

OLD COINS:

RECENT FINDS IN OR NEAR HIGH WYCOMBE.

Although, as indicated by the title, this paper deals chiefly with coins found during recent years in Wycombe and its neighbourhood, it will, perhaps, render its subject-matter more complete if I indicate very briefly the localities and nature of the principal "finds" of coins in Buckinghamshire, arranged in alphabetical order:—

Bierton.—Roman coins have been dug up in several places in this parish, but chiefly in the vicarage garden. They were principally of the Emperors who lived or ruled in Britain.

Brill.—A large brass coin of Commodus was found here, with a female figure on the reverse bearing in her left hand a shield.

Buckingham.—A large number found here at various times. One, dug up in 1819, had on the reverse a figure of Ceres with her sickle, and the letters "S. C." Supposed to belong to the reign of Antoninus.

Claydon (Steeple).—In 1620 an earthen pot full of brass coins was found under the root of a tree that stood by the great pond "in the wood of Sir Thomas Challoner, Chamberlain to Prince Henry." Some belonged to Carausius, and others to Allectus, who usurped the imperial dignity in Britain at the end of the third century.

Dunton.—Several dug up in a field near the village in 1824; one of Antoninus Pius, one of Justinian, one of Constantine, and some others.

Hughenden.—Upon Piggott Common, in this parish, a labourer, in May, 1795, in throwing up a bank, discovered 24 Roman coins (copper) in an earthen vessel about 18 inches below the surface.

Hazlemere.—A short time ago a coin of the Emperor Claudius was found here.

Kimble (Little).—Coins of Antoninus Pius, Vespasian, etc.

Ludgershall.—At the hamlet of Kingswood: a coin of Licinius, bearing a laureated bust, and on the reverse a figure with a quiver full of arrows; legend unintelligible.

Mentmore.—A coin of Constantius.

Olney.—Coins extending from the reign of Nerva to that of Constantine, the earlier ones being mostly silver, the later brass; found in a field called Ash Furlong.

Risborough (Princes).—In a cutting in one of the Chiltern Hills, called "Soldiers' Mount," numerous Roman vestigia have been found. The spot is near the famous White Leaf Cross. One of the coins was of the reign of Constantine the Younger, who succeeded Constantine the Great A.D. 337; on the obverse, the head of Constantinus; on the reverse, two soldiers armed with spear and shield, with a Roman standard between them. This coin was struck at Treves. "NVS JVN" was all that was visible of the inscription. Two coins of Constantine the Great A.D. 325, showing helmeted head with wreath and "CONSTANTINVS MAX," on the obverse; on the other side two figures of Victory over an altar with the legend "VICTORIA LÆ ET PRINCEPS." Another one belonged to the reign of Claudius Gothicus A.D. 268: Obverse, "IMP. CLAVDIVS AVG.;" reverse, Security, leaning and holding a sceptre, with "SECVRIT AVG."

Stone.—Two or three brass coins of the Lower Empire, one of Mazentius, were found in 1842, when the road near the village was lowered.

Stoke Mandeville.—Coins of Vespasian and Adrian.

Turville.—Several copper coins of the Middle Empire were found here in 1772.

Tingewick.—Forty coins, silver and brass, were turned up by the plough in 1860, extending from the reign of Heliogabalus A.D. 218, to 395. The in-

scriptions were very legible; one, of Crispus, was struck in London.

Weston Underwood.—On Dec. 31, 1858, an earthen vessel was discovered by some labourers, containing a large number of coins, 166 of them being Imperial denarii, extending through the reigns of 13 Emperors.

Whaddon.—Some hundreds of British gold coins were found in the Chase in 1849; and near the site of the old Priory of Snelshall in this parish was discovered in 1857, during the process of draining some land, an earthen vessel containing about 140 small brass Roman coins.

Woolstone (Little).—Several Roman coins found here in 1860; one bore the legend "ROMVLVS ET REMVS."

