

An Early British Coin from White Horse Hill

AN Early British Coin was found on White Horse Hill in June 1948 by Mr. W. S. How of Edinburgh who was on a visit to the neighbourhood. The exact spot of the find was at the junction of the Ridgeway with the entrance to Uffington Castle. (Nat. Grid. ref. SU 300862). The coin was a few inches in the chalk and had been laid bare by vehicles grazing the bank when passing along the trackway.

No record has been found of any other Early British Coin having been recovered from the hill. According to Sir John Evans, this type of coin was in circulation with the Dobuni tribe, whose ruler at the time may have been Antedrig. The date would be at a late period of the first century B.C.; very few of this type of coin are known to have been found in the White Horse area, which was inhabited by the Atrebates tribe, whose capital was Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) whereas the capital of the Dobuni tribe was Corinium (Cirencester).

The coin is similar to one found at Marlborough in 1890 and is illustrated in Evans "Early British Coins" on page 468. It is classified as of the type illustrated on Plate F, No. 6. Mr. W. A. Seaby illustrates another similar coin in the B.A.J. Vol. XLIII, Part 1, Plate LLL, No. 2. which coin was found at Letcombe Regis and is now in the British Museum. The Ashmolean Museum had no specimen of this type at the time of the find.

A description of the coin may be summarised as follows:—

- Obverse** Rude head in profile facing right, represented by crescent shaped bosses, large half radiate boss in place of the chin, two annulets in the field—one on each side of the neck. At base an ornament of ogee shape or half annulet and crescent, together with a V shaped ornament.
- Reverse** Rude two-tailed horse with maned neck to left, three annulets symmetrically placed in the field, two pellets above horse, also above horse what is usually called a wheel, a device which in this case more resembles a sun consisting of a circle of pellets with six spokes or rays.
- Exergue** In the exergue is a repetition of the ogee ornament as on the obverse.
- Metal** Silver.
- Diameter** 7/16 inch.
- Weight** 16 grains.

P. H. SELLWOOD.

Mr. L. V. Grinsell, F.S.A. of Bristol Museum adds the following note to this find:—

Mr. Derek Allen states that coins of this type can be described as sub-Dobunnic, but they stand apart from the regular series of

Dobunnic coins. Two almost identical examples were found in or just before 1880 at Mildenhall, Wiltshire, where there are a ploughed out Early Iron Age hill-fort and the site of the Roman town of *Cunetio*. Such coins could easily have continued in use in Early Roman times, but the two Mildenhall examples are said to have been found with one of the type of *Mack* 377. Mr. Derek Allen also states that 384a is a simplified and lighter version of 377, the analogies of which are Gaulish rather than British. The two Mildenhall type 384a coins went from the collection of Rev. C. Soames, sometime rector of Mildenhall, to the British Museum.

The general conclusion is that these coins, although found within what must have been Atrebatian territory, were not far from the border of the territory of the Dobunni, and there was most likely in this region some sort of contact between those tribes.

For assistance in reporting on this coin, the writer is grateful to Mr. G. W. B. Huntingford, Prof. Stuart Piggott, and especially Mr. Derek Allen. The coin remains the possession of the finder, but a mould has been made at Gloucester City Museum and electro-types are being supplied to Reading, Newbury and Bristol Museums.

AN EARLY BRITISH COIN FROM WHITE HORSE HILL

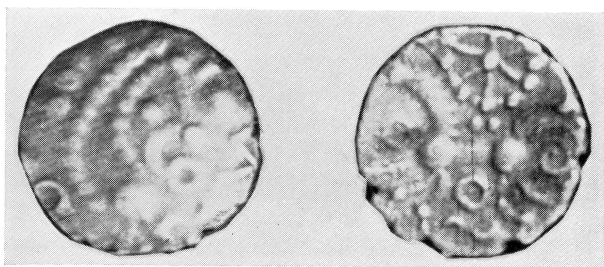


PLATE I

Obverse and reverse of late first century B.C. coin found on
White Horse Hill.