

IRELAND (11: 1.1%)

Edward I

Dublin: A1a?; A1b?; A1 (2); B2?; C3; G2/2; uncertain

Waterford: A2?; B2; D?

SCOTLAND (17: 1.8%)

Alexander III

sterlings: group B2, 24 points; group E, 28 pts, stars; 26 pts, 2 stars (3); 24 pts; 20 pts with added pellets in **SCO** (1) and **VM+** (2) quarters; group M, 24 pts, 1 star; group M?, 24 pts; M/D, 24 pts; E/D, 25 pts, stars; B/M, 24 pts?; uncertain, 23 pts, one star

John Baliol

sterlings: first coinage S.5065, 4x6 pts; second coinage S.5701, 4x6 pts (2); S.5071?, 4x5 pts

CONTINENTAL (7: 0.7%)

John of Louvain (1285–1309), crockards, Herstal, Mayhew 82, Mayhew 84

Valéran (I) of Ligny (1304–53), sterling, Serain, as Mayhew 220

Gaucher de Châtillon (c.1313–22), sterlings, Yves, Mayhew 239, Mayhew 245 (2)

Brabant, John III (1312–55), sterling ‘*au chatel brabançon*’, Brussels; Chautard, pl. IX, 9; Mayhew, 48–9 (fn); after 1318.

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SCBI 39. See North 1989.

COUNTERFEIT CHARLES I COINS IN RURAL COUNTY DURHAM

FRANCES MCINTOSH AND EMMA MORRIS

Introduction

IN 2011, whilst still the Finds Liaison Officer for the North East, Frances McIntosh recorded a genuine shilling of Charles I, a counterfeit shilling and half crown (both having copper alloy cores with silver plating), and a counterfeit blank for a half crown. The coins were all found by one metal detectorist (Peter Heads) in close proximity to each other, in an area now covered in concrete. They are recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) database (www.finds.org.uk/database) database as DUR-CF3B20, DUR-471E06, DUR-CF0ED6 and DUR-CE8740, and they are listed in the Appendix.

What can be said for certain is that the discovery is exceptional in terms of its composition and could represent part of a forger’s stock that was lost. This discovery therefore provides a basis for a short discussion of counterfeit coins of the reign of Charles I recorded on the PAS database. This note aims to discuss how common counterfeit coins were in the post-medieval period, particularly in Charles I’s reign, as well as highlighting the discovery of this important group of coins.

The PAS data primarily represents the material from rural areas in England and Wales, as these are the areas where metal detecting usually takes place. There is a fairly even distribution across the country, with some notable gaps. Most of these gaps can be explained as due to the presence of:

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1. National Parks: Exmoor and Dartmoor in the South West; the Lake District and North Yorkshire Moors in the North.
2. Land not suitable for detecting: the Pennines in the North, and parts of Wales.
3. Practices of recording and detecting in the area.

As of 19 February 2012 there were 19,099¹ post-medieval coins recorded on the PAS database (from Henry VIII to William III): 8,043 of these coins span the period from 1489 to 1660,² and of this 2,150 were from the reign of Charles I (1625–49). This note will focus mainly on the coins of Charles I, and the counterfeits of coins from his reign.

Counterfeit coins in hoards and the PAS database

In order to draw conclusions the PAS data can be compared with hoard evidence that has been published, as well as a contemporary account of the circulation of counterfeit coins. To examine the local context museums in County Durham and North and East Yorkshire were contacted to ask about counterfeit coins in their collections. A search was also carried out of the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* and the Yorkshire HER (Historic Environment Record), with no new coins being noted.

Edward Besly, in his 1987 British Museum Occasional Paper on hoards of 1625–60, states that counterfeit coins are not common in such hoards.³ Some examples from the *British Numismatic Journal* illustrate this point clearly. The 1987 Ryhall treasure, for example, dates from 1643 and contains 3,220 silver coins from the reigns of Edward VI to Charles I, of which only one coin was a counterfeit, imitating a shilling of Charles I.⁴ The 1991 Kelso hoard, which was made up of a total of 1,375 coins, including ten gold coins, contained only two certain forgeries of silver coins, both imitating coins of Charles I.⁵ Finally, the Middleham hoard, found in three pots, of which the first two had a *terminus post quem* of 1645–46 and the third dates from after 1646, contained only thirty-nine counterfeits in a total of 5,099 coins. Twenty-two of these forgeries were counterfeits of coins of Charles I,⁶ which is still a comparatively low number when considering the total number of coins in the hoard.