Wyeombe (High).—In 1724 several Roman coins were found with a Roman pavement in the meadow next the Rye, one of Nerva and some of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. Some Roman coins were also found when digging the cellar of No. 14, High Street, with part of a Roman vessel. Roman coins have been also found in Desborough Field, and one or more of Commodus during the formation of Desborough Road.

It has been stated, and the statement
KEEP HILL: has been repeated over and over again,
BRITISH. that in 1826, eleven ancient British
gold coins, in excellent preservation,
were dug up on Keep Hill. These coins were not
dug up, but as they were found under somewhat
peculiar circumstances it will, perhaps, be as well
if I give the particulars of their discovery. One
evening two men, named Pen Burnett and Charles
Wootton, were coming down the side of Keep Hill,
near the old encampment, overlooking the valley, and
were amusing themselves by throwing stones at various
objects lying on the hillside. Suddenly one of them
struck something which split open, and to their sur-
prise out fell these gold coins. On their way home-
wards, Pen Burnett called at the house of the Rev.
W. Edelman, who lived facing the Rye, and related

to him the circumstances under which the coins were found, and, upon being requested to do so, he left them with Mr. Edelman for a few days. Impressions were taken in sealing wax of each of the coins. As British gold coins are rarely found in this locality, I have endeavoured to trace those impressions, and have been so far successful as to discover by whom the impressions were taken, and the person who subsequently had them in his possession; but, unfortunately, he was unable to find them. The coins were sold for about £1 each. Five of them were purchased by a local antiquary, Mr. John Norris, of Hughenden Manor, who presented three of them to the British Museum and one to the Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh. Mr. W. Edmonds, of High Wycombe, also bought one; but what became of the remainder I have not been able to ascertain. From a description of these coins given me some years ago by a gentleman who had seen them, they appear to have been of an age and type similar to the British gold coins discovered in February, 1849, in Whaddon Chase, stamped on one side with a rudely-constructed figure of a horse with disjointed limbs and a grotesquely-shaped head.

On Keep Hill, where these gold coins were found in 1826, there are still visible the remains of one of those ancient British encampments which are to be seen on nearly every eminence along the line of the Chiltern Hills in Buckinghamshire. Beneath the turf of a meadow near the foot of the hill are hidden the foundations of the walls, towers, and apartments of a large Roman villa. Between the hill and the site of the Roman remains ran an ancient vicinal road, known in later times as the Windsor Way; so that the spot is one of no little historical interest.

	Coins of Offa, King of Mercia, have
W. WYC.	been found in this neighbourhood--
TINKER'S	one in West Wycombe Park and
WOOD:	another in Tinker's Wood, between
ANG.-SAX.	High Wycombe and Downley. The
	silver pennies, which bore on one side
	--"OFFA REX," were remarkable for the beauty of
	their execution and sharpness of their impression.

During this year, while cutting up some land in Oak Mead, High Wycombe, a coin of Constantine the Younger was found. It was much corroded, very little of the lettering being visible except the "S.C." in exergue.

1899.
H. WYC.
ROMAN.

A leaden coffin containing the remains of a full-grown person and some old coins were found during alterations at Medmenham Abbey.

1900.
H. WYC.
CHAS. II.

A milled crown of Charles II. was dug in the neighbourhood of High Wycombe. It was in an excellent state of preservation, and the obverse showed a laureated bust of the King to the right, with "CAROLVS II. DEI GRATIA." On the reverse were four shields, arranged so as to form a cross, England, France, Scotland, and Ireland, with interlinked C's between them, and this inscription: "MAG. BR. FRA. ET HIB. REX," and the date 1677. Round the edge—"DECVS ET TVTAMEN ANNO VICES NONO REGNI." (The years of Charles II. are reckoned, not from the Restoration, but from the death of Charles I.).

1901.
H. WYC.

During the rebuilding of an old house in White Hart Street, High Wycombe, several ancient coins were discovered. I did not see them, as the workmen had parted with them before I heard of their discovery; but from a description of them I was able to obtain, they were of Roman and mediæval type.

