

**Project Aquarius
Bamfield
Hengrove
Bristol**

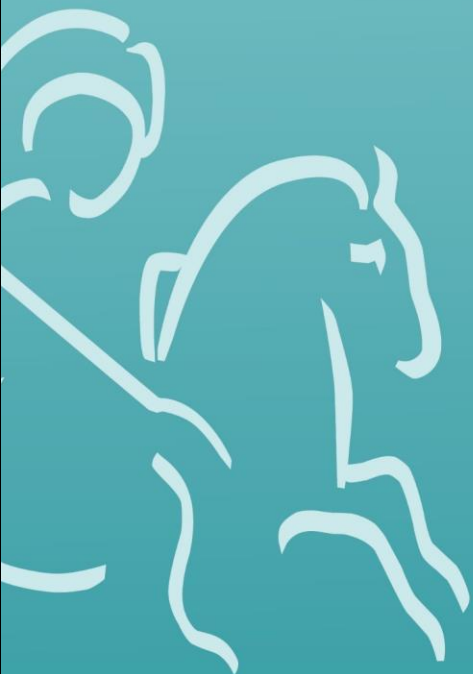
Archaeological Watching Brief



for:
Bellway Homes Ltd.

CA Project: CR0192
CA Report: CR0192_1

September 2021



Project Aquarius Bamfield Hengrove Bristol

Archaeological Watching Brief

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Project Aquarius
Location:	Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol
NGR:	360040 168136
Type:	Watching brief
Date:	4–9 September 2019
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Accession Number:	BRSMG:2019/49
Site Code:	PAB 19

In September 2019, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with residential development at Project Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol.

A coin hoard, consisting of pottery vessel container, copper-alloy scale pan lid, and 309 bronze and silvered-bronze coins, was recovered following emergency attendance during development groundworks.

The recovered coin assemblage dates exclusively to the middle of the 4th century AD and included a significant number of coins struck by the usurpers Magnentius and Decentius, who ruled the western provinces of the Roman Empire between 350 and 353.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In September 2019, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Project Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol (centred at NGR: 360040 168136; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Bellway Homes.
- 1.2. Bristol City Council (BCC) granted planning permission for residential redevelopment of the site (planning ref: 17/03719/F). Following the completion of a Heritage Assessment (CA 2017), which assessed the archaeological potential of the site, no condition was attached to this planning permission in regard to archaeological work.
- 1.3. However, during the course of the development groundworks features of archaeological potential were identified by the groundworks contractor (namely, evidence for a Roman coin hoard) and Bellway Homes contacted CA for advice and assistance. Subsequent liaison with Peter Insole, Principal Historic Environment Officer, BCC, resulted in a recommendation for emergency watching brief site attendance.
- 1.4. The watching brief was undertaken in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The development site is approximately 0.8ha in extent. It lies on the eastern side of Bamfield road, on the southern outskirts of the Bristol suburb of Hengrove. The site comprised the location of a former residential care home and associated grounds. The site lies at approximately 52m AOD, and was broadly flat.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as interbedded limestone and mudstone of the Rugby Limestone Member, which formed during the Jurassic Period (BGS 2021). The natural geological substrate identified during the course of the watching brief consisted of limestone within a light yellow clay matrix.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been the subject of a Heritage Assessment (CA 2017), and this is summarised below.
- 2.2. Limited prehistoric activity is recorded within the vicinity of the site (CA 2017). There is evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation nearby, with a number of hillforts situated on higher ground to the east and south of Bristol; however, there is very little evidence of these periods in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 2.3. Roman activity has been more widely recorded in the vicinity of the site, suggesting an actively managed landscape of scattered Roman settlements and farmsteads (CA 2017). At Loxton Square, c. 380m to the east of the site, occupation dating to between the Roman and medieval periods was recorded; near Filwood Park, c. 0.87km north-west of the site, a Roman settlement was identified during landscaping works and further remains associated with this settlement have been found in several locations around the southern edge of the park c. 1.1km and c. 0.91km to the north-west of site; a silver denarius was found near Fanshawe Road, c. 0.64km north-east of the site; and evidence of Roman settlement was recorded at the Hengrove Leisure Park, c. 0.60km south-west of the site.
- 2.4. In 1869 a Roman coin hoard of c. 1000 coins was found in an urn, on the bank of a small stream within the site (CA 2017). Over a thousand coins were reportedly contained within a ceramic vessel, probably buried in the later 3rd century. The exact location of this find cannot be ascertained, but the stream mentioned, although no longer extant, can be traced through the south-western part of the site on historic mapping and on aerial photography.
- 2.5. The site appears to be peripheral to medieval and post-medieval settlement, and probably formed part of the agricultural hinterland during these periods, with the former nursing home within the site developed in the later 20th century.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.
- 3.2. The specific objective of the watching brief was to investigate and record any remains associated with the possible Roman coin hoard identified by the groundworks contractor, and any further Roman remains which may have been exposed by the development groundworks.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The watching brief comprised the recording of open groundworks and recovery of exposed/disturbed artefactual material, followed by the observation by a competent archaeologist of all further intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development in the area, and further metal-detector scanning of the open excavations. These works comprised the machine excavation of foundation and service trenches (Fig. 2).
- 4.2. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, but no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.4. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.5. CA will make arrangements with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery for the deposition of the project archive, under accession number BRSMG:2019/49. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

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- 4.6. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendices B and C.
- 5.2. The general stratigraphic sequence recorded throughout the observed groundworks was broadly uniform. The natural geological substrate (1005/1009) comprised horizontally bedded limestone within a light-yellow clay matrix and was revealed at an average depth of 2.07m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by buried subsoil 1004, measuring 0.28m in thickness, which was sealed in turn by a total of 1.79m of mixed made-ground, levelling, and topsoil.
- 5.3. The location of pit 1006 (approximate location shown on Fig. 3, Section AA) was not observed during the archaeological recording due to the circumstances of recovery and its prior removal. It is presumed that it cut the natural substrate within the western extent of the observed groundworks and contained fill 1007, from which the remains of a greyware pottery vessel of mid to late-Roman date, fragmented into 74 sherds, a copper-alloy scale pan (Ra. 1; Fig. 4) and 309 bronze and silvered-bronze coins of mid-4th century date were recovered. It is assumed that fill 1007 was sealed by buried subsoil 1004.
- 5.4. No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed in the remainder of the groundworks area, and further no artefactual material was recovered.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. The finds recovered during the course of the watching brief consisted of those associated with the Roman coin hoard recovered from pit 1006. A detailed account of the recovered coin assemblage is given in Appendix B.

