

A FIND OF ANCIENT GOLD COINS AT WESTERHAM.

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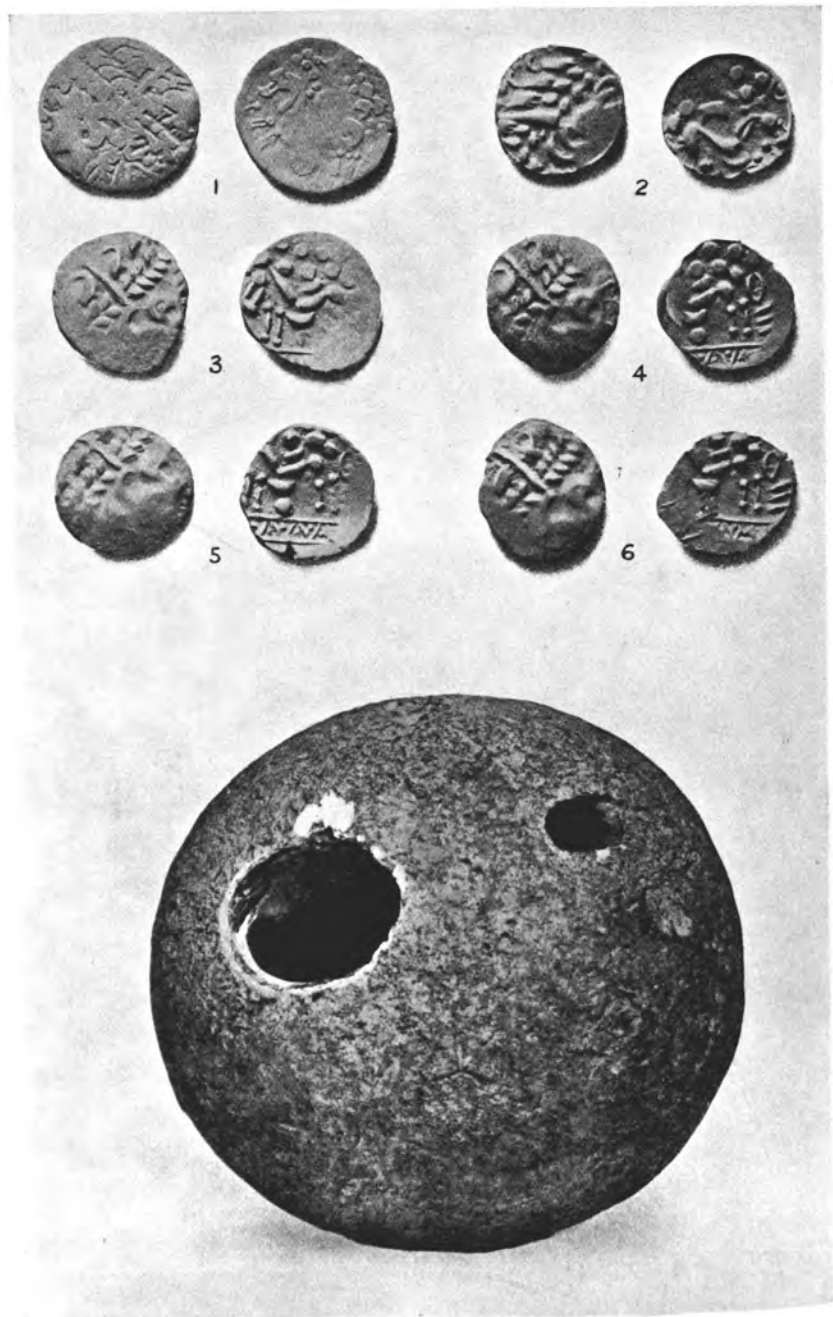
AN interesting little find of a hollow flint containing fourteen gold coins (two Gaulish and twelve probably British) was made in July, 1927, on the Squerries Estate, near Westerham. I am indebted to Captain Streatfeild, who is agent to the estate, for the following details of the place and circumstances of the find. He writes :

“The Wastes of the Manor of Westerham lie some two miles south of the Pilgrims' Road on the top of the range of hills overlooking the Weald. One portion of this Waste, known as Hosey Common, lies on the East side of the road running from Westerham to Edenbridge, and it was on the southern boundary of this Common that the find was made. There is an extremely old bridle-path at this part of the Common, running North and South, and it is considered by those who should know, that the north and south bridle-roads through the old forest of Anderida were comparatively few. It is assumed that this old path is one of the old bridle-paths.

“Living on the Common in cottages which in most cases have obviously been erected by themselves as squatters, are several families, all related and all bearing the name of Bateman, who have dug the gravel on the Common (of which there is an enormous quantity about two feet below the surface) for uncounted generations.

“Early in July, 1927, one of these gravel-diggers, working with two of his family, in digging gravel for the Local District Council, unearthed a flint receptacle with the point of his pick, about eighteen inches below the surface, embedded in the top spit, which chiefly consists of the peat, naturally formed on the Common over the gravel. Flint is a foreign material at that spot, though a good many flint implements have been found there from time to time.

