

Extending the frontiers – how the
PAS Roman coin database
expands our knowledge of
Roman Coin use in England

Sam Moorhead
Finds Adviser: Iron Age and Roman
Coins,
Portable Antiquities Scheme

Numbers of Roman coins recorded

- 45,000 Roman coins (mostly from rural sites) from a total number of 234,000 objects
- Richard Reece's *140 Sites* lists 168,828 coins (but note Richborough 50,767!)

Adding knowledge about Roman coinage: important single finds



Gold aureus of Carinus,
Siscia Mint, AD 283-5
Notts
(FLO: Rachel Atherton)



Unpublished silver denarius
of Carausius, London, 286-96
Norfolk (FLO: Adrian Marsden)

Adding knowledge about Roman coinage: important single finds

Copper alloy medallion of
Antoninus Pius (138-61),
Rome, found in Sussex
(David Rudling and FLO:
Liz Andrews-Wilson)



Cliché coin of Tetricus I,
Essex – unique?
(FLO: Caroline MacDonald)

But most site-finds are not attractive,
interesting coins in their own right



Recent drive to encourage the reporting of “grots”

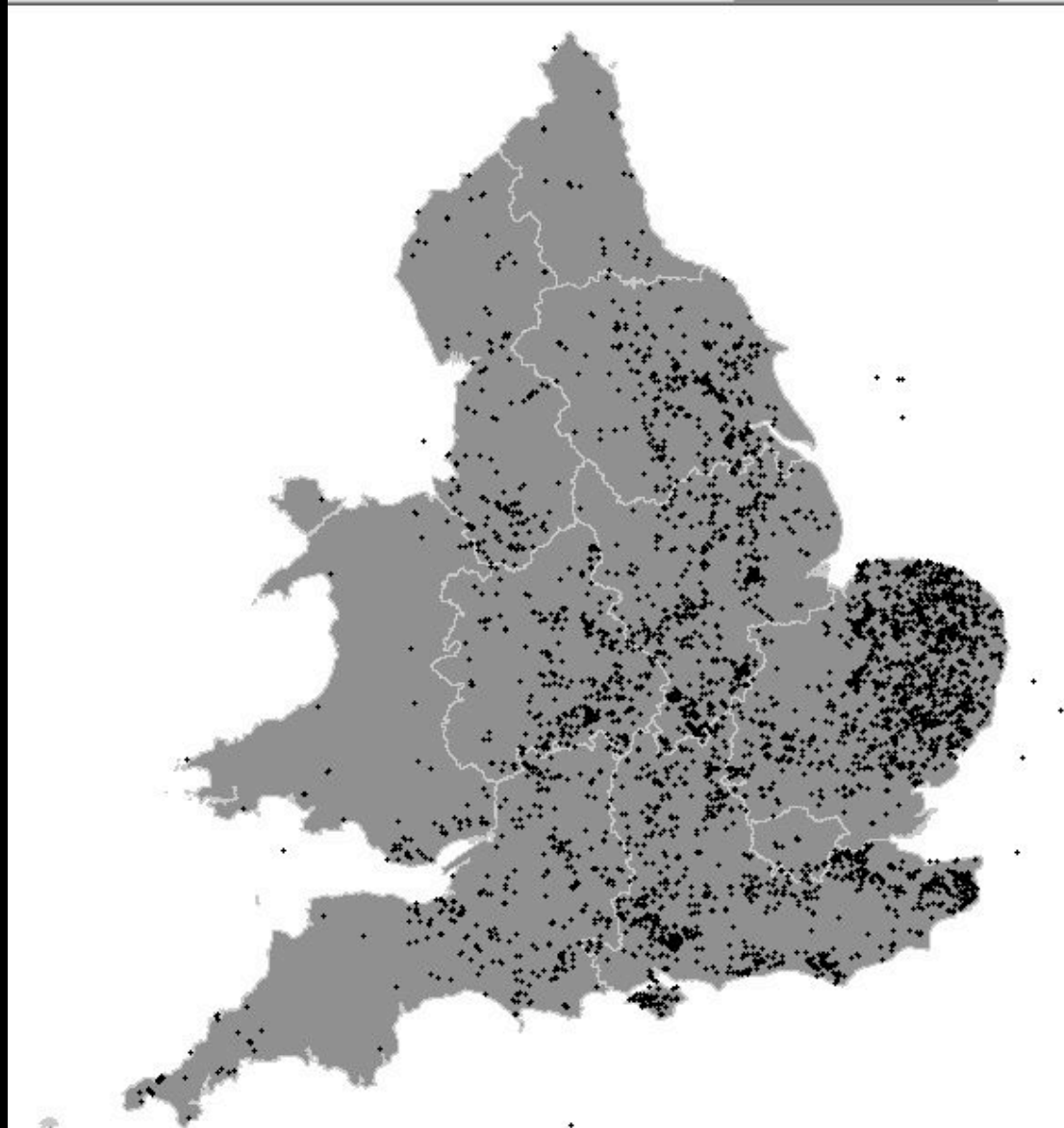


Silver unit of Adminius,
c. AD 40; only a few
known (Essex)
(FLO: Caroline MacDonald)

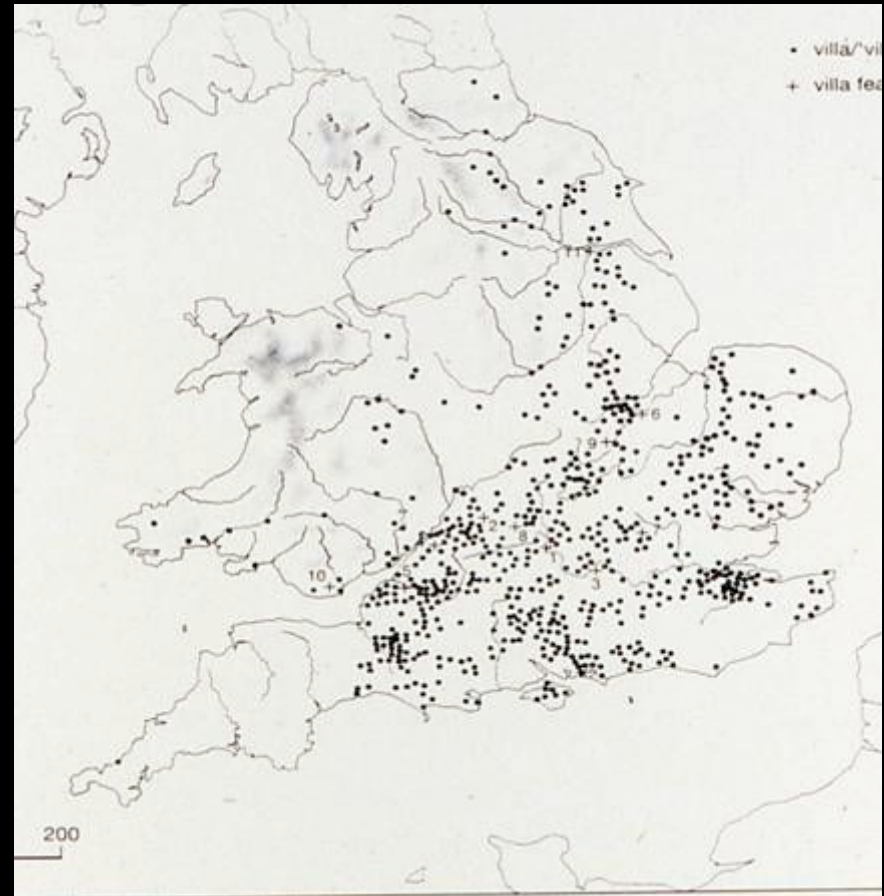
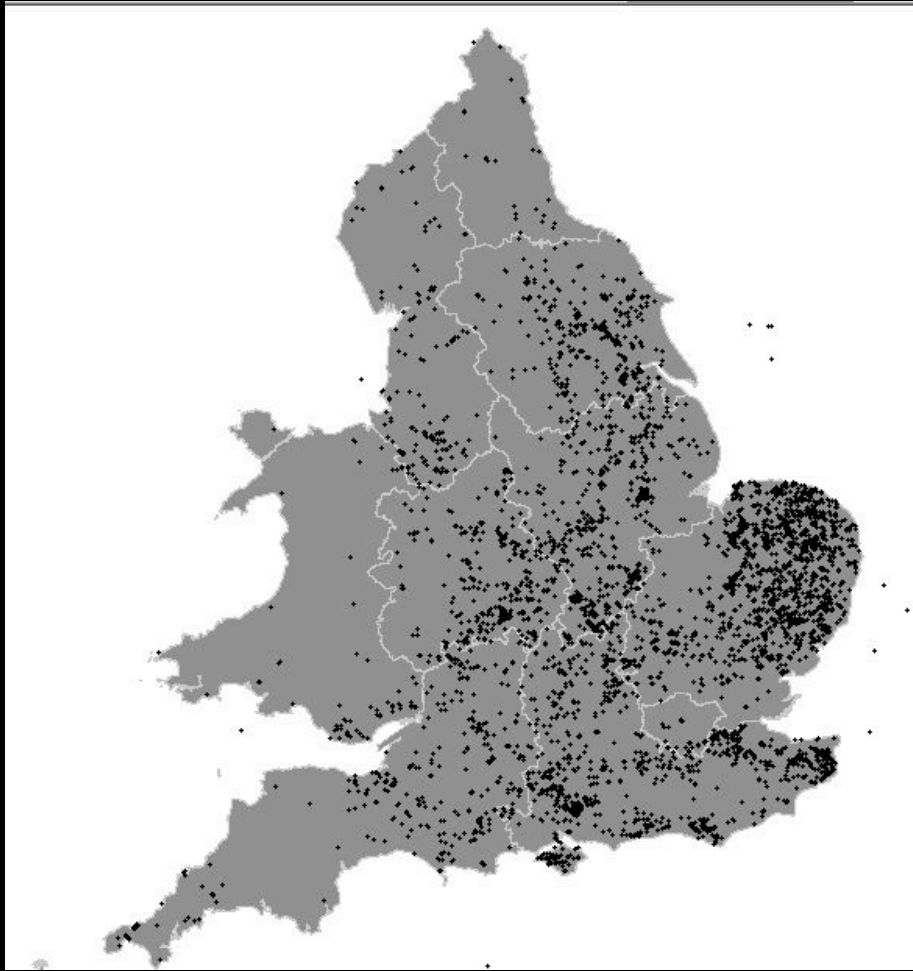
Silver denarius of
Augustus, 27BC-AD14;
only published example
in Paris (Isle of Wight)
(FLO: Frank Basford)



