

## Roman coin hoard and enclosure at Jamesford, near Montgomery

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### THE DISCOVERY OF THE HOARD

A Roman coin hoard was discovered by Mr Adrian Simmons using a metal detector, with the permission of the landowner, in a pasture field at Jamesford (SO 21149 97513) on 28 June 2011. The site lies at a height of about 130m above sea level, just over a kilometre south of the Roman fort at Forden Gaer and about a kilometre north-west of the town of Montgomery, Powys (Fig. 1). Initially, a few isolated coins were found scattered in the ploughsoil. This led to the discovery of a concentration of coins, of which about 900 were removed from the ground before it was realised that they represented part of a larger hoard still *in situ* in an upright redware jar buried in the ground. The find was swiftly reported to the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), within the terms of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, following which arrangements were made for the recovery the remainder of the hoard under archaeological conditions. A consultation of the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by CPAT suggested that the hoard came from or near a rectilinear enclosure<sup>5</sup> identified by aerial photography (Fig. 2) and considered to be probably of Roman date.

With the help of grant aid from Cadw – Welsh Government and with permission of the landowner, Mr Morris Jones, a small-scale excavation was carried out by CPAT to retrieve the remainder of the hoard, under the supervision of Jeffrey Spencer and Sophie Watson on 5 July 2011. An area centred on the find-spot, 1.5m by 1.5m across, was investigated, commencing with the removal of the turf and topsoil by hand. The hoard had evidently been disturbed by later ploughing, resulting in the loss of most of the neck and the entire rim of the redware jar and the scattering of coins in the upper part of the vessel in the topsoil. The portion of the hoard surviving *in situ* formed a compacted mass of coins up to the surviving top of the pottery vessel which survived to a height of 185mm, the top of which was 330mm from the modern ground surface (Fig. 3). Soil around the jar was removed to allow a supporting bandage to be applied and enable the jar and coin hoard to be lifted intact. Dry conditions at the time of the excavation hindered the identification of different soil deposits in such a small trench but although there was no clear identification of a pit within which the hoard had been placed there were hints that it had been sited within or close to the edge of a linear feature. The soil removed during the course of excavations was sieved with the help of a group of students from local schools who were undertaking work experience with CPAT; this resulted in the recovery of five additional coins from the topsoil which had presumably been spread by the plough. At the same time that the hoard was being recovered from the ground a small-scale magnetometer survey of the surrounding area was undertaken with the voluntary assistance of Mr John Burman which hinted that the hoard came from a position close to the south-eastern ditch of the cropmark enclosure. The coin hoard was subsequently taken to Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales where the coins that remained in the jar were excavated by Mary Davis in the Conservation Laboratory of the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics and then studied by Edward Besly (see report below). Five additional coins were subsequently recovered in ploughsoil by Mr Adrian Simmons from the same area of the field in December 2011.

