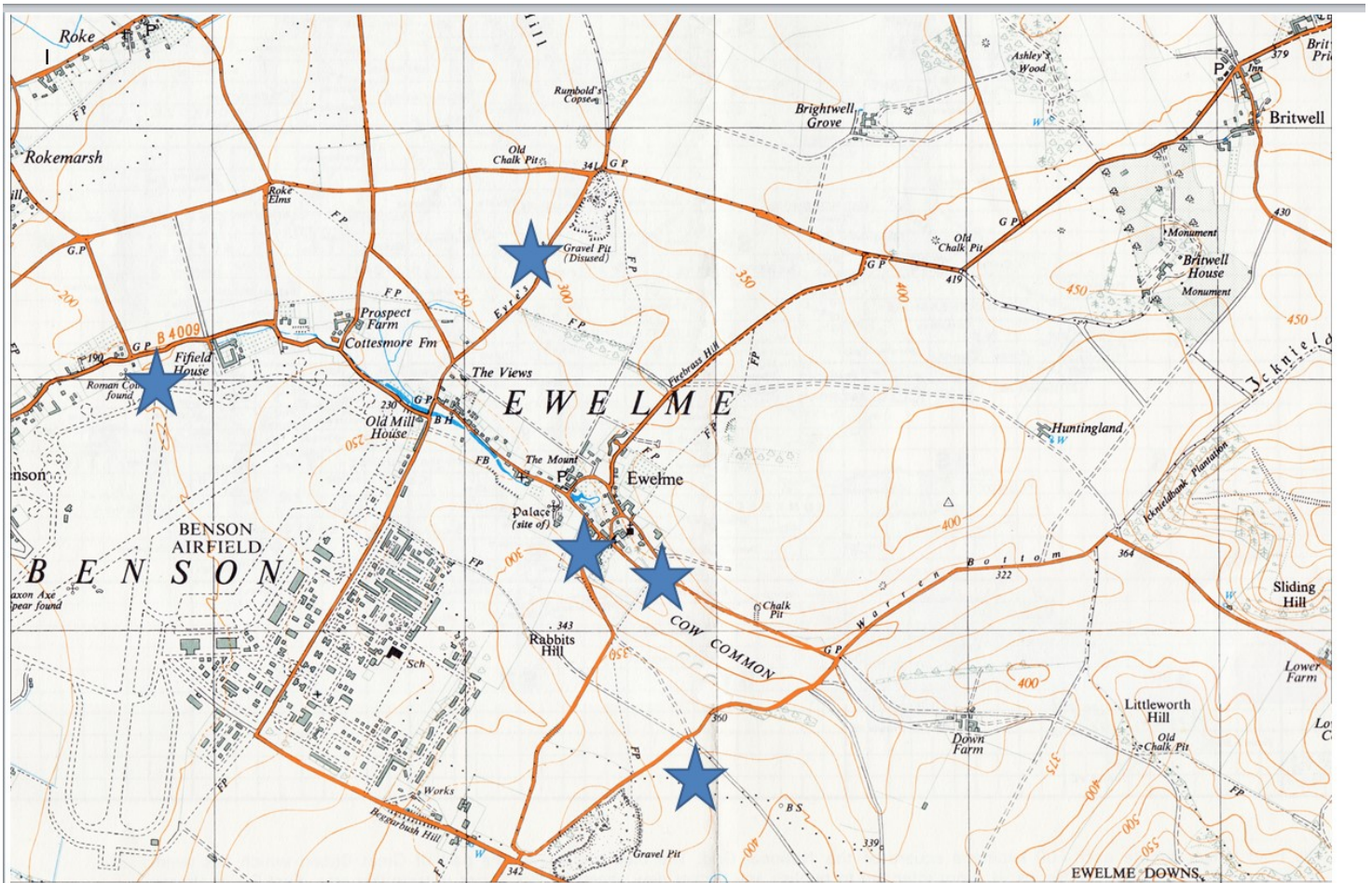


Roman Coin Finds Around Ewelme

Ewelme News, Feb-Mar 2015

The recent discovery of a treasure trove of rare Anglo-Saxon coins by an amateur metal detector caused great excitement in relevant circles. It reminded us that many of the detectorists who came to Ewelme in September 1999 for our Millennium Exhibition Fund Raising Day were also seeking rare coins, especially Saxon sceats, minted between circa 600-775 AD. If indeed any were found, none were handed in. However, we were given fifteen Roman coins spanning the period from 260 AD to AD 361 AD, dug up from the area near the Swyncombe Woods and Huntinglands crossway.



 Finds of Roman Coins

Had mass media existed 293 years ago, Ewelme too would have made the National news. A copy of a document in the archive has revealed that in 1722 a bushel of Roman coins was stumbled upon by a butcher's boy's horse on Harcourt Hill (between Ewelme and Nuffield). The document is a portion of the Thomas Hearne Collection, a diary kept by an Oxford scholar and antiquary (1678-1735). Of interest to us is his reference to Tetricus the Elder, (last emperor of the Gallic Empire 270-273 AD), as coins bearing his name were amongst those handed in to us. We have reproduced Hearne's words as written -

"Feb 24 1722 : Yesterday by Magdalen College, I met with one Griffyth, a Batch of Arts of Balliol

College, who shew'd me five or six Coyns of Copper, found as he said, near Watlington. I asked at what place he they were found. He reply'd, he could not tell, but said he was desir'd to shew them to me, adding however, that they were found between Watlington and Wallingford, and that there was about a Bushel of Coyns at the same time found in the same place.