Where are Roman Coins found?



PAS Roman coin finds versus Villa Distribution: a rural pattern



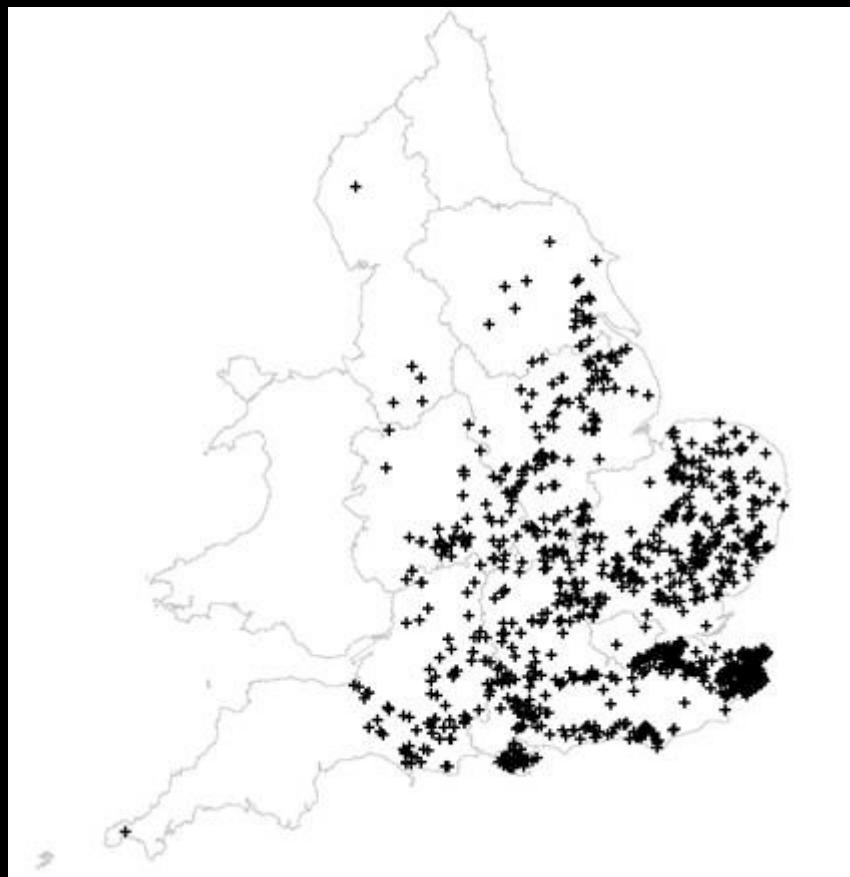
Villa distribution in UK (Wacher 1979)

PAS has 150% more Roman coins
from rural sites than Reece

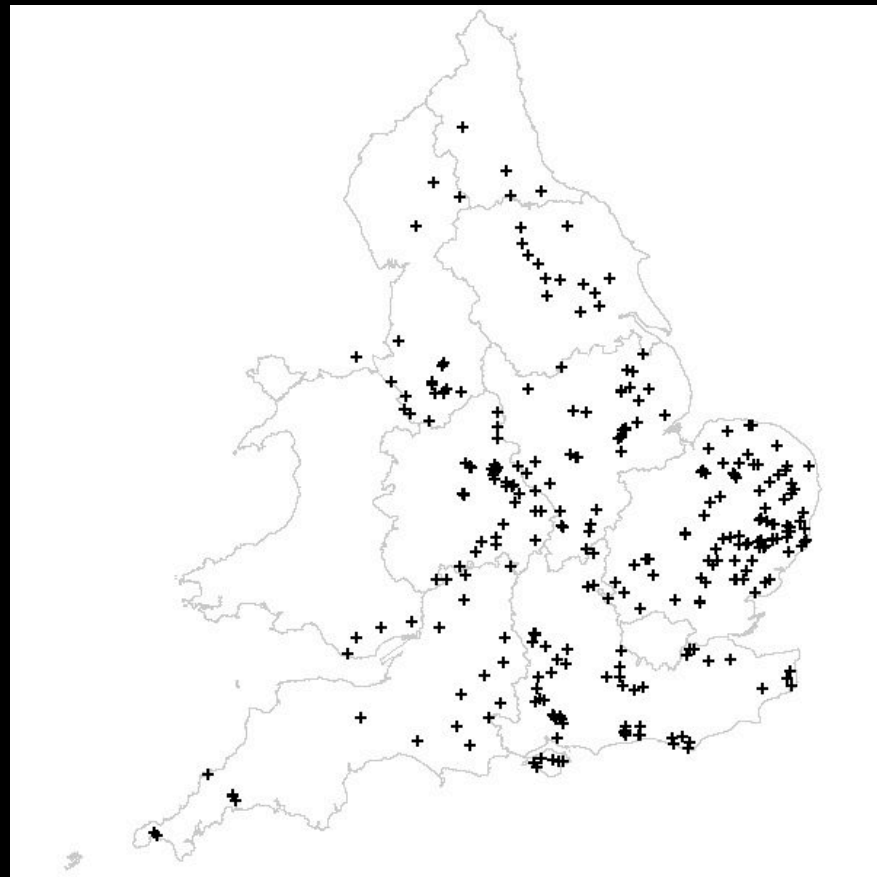
- However, Reece lists fewer coins for Rural and Temple sites:
 - 21,621 coins from 57 rural sites
 - 12,821 coins from 11 temple sites

Therefore, the PAS database, with 45,000 coins, exceeds our sample for rural sites by almost 1.5 times

