

Hamble's Roman Hoard

On 29th March 1968, during extension work on the playing fields at Mount Pleasant Recreation Ground, a hoard of Roman coins were found together with the broken remains of the pot in which they were buried. They were revealed by a driver of a bulldozer, who was working for the Parish Council.

A total of 2,494 coins were recorded, of which 200 are now with the British Museum and most of the rest are held by the Hampshire Arts & Museum Service. The Parish Council retained 90 coins some of which were framed for itself and the schools, so that parishioners and pupils could view them.

Most of the coins belonged to the period AD 330-335. The earliest dated examples are from the 260s, the latest to AD 348-50. The hoard must therefore be deposited in or soon after AD 350.

The coins had almost certainly been buried with the intention of retrieving them at a later date. The reasons for failing to do this will never be known. Similar hoards have been found elsewhere in Britain and they are likely to relate to a reform of the system which took place in AD 348. The reasons why the coins were removed from circulation is not fully understood. Coins issued after AD 348 may have been worth less than their predecessors, so the owners may have preferred the older higher valued coins and hoarded them. Alternatively the old coins were not acceptable currency any longer, so were hoarded for their metal content.

Most of the Hamble coins were produced at the mints closest to Britain, such as in Germany or southern France. Some coins were minted in Rome or as far away as Turkey. The coins had travelled a long way either as personal change or in official pay packets before they were buried at Hamble.

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