The group of coins under discussion contrasts significantly in comparison with the above examples. It is perhaps to be expected that people would only want to save or hoard official coins which have an intrinsic metal value as well as their recognized monetary value. Some copies might have seemed genuine and would therefore have slipped through the net. Blatant copies, however, would not have been seen as worth hoarding.

The hoard data can be compared with the results of a search of the PAS database. Out of the c.20,000 post-medieval coins on the database, only 134 counterfeit coins have been recorded (see Figure 1).⁷ Thirty-five of these counterfeits were of Charles I (including the three found by Peter Heads). Although this is a small proportion of all Charles I coins on the PAS (less than two per cent) they account for almost a quarter of the counterfeits from the post-medieval period. So finds of counterfeits of Charles I coins appear to be more common than counterfeits of the preceding and following periods, which is consistent with the evidence from the Ryhall, Kelso and Middleham hoards.

The PAS data seems to indicate that counterfeit coinage was more common as an occurrence during the reign of Charles I than in the preceding and following periods. A contemporary account supports the idea of a widespread problem and gives further weight to the suggestion. A diary kept by Adam Eyre, a Yorkshireman, between 1647 and 1648 gives an account of his

¹ The advanced search function was used, with 'Coin' as the object type, and 'Post Medieval' as the period.

² The numismatic search function was used, and the group 'Early Modern' was chosen.

³ Besly 1987, 66.

⁴ Clough and Cook 1988, 97.

⁵ Bateson 1991, 82.

⁶ Barclay 1994, 84, 87, 91, 94–5, 97.

⁷ The advanced search function was used with 'Coin' as the object type, and either 'Counterfeit' or 'Copy' as the object description. 'Post Medieval' was selected as the period.

