

Wolflee Earthwork at NT 591 089.

There are many earthworks in the Borders provisionally dated by shape and size as medieval or Dark Age, but a friendly and responsible metal detectorist can change the dating sequence.

With permission from the farmer and having checked that it was not a scheduled area, Billy Butler was detecting and fieldwalking the Wolflee earthwork site in June 1996. As he left his finds with me for interest, I laid them out and got them photographed by Donald Gordon.



After this, things become a little blurred.

The objects were certainly taken to the Trimontium Exhibition in Melrose and on display for at least one year. It probably went up to the National Museum during a refreshment of the Trimontium display. (Fraser, please check) or the Regional Records (Keith ditto) It would be interesting to re-access this collection as a representative of how 3rd/4th Roman influence had spread to a small native settlement far from the main-line road systems.

In 1960, I was speaking to a friend of my grandfather's who had had been brought up on Wolflee Farm in the pre-World War One period. Knowing my interest in the Romans he told me a story of how, in the early 1900s, two brothers who were ploughmen on Wolflee farm came to the Kirk at Hobkirk one Sunday with a small silver coin on each link of their watch chains. It caused a great sensation when the coins were identified as Roman silver denarii by the estate owner, Sir Walter Elliot of Wolflee, a keen antiquary himself. (No relation.) It had been a buried hoard from on or near the No 947 site.

I don't think this hoard has been recorded or even noted but Fraser will know.

Feb 2021.

Walter Elliot.

It was the following year that I visited the site with divining rods and got a typical Roman fort shape with an annexe on the east side.

2 August 2023. With new skills of using Google Maps to get air photographs, I looked at this site and found a fairly convincing Roman fort. Definitely worth a drone trip.

Best wishes.

Walter.