

Roman soldier's coins found in Northchurch



15 August

Published on the

2013
19:00

[Print this](#)

Two coins that are more than 2,000 years old have been bought by a history group after being found with a metal detector in Northchurch.

The two silver denarii – each a day's pay for a Roman soldier – were given to those who fought in the 31BC Battle of Actium.

Roman general Mark Antony issued coins of this type to honour each of the 23 legions who fought beside him and last pharaoh of Egypt Cleopatra during the conflict.

The pair lost the naval battle – off the west coast of modern-day Turkey – to Octavian, who later became Augustus, first emperor of Rome.

Mark Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide in Egypt less than a year later.

The legionary number on one of the Northchurch denarii is illegible, but the other reads LEG XV – issued to all members of Mark Antony's 15th legion.

Both coins were valued at £95 – but bought for Dacorum Heritage Trust for £47.50. The £95 had to be split between the owner of the land where the coins were found and the finder, who waived his fee.

The coins will be kept in its museum store in Clarence Road, Berkhamsted, which is open by appointment from 10am to 4pm on weekdays.

Vice-chairman Peter Clayton said: "What were these two Mark Antony coins doing so far away from where they were issued?"

"It is rather curious that these two should be found at Northchurch on their own.

"They would have been expected to be found hoarded along with other later coins – so, where are the rest?"

Other Mark Antony denarii have been found in recent years among what was later discovered to be a scattered hoard of Iron Age and Roman coins in Mattishall, Norfolk.

Several years ago a Roman villa and mausoleum were excavated at Northchurch. Both have since been covered by housing developments.