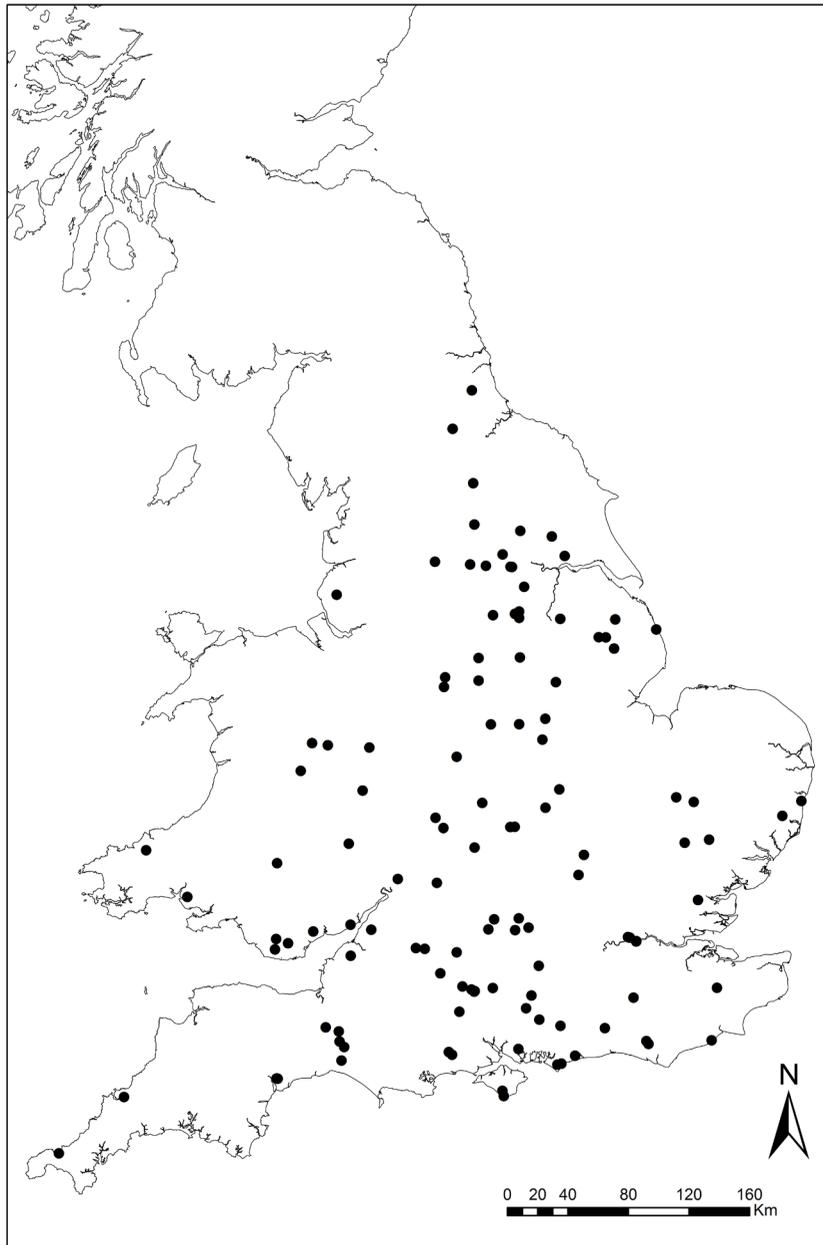


Fig. 1. The distribution of post-medieval counterfeit coins recorded on the PAS database.

daily activities, including his expenditure. He makes a note of any counterfeit coins he comes across. Eyre refers to these coins as ‘ill money’, ‘light money’ or ‘bad money’ at various points throughout the diary, also mentioning a ‘brass shilling’.⁸ The diary spans around twelve months, and there are eight instances in which counterfeit coinage is mentioned. In some cases, such as when he receives a loan from one Francis Haighe, he returns the counterfeit coinage and receives legal currency to replace the forgeries.⁹ This example from the contemporary literature demonstrates that counterfeit coinage was present in everyday life, and that people were able to recognize at least some of it.

⁸ Jackson and Morehouse 1877, 61

⁹ Jackson and Morehouse 1877, 40–1.

The PAS database provides evidence of another possible forger's hoard, from Stocksbridge in South Yorkshire (Treasure Case 2006 T298, recorded on the PAS database as SWYOR-AEF0A6). This find comprises silver clippings (probably of Charles II hammered coins of 1660–62), pieces of plate silver and two counterfeit coins, which the report identifies as probably Charles I shillings. The hoard most likely dates to 1660–62, perhaps indicating that the forgery of Charles I coins continued until that period.

It is difficult to know whether counterfeits of the coins of Charles I are contemporary with the issues they copy. Many issues continued to circulate for long periods, up until the recoinage of 1696, and could have been counterfeited until then. Nevertheless, analysing the counterfeit Charles I coins in the PAS database according to when the prototypes were made might possibly give us an idea as to how much of an effect the Civil War (and the upheaval in the official minting system this led to) had on counterfeiting. Unfortunately, many of the coins on the database could not be narrowed down to a date specific enough, due to a lack of detail on the coins. It is at least worth noting, however, that although the Civil Wars only occupied the last seven years of Charles's twenty-four year reign there are nine coins identified from that period, as opposed to seven from the previous seventeen. Perhaps the increased output of coinage at the start of the 1640s impacted on the amount of counterfeiting.¹⁰

TABLE 1. Charles I counterfeits recorded on the PAS by period of prototype

<i>Period</i>	<i>Coins</i>
Pre-Civil War (1625–42)	7
Civil War (1642–49)	9
Undetermined period	19
Total	35

Figure 2 shows the thirty-five counterfeit coins of Charles I recorded on the PAS database. It is difficult to show patterns of distribution with only thirty-five coins but some general comments can be made. The coins are not evenly distributed across the map. They fill in some of the gaps in the hoard distribution and push the distribution further into the North East. The east of England, which is thickly populated with dots on the map of all finds of Charles I coins, is extremely sparse.

Conclusion

The presence of counterfeit coins in hoards is usually relatively low and in the PAS database counterfeit coins also constitute only a very small percentage of the coins from the post-medieval period. Counterfeiting of the coins of Charles I was, however, probably more endemic than the norm. There is a higher percentage of counterfeits of coins of Charles I recorded on the PAS database than in hoards, although they still account for less than two per cent overall. The small hoard found in County Durham by Peter Heads, perhaps best described as a purse drop, is extremely rare in terms of its composition. It offers an insight into counterfeiting in this period, possibly showing the forger's work in progress.