General Distribution: Iron Age and Roman Republican coins

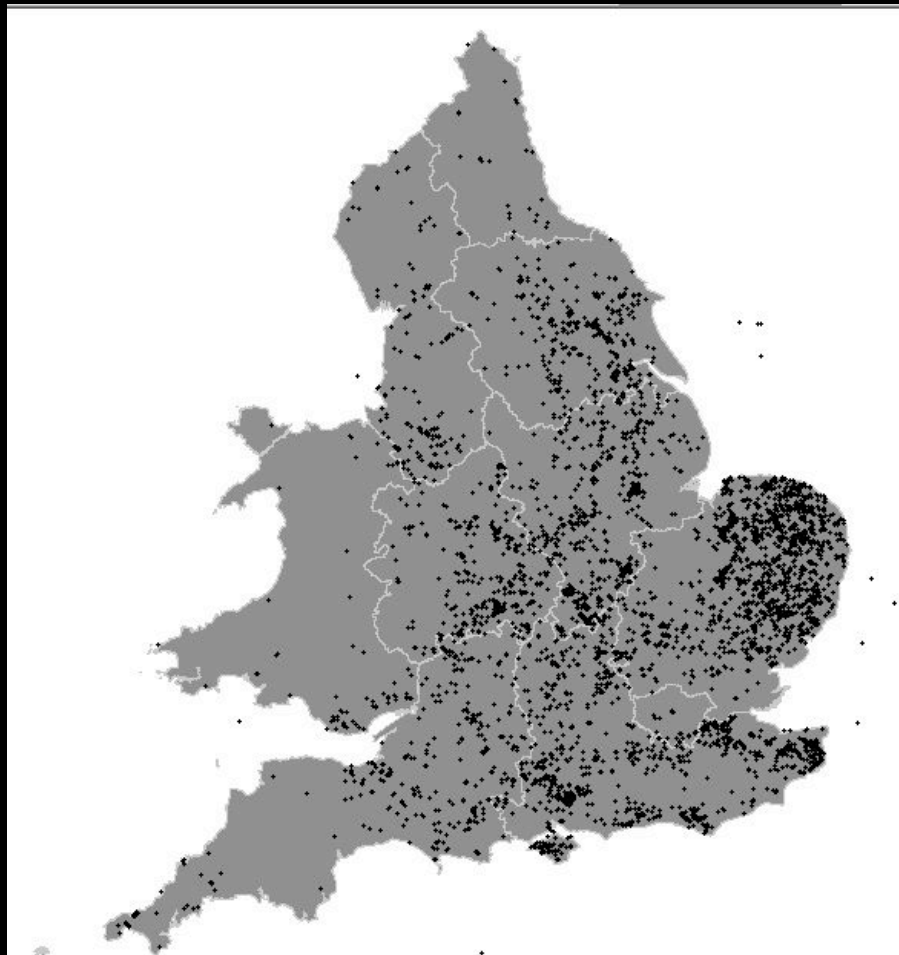


PAS Iron Age coin records

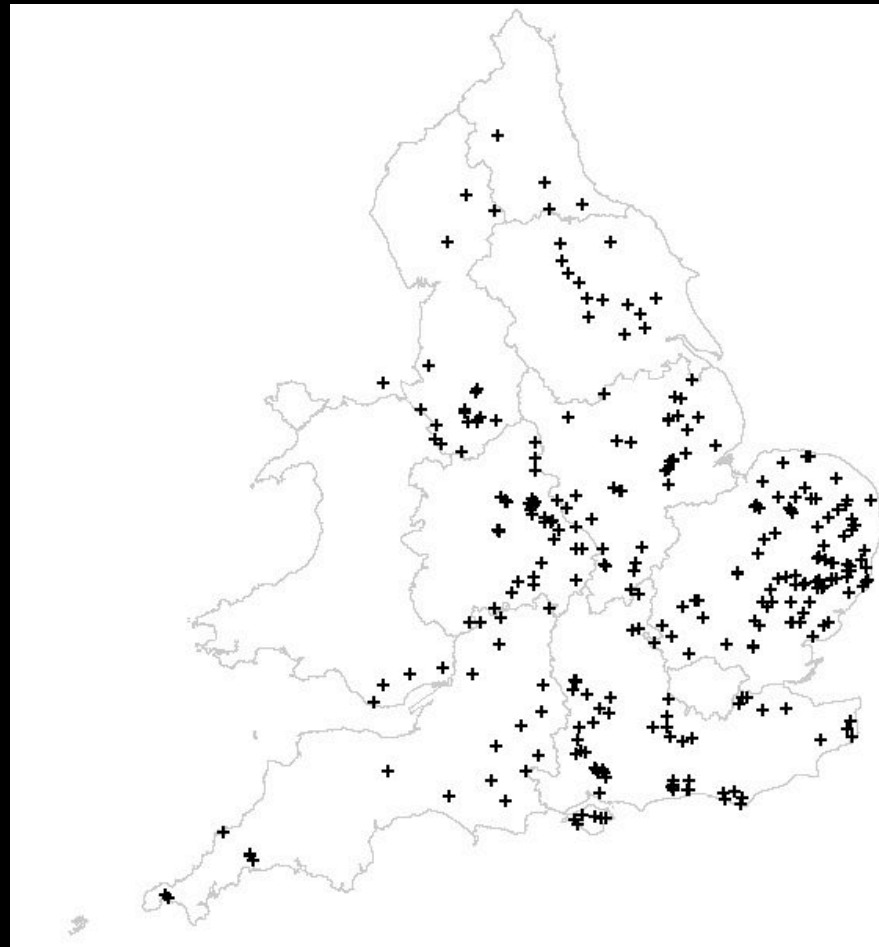


PAS Roman Republican coin records

General Distribution: All Roman versus Roman Republican coins



PAS All Roman coins records

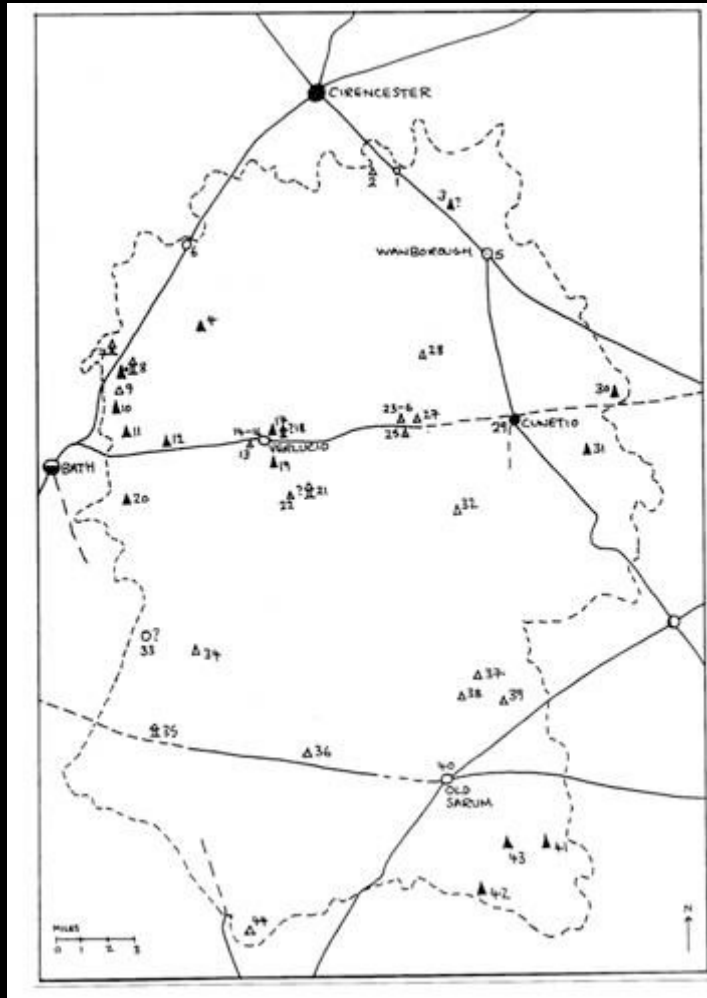


PAS Roman Republican coin records

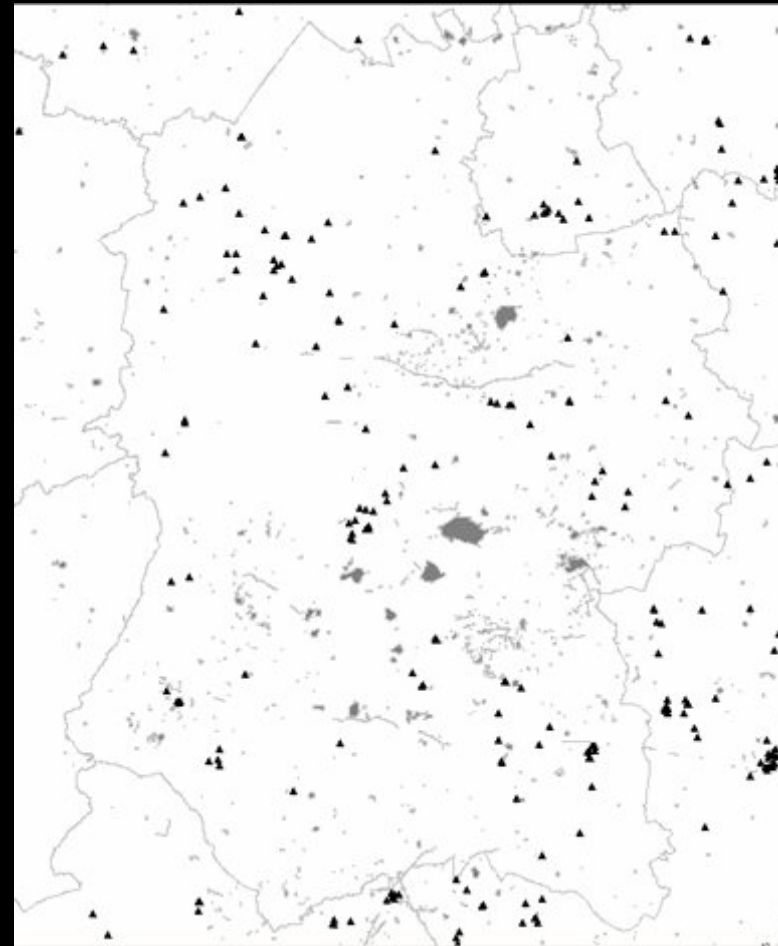
Is the PAS material Reliable and Valid? A Wiltshire Case-Study

- Moorhead Research (completed 2000):
- 10,550 coins from 44 sites (in 35 Parishes)
- PAS Database (28.9.06; David Algar and FLO: Katie Hinds):
- 890 coins (687 assigned) from up to 90 sites (in 51 Parishes)

Distribution of Wiltshire finds: Moorhead versus PAS