The Coin Hoard, associated finds

The pottery vessel

- 6.2. The pottery vessel was heavily fragmented, with 74 sherds (635g) recovered. Approximately half of the circumference of the rim (0.52 EVEs) was present,

together with the greater part of the base. That the vessel was utilized as the container for the hoard is indicated by green, coppery staining to the inside surface of a number of sherds. The vessels incompleteness/fragmentation appears to be, in part at least, as the result of disturbance prior to the time of recovery; this suggested by the clearly 'old' sherd breaks.

- 6.3. The vessel's fabric is a micaceous greyware type commonly encountered from across the Severn Vale and Bristol area and equivalent to Gloucester type TF5 (Timby and Tyres 2017). Although kilns are so far unknown, the distribution of this type is clearly suggestive of origins in south Gloucestershire or the Bristol area (Timby 2017, 321). At Gloucester and sites including Frocester (Timby 2000) the dating for the type is focused in the Middle and Late Roman periods, c. AD 150/170–400+. The vessel represented is a necked jar or deep bowl of common type, with medium mouth and out-curved, squared rim measuring c. 200mm.

The scale pan, Ra. 1 (Fig. 4)

- 6.4. This object appears to have been associated with the hoard although the circumstances of discovery and recovery make this impossible to be determined with complete certainty. Its size means that it cannot have been placed inside the pottery vessel, but it may have functioned as a cover, possibly secured in place utilizing the suspension fixings. The damage evident to the rim of the pan is not recent and suggests some disturbance to the deposit.
- 6.5. Ra. 1. is circular, concave-based with wide, flat rim. It is of thin, beaten sheet of 135mm diameter, 25mm depth, 1.2mm in thickness at rim and down to 0.6mm near the base. The two surviving suspension mounts are of triangular/heart-shaped form with projecting loops. These were cast and secured under the rim by a thick, whitish solder. Thick solder surviving to the underside of the pan rim, equidistant and at right angles to the surviving mounts, indicates that two more were once present. Both mounts have articulating wire rings for suspension, these with 'sliding knot' joints, the ends crossed and twisted around the loop in two tight coils.
- 6.6. Scale pans are rare finds from Roman Britain, Smither recording only 13 from his 2016 survey of weighing instruments from the province (Smither 2016). None were recorded as coming from coin hoards, although examples are known from metalwork hoards, including four from a group of eight bronze vessels from a 'structured' deposit from Pewsey, Wilts (Henry et al. 2019, 153). The limited dataset

notwithstanding, there are some indications that numbers increase in the 4th century and that distribution expands to rural areas at this time (ibid.)

- 6.7. Ra. 1 is notably larger than the Pewsey examples, these were interpreted as (two) paired pans from equal or dual balances (ibid.,173). Although the absence of the weighing arm makes this uncertain, the larger size of Ra. 1 would accord with its deriving from a steelyard balance, the form more suited to weighing heavier goods. The distribution of steelyards is weighted to rural areas, a probable indication of use for raw produce such as grain (Smither 2017, 7).
- 6.8. It is unclear the associations of use, if any, the scales with the coins in the hoard might have. Weighing, in preference to counting, of small denomination for purposes of accountancy or commerce is possible, although the variability of unit size make this unlikely. The function of pan Ra. 1 in the context of the hoard rests on interpretations of the hoard itself and whether it was intended for retrieval or as a votive. If the former, pan Ra. 1 may have served as an expedient, protective cover. If a votive or other ritual motive lay behind the hoard's deposition, the associations with scale pans with commerce, agriculture, or even concepts of justice or judgement might be seen as significant.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. The Hengrove hoard is an unusual cache of coins from the mid-fourth century, deposited in a large ceramic jar with the scale pan possibly used as a lid closing the vessel's opening and sealing the coins inside.
- 7.2. The most recently struck coin within the hoard was from the Arles mint, and dated to between 355 and 358, and it is unlikely that the hoard was buried any later than AD 360. Therefore, it is one of a comparatively small number of coin hoards from Britain dating to the later 350s, but the unusually large quantities of coins of the usurpers Magnentius and Decentius mean that it is unlike most contemporary finds. The reasons for the Hengrove hoard's burial and non-recovery are not known and it is possible that the coins were deposited in the political aftermath of the usurpers' defeat and suicides. The further coin hoard also discovered within the site in the 19th century is also of interest, although its relationship to the hoard recovered during the current works is not possible to determine at this stage.

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- 7.3. It is notable that the area around Bristol has produced a number of coin hoards dating to the 350s, including from Wraxall, Blaise Castle, Gatcombe and Hanham Abbots. The concentration of contemporary finds in the Bristol region suggests the Hengrove hoard is an important piece of evidence for the political and financial fortunes of this part of Roman Britain in the later 350s.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Sara-Jayne Boughton and Marino Cardelli. This report was written by Marino Cardelli and Alex Thomson. The finds and coin reports were written by Ed McSloy and Dr Peter Guest. The report illustrations were prepared by Amy Wright. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silt. Turf on top, compact, stripped before arrival			0.15	
1	1001	Layer		Made ground	Dark red-brown silt clay compact with frequent inclusions of modern CBM and metal			1.23	
1	1002	Layer		Levelling	Dark mid yellow brown silt-clay compact and sterile. Possible modern levelling material isolated to northern section			0.12	
1	1003	Layer		Made ground	Light blue-yellow redeposited lias clay, compact with small chalk inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal			0.41	
1	1004	Layer		Buried subsoil	Dark black-grey clay-silt with frequent flecks of charcoal			0.28	
1	1005	Layer		Natural substrate	Light yellow brown clay.			>3	
1	1006	Cut		Cut of pit	Cut of pit containing coin hoard. Arbitrary measurements due to removal before arrival	>0.5	>0.23	>0.35	MC4
1	1007	Fill	1006	Fill of pit	Context removed before arrival	>0.5	>0.23	>0.35	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

The Hengrove Coin Hoard, by Dr Peter Guest

Summary

The Hengrove hoard is an unusual and interesting collection of coins from the mid-4th century AD. It contained 309 bronze and silvered-bronze small-change denominations, most of which were produced in a short 7 to 10-year period after 348. These include a significant quantity struck in the name of the usurpers Magnentius and his brother Decentius, who ruled the western provinces of the Roman Empire between 350 and 353. It is notable that almost 25% of the coins are locally-made imitations of official coins, a practice that was especially common in Britain in the 350s and early 360s. The Hengrove coins are often unworn or only slightly worn, suggesting that some had not been in circulation for very long before they were deposited in the ground (no evidence was found to suggest any grouping of coins in the hoard's container).

