

Notes

The East Leicestershire Hoard

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During fieldwalking in 1999 in south Leicestershire, one of the local fieldwork groups found a scatter of late Iron Age and Roman pottery. Subsequent metal detecting located up to 200 silver *Corieltavian* and Roman Republican coins. Fieldwork by University of Leicester Archaeological Services comprising, geophysical survey, metal detector survey, fieldwalking, trial trenching, and open area evaluation was carried out between 2001 and 2003, in response to a potential threat from illicit metal detecting and plough damage. This work was funded by English Heritage, the British Museum, and the BBC.



Geophysical survey and trial trenching indicated the presence of an extensive settlement, *c.* 8ha, of late Iron Age to 3rd-4th century AD date. Open area evaluation uncovered a ritual hill-top site marked by a ditch with a complex entrance-way. Thirteen discrete coin groups, some holding the shape of their organic containers, were located in a loose cluster within a possible enclosure northwest of the entrance. Remarkably they retained their integrity although they were not in cut features but located at the interface of the topsoil and natural substratum. To the south, two further coin hoards were discovered in a small pit along with a silver decorated Roman military helmet of early 1st century date. The coin groups and helmet are currently undergoing conservation at the British Museum.

To the east of the site, directly opposite the entrance-way, a large spread of animal bone was noted. Excavation revealed a number of small pits containing partially articulated animal bone, predominantly pig. From the plough-soil above the bone deposits a number of *Atrebatian* gold coins and a copper alloy Iron Age tankard handle were found.

The fieldwork revealed an unusual and well-preserved religious site on a ridge-top location, dating to around the time of the Roman invasion. It was probably an important religious centre for the tribe which dominated this area – the *Corieltauvi*. In total, over 3000 Iron Age coins have been located together with some Roman Republican issues, the latest being a coin of Tiberius. 1. Some of the coins were found in fifteen separate hoards, others were scattered in the vicinity, disturbed perhaps by ploughing. Although most coins were of the tribe of the *Corieltauvi*, others were coins of the *Iceni*, the *Atrebatas*, the *Dobunni* and the *Trinovantes*.

Later Roman deposits were also found on the site including a number of enclosure ditches, pits, trackways and other features. These Roman deposits appear to avoid the focal area of the Iron Age site, possibly indicating that the site was still known about during the Roman period.