Moorhead 2000



PAS 2006

Moorhead: Detector coins

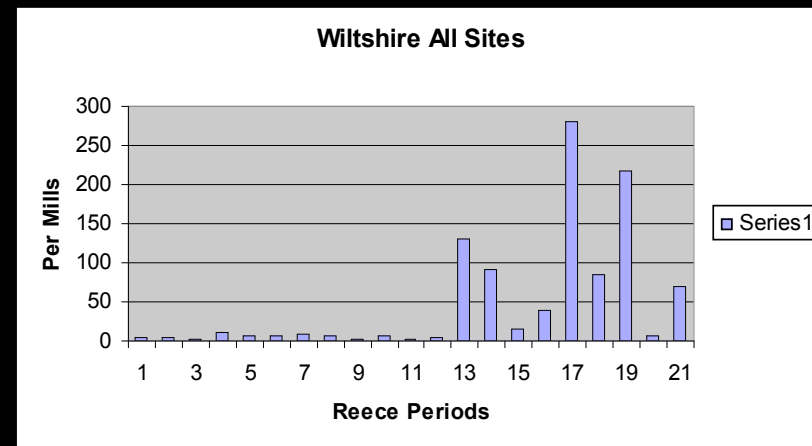
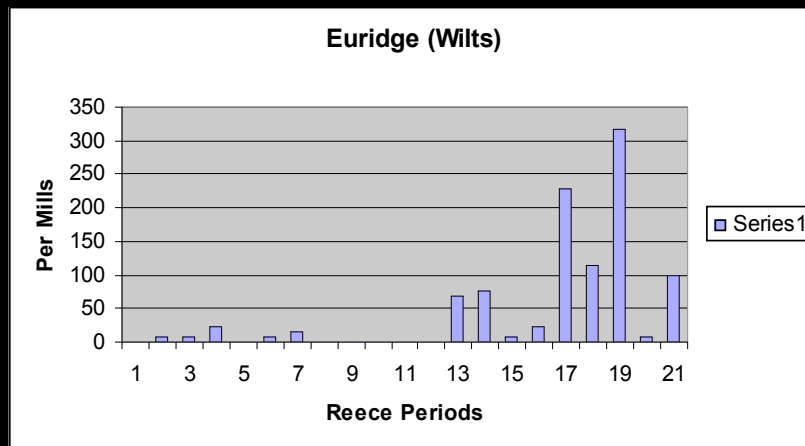
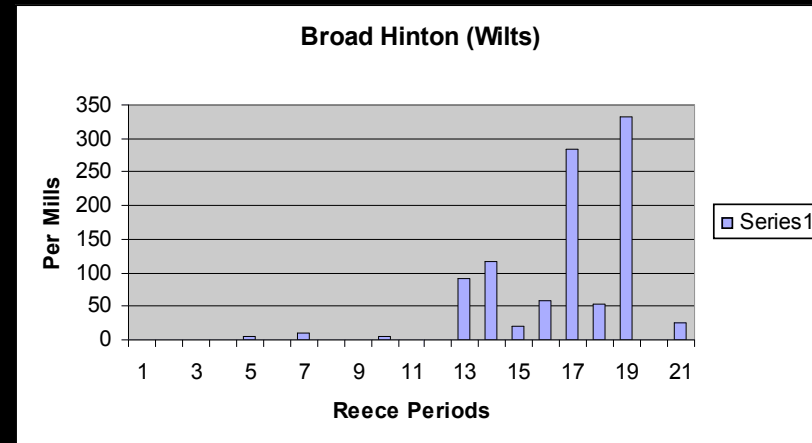
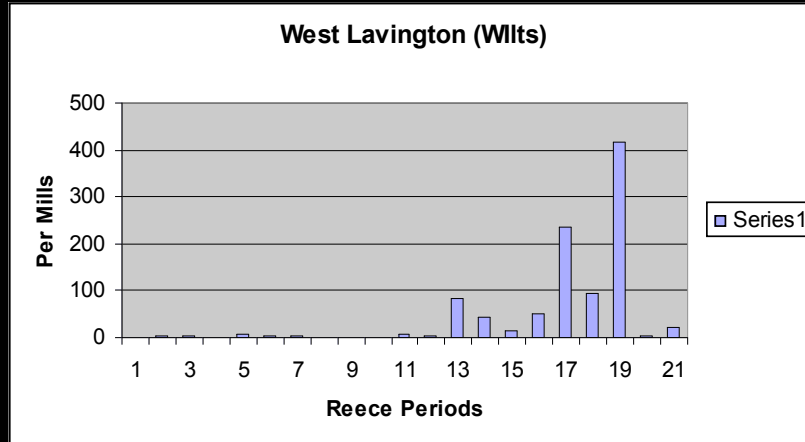
1,979 coins were detector finds from 6 different sites:

PAS Finds – Larger groups

The Validity Issue

- Many PAS sites have too small a sample (fewer than 12 coins)
- Possibly due to fact that coins are stray finds not associated with ancient settlements
- Also certain that it is also often due to the lack of declaration of “grotty” coins – these often include AD378-402 issues

West Lavington (PAS) shows North Wiltshire Valentinianic Peak



Also shown by PAS assemblages from Kington Langley, Winterborne Stoke and Euridge (Colerne)