The most recent coin in the Hengrove hoard was struck at the Arles mint between 355 and 358 and it is unlikely that the hoard was buried any later than 360. Therefore, it is one of a comparatively small number of coin hoards from Britain dating to the later 350s, but the unusually large quantities of coins of Magnentius and Decentius mean that it is unlike most of these contemporary finds. The reasons for the Hengrove hoard's burial and non-recovery are not known and it is possible that the coins were deposited in the political aftermath of the usurpers' defeat and suicides. This report will summarise the political and monetary background to the period before describing the Hengrove hoard's coins and, finally, comparing it to other coin hoards of the 350s.

The Roman Empire in the mid-4th century

The administrative reforms of the Emperor Diocletian at the end of the 3rd century had divided the Roman Empire into two parts, east and west; each of which was ruled by a senior Augustus and a junior Caesar. Diocletian's revolutionary new system of imperial government was known as the Tetrarchy ('rule by four emperors') and it survived successive civil wars over the following decades as emperors fought one another for sole control of the Empire. By 324 Constantine I ('the Great') had defeated his last remaining rival to become senior emperor in both east and west, ruling alongside his 3 sons as Caesars. Although born a pagan, in 313 Constantine I decriminalised the Christian religion and for the first time allowed Christians to worship without fear of persecution. Constantine I himself converted to Christianity on his deathbed in 337, after which his sons – Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans - became senior co-emperors. The brothers had been brought up as Christians but

rivalries between them led to conflict and Constantine II was killed in 340, leaving Constantius II alone as Augustus in the east and his younger brother Constans as Augustus in the west.

The Roman Empire faced a number of external threats throughout the 4th century and Constantius II fought several long and bloody wars against the Persians, while Constans successfully campaigned against the Franks in 341/2 before crossing to Britain in the winter of 342/3 (the purpose of the British expedition is not known, but it is thought that it might have been to deal with barbarian incursions into the province from beyond Hadrian's Wall). Despite these military successes, Constans was increasingly unpopular for his cruel and scandalous behaviour and in 350 one of his commanders, Magnentius, proclaimed himself emperor with the support of the army. Constans tried to flee but was soon overtaken and killed. Following his usurpation, Magnentius was sole Augustus in the western part of the Empire (including Britain, Gaul, Germany, Spain, Italy and Africa), but his rule was never recognised by Constantius II and in 351 he elevated his brother Decentius to the rank of Caesar. In the same year, Constantius II moved west with his army to deal with the usurpers and in September defeated them at the Battle of Mursa (modern Croatia), after which Magnentius lost control of Italy followed by Spain and Africa. Constantius II finally invaded Gaul in 353 and again defeated Magnentius, after which the usurpers both committed suicide.

Constantius II had awarded his cousin, another Constantius and known as Gallus, the title of Caesar in 351 and the junior emperor remained in the east while Constantius II campaigned against Magnentius. After the usurpers' defeat and death, Constantius II (now the undisputed sole Augustus) stayed in the west to deal with various barbarian incursions on the Danube frontier, as well as the aftermath of Magnentius's usurpation. Constantius sent an official, Paulus, to Britain to root out any subversive elements who had supported Magnentius, but his methods were so harsh that he was recalled and sent to Egypt (but not before earning the epithet 'Catena', meaning 'The Chain').

After receiving disturbing reports about his cousin Caesar's behaviour, Constantius II summoned Constantius Gallus to Italy where he was executed in 354. The Empire, however, continued to face multiple threats from her enemies and in 355 Constantius II raised his last remaining male relative, Julian, to the rank of Caesar. Julian's military successes in the west soon led to Constantius II's resentment and he tried to undermine Julian's popularity by withdrawing his best troops for a new campaign against Persia. This led to the army in Gaul proclaiming Julian as Augustus in 360, which would have resulted in yet another

confrontation between the armies of the eastern and western emperors had it not been for Constantius II's sudden death on his way westwards in November 361.

Roman Coinage and Currency in the mid-4th century

As well as reorganising the Empire's political structures, Diocletian had also reformed Rome's currency. For most of the 4th century, Roman money was based on a trimetallic system of denominations struck in gold, silver and bronze. The high value gold and silver coinage was almost always rare and most coins that we find today, whether on excavated settlements or in hoards, consist of the lower value bronze denominations that people would have used as small-change for most day-to-day transactions. Unfortunately, we do not know what the small-change coins were worth, either relatively compared to higher value coinage or in terms of what they might have bought in the marketplace, or indeed what they were called.

By the 330s, Roman mints were striking only a single small-change denomination, albeit in very large quantities. These bronze coins were small in size (it is thought that 173 were struck from a Roman pound of metal) and were manufactured from a copper and tin alloy mixed with small quantities of silver (approximately 1%-2%), that today is known as 'billon'. This deliberate addition of silver reinforced the monetary value of these coins, but it also meant that they had an intrinsic value too that could be exploited if the precious metal could be extracted profitably (naturally the Roman state took a dim view of forgers who availed themselves of precious metals in the emperors' coinage in this way).

The small-change element of Roman currency underwent a major reform in 348, which introduced a new system of 3 copper alloy denominations: 2 large in billon and 1 smaller in bronze (Mattingly 1933; Kent 1967; Kent 1981, 34-9). This reform coincided with the 1100th anniversary of Rome's foundation (which, according to myth, happened on 21 April 753 BC), and the 3 new denominations all bore the legend FEL. TEMP. REPARATIO harking back to a lost golden age that, it was hoped, was about to manifest itself in Rome once again (the legend loosely translates as 'return of happy times', or perhaps 'happy days are here again'). Although we cannot be certain of these denominations' names, a late Roman edict written in 354 demonetising older bronze coinage suggests that they might have been called the *maiorina* (simply 'large one'), which is apt given they are far larger than those they replaced (diameters of 23-20mm compared to 17-15mm). They were struck with carefully cut dies and the larger of the 2 billon denominations also contained more silver than pre-reform coins (2.5-3% compared to only 1.1-1.5% in the smaller sibling), which all together gave a more aesthetically pleasing coinage. Today these denominations are referred to as:

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1. **'Large Æ2'** (probably struck at 60 to the pound). The reverses of this denomination showed either:
 - a. an emperor holding a standard and a miniature phoenix or Victory on a globe, sailing across the ocean on a galley steered by Victory (referred to as the 'Galley' type), or
 - b. an emperor with a shield spearing a falling horseman (known as the 'Falling Horseman' type). It is possible that these reverse types were intended as allegories for the expedition to Britain by Constans in 342/3 and the defeat of the Persian king at the hands of Constantius II, both of which would have been understood in the context of the hopes expressed in the reverse legend.

