

The time capsule – A mystery spanning 2000 years

The story began in 1923 when the sexton of St Mary's Church Allerton Bywater, a Mr R. Mills uncovered a hoard of Roman coins whilst digging a grave in the churchyard. The coins amounting to approximately 300 were deemed treasure trove and split between Leeds Museum and Hull Museum with a few rarer ones going to the British museum in London. About this time money was being raised to build a church hall and in 1925 the foundation stone was laid. According to the programme for the ceremony, a time capsule was buried underneath the stone containing current coins of the realm, parish records and coins dating from 60BC and 180AD i.e. pre Roman conquest and after the North of England was conquered. Hadrian's Wall was built in 122AD

Forward to 2007

As the Hall is in the process of being sold the Church thought it important that we rescue the capsule before the hall was demolished. So an intrepid party led by churchwarden Stewart (Indiana) Fawcett and members of the Parish Council recovered the capsule from the base of the Foundation stone. What was recovered was in a bad state of decay. The metal canister that held the items was crumbling and only just held its contents which amounted to a copy of the Pontefract and Castleford Express and Yorkshire Post and a donations record book for the building of the hall, coins of the realm the earliest being from the reign of George I V but no Roman coins. John Taylor has been researching the matter and discovered that the coins in Hull Museum were lost when it was bombed in World War 11 and Leeds Museum was also bombed and has no record of them. Only the few in the British Museum can be seen.

If anybody can shed any light on where they might have gone or why they weren't put in the time capsule or know a relative of anyone on the Parochial Church Council at that time can you please contact

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me Jean Baldwin on 01977 557981 email: - martianjeanius@lineone.net

Photographs of the finds can be viewed in the Church porch before or after church services on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening or between 10am and 12noon on Fridays when the church is open for prayer.

ANCIENT LAWS OF TREASURE TROVE.

The discovery of a valuable and complete collection of silver and bronze Roman coins near Castleford—of which, in the days of the Roman occupation, was a fort standing guard over the Ryedale Street crossing of the River Airedale—has attracted attention to that which in English law is called treasure trove.



The coins found at Allerton Bywater date from B.C. 50 to A.D. 180. The coin on the left dates from 71 A.D.; that on the right from about 140 A.D.

Treasure trove is a perquisite of the Crown, the law on this matter being that "when any money, gold, silver plate, or bullion is found, and no man knoweth to whom it belongs, then such property shall go to the Crown."

It is essential, however, that the original owner of the treasure and his descendants be unknown. If the identity of the man who hid the treasure be established, his descendants become entitled to it, and not the King. Moreover, to discover treasure trove, it is also necessary to discover the person who hid it.

having found the coins on October 13 last. They were which had not been disturbed hitherto, and were about ins. from the surface.... The coins had very probably contained in a copper vessel, which had been dissolved in action of earth and water."

JBA, n.s., XXIX (1923), Arch. Notes

H. Mattingly, in *NC*, 1925, 400f., gave a list, with types, of coins, all den.:

	<i>Den.</i>
Mark Antony	11
Nero	6
Galba	1
Otho	3
Vitellius	4
Vespasian	54
Titus	10 (6 under Vespasian)
Domitian	14 (5 under Vespasian, 3 under Titus)
Nerva	4
Trajan	62
Hadrian	51
Sabina	7
Aelius Caes.	1
Antoninus Pius	30 (1 Pius and Marcus)
Faustina I	19 (18 deified)
Marcus	8 (7 under Pius)

294 ALLERTON BYWATER, 1922 (Yorks.)

"The coins, 299 in number ... are of silver. ... Richard Mills, the sexton of Allerton Bywater Church, gave evidence as to having found the coins on October 13 last. They were in soil which had not been disturbed hitherto, and were about 5 ft. 6 ins. from the surface. ... The coins had very probably been contained in a copper vessel, which had been dissolved by the action of earth and water."

JBAA, n.s., XXIX (1923), Arch. Notes, 258f.

H. Mattingly, in *NC*, 1925, 400f., gave a list, with types, of 296 coins, all den.:

	<i>Den.</i>
Mark Antony	11
Nero	6
Galba	1
Otho	3
Vitellius	4
Vespasian	54
Titus	10 (6 under Vespasian)
Domitian	14 (5 under Vespasian, 3 under Titus)
Nerva	4
Trajan	62
Hadrian	51
Sabina	7
Aelius Caes.	1
Antoninus Pius	30 (1 Pius and Marcus)
Faustina I	19 (18 deified)
Marcus	8 (7 under Pius)
Faustina II	9 (6 under Pius)
Lucius Verus	1 (of AD 161-2)
Lucilla	1
	<hr/> 296

12 den. in Dept. of Coins and Medals, BM (BM Register of Coin Accessions, Oct. 1924)

Examined, 1948 (ASR)

40 den. in Hull City Museum

Examined, 1938 (ASR)

THE ALLERTON BYWATER HOARD OF ROMAN COINS.

Towards the end of 1923, a hoard consisting of 296 bronze and silver Roman coins was found while digging a grave in the Churchyard at Allerton Bywater. The specimens occurred in an earthenware jar. An inquest was duly held, and the coins were declared to be treasure trove, and after they were submitted to the British Museum, the Treasury eventually remitted them to the Vicar, Rev. James Bell, who has allowed us to have a selection.

In *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 1925, Parts III. and IV., "H.M." gives a conspectus of the find as under:—Mark Antony (11), Nero (6), Galba (1), Otho (3), Vitellius (4), Vespasian (54), Titus (10), Domitian (14), Nerva (4), Trajan (62), Hadrian (51), Sabina (7), L. Aurelius Cæsar (1), Antonius Pius (30), Faustina I. (19), Marcus Aurelius (8), Faustina II. (9), L. Verus (1), Lucilla (1). Total, 296.

He points out that "The latest dated coin in the find was of the year A.D. 162. The only coin of special interest was the very rare *Patentia Augusti* of Hadrian (Cohen, 1010)."

The coins are also classified in accordance with Cohen's second edition, for details of which those particularly interested are referred to the *Numismatic Chronicle*.

After considerable correspondence with the Rev. James Bell, we have succeeded in obtaining the following coins for our collection:—Mark Antony (2), Nero (1), Titus (1), Domitian (2), Vespasian (6), Trajan (10), Hadrian (8), Antonius Pius (5), Marcus Aurelius (1), Sabina (1), Faustina I. (2), Faustina II. (1).

SPALDING GENTLEMEN'S SOCIETY MEDAL.

The Hon. Secretary of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society (Mr. A. K. Maples) has recently struck an admirable medal to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of that Society. As I happen to be an honorary member, and gave the first lecture in the new premises, he has kindly presented me with a copy of the medal, which is reproduced herewith by the kindness of the Editor of *The Lincolnshire Free Press*. It has been designed by Mr. G. W.