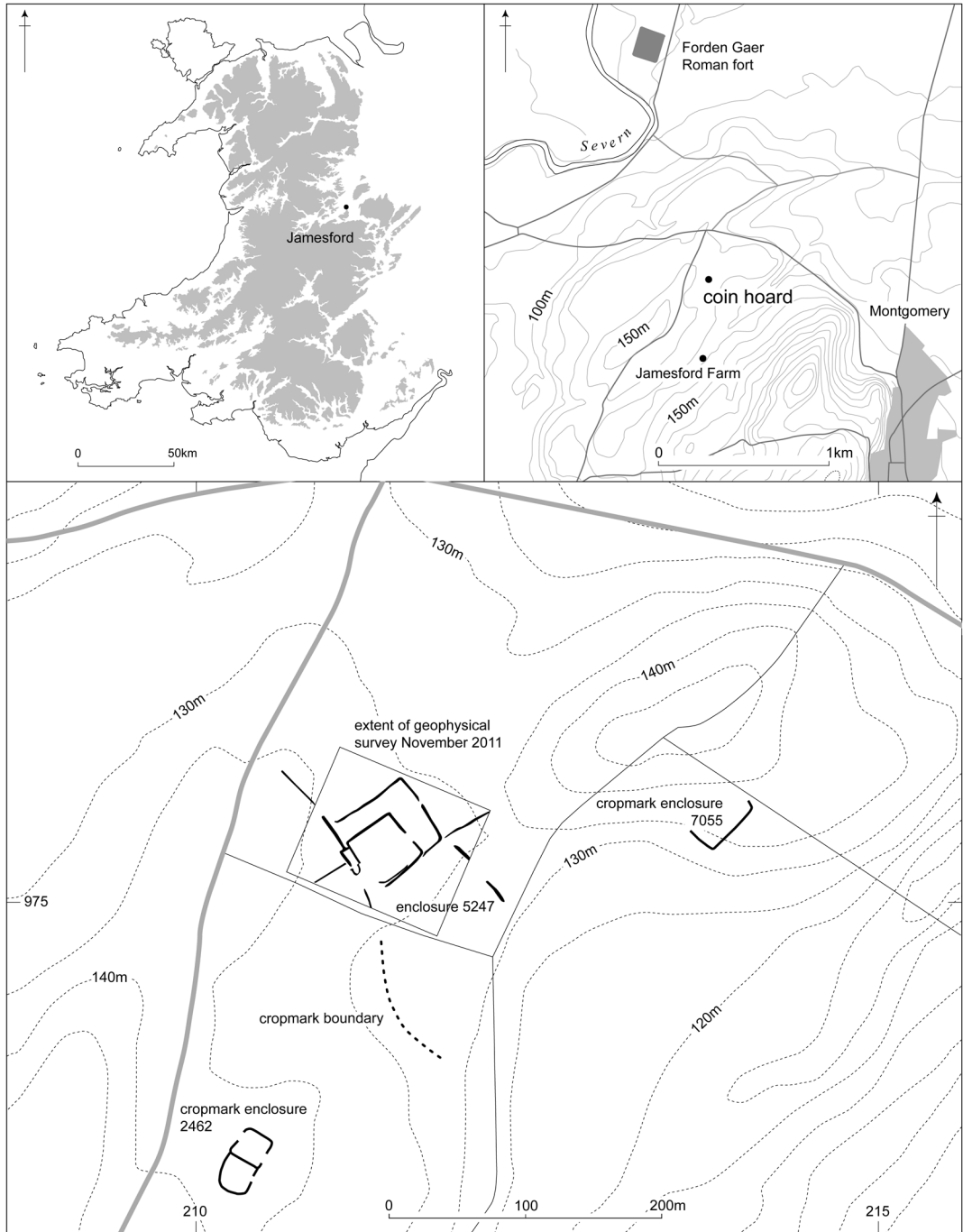


Fig. 1. Location of the Jamesford coin hoard in relation to the Jamesford enclosure and other neighbouring cropmark enclosures.



Fig. 2. Oblique aerial photograph of the Jamesford enclosure from the south-west showing in grassland in July 1996, taken by Chris Musson. *Photograph: © Crown copyright, RCAHMW.*



Fig. 3. The partly excavated hoard before removal from the ground. *Photograph CPAT 3308-0052.*

The hoard was declared to be Treasure within the terms of the Treasure Act 1996 at the Coroner's Court held in Welshpool on 7 June 2012 on the evidence of a report prepared by the National Museum Wales. The hoard has been acquired by the Powysland Museum in Welshpool, for conservation, detailed cataloguing and in due course public display.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE COIN HOARD

By Richard Hankinson and Ian Grant

Further geophysical survey and small-scale excavation of the find-spot was undertaken by CPAT with additional grant aid from Cadw – Welsh Government in November 2011 to find out more about the context in which it had been buried.

### **Geophysical survey (RH)**

Geophysical survey was carried out using a dual-sensor Bartington Grad 601-2 fluxgate gradiometer, which is capable of detecting slight variations in the earth's magnetic field caused by subsurface archaeological features. The gradiometer has an on-board data-logging device which enables readings to be taken at specific time intervals, and these readings are taken along parallel traverses within a grid of known size, which allows them to be correlated with geographical locations.

An area measuring 120m west-north-west/east-south-east by 100m wide was surveyed using a series of grids each measuring 20m by 20m (area shown on Fig. 1). Within each grid, readings were taken along a series of parallel traverses, with intervals between the traverses of 0.5m, and the speed of each traverse was controlled so that readings could be taken every 0.25m, thereby giving a total of 3,200 readings per 400m<sup>2</sup> grid. The readings were downloaded and processed using ArcheoSurveyor software, and a greyscale plot (Fig. 4) produced showing the features revealed. The main functions of ArcheoSurveyor used to process the results were 'Despike' to remove the effects of near-surface iron objects, 'Destripe' to remove any directional variation between traverses, and 'Clip' which removes high and low readings, thereby allowing fine detail to be observed in the resulting plot. The survey area was located in relation to adjacent field boundaries by total station surveying and was then related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid as a best fit, which enabled the coordinates of fixed points on the survey grid to be determined. The greyscale image of the survey produced in ArcheoSurveyor could then be registered to the Ordnance Survey grid using these coordinates, allowing any features that were visible to be accurately mapped.

The geophysical survey enhances the aerial photographic evidence and reveals two superimposed rectilinear enclosures together with probable field boundaries which appear to be contemporary with one or other enclosure and other anomalies, an interpretation of which is presented in Figure 5. Of the two enclosures revealed by the geophysics, the larger appears to be the earlier, and combines anomalies 1, 2 and 3 to form a rectangular enclosure about 57m across north-west/south-east by 60–65m north-east/south-west. Each anomaly represents a ditch between about 1.0m and 1.5m wide. The uncertainty in the north-east/south-west dimension reflects the lack of certain evidence for the south-west side of the enclosure. A gap between anomalies 1 and 2 on the north-east side of the enclosure may define an entrance (17), some 2.5m wide, or could just mean that the fill of this section of ditch has a similar magnetic response to the adjoining natural subsoil. At the west corner of the enclosure, ditch 1 appears to turn outwards which may again hint at an entrance.

The smaller enclosure, combining anomalies 4 and 5, is also rectangular, about 45m across north-west/south-east by 42m north-east/south-west and is defined by a ditch about 1.5m wide. Significantly, the