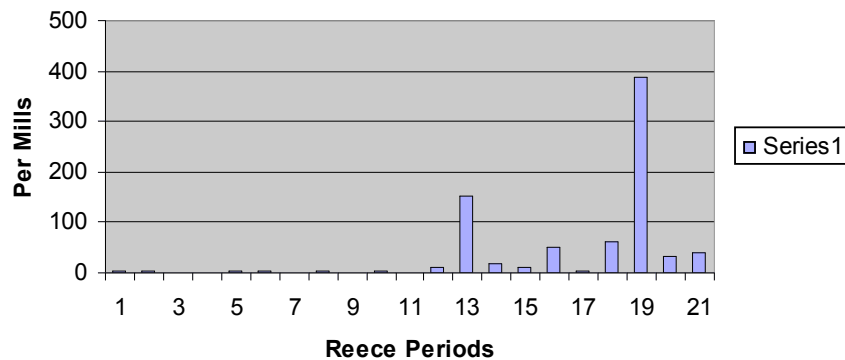
Valentinianic coins

AD 364-78

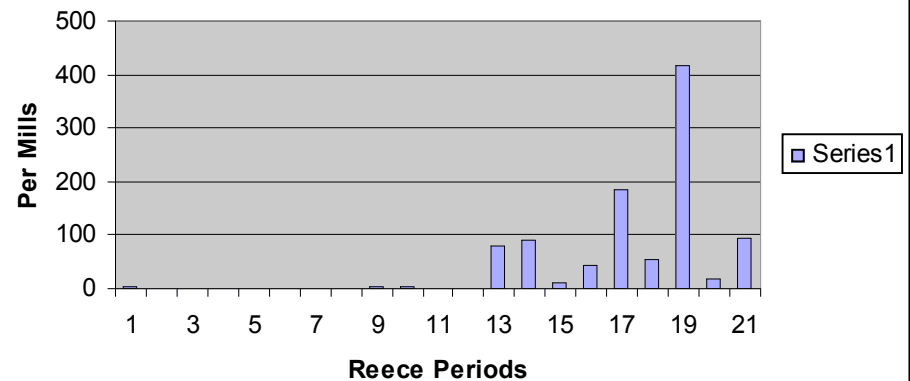


Butterfield Down (Wilts) versus Nether Wallop (Hants, PAS): share Valentinianic peak

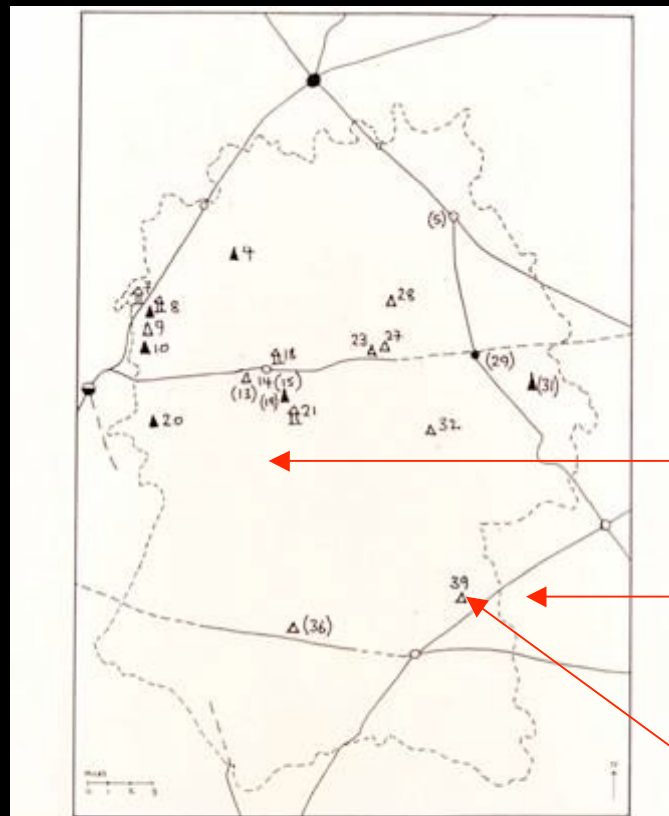
Nether Wallop (Hants PAS)



Butterfield Down (Wilts)



Sites with high incidence of Valentinianic coins



West Lavington

Nether Wallop

Butterfield Down

Figure 3.6 Wiltshire sites with a high proportion of period 19 / Valentinianic coins (AD 364 - 378)

4	-	over 200 <i>per mills</i>
(5)	-	over 118 <i>per mills</i>

Sites with few coins after AD 350 in south-east Wiltshire

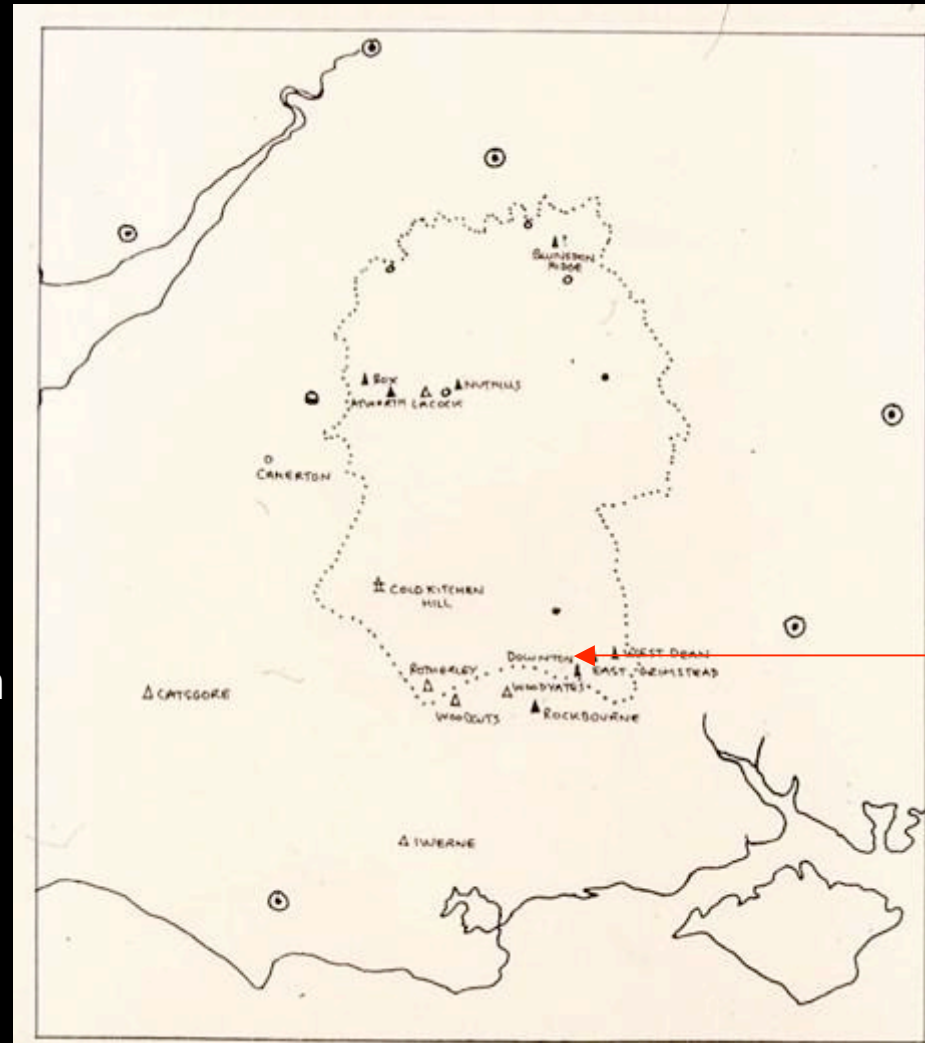
Pitton and Farley follows three villa sites:

