



Sandwich Guildhall Museum and Archives



Volunteer Favourite: Roman Bowl



Sandwich Mayor, Councillor Jeff Franklin has always been a positive advocate for the museum and the heritage of the town. We asked him what his favourite object is. His reply was:

“I think my favourite object at the present time, is the beautiful Roman bowl. I do not know how it could be buried for so long in such a shallow hole. The dimensions are perfect so is the colouring. I have often stood and admired this beautiful artefact, we are so lucky to have such an amazing object in our possession”

The bowl dates from 1st Century AD and is one of three such known bowls. In November 2016, a local metal detectorist, discovered this finely preserved early Roman bowl of copper-alloy whilst searching orchards between Canterbury and Sandwich. Buried at a depth of less than half a metre. Despite how shallow the bowl was it was almost perfectly preserved.

The full excavation was undertaken by Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Dover Archaeological Group. They believe that the bowl had been purposely buried in a small pit in an area where there had been late Iron Age – early Roman activity. A

coin, a denarius of Severus Alexander, was also found in the pit as were two iron bar type objects, whose use is as yet unknown.

Research is ongoing, but it is confirmed that the bowl is a very rare discovery. Its location is in an area where there were important Roman settlements at Richborough and Canterbury. Features found at the site indicate that this was probably a settlement, which until this discovery of the bowl was unknown to archaeologists. Other finds indicate that this settlement may have continued into later Roman times.



The metal detectorist and land owner both kindly agreed to loan the bowl to the museum so it can be shared by local visitors and residents.

This artefact also caught Jeweller Jessica of Sea Worn Jewellery's eye and she created us bespoke items based on the design and colouring of this bowl; they are available to buy in our museum shop when we reopen.

M. Beardmore, March 2020