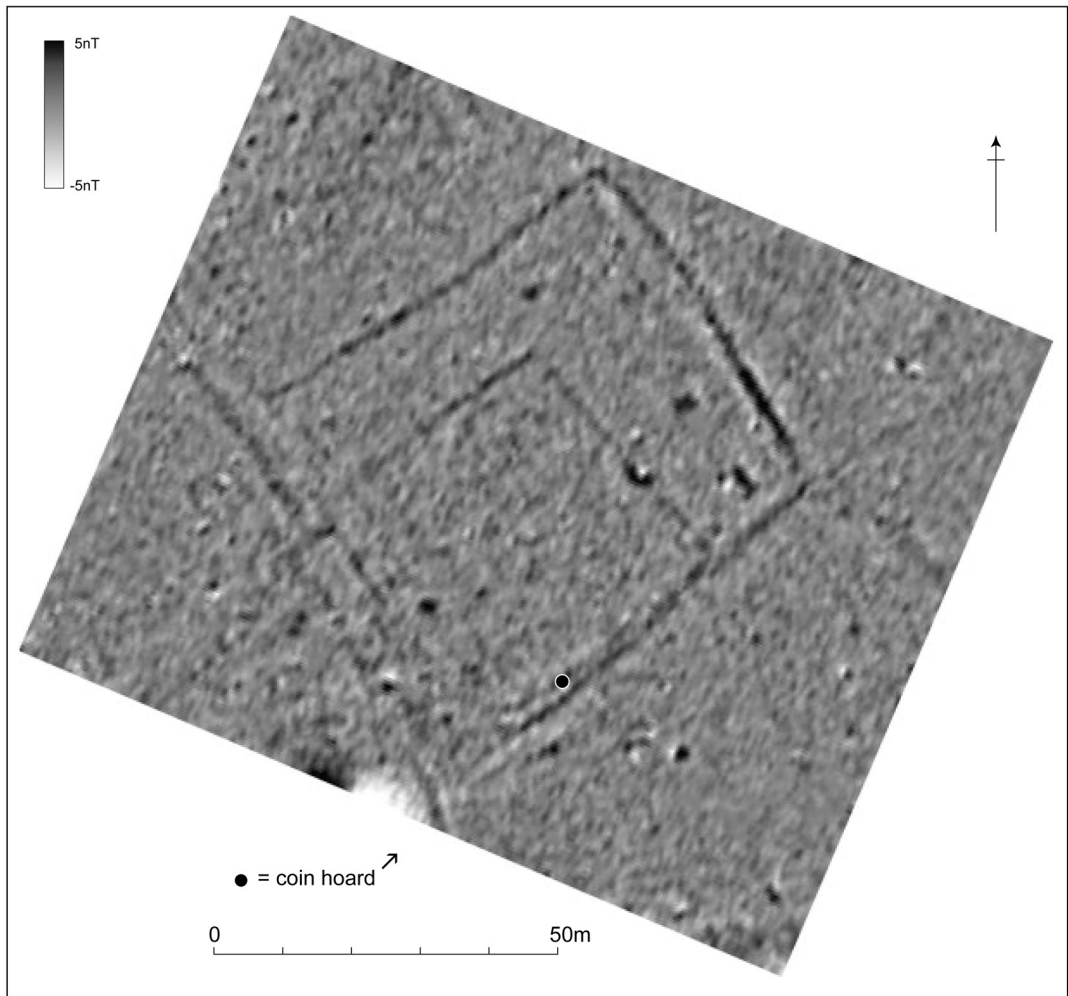


Fig. 4. Results of the magnetometer survey in November 2011, showing the location of the coin hoard.

detailed results suggest that the ditch of the smaller enclosure cuts obliquely across the ditch of the larger enclosure on its south-east side, suggesting that the smaller enclosure is the later of the two.

Rather than being single independent entities the larger and smaller enclosures appear to be butted up against a boundary, represented within the survey area by anomalies 6 and 10, which can be traced for a distance of up to 250m by cropmarks to the north-west and south-east (Fig. 1). Along this boundary on the south-west side of the larger and smaller enclosures are anomalies which suggest the presence of a building structure (7–8). Anomaly 6 defines a ditch about 30m long and 2m wide, which appears to merge into a right-angled section of ditch represented by anomaly 7 which appears to enclose a rectangular area measuring about 12m north-west/south-east by 5m wide, set against the outer side of the smaller enclosure ditch (5). At the south-east end of the rectangular area is a horseshoe-shaped anomaly (8), about 7m across. Another curving anomaly (19), comprising an arc of a circle about 7m in diameter, lies in the