Downton

East Grimstead

West Dean

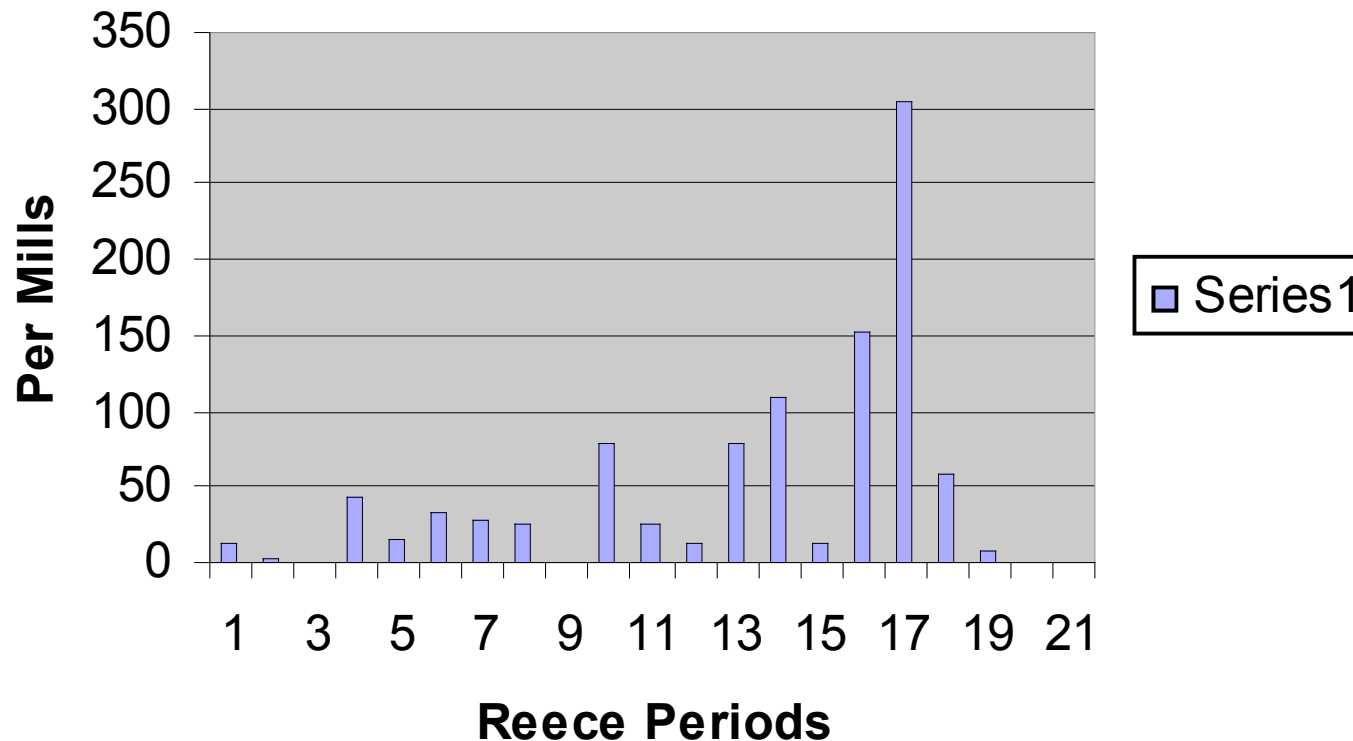
This phenomenon extends to Hants as well:
e.g. Thruxton



Pitton and Farley

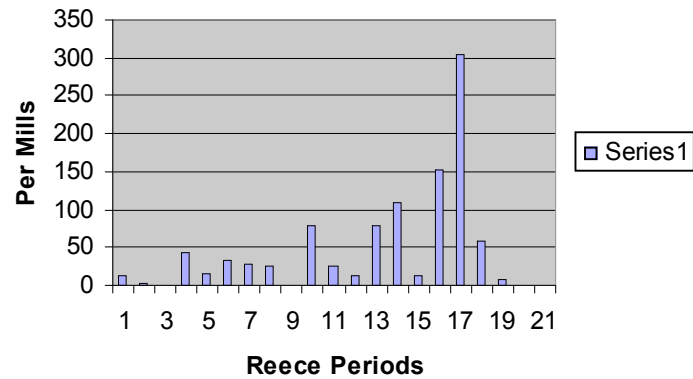
Wenhaston (Suffolk) shown by Jude Plouviez to follow East Suffolk pattern (FLO: Faye Minter)

Wenhaston with Mells (Suf)

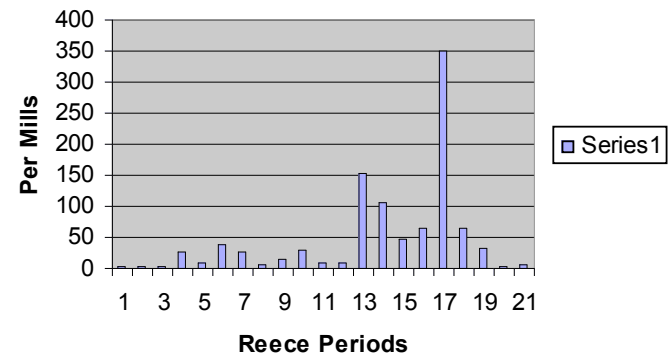


Wenhaston vs Hacheston (Suffolk)

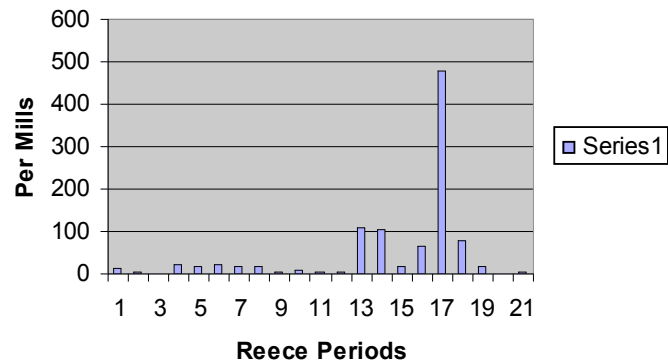
Wenhaston with Mells (Suf)



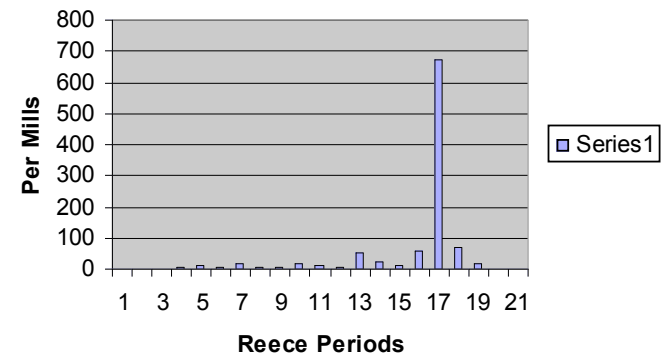
Hatcheson 1 (Suffolk)



Hatcheson 2 (Suffolk)



Hatcheson FW (Suffolk)