H. WYC.
EDW. VI.

A testoon of Edward VI. of the usual type was dug up in a garden in the Jubilee Road, High Wycombe. These coins were issued in the third year of the King's reign, and are the earliest silver English coins bearing a date—1549.

1902. In the March of this year a large number of coins of Elizabeth were found at Wycombe Marsh, ranging in date from 1570 to 1576, and one of ELIZ. Mary, of 1554. They were dug up close to the spot where the old village stocks used to stand.

H. WYC. During the same year a very interesting Roman coin was found in a newly-laid-out garden near Oak Mead. It was a silver coin, about the size of our modern shilling, and beautifully stamped, the figures and lettering extremely sharp and well-defined considering its age. It bore:—

Obv. a bust of the Empress to the right, and the inscription, "IVLIA. PIA. FELIX. AVG.;"

Rev. "VENVS. GENETRIX," with the Goddess of Love seated to the left, her right hand extended, and the left resting upon the seat: the figure draped over the shoulder.

"Julia, Pious, Happy Empress," whom this coin commemorates, was originally an obscure Syrian damsel, but having won the heart of the Roman General, Septimus Severus, she became his second wife. It is an interesting fact that coins of Severus and Julia should both have been found in this neighbourhood.

When I visited the Roman city of Uriconium this summer (1906), I learned that a quantity of clay moulds for making Roman coins had been found on the site. They had on them the head of Julia, the wife of Severus, and the inscription—"IVLIA AVGVSTA."

Whilst the new G.C. and G.W. joint line was being made a testoon of Edward VI. was found near Beaconsfield. It was in a fairly good state of preservation, but somewhat chipped at the edges in places, by which some of the lettering

had been destroyed. It bore:—

Obv. a demi-bust of the King, crowned, with profile to the right, and the inscription—"EDWARD. VI. D.G. AGL. FRA. Z. HIBER. REX."

Rev. In centre, an oval shield of arms, bearing France and England quarterly. Motto, indistinct, but read "TIMOR. DOMINI. FONS. VITE. M.D. XL. IX." This year is the earliest date appearing on an English silver coin.

1903. Ploughed up in a field at Fingest, a
groat of Edward III. in a very good
FINGEST. state of preservation.

EDW. III. *Obv.* full-faced bust of the King,
crowned, within a tressure, and this
inscription—"†EDWARD. DI. GRA. REX. ANG. Z.
FRANC†"

Rev. a long cross extending to the edge of the coin,
with three pellets in each angle, surrounded by two
circles. In the outer circle is the usual motto,
"POSVI. DEVM. ADIVTOREM. MEVM." The
inner circle shows the mint, "CIVITAS. EBORICI"
—that is, York.

Found in West Field, High Wycombe,
II. WYC. a silver penny of Henry III., in a very
HEN. III. good state of preservation.

Obv. The King's head, full faced,
crowned, within an inner circle, complete except where
the sceptre is held in the dexter hand. The inscrip-
tion was as follows:—"HENRICVS. REX. III." This
side of the coin was very distinct, and the knuckles
of the hand in which the King held the sceptre were
plainly visible.

Rev., divided by a long double-barred cross, and in
each angle of the cross three pellets inclosed by an
inner circle. The inscription on this side of the coin
was not so distinct, but probably indicated the name
of the moneyer and mint.

A hammered half-groat of Charles II.
BOOKER. (second issue), or, as we should call
CHAS. II. it, a twopenny piece, having behind
the head "II.." indicative of its value
in pence, was dug up, near the Isolation Hospital at

Booker, by the caretaker. It bore the usual inscription on each side.

Another and more valuable coin is the
 H. WYC. only gold coin among recent finds
 CHAS. II. that has been brought to my notice.
 It is a Broad, or 20 shilling piece
 (second issue) of Charles II., and in an excellent state
 of preservation, though somewhat worn in parts.

Obv. a laureated bust of the King to the left, and
 this inscription—"CAROLVS. II. D.G. MAG. BRIT.
 ET. HIB. REX."