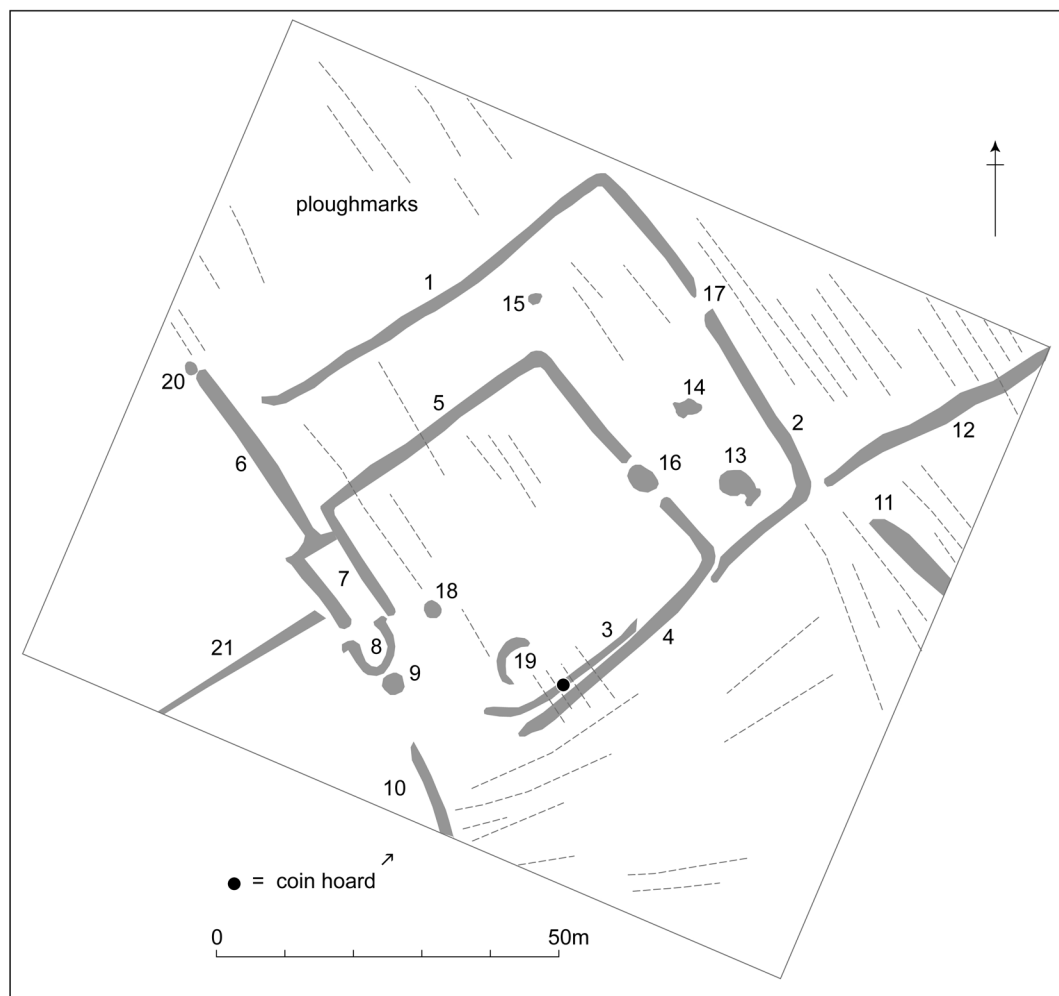


Fig. 5. Interpretation of the magnetometer survey, showing the numbered anomalies detailed in the text.

south corner of the enclosures. At the south-east end of anomaly 8 there appears to be a large pit (9), 3m in diameter, with some thermo-remnant magnetism, and further to the south-east another ditch (10), perhaps 1.5m wide, runs south-east for at least 15m before leaving the survey area. This north-west/south-east axis of anomalies seems significant in any interpretation of the archaeology of the site, as it appears to be respected by all of the subsurface linear features identified by the survey.

Three further ditches are visible in the survey, two of which (11 and 12) approach the east corner of the larger enclosure and may define elements of an associated field system that extends beyond the survey area. Anomaly 11 is about 2.5m wide and extends for at least 15m north-west/south-east, while 12 is no more than 2m wide and at least 38m long (north-east/south-west). Lastly, ditch (21) extends for at least 27m to the south-west of the rectangular enclosed area defined by ditches 5 and 7 and is up to 1.8m wide.

The survey also revealed a number of discrete anomalies, the nature of most of which remains unexplained. On the north-east and north of the smaller enclosure, but still within the larger enclosure, are three irregular anomalies (13–15) up to 5m across, none of which has any trace of thermo-remnant magnetism, all of which are likely to represent pits. A similar feature (18) lies in the south-west part of the smaller enclosure and is about 2.5m in diameter. There is an area of thermo-remnant magnetism (16) on the line of the north-east ditch of the smaller enclosure, which either masks part of the ditch or lies within an entrance, but its true nature cannot be confirmed from the geophysical survey alone. Lastly, there is a small pit or feature (20) about 1.5m in diameter with thermo-remnant magnetism at the north-west end of ditch 6.

Traces of ploughing, represented by lines of increased magnetic response were probably caused by the presence of slight furrows or ploughmarks containing a greater depth of topsoil. The minimum separation of these anomalies is little more than 2m and their general alignment is north-west/south-east. These generally respect the alignment of the enclosures although some traces aligned north-east/south-west are present to the south-east of the enclosures. It appears significant that this evidence of ploughing is found to the north-east of the line of anomalies 6–10, but not to its south-west, which may suggest that these boundaries were still visible in the landscape when the ploughing took place and that they the boundaries mark a long-standing division between different agricultural regimes.

Two sherds of Severn Valley ware were also found on the surface of the ground, close to the location of the hoard, during the geophysical survey and it is assumed that these were disturbed from the container at the time the hoard was first identified.

#### **Small-scale excavation (IG)**

The excavation, which was carried out by hand, was undertaken in November 2011, and comprised a single trench measuring 5m by 2m, centred on the location of the coin hoard and extending across both ditches identified by the geophysical survey (Fig. 6). Context numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual contexts recorded in the site archive.



Fig. 6. Excavated sections of ditch 4 (left) and ditch 3 (right), viewed from the north-east, showing location of coin hoard (arrowed). Scales 1m. *Photograph: CPAT 3385-0067.*

Removal of the turf (1) and ploughsoil (5) revealed the two ditches 3 and 4 (contexts 17 and 13 respectively), less than 0.5m apart, which had been identified by geophysical survey, the site of the coin hoard lying close to the edge of ditch 3. Several additional coins that had evidently been spread by ploughing up to about a metre from of the site of the coin hoard were found at the base of the topsoil above the ditches (Fig. 4), together with three possible hobnails and small sherds of Severn Valley ware. A further thirteen coins were recovered from ploughsoil and topsoil removed during excavation by Adrian Simmons and his father.