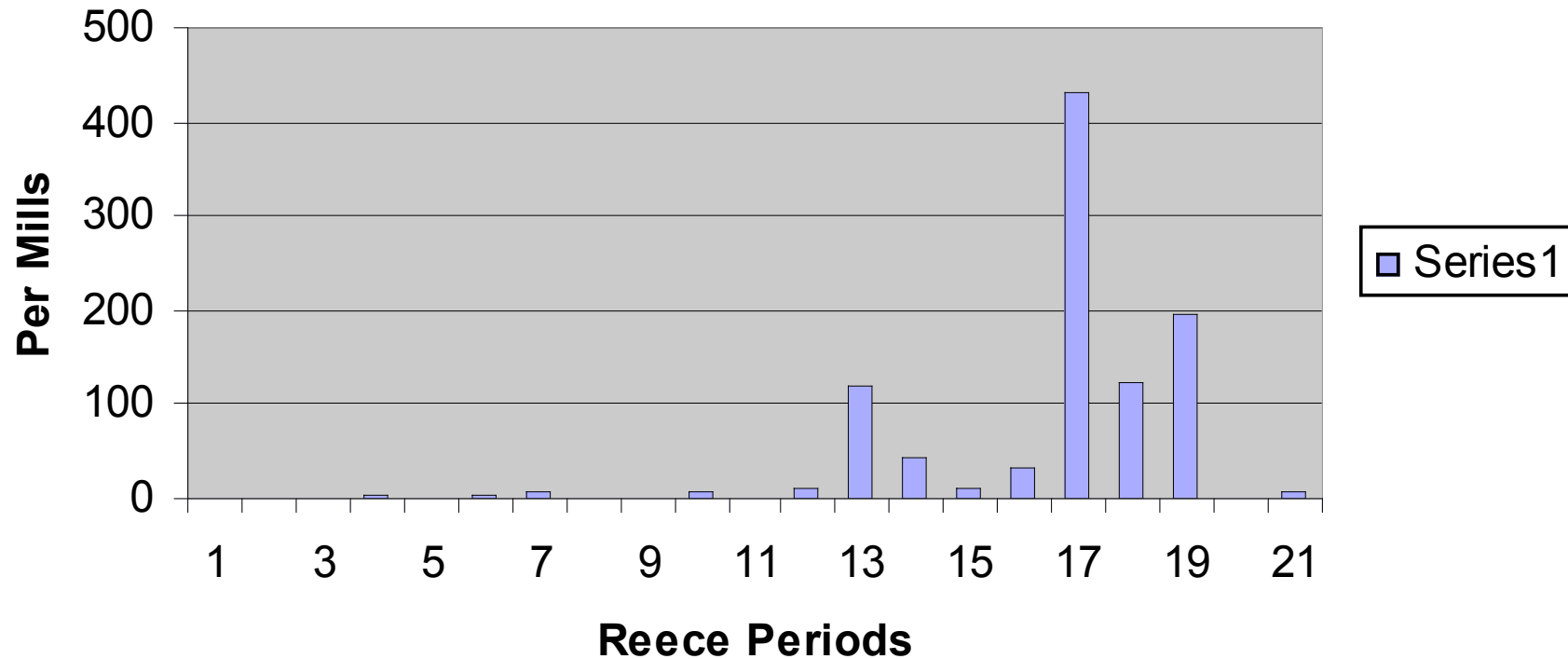


Filling the void: Roman coins from Nottingham

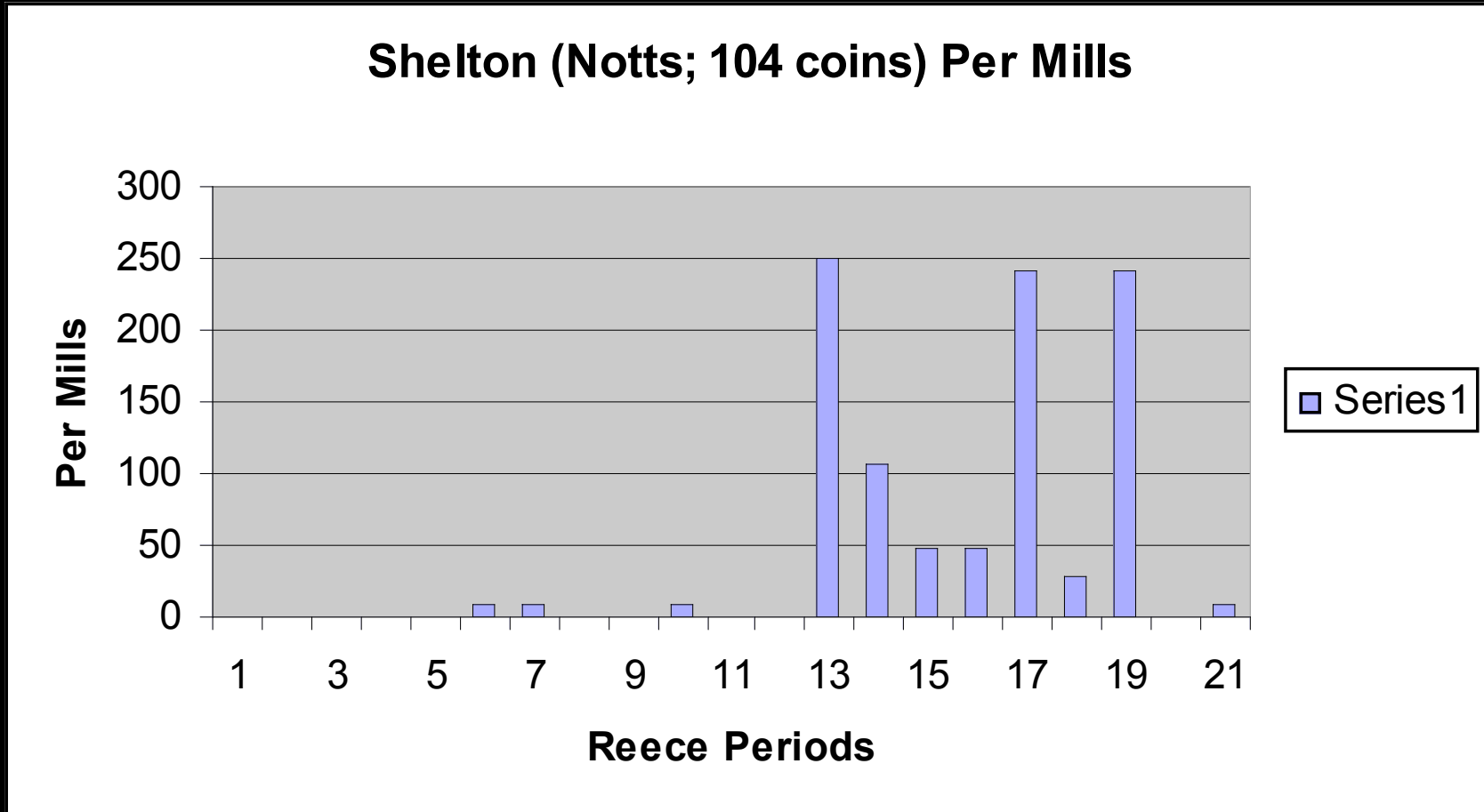
- 1535 coins recorded on PAS by 11.2006
(FLO: Rachel Atherton)
- 917 coins from 6 sites analysed (without edit of data)
- No widely available comparative material from Nottinghamshire

Thoroton, Notts – 574 coins Per Mills

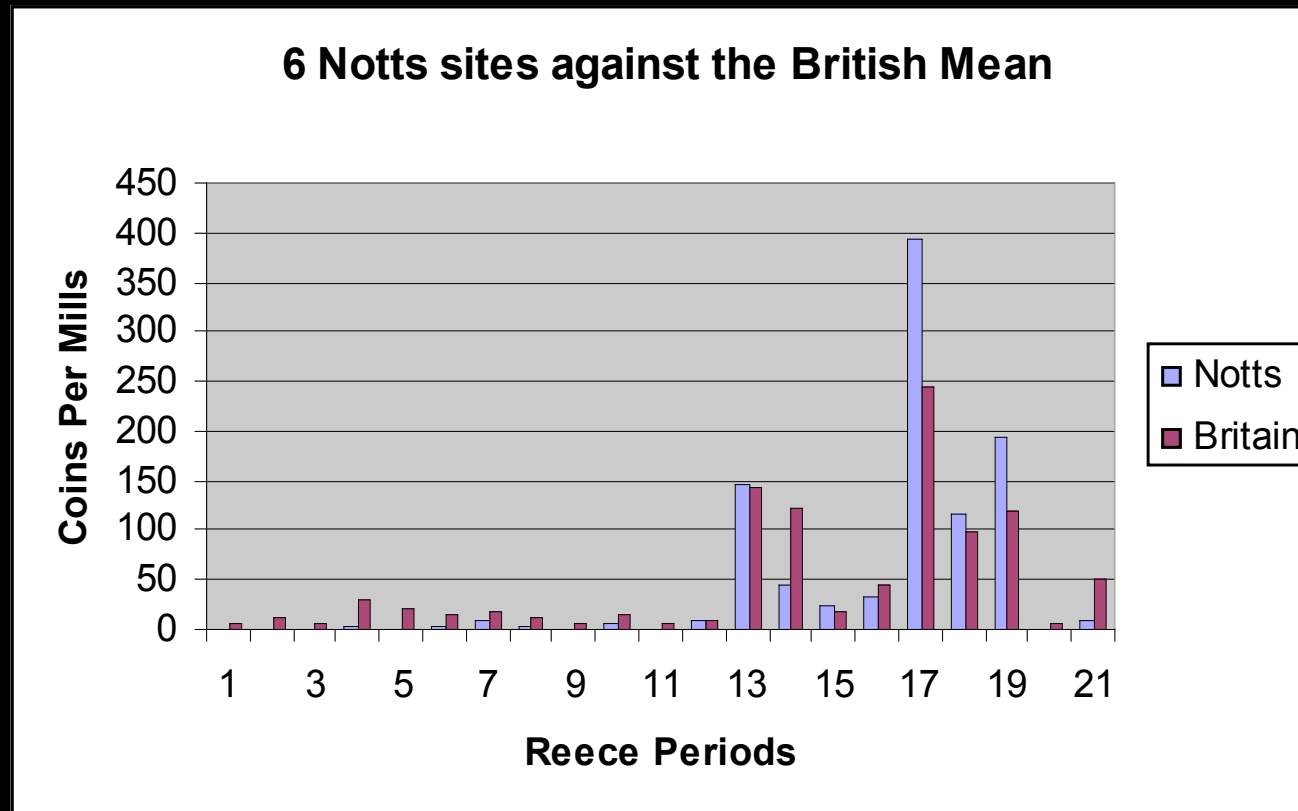
Thoroton (Notts; 574 coins) Per Mills



Shelton, Notts – 104 coins Per Mills

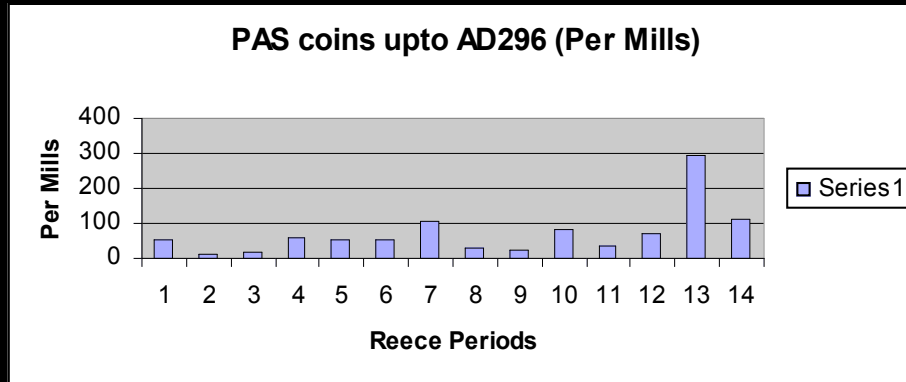


Notts, the 6 sites (as above) 917 coins – Per Mills – against the British Mean (Reece 1995)

