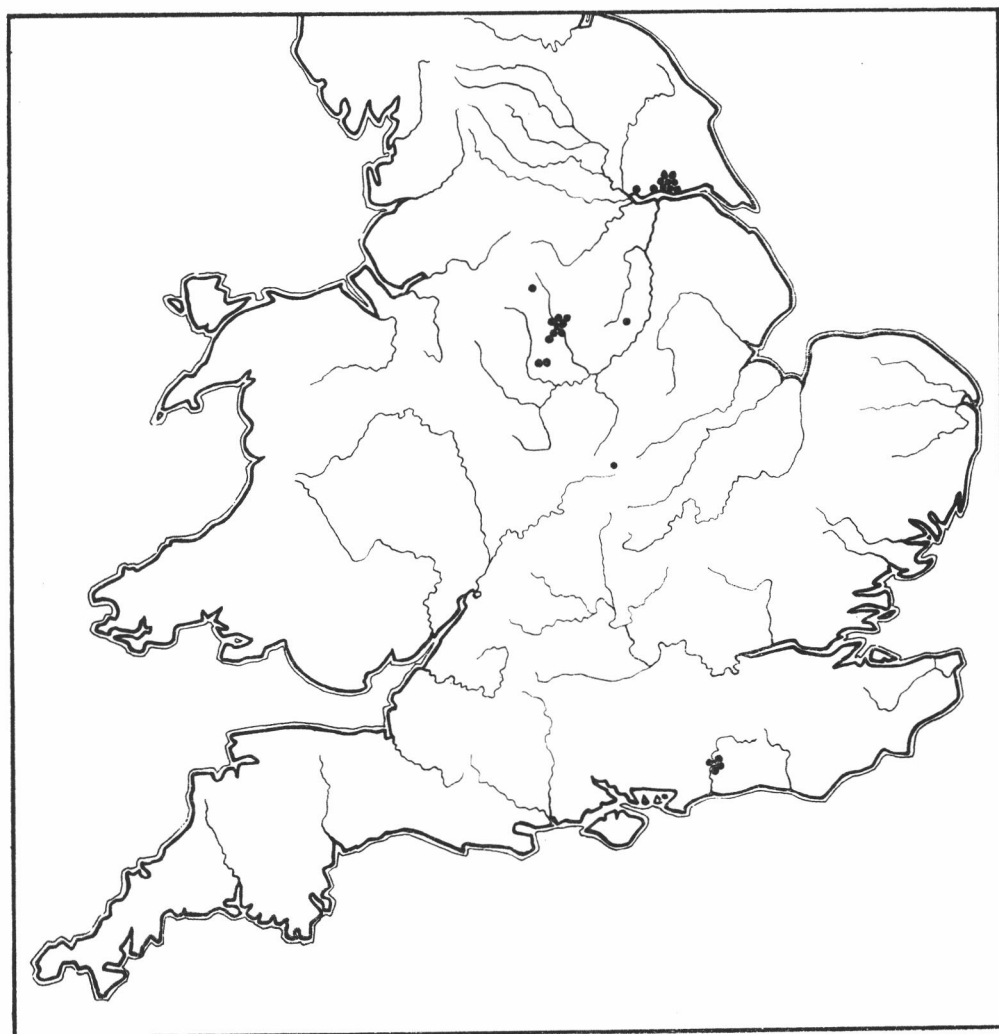


Fig. 1 Roman Pigs of Lead of Derbyshire Origin

The edges of both pigs are battered and uneven, but they have the same dimensions, the weights differing slightly:

Face: 495 × 82 mm. (19½ × 3¼ ins.)

Base: 585 × 160 mm. (23 × 6¼ ins.)

Height: 95 mm. (3¾ ins.)

Weights: 59·42 kg., 62·14 kg. (131 lb., 137 lb.)

Both pigs bear the same inscription, although the lettering on one of them is indistinct and scarcely legible:

The face: SOCIORVM LVTVD

The side: BRIT EXARG

This may be expanded as SOCIORVM LVTVD(arensium) BRIT(annicum) EX ARG(entariis): 'Product of the Lutudarensian partners: British lead from the lead-silver works'. A close examination revealed some slight differences in the lettering, implying the use of two separate moulds. In two instances letters had been more clearly delineated by lines incised after casting. The bottom surface of one pig incorporates small pieces of unsmelted galena, lead sulphide.

There is no precise parallel for the inscription but it represents an expansion of the legend SOCIOR LVT BR EX ARG on pigs of lead found at Tripontium, Warwickshire,<sup>1</sup> Broomfield, Yorkshire,<sup>2</sup> and possibly Belby, Yorkshire;<sup>3</sup> and of the legend SOC LVT BRIT EX ARG on pigs from Ellerker<sup>4</sup> and Brough-on-Humber, Yorkshire.<sup>5</sup> The Yeaveley pigs are certainly products of the Derbyshire lead-mining region, bringing the number of Derbyshire pigs that have been found in Britain to 27 (Fig. 1).

R. W. P. Cockerton has argued that pigs of lead whose inscriptions include the legend BRIT EX ARG are products of the Flavian period,<sup>6</sup> so the Yeaveley examples may date to the latter part of the first century A.D. The distribution map of find-spots indicates that Derbyshire lead normally was conveyed by water down the Trent and Humber for shipment by sea to other parts of the province.

The Yeaveley pigs are now on loan to Derby Museum.

#### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>*J.R.S.*, LVII (1967), 206 and pl. XX.

<sup>2</sup>*D.A.J.*, LXXXVII (1967), 167-168.

<sup>3</sup>*J.R.S.*, XXXI (1941), 146.

<sup>4</sup>*J.R.S.*, XLVIII (1958), 152.

<sup>5</sup>*J.R.S.*, XXXI (1941), 146.

<sup>6</sup>*D.A.J.*, LXXIX (1952), 88-96.