Both ditches had been cut through a firm, pale grey silty clay subsoil (19) with an upper band of orange-brown silty clay (6, 7, 18) down into the underlying shale bedrock (Fig. 7). Ditch 3 (context 17) had a weathered profile up to about 1.6m wide and 0.7m deep from the modern surface with a rock-cut base. The ditch had a basal fill (16), 0.2m thick, which was composed of loose, redeposited shattered bedrock, mixed with a light grey, gritty, silty clay flecked with charcoal. Five sherds of Roman pottery were found within the fill, including body sherds of Severn Valley ware, grey ware, and Black-burnished ware vessels.

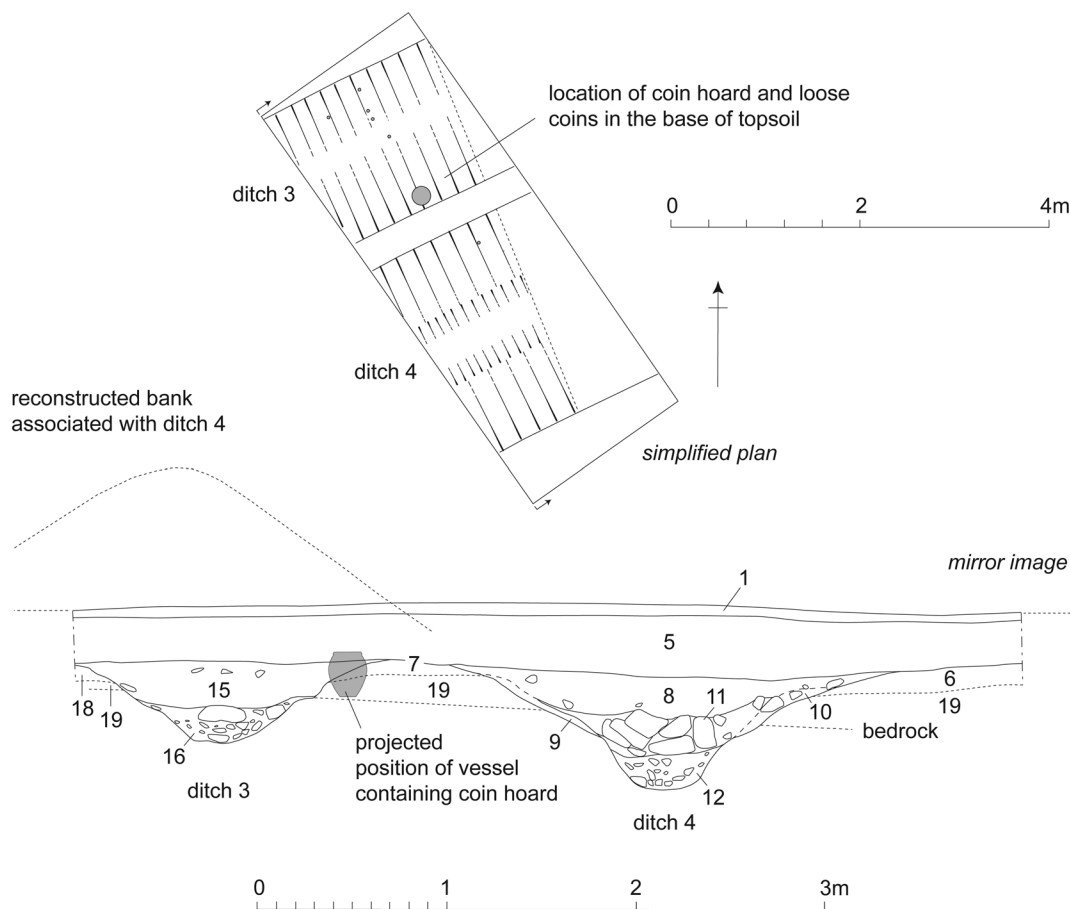


Fig. 7. Plan and section of the trench excavated across the ditches of the Jamesford enclosure.



The upper fill (15) consisted of orange-brown silty clay, around 0.25m thick, which contained occasional fragments of shattered bedrock and large, rounded cobbles. Five body sherds and a single rim sherd of Severn Valley ware were recovered from the upper fill. Ditch 4 (context 13) had a weathered profile up to about 2.3m wide and 0.95m deep from the modern ground surface with a narrower rock-cut base about 0.5m wide. The basal fill (12), 0.2m thick, consisted of loose redeposited shattered shale bedrock within a light grey, gritty, silty clay matrix, which contained a small fragment of pottery, possibly Severn Valley ware. Thin deposits on either side of the ditch (9 and 10) possibly represent eroded bank material. The secondary ditch fill (11) consisted of a 0.2m-thick deposit of stony, yellow-brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecking, containing a central band of large, rounded pebbles possibly representing field clearance. The fill produced two body sherds of possible Severn Valley ware, together with a sherd from a different vessel and a fragment of grit-stone, possibly part of a quern. The upper fill (8) consisted of a 0.2m-thick deposit of firm, light orange-brown silty clay.

There was no surviving stratigraphical relationship between the two ditches at this point and no certain evidence of surviving bank material associated with either ditch. However, in the light of the geophysical survey suggesting that ditch 4 superseded ditch 3, projecting the position of the coin hoard on to the recorded section (Fig. 8) suggests that the vessel containing the coin hoard is most likely to have been placed in a pit cut through a bank on the inner side of the later ditch, ditch 4.