Mar 13 1722 : Last night Mr Collins of Magd Coll shew'd me five other small Copper Coyns, put into his hands by a Friend for my View, being part of those found lately between Watlington and Wallingford. All five are of Tetricus the Elder and I remember that on the Reverse of one is HILARITAS ATGG. This must, I take it, relate to the Father and Son, to the Son as Caesar, to the Father as Augustus. I was told last night that about a peck of these Coyns were found at the same time. They were discover'd by a Butcher riding on the way whose Horse sinking in, he lighted & putting his hand into the Hole, took out handfuls of the Coyns. Afterwards they digg'd but whether they broke the Pot in digging or whether it were broke by the Horse, I cannot yet learn.

Mar 14 1722 : Yesterday Mr Nath. Wells who is Curate of Swyncombe, came to me and told me that the Coyns above mention'd were found in an Urn at Harcourt Hill in Ewelme Warren, and that most of them are now in the Hands of Mr Tipping of Ewelme. [A Justice of the Peace living at West Court, the largest house in Ewelme and now the site of Chaucer Court].

Sept 29 1722 : I went through Ewelme, a quarter of a Mile from which is Goulds Heath, and about 2 Furlongs East from the said Ewelme passeth the Lower Hackney Way [an old name for the Icknield Way]. About 2 Miles from Ewelme is Harcourt Hill, in Ewelme Warren [the rubble that was Warren Bottom Farm is in the valley to the south of Potters Farm], at which Hill the Butcher's Boy of Watlington lately found the Roman Coyns & a piece of an Urn. The Butcher at Watlington's name is Anthony Athertonn.

One [farmer] Leaver of Potters Farm (as he is called) lives at the foot of Harcourt Hill. A [second farmer] Leaver of May's Farm lives to the right of him, the two farms being about a Mile apart. Leaver [Edward] of Potter's rents Ewelme Warren. He is an old, sullen, cross, hoggish Fellow, & so is his Son [also Edward], who lives with him. I could get no manner of Intelligence from them about the Coyns. They would hardly own there were any found."

On ancient local maps reference is made to a cache of Roman coins found on the Manor site - what became of them is unknown. Hopefully, Mr Justice Tipping safely deposited the Harcourt Hill coins in Oxford.

Ewelme Village Archive