Rev. a coat of arms showing quarterly 1 and 4,
 France and England; 2, Scotland; 3, Ireland; and
 the motto—"FLORENT. CONCORDIA. REGNA."

A very interesting Roman coin was
 1904. found this year in a field near Downley
 DOWNLEY. Common.

ROMAN. *Obv.* showed a bust of the Emperor
 Galerius to the right—an extremely
 distinct and well-executed figure. Inscription—
 "MAXIMIANVS. NOB. CAES."

Rev. On this side was a standing figure represent-
 ing the genius of the Roman people, with this inscrip-
 tion round it—"GENIO. POPVLI. ROMANI."

The full name of this Emperor was Galerius Valerius
 Maximianus—the last name being the one on the coin.
 He died 311 A.D.

The following was found during the
 NEW formation of the new railway line
 RAILWAY. through the Wycombe valley. It was
 ROMAN. a small coin, and the lettering indis-
 tinct; date, about 322 A.D.

Obv. had bust to the right with this inscription—
 "CRISPVS. NOBI. C." In the centre of the reverse,
 an altar inscribed, "VOTIS XX.;" around it, "BEATA
 TRANQVILLITAS," and below, "P. LON." The
 "xx" probably means that Crispus was in his 20th
 year at the time.

The "P. LON" beneath the altar indicates that the
 coin was minted in London, which becomes a doubly-

interesting fact when we come to consider who this Crispus was. His full name was Flavius Julius Crispus, which occurs in a shortened form on some of his coins. He was the son of Constantine the Great by his wife Minervina, and was born about the year 300. He was an amiable youth, and brought up under the care of Lactantius, and at the age of 17 was invested with the title of Cæsar. Entrusted with the command of the Rhine Provinces, Crispus distinguished himself in several battles against the Franks and Alemanni, and by a great naval victory in the Hellespont largely contributed to obtain for his father undivided possession of the Empire which had been under six rulers—three in the East and three in the West. It was the peace thus secured by Crispus which is commemorated on the coin as “*beata tranquillitas*”—blessed tranquility. His popularity, however, excited the jealousy of Constantine, who caused his son to be put to death, 326 A.D.

H. WYC. ROMAN.	A copper coin of Constantine the Great was found on Castle Hill, High Wycombe.
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Obv. bust to the left, helmeted, and the inscription “VRBS. ROMA.”

Rev. the well-known representation of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, illustrating the legend that ascribes the founding of Rome to the twin brothers whom a shepherd found being nourished by a she-wolf on the banks of the Tiber, at the foot of the Palatine Hill.

NEWNTON LONGVILLE.	The next coin was found by Mr. F. Smith in a field belonging to his farm at Newnton Longville, near Bletchley.
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JAS. I.	It was in excellent condition. This coin was a one-eighth sovereign piece of James I., of gold, and weighed 21 grains.
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Obv. bust of the King to the right, crowned. Inscription—“I. D. G. ROSA SINE SPINA.”

Rev. a shield of arms, crowned, between “I” and “R,” encircled with the motto—“TVEATVR VNITA. DEVS.” These coins are somewhat rare.

1905. Silver Penny of Edward I., found at High Wycombe.
H. Wyc. *Obv.* a bust of the King, full-faced,
Ed. I. crowned, with this inscription—
“† EDW. R. ANGL. DNS. HYB.”

Rev. a long single cross extending to the edge of the coin, with three pellets in each angle, encircled with the mint mark, “CIVITAS. LONDON.”

In the early part of this year Mr. CUDDINGTON. Pullen, gardener to Mrs. Napier ROMAN. Higgins, found some interesting coins at Cuddington, in an orchard separated only by a narrow lane from Tyringham Hall, which is now used as a Reading Room, but was formerly the Manor House, and was certainly in existence at the time of the Revolution. It is mentioned in Lipscomb's “History of Bucks,” and there are references to it in Mrs. Napier Higgins' account of “The Bernards of Abingdon and Nether Winchendon—a Family History.”