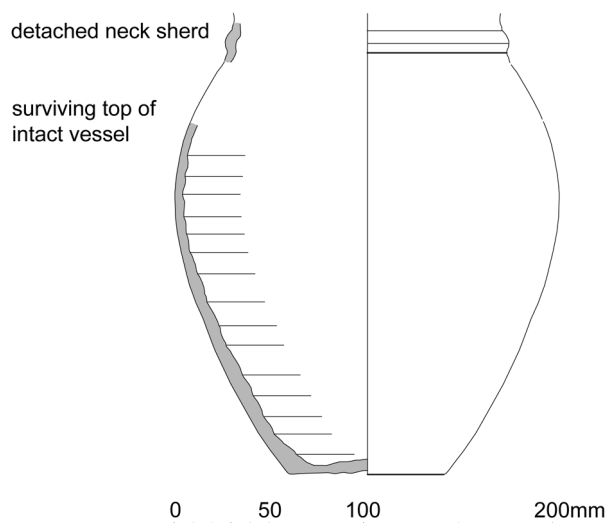


Fig. 8. Severn Valley ware type vessel containing the coin hoard. Scale 1:4.

## THE COMPOSITION OF THE COIN HOARD

By Edward Besly

The hoard, consisting of a total of 4,854 coins, includes coins issued by both the Gallic and Central empires, with the earliest belonging to Gordian III, AD 238–244, and the latest Aurelian, AD 270–275. The majority, however, are coins of Postumus and Victorinus, representing 25% and 30% of the total respectively. With the exception of a bronze denarius of Gallienus, all are radiates. A summary of the hoard's composition is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the contents of the Jamesford coin hoard by reign

Reign		Total	(%)	By reign (%)	Typical fineness (Ag, %)
Gordian III (238–244)		9	(0.19)	9 (0.19)	35–40
Philip I (244–49)	Philip I	14	(0.29)		
	Philip II	6	(0.12)		
	Otacilia Severa	4	(0.08)	24 (0.49)	35–40
Trajan Decius (249–21)	Decius	4	(0.08)		
	Herennia Etruscilla	3	(0.06)		
	Herennius Etruscus	3	(0.06)		
	Hostilian	1	(0.02)		
	Divus Pius	1	(0.02)	12 (0.25)	
Trebonianus Galius (251–253)	Galius	11	(0.23)		
	Volusian	7	(0.14)	18 (0.37)	20–25
Aemilian (253)		2	(0.04)	2 (0.04)	
Joint Reign (253–260)	Valerian	129	(2.66)		
	Diva Mariniana	4	(0.08)		
	Gallienus	117	(2.41)		
	Salonina	63	(1.30)		
	Valerian II	49	(1.01)		
	Saloninus	35	(0.72)	397 (8.18)	15–20
Sole Reign (260–268)	Gallienus	553	(11.39)		
	Salonina	73	(1.50)	626 (12.90)	10–15/ 2.5–5
Claudius II (268–20)		401	(8.26)	401 (8.26)	2–4
Quintillus (270)		51	(1.05)	51 (1.05)	2–3
Divus Claudius (c. 270)		22	(0.45)	22 (0.45)	
Aurelian (270–275)		7	(0.14)	7 (0.14)	
Postumus (260–269)		1,222	(25.18)	1,222 (25.18)	15–20/5–8
Laelian (269)		5	(0.10)	5 (0.10)	
Marius (269)		14	(0.29)	14 (0.29)	
Victorinus (269–271)		1,488	(30.67)	1,488 (30.66)	1–4
Tetrici (271–274)	Divus Victorinus	1	(0.02)		
	Tetricus I	412	(8.49)		
	Tetricus II	90	(1.85)	503 (10.36)	1–2
Uncertain		26	(0.54)	26 (0.54)	
Irregular		27	(0.56)	27 (0.56)	
Total		4,854	(100.00)	4,854 (100.00)	

The composition of the hoard suggests a date of deposition in the early to mid-270s. Just under two-thirds of the coins are issues of the 'Romano-Gallic' empire, established by the usurper Postumus in AD 260, which encompassed Gaul and Britain. The latest coins belong to the Tetrici, the last of the Gallic rulers, *c.* AD 271–274; eight specimens of their final issue have been noted to date, a 'weak' ending which suggests that the hoard was probably buried during the course of this issue. From the evidence of the laboratory 'excavation', the hoard's composition was homogeneous throughout the pot and it is likely that the coins were accrued over a relatively short period of time and deposited in a single event. The hoard therefore appears to provide a useful snapshot of the circulating medium in this part of Roman Britain in AD 273–274; the Gallic state was reabsorbed into the Roman Empire in the spring of 274. The hoard includes several rare coins, including one of Saloninus as Augustus, a title he held briefly in 260 before being killed by Postumus; and five of Laelian who in turn usurped Postumus at Mainz in AD 269.

The coins comprise debased alloys of silver. In the course of the third century, successive debasements took the fineness from around 50% precious metal down to around 1–2%. The coins in the hoard span most of this period, with typical fineness likely to range from 35–40% silver down to only 1–2% silver.

## ROMAN-BRITISH POTTERY

By Peter V. Webster

### Jar containing the hoard

When found, the coin hoard was enclosed by a pottery vessel which was intact up to the top of the compacted coin mass, a height of 185mm (Fig. 8). Some detached fragments of pottery survived, from above this level but the vessel, including a neck sherd with a cordon suggesting that the vessel originally stood to a height of over 240mm, but there are no surviving rim sherds. The vessel is in an orange fabric with sparse inclusions of grit and what are probably clay pellets. Both interior and exterior surfaces show signs of finger rilling, although the vessel has been smoothed near the base externally, perhaps in the process of removing surplus clay from this area. There are no signs of external decoration.