 2. **'Small Æ2'** (struck at 72 to the pound). This denomination's reverses depicted either:
 - a. a soldier or an emperor leading a small barbarian from a hut beneath a tree (the 'Hut' type struck only in the name of Constans, though if this represents a specific event such as the campaigns against the Franks in 341/2, or simply Rome's civilising influence is uncertain), or
 - b. a soldier emperor holding a standard and shield with 2 small barbarian captives standing in front of him ('Emperor and 2 captives' type issued only for Constantius II in the eastern empire, possibly telling of victories against the Persians).

 3. **'Æ3'** (120 to the pound). This smallest denomination was similar in size to the pre-reform coins and its reverse bore either:
 - a. a phoenix, symbolising the regeneration promised in the accompanying legend, standing on a rock or a globe ('Phoenix' type), or
 - b. the same galley scene as in the largest denomination (the small 'Galley' type).

These new reverse types on the reformed small-change coinage presented positive images of imperial success that must have been intended to convince the viewer that the good times were actually here already, while the emperors' Christian faith is clearly shown on the standards they carry (known as the *labarum*) that bear the Chi-Rho symbol of the recently adopted religion.

After the assassination in 350 of Constans, the legitimate emperor in the west, Magnentius continued to strike the 2 larger billon denominations, but adapted them with his own reverse types and a very unusual obverse imperial portrait. Even though Magnentius was proclaimed Augustus, his coins depict him without the usual laurel wreath or diadem that senior emperors traditionally wore on their bust portraits. Magnentius, however, is shown bare-headed, which had been how junior Caesars were depicted and perhaps indicates his willingness to act as the subordinate emperor to Constantius II (his Caesar, Decentius, is shown bare-headed too, correctly). Magnentius's small-change denominations included:

1. **'Large Æ2'** (struck at 60 to the pound). The reverses of this denomination were struck with one of the following types:
 - a. FELICITAS REIPVBLICE ('the blessed state or imperium') showing an emperor in military dress holding a labarum and miniature Victory, or
 - b. GLORIA ROMANORUM ('glorious Romans') with a mounted soldier or emperor holding a spear and facing a barbarian kneeling in supplication.

2. **'Small Æ2'** (66-72 to the pound). This denomination had a single reverse type:
 - a. VICTORIAE DD NN AUG ET CAE(S) ('our victorious emperors') around a large central wreath inscribed with VOT V MULT X (celebrating the 5th imperial anniversary and looking forward to the 10th) and held up by 2 Victories.

These two denominations struck for Magnentius and Decentius were similar in size to coins produced by the legitimate emperors Constans and Constantius II and they also contained comparable quantities of silver. Magnentius, however, did not strike an equivalent of the smallest Æ3 denomination and it is possible that it might not have been needed if, as is believed, old pre-reform coins continued to circulate after 348 alongside the new reformed Æ2 denominations.

In 352 Magnentius introduced a new bronze coin with a remarkable reverse type to replace his initial Æ2 denominations. The reverse bore a large Chi-Rho flanked by alpha and omega with the legend SALUS DD NN AUG ET CAES around it ('safety or well-being of our lords and emperors'), which directly associates the prosperity of the Empire with Christianity. These coins were often far heavier and larger than the coins they replaced (though they also seem to have been struck at 3 different sizes, perhaps 36, 48 and 70 to the pound), but they

did not contain any silver and the new coins must have had a more bronze appearance. It is unclear if the earlier Small Æ2 VICTORIAE coins continued after 352 or if they were replaced by the smallest SALUS type. Neither contained any silver and both were effectively token currency of the lowest monetary value, and it is also possible that older pre-348 bronze coins also continued to circulate after 352.

In the eastern part of the Empire, Constantius II quickly discontinued most of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO denominations, so that by 351 his mints were only producing the Falling Horseman type. These coins still contained silver, but less than before and their weight and fineness were rapidly reduced so that by 353-4 they contained virtually no silver and were half the weight of coins only 2 or 3 years older (decreasing in size to Æ2/Æ3). A legal reform in 354 seems to have demonetised the large post-348 coinage (the name *maiorina* is mentioned in this edict), after which production of the lowest value FEL TEMP REPARATIO bronze coinage continued for another 3 or 4 years until it was replaced with a new SPES REIPUBLICAE type in 358. The end of a silvered-bronze or *billon* small-change coinage seems to have led to the immediate removal of large quantities of demonetised coins, recalled officially to the treasury but also fraudulently withdrawn by forgers who recycled them to extract their silver contents. The combination of a decline in the availability of existing small change and a likely reduction in the production of new low-value bronze coins led to an upsurge in the forging and copying of coins to meet the demands for silver metal and also for small change. Copies of the FEL TEMP Falling Horseman type are particularly common in Britain and Gaul, where they quickly became very crude and must have been struck in very large quantities up to 360, but perhaps as late as 364 (Brickstock 1987). It is interesting that a number of Falling Horseman copies were overstruck on older regular pre-348 reform coins, particularly those produced after 330. This demonstrates that these coins were still available when the copying took place (i.e. 354-60/4) and, also, that the 354 edict demonetising earlier coinage is likely to have rendered them no longer legal tender along with the post-348 *maiorinae*.

Coins in the Hengrove hoard

The Hengrove hoard coins were in generally good condition and although many coins were poorly struck or very worn, there were numerous examples of unworn or hardly worn coins of the same date. All but 2 of 309 could be identified to a reverse type or an emperor, though for another 67 it was not possible to identify the mint where they were produced. The coins from the Hengrove are listed in the Catalogue and are summarised in Table 1.

The 309 coins from the Hengrove hoard were struck between the first and the middle decades of the 4th century, with 288 from the 10 years between 348 and 358. A quarter of the coins (77) are unofficial copies, most of which are poor imitations although some are far closer to their originals and can only be identified as copies by small mistakes in the legend, or in the depiction of types. Of the 232 official coins in the hoard, 154 were struck during the usurpation of Magnentius from 350 to 353, both in his name as well as for his Caesar and brother, Decentius. The latest coin from the hoard (C218) is a 355-358 FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman issue of Constantius II from Arles (dated after 355 because the mint mark is shared with coins of Julian Caesar not Constantius Gallus Caesar).