In the find was a Roman coin, bearing:—

Obv. a bust of the Emperor to the right, and this inscription—“CONSTA NTINVS:” thus divided by the head.

Rev. showed in the centre an altar inscribed with the word “VOTIS;” but the “IS” was placed under “VOT:” below the altar “P. LON.” The lettering round the coin was not easily decipherable, but appeared to be—“BEATI[TU]DO. FELICITAS.” This coin is interesting from the fact that it was struck in London.

Another coin was a James II. piece, CUDDINGTON. a gun-money half-crown of the first JAS. II. issue. It bore:—

Obv. a laureated bust of the King to the left, and the inscription, “IACOBVS. DEI. GRATIA.”

Rev. had round it “MAG. BR. FRA. ET. HIB. REX.” In the centre were two sceptres in saltire passing through a crown between “I” and “R.” with “x x x” for thirty pence above the crown, and above

that "1689," and "OCT.," the month when the piece was issued, below the crown. This coin is interesting chiefly because of its connection with some of the most stirring events in the history of this country during the latter part of the 17th century.

Another coin found at the same time

CUDDINGTON. and place bore:—

GEO. PR. *Obv.* "GEORGE PRINCE OF
WALES. WALES," with a bust of the Prince
wearing a wig and cravat according to

the fashion of his day.

Rev. had in the centre the Prince of Wales' feathers and the motto, "ICH DIEN;" below, the date, "1795;" above, the word "HALFPENNY." This coin was issued by George Augustus Frederick, the eldest son of George III., afterwards George IV., when acting as Regent during the first period of his father's insanity.

In April of this year a silver penny
H. WYC. of Elizabeth was found at High Wy-
ELIZ. combe.

Obv. a bust of the Queen to the left, crowned, with the Tudor Rose behind the head. Inscription—"ELIZABETH. ANG. FR. ET. HIB. REG."

Rev. had in the centre a shield of arms bearing (1) France, (2) and (3) England, (4) Ireland: over all a single cross extending to the edge of the coin; date, "1575," over the shield and divided by the upper arm of the cross, two figures on each side. Inscription—the usual—"POSVI. DEV. ADIVTOR. MEV."

A farthing of Charles II. was dug up
H. WYC. in a garden in Oak Mead, High Wy-
CHAS. II. combe. It was in perfect condition,
the lettering and effigy being as distinct as on a coin just issued from the mint.

Obv. laureated bust of the King to the left, in armour, and "CAROLVS. A. CAROLO."

Rev. a figure of Britannia, seated, a palm branch in the right hand, and a spear in the left. "BRITANNIA" (thus divided by the figure), and the date, "1678," below.

The next I have to describe is a somewhat rare gold coin, a quarter-noble of Edward III. As the shield of arms on the obverse contained the fleur-de-lis as well as the lions of England, the date of the coin must have been subsequent to our Edward III.'s laying claim to the throne of France. There was no effigy of the King as usual, but its place was occupied by the shield of arms just referred to, within a tressure, surrounded by the monarch's name and titles. The reverse bore a cross fleury in the centre, with fleurs-de-lis and lions alternately in the angles.

In July a coin of the Emperor Diocletian was dug up in a garden in the H. Wyc. TOTTERIDGE ROAD, HIGH WYCOMBE. It showed a laureated bust to the right, and on the reverse a figure of Pax, with a laurel leaf in the right hand, and a sceptre in the left.

A silver penny of Edward VI. of the usual type was found on Castle Hill, H. Wyc. HIGH WYCOMBE, having the Tudor rose in the centre, surrounded by "EDWARD VI. ROSA SINE SPINA," and on the other side a cross with a shield of arms, England and France, quarterly, surrounded by "CIVITAS. LONDON."

The next coin found during this year was interesting because it is somewhat rare, and, as far as I can recollect, it is the only example found in this locality. It was a groat (silver) of Richard II., the weak and unfortunate son of the Black Prince, who reigned 1377-1399. It was in a fairly good state of preservation, and was found by Mr. A. J. Barrow, gardener to the late Mr. John Parker, of High Wycombe.

