

# Peter finds the key to local history

PETER Stewart - local churchyards' cherished guardian angel, ornithologist and all round good egg - is all of a flutter after swooping back to his old hobby haunt of archeology.

Armed only with an eagle-eye for a likely spot and his metal detector, Peter struck gold in the best possible way in a field near Badsey, where he unearthed an historically valuable bit of old iron.

"I'd hate to find the proverbial pot of gold in a farmer's field because of the chaos that would ensue and because I don't care one jot about the monetary value of finds, it's the history that's important," says Peter, 73, who shares news of all his discoveries with the landowners and the Badsey Society.

"People sometimes come up to me when they spot the metal detector and ask whether I've found anything valuable. Sometimes I'll say yes, and then explain why this old button or that bit of coin is such a treasure for historians. They soon get going!"

So... that recent bit of old iron? It's a large Roman key and represents a fascinating clue to the village's past incumbents.

"While it has long been known that there was Roman occupation in Badsey nobody has actually established exactly where people were living, although there is evidence of occupation on one site because of the presence of stones, pottery and artefacts," Peter explains. He had studied the site in the 1970s, and at odd times since, but he got



*That very special Roman key.*

caught up in his other work, including researching his family history and the careful charting of churchyards in Offenham, Badsey and Waterside, which we featured in the August 2011 issue of the Vale Magazine.

But Peter went back to site last summer, and was thrilled with the results. "The large key has been identified as Roman and it represents, as far as I am aware, the first

Roman key found in the Badsey area," he beams

"Roman coins are ten a penny, but this is a real find."

We persuaded him to produce a report of his history hunt for readers, and he promises to let us know if he unearths other treasures.

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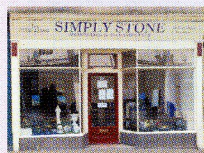


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# DONE! The worker who got short changed

WHILST the finding of hoards of coins receives much publicity in the media, other small - of less intrinsic value, but historically important - finds often go unreported.

The pictured silver penny found in the middle of a ploughed field in Badsey is just one of many interesting finds I made in 2011 during my archaeology studies on several sites in and around the village of Badsey.

Local historian, and a leading authority on Hammered Silver Pennies, Mike Edward, who first examined the coin, found that the inscription was not quite right for what was first thought to be an Edward 1 penny. He believed it to be an imitation.

It was suggested that I forward photographs of the coin to another learned colleague, Marion Archibald, late of the British Museum, for a second opinion. Michael was proved correct and that the coin was indeed an imitation and a continental one at

that. It was produced by Ferry IV, 1312-28, Duke of Lorraine. These continental imitations were cashing in on the high quality and good reputation of the English coins and the issuers made their profit by striking them in silver less fine than the prototypes and/or below their weight-standard.

They infiltrated the English currency and the English kings made strenuous efforts to

exclude them. Edward I banned them in 1299 and called in large quantities but they continued to be produced later and to get into circulation as shown by their appearance in hoards.

One cannot help but feel sorry for the poor individual whose coin it was. He not only lost the equivalent of half a day's pay but was not aware that he had been paid in imitation money.

The coin had also been clipped, so was not the full silver weight. No doubt he got a lot of stick from the wife when he got home that

***"No doubt he got a lot of stick from the wife when he got home"***

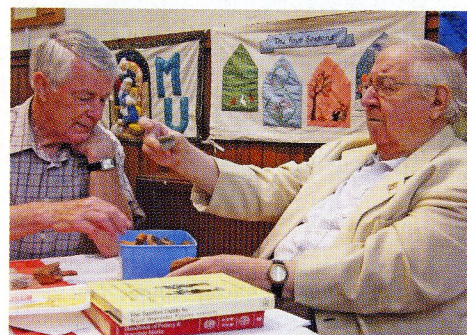


*Wages of misfortune - the imitation silver penny.* night. Going back even further in time, perhaps the most important find in 2011 was a large Roman iron key, a metre below the surface of a field where, in the 1970s, I first discovered a large concentration of stones among which were an assortment of pottery.

These stones are still evident today, but smaller and more widely dispersed, as are the pottery sherds. Despite the passage of time, some large sherds were still found and samples collected included high status Samian, the more common Severn Valley and Grey Ware, and Mortaria. The latter providing the evidence of domesticity. ►



Pottery shards, identified as Samian, Grey Ware and Mortaria.



Peter Stewart and pottery expert Henry Sandon MBE examine some of Peter's finds.



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A Commemorative Coin from 332-333AD, from a series that marked the foundation of the City of Constantinople and minted in the time of Constantine the Great and his sons Constantinus II, Costans y Constantius II. It shows a laureate holding a sceptre. On the reverse, Victory is standing on foot of a prow with sceptre and leaning on a shield. This coin was minted in Trier, in Germany.



The reverse of the coin.

They are hemispherical or conical bowls, more than often with heavy flanges, and with coarse sand or grit embedded on the internal surface. They were used for pounding and mixing foods and an important indicator of



A selection of Roman coins of various dates. Most were found on the surface during field walks and, although well worn, most of them are identifiable.

the spread of Romanised food preparation methods. Other finds from the same plot includes a large selection of iron nails and other iron artefacts which have yet to be identified. Roman coins mainly from the 3rd & 4th Century were found, while it is known that coins and artefacts from previous centuries, and later, have been found by the landowners and their workers in the immediate area.

PETER STEWART

All photographs were taken by Peter Stewart, except the Henry Sandon shot which was taken by John Dallimore.



There are 20 kilograms of metal fragments waiting to be identified.



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