The fabric appears to be one allied to Severn Valley Ware and is likely to be fairly local in origin. Any restoration of the overall form is a difficult matter. The pot swells out from a narrow base 84mm in diameter to a girth of about 204mm. The surviving curvature would suit either a medium-mouthed or narrow-mouthed jar. The vessel is possibly a small version of Webster 1976, no. 8, itself the container of a large, late third-century coin hoard.

### Other sherds

Two sherds were recovered, one each from ditches 3 and 4 (contexts 15 and 11 respectively) which seem likely to be from the same Severn Valley Ware jar. Together they give the upper profile of a necked jar with a cordon on the shoulder/neck junction. This appears to belong to Webster 1976, type 10, although the thickness of the rim is slighter than on the type vessel. A third to fourth-century date is likely but if the thinner 'pulley' type rim is accepted as an early feature, before the development of the wider rim and its variants, then a third-century date might be preferred.

The excavations also produced a further 17 small body sherds and one base sherd in Severn Valley Ware type fabrics from the fills of both ditches, and one sherd from a Black-burnished ware jar, probably of second to third century date, and two small, worn body sherds in grey ware fabrics from the basal fill (16) of ditch 3.

## CHARRED PLANT REMAINS AND CHARCOAL IDENTIFICATIONS

By Astrid E. Caseldine and Catherine J. Griffiths

Samples were taken from the ditch fills of the two overlapping enclosures during the small-scale excavations designed to elucidate the context of the coin hoard with the aim of recovering archaeobotanical evidence which would provide information about arable farming in the area. In addition a small amount of charcoal was identified to gain some information about woodland in the area.

**Charred plant remains**

The samples were processed by CPAT using a simple wash-over technique. The finest mesh used to collect the flot was 1mm. The flots were examined using a Wild M5 stereomicroscope. A reference collection of modern type material and identification manuals and atlases (e.g. Jacomet 2006) were consulted to aid identification. The results and sample details are given in Table 2. Nomenclature and habitat information are largely based on Stace (1995).

Slightly more evidence was obtained from sample 108 from the basal fill (16) of ditch 3 than from sample 109 from the basal (12) and secondary (11) fills of ditch 4. Ditch 3 was immediately adjacent to the coin hoard and part of the smaller enclosure whereas ditch 4 was part of the larger enclosure and field system. Both samples produced spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) glume bases and brome (*Bromus* sp.) caryopses. In addition a spelt grain was recovered from ditch 3 along with possible evidence for emmer wheat (*T. dicocum*) in the form of a glume base. Oat (*Avena* sp.), which could be either cultivated or wild, was also present as well as some indeterminate cereal. The assemblages are too small to draw any firm conclusions but the remains probably reflect waste from crop processing activity accidentally or deliberately burnt, while the presence of grain and glume bases in sample 108 possibly indicates that hulled wheat (spelt and emmer) was stored as spikelets rather than cleaned grain.

Since sample 109 from the earlier enclosure ditch, ditch 4, is from both the secondary and basal fills it is unclear whether the remains relate to activity associated with the ditch around the time it was first cut or later but they do indicate the cultivation of spelt wheat in the area. This is also suggested by the evidence from ditch 3 which suggests that emmer may have been cultivated as well, or was present as a weed contaminant as a result of earlier cultivation in the area. Equally, oat may have been cultivated or have been present as a weed contaminant of the crop. The occurrence of brome probably reflects its presence as a weed but brome might have been used as a famine food if the cereal harvest was poor.

In general there is a lack of archaeobotanical evidence from rural settlements in this area, although there is some evidence from the Roman fort and *vicus* at Caersws. Hence, although the evidence is limited, it is a useful addition to the archaeobotanical record. The presence of spelt, emmer and oat in the assemblage is in keeping with the evidence from Caersws II fort (Caseldine 1993) and the associated civilian settlement (Caseldine 1996) in the Severn Valley, about 19 kilometres to the west. However, a more extensive range of cereals, including bread wheat, barley and rye, were recorded at Caersws, indicating a change in crop husbandry in the wider area.

**Charcoal identification**

A few fragments of charcoal were selected for identification. The charcoal was fractured to enable the wood anatomy to be examined in three views using a Leica DMR microscope with incident light source. Identification was by reference to wood identification manuals (Schoch *et al.* 2004; Schweingruber 1978) and modern type material. Nomenclature follows Stace (1995). The identifications are given in Table 2.

The small charcoal assemblage indicates that ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), birch (*Betula* sp.) and gorse (*Ulex* sp.) were growing in the area. The occurrence of gorse and birch suggests scrubland while the presence of ash, a tree that is light-demanding, would be consistent with a fairly open environment.

## Conclusions

The cereal evidence indicates the cultivation of wheat and possibly oat in the area, while the charcoal suggests a relatively open landscape, but with some scrub.