Table 1 The contents of the Hengrove hoard by date of issue and mint

Date	London	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	Aquileia	Thess.	Nicom.	copies	uncertain	Total
294-305											1	1
305-313												0
313-318			2								1	3
318-324	1		4									5
324-330			2									2
330-335				1							1	2
335-341								1			2	3
341-348			2		1						2	5
348-350			13	3	2	4	2			8	3	35
350-353		23	48	33	4		1			57	48	214
353-358		2	2	7	4	1			2	12	7	37
Uncertain											2	2
Total	1	25	73	44	11	5	3	1	2	77	67	309

Only 21 coins predate 348, of which 10 were struck after 330 (this is unusual for hoards of the 350s that often contain far larger relative quantities of earlier Constantinian coinage. See below and Bland 2018, 105-6; Kent 1981, 80-1). The 27 official coins of the 348 reform are mainly the Large $\text{Æ}2$ and Small $\text{Æ}2$ denominations, particularly the Galley and Hut types in the name of the western emperor Constans (Table 2). The single $\text{Æ}3$ denomination in the hoard (Phoenix type), suggests a preference to avoid the lowest value small-change that, in this hoard at least, was not made up for with older pre-348 coinage.

Table 2 Coin issues struck 348-50 in the Hengrove hoard

Large $\text{Æ}2$ FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Galley (14)							
	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Rome	Uncertain	Total
CONSTANS	7	1			2		10
CONSTANTIUS II	2	1				1	4
Large $\text{Æ}2$ FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Falling horseman (3)							

	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Rome	Uncertain	Total
CONSTANS			1			1	2
CONSTANTIUS II			1				1
Small Æ2 FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Hut (9)							
	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Rome	Uncertain	Total
CONSTANS	2	1		2	2	1	8
Hse of Constantine	1						1
Æ3 FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Phoenix (1)							
	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Rome	Uncertain	Total
CONSTANS	1						1

The 157 regular coins issued between 350 and 353 during the usurpation of Magnentius and Decentius are the largest group of coins in the Hengrove hoard (Table 3). All but 2 were struck in the usurpers' names (the exceptions are coins with the reverse legend SALUS AUG NOSTRI struck at Trier for Constantius II when the city, led by Poemenius, rebelled against the usurpers sometime in 352 or 353), while with only 1 exception all were struck at the Gallic mints of Amiens, Trier, Lyons and Arles. The hoard contained some of the early Magnentian Large Æ2 denomination with the FELICITAS and GLORIA reverses (10 and 12 respectively), and a similar quantity of the SALUS and Chi-Rho Æ1/Æ2 denomination that replaced them in 352 (16). By far the largest group of Magnentian coins, however, includes the 115 examples of the Small Æ2 VICTORIAE denomination whose production began in 351 and could have continued until the usurpers' overthrow in 353.

Table 3 Coin issues struck 350-353 in the Hengrove hoard

350-1 Large Æ2: FELICITAS REIPVBLICE (10)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Uncertain	Total
MAGNENTIUS		5	3			2	10
350-1 Large Æ2: GLORIA ROMANORVM (12)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Uncertain	Total
MAGNENTIUS	2	6	1	1		2	12
351-3 Small Æ2: VICTORIAE/VICT DD NN AVG ET CAE/CAES (115)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	uncertain	Total
MAGNENTIUS	13	21	17	2		19	72
DECENTIUS	5	5	12	1	1	4	28
Uncertain		1				14	15
352-3 Æ1/ Æ2: SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES (14)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	uncertain	Total
MAGNENTIUS	3	4				2	9
DECENTIUS		2				2	4
Uncertain						1	1
352-3 Æ2: SALVS AVG NOSTRI (2)							

	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	uncertain	Total
CONSTANTIUS II		2					2

The years after 353 produced 25 official coins in the Hengrove hoard (Table 4), all of which are reduced Falling Horseman types in the name of Constantius II and Constantius Gallus Caesar (the latter was executed in 354). The 2 coins from Nicomedia could have been struck as early as 351 (though it seems unlikely that they would have arrived in Britain before 353), whereas the majority from the Gallic mints were almost certainly struck after the defeat of Magnentius and Decentius in 353, including the latest coin from the hoard that must have been issued after Julian's elevation to Caesar in 355.

Table 4 Coin issues struck after 353 in the Hengrove hoard

353-55/8 Æ2/Æ3: FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Falling Horseman (25)								
	Amien	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	Nicomedia *	Uncertain	Total
CONSTANTIUS II	2	1	6	3		1	4	17
CONSTANTIUS GALLUS		1		1	1	1		4
House of Constantine			1				3	4

* 351-55

One quarter of the Hengrove hoard consists of copies of regular coins, although the proportion of imitations is not consistent and the latest official types were more likely to be copied than those closer to 348 (23% of 348-50 types are copies, increasing to 27% for types of the years 350-53 and 32% from 353 to 358). All the main types struck between 348 and 355 were copied and the largest group are imitations of the Small Æ2 VICTORIAE denomination (Table 5). Two copies were overstruck on earlier regular coins: a Falling Horseman copy in the name of Constantius II on an URBS ROMA type of 330-40 (C298), and a Magnentius copy on an earlier Constantinian coin almost certainly also from the 330s (C307).

Table 5 Imitations of official coin issues in the Hengrove hoard

348+ as Large Æ2: FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Emperor on galley (5)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	Uncertain	Total
as Constans		5					5
348+ as Large Æ2: FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Falling horseman (1)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	uncertain	Total
as Constantius II				1			1
348+ as Small Æ2: FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Hut (2)							