Obv. a full-faced bust of the King, crowned, within a tressure, encircled by his name and titles thus:—
"† RICARD. DI. GRA. REX. ANGL. Z. FRANC."

Rev. had a long cross extending to the edge of the coin, with three pellets in each angle, surrounded by two circles. In the outer circle was the motto used by the later Plantagenets, the Lancastrian, and Yorkist

monarchs, viz., "POSVI. DEVM. ADIVTOREM. MEVM.," and within the inner circle the name of the mint, "CIVITAS, LONDON."

Along with this groat was found a silver penny of Richard II., which had been damaged apparently by being struck with the spade in digging it up.

It was similar to the groat described above, but much more worn. The arms of the cross sprang from a quatre-foil, and had three pellets in each of the angles. The inscriptions were scarcely legible, but that on the obverse appeared to be the same as on the groat, while the reverse had, judging by the portions of the letters visible, "CIVITAS. EBORACI," showing that it was minted at York.

Towards the end of the year an Imperial Roman brass coin was found at the West End of High Wycombe. It was of a very interesting type, and in

an excellent state of preservation. It bore:—

Obv. "IMP. CAES. VESPATIAN. AVG. PM. TRP. P.P. COS. II.," with bust of Vespasian to the right, wearing the paludamentum.

Rev. "ROMA. RESVRGES;" in exergue, "S. C.;" a group of three figures—a warrior, standing, helmeted, to the right, holding a shield; by his side a captive, kneeling, and extending his right hand, which is held by another standing figure to the left, in civil costume.

On the obverse of this coin Vespasian is described as Emperor, "IMP.;" and invested with his attribute of deity, "AVG.," which the Roman Emperors claimed. To him is also assigned the title of high priest, "P.M.;" as having the authority of a Tribune, or representative of the Roman people, "TR. P.;" and, finally, as the father of his country, "P.P." The "COS. II." shows that when this coin was struck Vespasian had entered for the second time into the most honourable office of Consul. The letters "S.C.," a contraction of "Senatus Consulto," are only found on the Imperial brass or copper coins which were struck by the direction of the Senate.

As Vespasian reigned from 70 to 79 A.D., it is easy to fix approximately the date when this coin was

struck, and as Agricola, whom Vespasian sent as Commander-in-Chief into Britain, arrived in the autumn of 78 A.D., the coin was in all probability brought hither by one of his soldiers.

A Roman brass coin of the Emperor
1906. Antonine was dug up in a garden at
W. WYC. West Wycombe in a very good state
ROMAN. of preservation. It bore:—

Obv. "ANTONINVS. AVG. PIVS.
PP. TR. P. XVIII.:" Bust of the Emperor to right.

Rev. "LIBERTAS. COS. IIII. S.C.," with a standing figure of liberty to the left, robed, holding a patera in the right hand and a sceptre in the left.

"COS. IIII." shows that when this coin was struck Antonine had entered for the fourth time into the most honourable office of Consul. Coins of Antonine are often found in this country, and it may be interesting to note that one of the series bears on its reverse a female figure seated on a globe, surrounded by waves, in her left hand a javelin, and a large shield by her side. The germ of the device which appears on the reverse of our present bronze coinage is to be found on the coins of Hadrian and Antonine.

Four Roman coins were found at High
H. WYC. Wycombe in March of this year.
ROMAN. Taking them in chronological order,
the first one was of the Emperor Commodus, who succeeded Marcus Aurelius A.D. 180. During his reign a serious disturbance arose in Britain; but the Roman General, Marcellus, drove the Caledonians back again beyond the Wall, when Commodus assumed the name of Britannicus, as appears on his coins. The next in point of age was a base denarius of Claudius II., who ruled 268-270. Then came another base denarius of the Emperor Probus A.D. 276-282. The last, but most important, was a copper votive coin of Constantine II., about A.D. 330. This coin was struck in London. Accompanying these Roman coins was a farthing of William and Mary, 1694.

R. S. DOWNS.