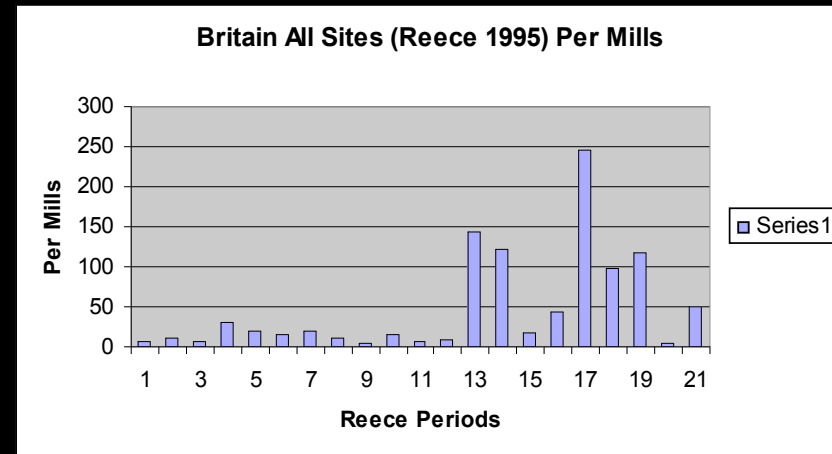


Nottinghamshire has minimal coin-loss in the period before AD260. Especially noticeable is the lacuna for Flavian coins (period 4: AD69-96): did the Flavian advance of the AD70s just pass Notts by?

PAS versus the National Mean up until AD 300



PAS coins up to AD 296,
Per Mills (Sample 9,544)



British Mean for all periods
(Reece 1995)

Note: PAS shows lower peak for Flavian Period (4: 96-96) in relation to Antonine 1 Period (7: AD 138-161) than the British Mean. **WHY?**

Bath: the Sacred Spring



The Sacred Spring today

David Walker's report on the Roman coins identified "Coins of British Association"



Some of 12,165 Roman coins From the Bath Spring

Possibly due to large influx of Base Metal “Coins of British Association” in AD 150s



Antoninus Pius Britannia issue As



Marcus Aurelius as Caesar As,
Surrey (FLO: David Williams)



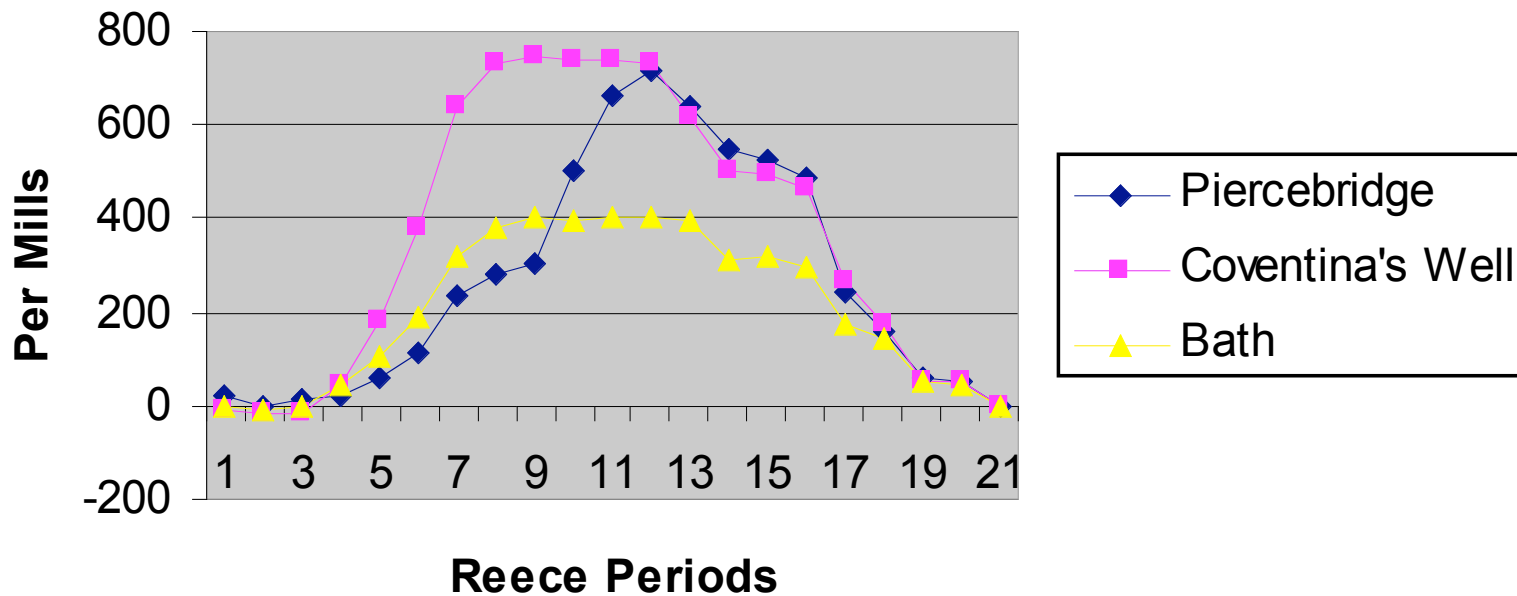
Marcus Aurelius as Caesar As,
Surrey (FLO: David Williams)



Faustina II As, Sussex
(FLO: Liz Andrews-Wilson)

A new votive site: Piercebridge River (FLO: Philippa Walton)

**Cumulative Frequency graph for Piercebridge,
Coventina's Well and Bath against the British
Average**



Coins as evidence for trade: ?direct trade between Cornwall and the Mediterranean



Coins found at Hayle,
Cornwall:

AD 335-40

Mint of Alexandria (Egypt)



AD 330-5

Mint of Heraclea
(south-west of Istanbul)

What does this suggest
about trade links?

Also coins from Sirmium and Nicomedia (FLO: Anna Tyacke)

Exotic coins



Gold solidus of Phocas from North Yorkshire, mint of Constantinople, 602-10 (FLO: Rob Collins)

Copper alloy coin of the city of Cius (North-West Turkey) struck for Elagabalus (218-222) from Hertfordshire (FLO: Julian Watters)
Another example was found in Kent c. 2000



Byzantine coins in Dark Age Britain



Dark Age site at Tintagel, 5th & 6th cents AD – seat of a ruler and monastery in Cornwall with links to the Mediterranean (FLO: Anna Tyacke)



10 Nummus coin of Justinian I (527-65), struck at ?Cyzicus (Turkey), found at Padstow, Cornwall

6th century Byzantine folles from the South West



Justinian I (527-65) follis of Constantinople, from Gloucestershire (FLO: Kurt Adams)



6th century folles from Devon (FLO: Danielle Wootton)

Conclusions 1

- The PAS extends our coverage of rural Roman Britain enormously
- Many assemblages are small, possibly often due to the non-recording of grotty or less interesting coins
- Comparison with previous research shows that larger assemblages, however, are valid
- PAS records are a valuable source for studying the distribution of coin finds (hence use)

Conclusions 2

- PAS records are helping to elucidate particular patterns of coin loss (e.g. Coins of British Association)
- PAS records include enough unusual coins (e.g. Byzantine) to challenge some traditional tenets
- PAS data will help to transform our knowledge of Romano-British coin loss
..... especially in rural areas