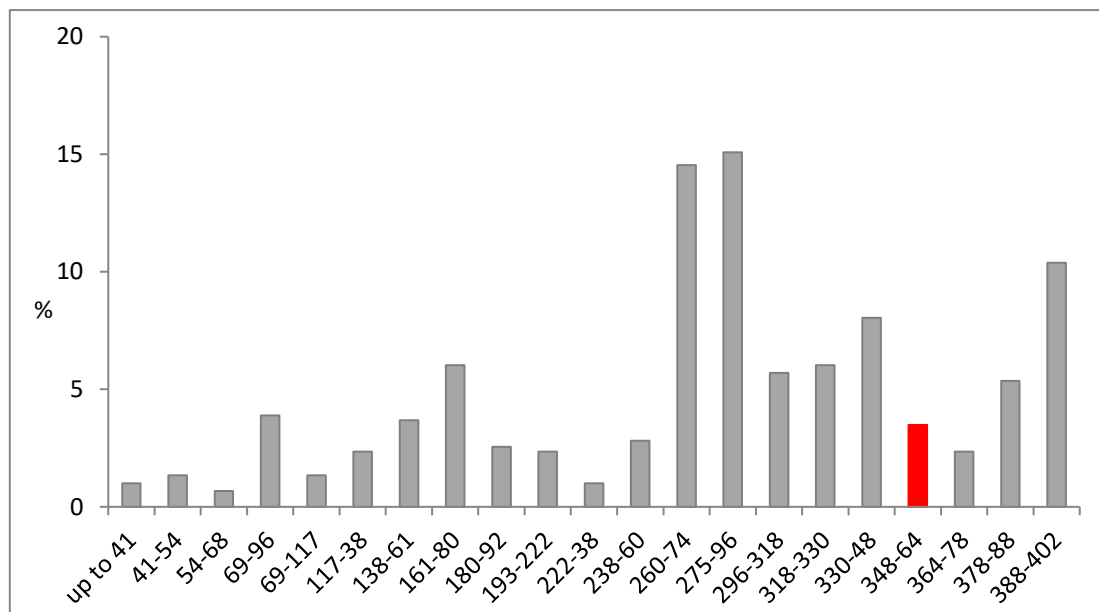
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	uncertain	Total
as Constans			1				1
as Magnentius/Decentius						1	1
350+ as Large Æ2: FELICITAS REIPUBLICAE (2)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	uncertain	Total
as Magnentius		1				1	2
351+ as Small Æ2: VICTORIAE/VICT DD NN AVG ET CAE/CAES (53)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	uncertain	Total
as Magnentius	5	12	3			17	37
as Decentius	2					7	9
as Magnentius/Decentius	1	2				2	5
as Constantius II						2	2
352+ as Æ1/Æ2: SALVS DD NN AVG ET CAES (1)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Aquileia	uncertain	Total
as Magnentius		1					1
353+ as Æ2/Æ3: FEL TEMP REPARATIO - Falling Horseman (12)							
	Amiens	Trier	Lyons	Arles	Rome	uncertain	Total
as Constantius II		1				2	3
as House of Constantine		1			1	7	9

Date and Circumstances of the Hengrove hoard's burial

The most recent coin in the Hengrove hoard, a FEL TEMP REPERATIO Falling Horseman type for Constantius II struck at Arles (C218), provides a date of 355 after which the hoard must have been buried in the ground. The mints ceased producing the FEL TEMP REPARATIO Falling Horseman type in 358, introducing a new type with the legend SPES REIPUBLICAE instead. The absence of these new coins from the hoard strongly suggests it was collected and probably buried before they were available in Britain, so at some time between 355 and 358 (or possibly 359/360).

In order to check if the suggested date of burial is reliable, it is useful to compare the Hengrove hoard to other coin hoards from the 350s and 360s. Britain produces a large number of coin finds from the 4th century, but fewer hoards are known from the period 348-364 than from the decades immediately before or afterwards (Graph 1). Hoards containing coins of Magnentius and Decentius are more numerous from Britain than from other provinces of the western Empire that also fell under the control of the usurpers between 350 and 353 (including Gaul and Spain), although there appears to be a great deal of variation between them.

Graph 1 Sequence of coin hoards from Roman Britain (based on Robertson 2000 and Abdy 2002)



British hoards that close with coins of 353 to 358 (for Magnentius and Decentius or the smaller post-353 Falling Horseman type) seem to fall into a number of general groups:

1. Hoards that contain lots of coins from the period before 348, together with some of the large FEL TEMP denominations of 348-50 as well as relatively small quantities of Magnentian types (usually the early Large $\text{Æ}2$ denomination with FELICITAS and GLORIA reverses or occasionally the Small $\text{Æ}2$ VICTORIAE denomination, but never the $\text{Æ}1/\text{Æ}2$ SALUS denomination introduced in 352):
 - The hoard from Coleshill near Birmingham closes with coins of 353/4, but almost 60% of its coins predate 348 (Robertson 2000, no. 1351; Bland 2018, 106).

2. Hoards that contain very few pre-348 coins, but large numbers of 348-50 denominations and including all the denominations and types of Magnentius and Decentius (usually the early Large $\text{Æ}2$ denomination with FELICITAS and GLORIA reverses or occasionally the Small $\text{Æ}2$ VICTORIAE denomination):
 - The Croydon hoard (found in 1903, latest coins dated to 353/4) contains almost twice as many coins of 348-50 (65%) as 350-53 (35%) (Robertson 2000, no. 1362).

-
- The Cobham (Kent) hoard (latest coins dated to 353/4) contains nearly as many coins of 348-50 (48%) as 350-53 (52%) (Robertson 2000, no. 1357);
3. Hoards that are dominated by post-353 FEL TEMP Falling Horseman types, combined with abundant copies of all post-348 coinage but particularly Falling Horseman:
- 28% of the 1,347 coins in the Besthorpe hoard (latest coins dated to 353-5) were imitations, of which 67% were Falling Horseman copies (Robertson 2000, no. 1358);
 - 31% of the 542 coins in the Freckenham hoard (latest coins dated to 353-5) were imitations, of which 74% were Falling Horseman copies (Robertson 2000, no. 1361);
 - Of the 76 coins found together in Poundbury Camp in 1943 (latest coins dated to 353-5), 51 were official Falling Horseman issues while all 24 copies (32% of the hoard) were Falling Horseman copies (Robertson 2000, no. 1355);
 - 50% of the 3,258 identified coins from the Oldcroft hoard (latest coins dated to 355-8) were imitations, of which 68% were Falling Horseman copies (Robertson 2000, no. 1365).

The Hengrove hoard does not fit easily into any of these loose groups of British coin hoards from the 350s. It contains very few pre-348 coinage and, even though all denominations and types of Magnentius are present, the Small *Æ2* VICTORIAE denomination is far more common than the Large *Æ2* FELICITAS and GLORIA types of 348-50. It is also unusual because of the preponderance of coins struck for Magnentius and Decentius, and the consequent relative paucity of coinage in the name of Constantius II. The proportion of irregular copies and imitations is consistent with other hoards of the years 355-8, albeit comprising copies of all regular denominations after 348 not just the later small Falling Horseman type.