“The flint was at first thrown aside, but at lunch time one of the diggers noticing the flint picked it up and observed a hole



MONEY-BOX WITH GOLD COINS FOUND AT WESTERHAM.

in it. He started idly picking at the hole with a stick and a coin fell out. I understand that his next action was to pour tea into the hole and shake the receptacle whereupon the remaining coins fell out. He handed the whole find over to the officials of the Council for whom he was working. They in due course handed the find to the Police, a Coroner's inquest was held and the coins were found to be Treasure Trove by a duly constituted jury."

It was the wish of Mr. J. O'Brien Warde, the owner of the Squerries Estate, that the find should remain intact, and a generous gift from him has enabled the British Museum to retain all the coins, and thus to carry out his wish. There are two indisputably Gaulish coins, one of the Bellovaci and the other of the Atrebatas. The remaining twelve coins are of the type (Evans, *Ancient British Coins*, pl. B 4 and 6) which has the Atrebatas coin (Evans, B 7) as its immediate forbear, but, by reason of its frequent English and rare French provenance, was probably struck on this side of the Channel, and is perhaps the earliest native coinage of Britain. The approximate date of the deposit may be put at the close of the second century B.C. Six of the fourteen coins are here illustrated; the weight and specific gravity of each coin is given below. One obverse die only was used for the twelve British coins; the letters *a* to *g* denote the reverse dies. The first six numbers correspond with the numbers on the plate.

1. (Bellovaci)		wt. 112.5 gr.	sp.g. 15.06
2. (Atrebatas)		86.5	14.04
3. reverse die	<i>a</i>	97.6	14.50
4.	<i>a</i>	100.5	14.12
5.	<i>a</i>	98.7	13.85
6.	<i>a</i>	97.5	13.91
7.	<i>b</i>	99.6	14.31
8.	<i>b</i>	102.2	13.86
9.	<i>c</i>	99.4	14.75
10.	<i>d</i>	98.3	13.61
11.	<i>d</i>	97.2	14.54
12.	<i>e</i>	99.1	13.67
13.	<i>f</i>	96.0	13.45
14.	<i>g</i>	98.0	13.82

Three of these coins, Nos. 1, 2, and 5, have been analysed with the following result :

	No. 1.	No. 2.	No. 5.
Gold	69.02	69.70	59.51
Silver	22.83	18.62	28.22
Copper	8.15	11.68	12.27
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.00	100.00	100.00
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The weight of the Atrebatas coin, No. 2, is very low and its flan unusually small. The eleven coins of this type found at Higham, near Rochester, in 1912 (*Num. Chron.*, 1923, p. 156), were all over 98 grains, nine of them between 100 and 102.5 grains. A comparison of the two hoards is interesting ; in both cases a hollow flint was used as the receptacle, as again in the find at Chute, Wiltshire. The Rochester treasure is certainly the earlier, that of Westerham containing the British coins derived from the Gaulish type of the Rochester find.

It is interesting to find only one obverse die used, with seven reverse dies, for the twelve British coins. A comparison of Nos. 3 and 14 would hardly suggest identity of obverse die ; but, though for some time I was doubtful whether there were not two obverse dies, I am now satisfied by a careful comparison of the coins and examination of the gradual wearing of the die that the same die may be traced throughout (it should be noted that No. 9 is out of place, and should be placed earlier, perhaps after No. 6). At the end of the series almost all traces of engraving have disappeared from the die, and it may well be that the class of coins classified as B 8, 10, &c., in Evans's work are the result of this and other worn dies being used, and are not due to a custom of striking with an unengraved lower die. A coin in the British Museum (Montagu sale, 1895, lot 7, found at Portsmouth) perhaps shows in fresh condition the obverse die that struck the Westerham coins, but there is some doubt if the die is identical. The die also appears in late state, similar to that of No. 10, on the coin mentioned by Evans as found at Horne, near Reigate (now in British Museum, wt. 96.0 gr.) ; it is

there used with a reverse die that is not found on the Westerham coins. Another specimen of an early stage, with reverse *a*, is in the British Museum (wt. 98.8 gr.).

Thus there are not less than eight reverse dies known to have been used with this one obverse ; probably the dies were used regardless of their condition until they broke ; the reverse dies, receiving the direct blows of the hammer, would break more quickly than the better protected obverse dies.

The flint money-box has, by the gift of Mr. O'Brien Warde, been acquired by the British Museum for exhibition in the Iron Age Gallery. Both the holes are natural ; there are slight traces of chipping at the edge of the large hole.

NOTE.—The above communication is practically identical with one which appeared in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, fifth series, Vol. VII. (1927). Thanks are due to Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, F.S.A., Editor of *Antiquity*, for permission to use the block which appeared in that journal.