

Roman coins

Celtic coins were rapidly replaced by Roman money after the invasion of 43AD. The value of Roman coins was based on the metals they were made from - gold, silver or copper.

Roman coins had the head of the Emperor on one side and on the reverse a word such as 'peace', 'prosperity', or 'liberty'. The smallest Roman coin was a *minim*, only 4mm in diameter, and the largest was a *sestertius* with a diameter up to 50mm.

Coins moved around the Empire along trade routes. Roman soldiers were paid in cash: their spending spread the coins around.

We have numerous Roman coins in our collections, that have been found from locations all around the Island. They date from across the Roman period and depict many of the emperors.



9355.0.1

This Republican denarius dates to the year 82BC, it would have been over 100 years old at the time of the Roman conquest of Britain in 43AD.

Found on the Island this silver coin indicates that it was highly likely that there was contact with Roman traders well before the invasion.

Roman Republican currency refers to the gold and silver coins minted by the Roman Republic (before the Empire) during the 2nd-1st Century BC.

A sestertius of the *Emperor Vespasian* 69-79AD. In 43AD, Vespasian participated in the Roman invasion of Britain. He distinguished himself in battle and penetrated through the south west of England. He also invaded Vectis (now the Isle of Wight).



9326.0.1

Roman Coins found on the Isle of Wight

Showing Emperor and possible dates of coin



Tiberius 14-37AD 80.0.1 – Denarius



Claudius 41-54AD 9115.0.1 & 546.0.1



Nero 54-68AD 9118.0.1



Vespasian 69-79AD 9326.0.1 – Judea
Capta & 9119.0.3



Titus 79-81AD 544.0.2



Domitian 81-96AD 80.0.2 - Denarius



Trajan 98-117AD 9134.0.1 & 1947.0.1 - Dupodius



Hadrian 117-138AD 278.0.6



Antoninus Pius 138-161AD 9148.0.1
& 9153.0.1



Commodus 177-192AD 1950.0.1 – Sesturiu
& 9172.0.1



Crispina 178-187AD 891.0.1 *Empress of Rome - wife of Commodus*



Gordian III 238-244AD 1153.0.1



Postumus 260-268AD 503.0.1 – Carisbrooke Villa



Carus 282-283AD 1089.0.1



Victorinus 283-285AD 741.0.16



Constantius 305-306AD 9305.0.1



Constantine 1 312-337AD 277.15.4 & 9308.0.1 Wolf & Twins



Gratian 367-383AD 277.65.1 - From Rock Villa



House of Theodosius 379-395AD 277.48.29



Arcadius 383-408AD 801.0.5

Roman coins from the collections of the Isle of Wight Council Heritage Service.

Why are coins so useful to archaeologists?

Dating

Coins can be used to help work out the date of an archaeological site. If a coin with the Emperor Hadrian, (117-138 AD), on it is found under a mosaic floor, we know that it was built after that date.

Growth and Decline

The number of coins can give us an idea of how busy the site was, when it was successful or when it was abandoned.

Coin Hoards

Many coins were accidentally lost by their owners.

Coins are also found in hoards, a collection of coins that had been buried but never dug up.



Coin Hoards

Hoards kept your money safe during times of unrest.

Hoards vary in size from a few high value coins to thousands of small value coins.

Hoards show how long it took to build up savings.

Looking at the wear of the coins, the dates and arrangement can



help us understand what it was like to live at that time, if there was a war going on, civil unrest, high inflation and debasement.

There were no banks, so a hole in the ground was the safest place to keep your money.

If you find a Roman coin

If you find any coins or hoards you should report them to *Frank Basford*, the Finds Liaison Officer for the Isle of Wight. Finds recorded with the Scheme help advance knowledge of the history and archaeology of England and Wales.

Phone 01983 823433

Email - museums@iow.gov.uk

Web - www.iwight.com/museums

Isle of Wight Council Heritage Service