While the date of the Hengrove hoard's burial in the years 355 to 358/360 is reasonably secure, its coins are a very unusual collection of coins when compared to near-contemporary hoards from Britain. The explanation for this is unclear and it is difficult, therefore, to explain the reasons for the hoard's burial. Perhaps the presence of so many

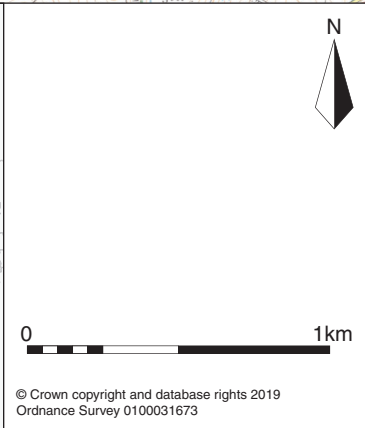
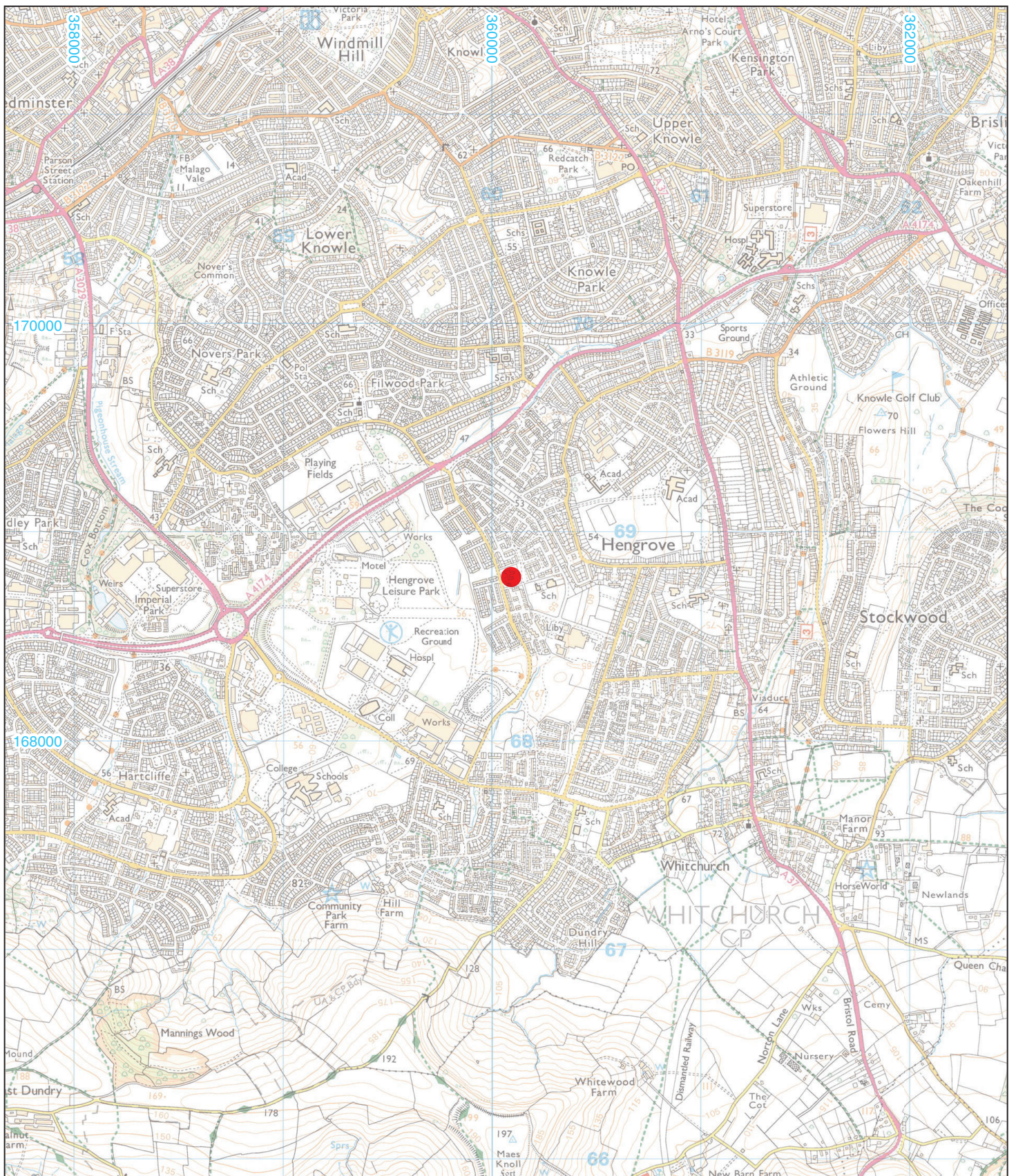
coins of Magnentius and Decentius suggests a politically motivated decision to bury them in a pot, possibly in the years immediately following their deaths when Constantius II seems to have undertaken a purge of the usurpers' supporters in Britain (Robertson 2000, xxviii). This might explain the apparent absence of coins of Constantius II, particularly of the later Falling Horseman type (including copies), which other finds suggest is not normal in hoards buried after 355. Alternatively, the coins could have been buried for economic reasons, for instance because they had been legally demonetised in 354 and were, consequently, monetarily worthless. This seems, however, a less likely explanation for the hoard's burial and subsequent non-recovery (it does not account for the predominance of Magnentian and Decentian coins, or the hoard's different composition to other contemporary caches of coins, nor does it take into consideration that the small quantities of silver in most of the coins had an intrinsic value that could be extracted). It is also notable that the area around Bristol has produced a number of coin hoards dating to the 350s, including the northern Somerset finds from Wraxall (latest coin: Æ3 Phoenix type, 348-50) (Robertson 2000, no. 1266); Blaise Castle (latest coin: Large Æ2 Galley type, 348-50) (Robertson 2000, no. 1350A); Gatcombe II (latest coin: Magnentian Small Æ2 VICTORIAE type, 351-3) (Robertson 2000, no. 1350B) and Hanham Abbots in Gloucestershire (latest coin: Magnentius, 350-3) (Robertson 2000, no. 1324). The concentration of contemporary coin hoards in the Bristol region suggests the Hengrove hoard is an important piece of evidence for the political and financial fortunes of this part of Roman Britain in the later 350s, when the island province was once again reunified with the rest of the Empire after another episode of failed rebellion.