Table 2. Charred plant remains and charcoal from the Jamesford enclosure ditches

Feature Context Sample	Ditch17 16 108	Ditch13 11 and 12 109	Habitat preferences*
<b>Charred plant remains</b>			
<i>Triticum cf. dicoccum</i> – glume bases (emmer wheat)	1	–	A
<i>Triticum dicoccum/T. spelta</i> – glume bases (emmer/spelt wheat)	1	–	A
<i>Triticum spelta</i> – glume bases (spelt wheat)	3	2	A
<i>Triticum spelta</i> – grain	1	–	A
<i>Avena</i> sp. (oats)	1	–	A, D
Cerealia indeterminate – fragments	2	–	A
<i>Bromus</i> sp. – (brome) fragments	–	2	A, C, D, G (w)
cf. <i>Bromus</i> sp.	1	–	
<b>Charcoal</b>			
<i>Betula</i> spp. (birch)	–	1	W
<i>Ulex</i> spp. (gorse)	–	1	W
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. (ash)	5	1	W

\*Habitat preferences: A = arable and cultivated; C = coastal, salt marshes; D = disturbed ground, wasteland, rough ground; G = grassland; W = woods, hedgerows, scrub; w = wet

## DISCUSSION

By Nigel W. Jones and William J. Britnell

The hoard of Roman coins from Jamesford is likely to represent the hiding of personal savings presumably with the intention of retrieval at a later date during a period of political and economic instability, probably in AD 273–274. It was buried in a relatively locally made jar in a pit dug into the outer side of a bank associated with the later of two superimposed, single-ditched rectangular enclosures, possibly associated with a small Romano-British farmstead.

Enclosures of this general form are reasonably common in the Severn Valley though little excavation has been undertaken upon them locally. Clusters of similar rectilinear enclosures have been noted in the vicinity of Wroxeter and the Roman forts at Forden and Caersws, however, which have often been taken to suggest Roman farmsteads (e.g. Collens 1988, 160; Whimster 1989, 40; Wigley 2007, 179; Silvester 2011, 6; Davies 2012, 57–9). These appear to have been established anew alongside pre-conquest Iron Age defended enclosures of more curvilinear form, such as Collfryn, which continued in occupation following the Roman conquest (cf. Britnell 1989).

The manner in which the Jamesford enclosures butt up against a longer linear boundary is reminiscent of other similar cropmark enclosure complexes of assumed Roman date in the Severn Valley such as, for example, Gaer Cottages, north of the Forden Gaer Roman fort (Whimster 1989, figs 37 and 38) and

Upton Magna and Cloud Coppice in the vicinity of Wroxeter (*ibid.*). A particular point of interest is that the ditches radiating out from the corners of the Jamesford enclosures suggest that the enclosures formed part of a more extensive process of land allotment, possibly first enclosed during the Roman period.

Geophysical evidence suggests one or more building structures at Jamesford, on the south-west side of the larger and smaller enclosures, about 30 metres to the north-west of the site of the coin hoard (Fig. 4, no. 7). No details of this possible structure have been revealed though it may conceivably have been rectangular and up to about 12m by 5m across, possibly with an apsidal structure at the south-east end. No Roman building materials are recorded from the site, which suggests that if it had been a building here, that it was of timber or cob and thatch. Roman post-built structures of similar dimensions may be represented inside the Iron Age and Romano-British enclosure at Collfryn (Britnell 1989, 119). It seems likely that the site represents a lower-status Romano-British agricultural settlement of a type previously poorly recognised within the region, though the size of the enclosures and the enclosure ditches is not dissimilar to that enclosing a possible small villa and/or farming settlement of first- to fourth-century date at Plas Coch, Wrexham, for example, which also perhaps significantly had traces of timber building with an apsidal structure at one end to one side of the enclosure (Jones 2011). A second possible structure at Jamesford, of curvilinear form, is suggested by a curving ditch less than 10m to the north-west of the location of the coin hoard.

Geophysical survey appears to indicate a phase of cultivation on the same alignment as the putative Roman field system and on quite a different alignment of to the modern field boundaries (Fig. 1). Contemporary cultivation is also suggested by the presence of large rounded pebbles in the upper fill of the later enclosure ditch which appear to have been derived from field clearance. The absence of ploughmarks in the western part of the area surveyed, which lies beyond the more extensive boundary suggested by aerial photography, suggests a division between infield and outfield—between pasture on the uphill side of the settlement and arable on the downhill side. Charred plant remains from the ditch sections suggest that a farm might have been fairly close: the charred wheat and oats grains could have been derived from drying ovens in the vicinity, which might be at some distance from contemporary settlement, but relatively scarcity of charred grains means that there is insufficient evidence to confirm that they were not the result of accidental burning during drying (Astrid Caseldine *pers. comm.*). The fact that some of the ploughmarks appear to cross the line of the enclosure ditches suggests that ploughing continued after their abandonment as separate entities. It therefore appears that the enclosures represent a profitable (in view of the coin hoard) but perhaps relatively short-lived extensification of cereal cultivation of cereals at Jamesford during the Roman period.

The evidence for Roman agriculture in mid-Wales has been recently reviewed in a paper by Jeffrey Davies (Davies 2012, 61–2) who has argued that taxation and the procurement of local provisions for the Roman army in order to cut down on transport costs are likely to have provided a significant stimulus to agricultural production. The Roman pottery assemblage from Jamesford suggests that the enclosure may have been in occupation between about the second to fourth centuries. There is therefore the possibility that the site may have been founded at a time when the Roman fort at Forden Gaer was still in occupation, but finds from the fort and from the military *vicus* attached to it suggest that these had effectively been abandoned by the mid third century (Burnham and Davies 2010, 57; Blockley 1990, 44), though there is evidence for refurbishment of the fort in about the mid fourth century (Burnham and Davies 2010, 62; Jones 2010, 245). The presence of the Roman garrison and military *vicus* at Forden Gaer less than 2 kilometres to the north may therefore have been an important stimulus to the establishment of the Jamesford enclosures, though it appears to have outlived both of them. The Roman city at Wroxeter, just over 40 kilometres to the north-east, will no doubt have continued to have had a significant economic impact upon agricultural production in the region well into the third and fourth centuries.

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