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APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Project Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol	
Short description	<p>In September 2019, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with residential development at Project Aquarius Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol.</p> <p>A coin hoard, consisting of pottery vessel container, copper-alloy scale pan lid, and 309 bronze and silvered-bronze coins, was recovered following emergency attendance during development groundworks.</p> <p>The recovered coin assemblage dates exclusively to the middle of the 4th century AD and included a significant number of coins struck by the usurpers Magnentius and Decentius, who ruled the western provinces of the Roman Empire between 350 and 353.</p>	
Project dates	4–9 September 2019	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	DBA (CA 2017)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol	
Study area (m ² /ha)	0.8ha	
Site co-ordinates	360040 168136	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	N/A	
Project design (WSI) originator	N/A	
Project Manager	Alex Thomson	
Project Supervisor	Sara-Jayne Boughton and Marino Cardelli	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Roman Coin Hoard	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives: BRSMG:2019/49	Pottery, coins, metal objects
Paper	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives: BRSMG:2019/49	Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives: BRSMG:2019/49	Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2021 <i>Project Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report CR0192_1		





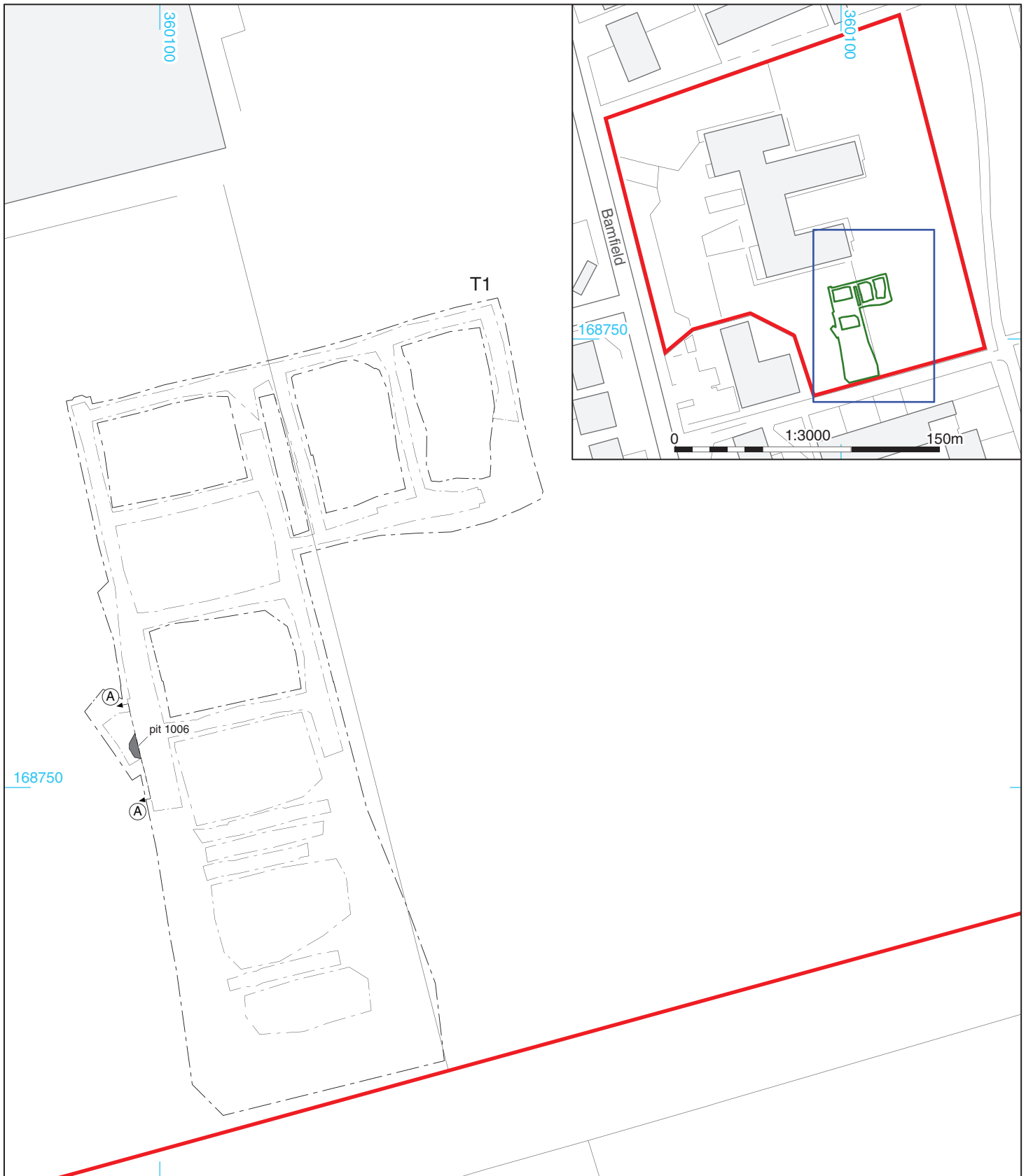
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



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PROJECT TITLE
 Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	AW	PROJECT NO.	CR0192	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	01.10.19	
APPROVED BY	MC	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1



-  Site boundary
-  Excavation trench
-  Top of excavation trench
-  Bottom of excavation trench
-  Archaeological feature
-  Section location

0 1:200 10m



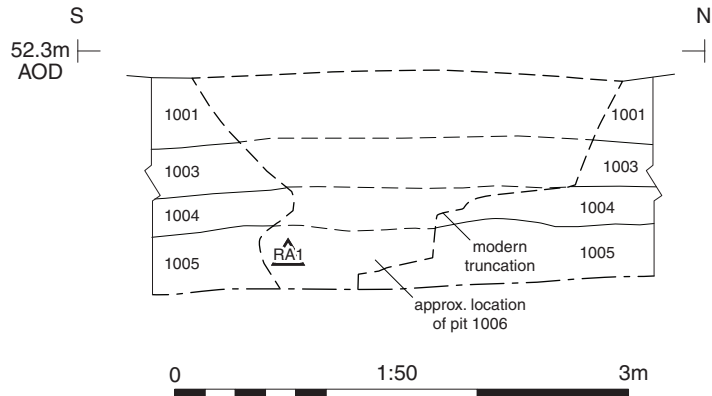
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PROJECT TITLE
 Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE
 Area of observed groundworks,
 showing archaeological features

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	01.10.19	2
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Section AA



Approximate location of recovered coin hoard RA1 and pit 1006, looking south-west (1m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Aquarius, Bamfield, Hengrove, Bristol

FIGURE TITLE

Section and photograph

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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

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