COIN LIST

1. Fragment of a shilling of Charles I (1625–49), North 1991 no. 2231, Group F, initial mark Triangle-in-Circle (1641–43)
Silver
Obv: crowned bust facing left with XII behind the head; CAROLVS D G MAG [---] REX
Rev: shield; CHRISTO AVSPICE REGNO
Weight: 2.7 g.
(PAS DUR-CF3B20)

¹⁰ Besly 1987, 57, discusses the output of the Tower mint between 1638 and 1649.

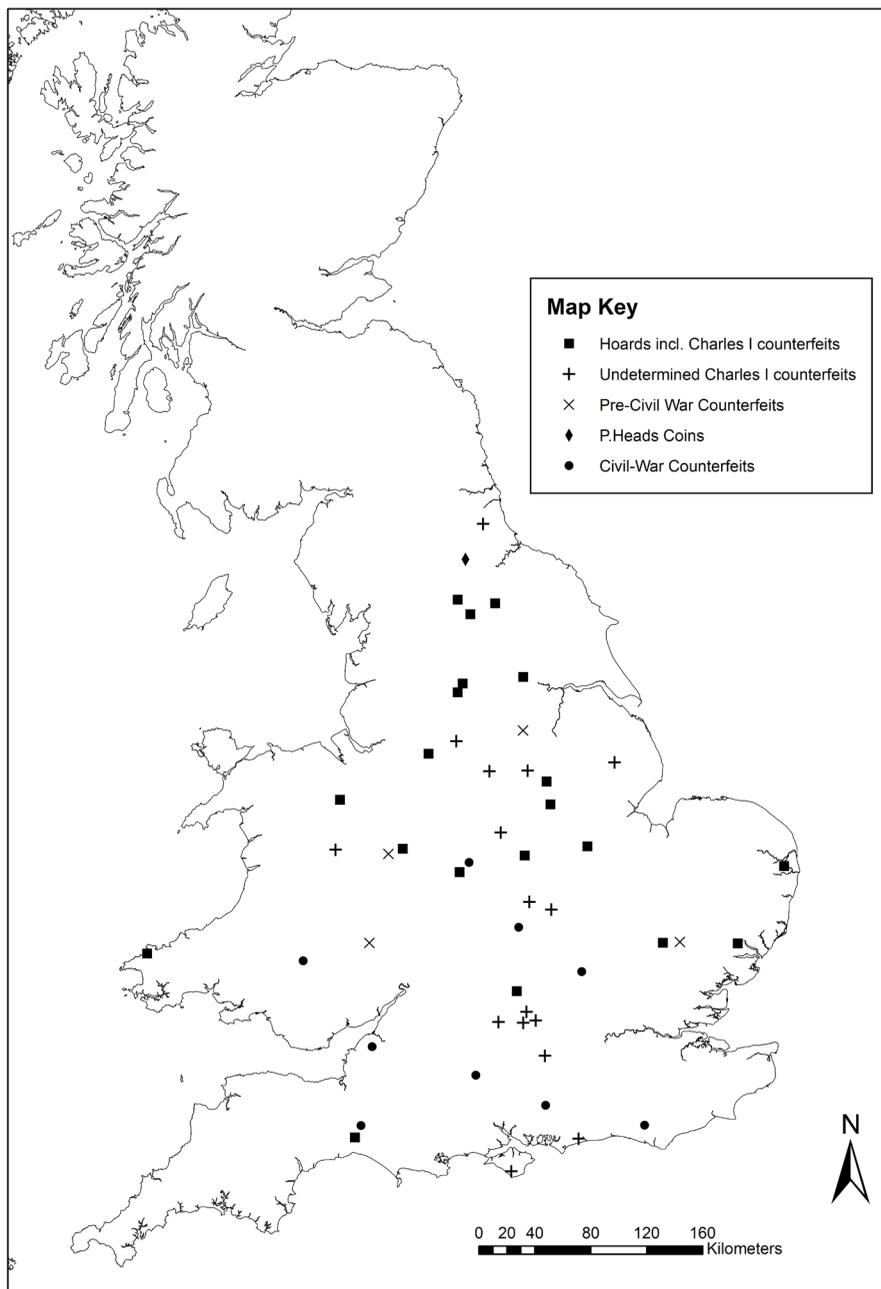


Fig. 2. Distribution of counterfeits of Charles I coins recorded on the PAS database compared with the hoard data provided by Besly.¹¹

2. Half crown (counterfeit) of Charles I (1625–49), initial mark (R), 1644–45 or later
 Silver plated with copper alloy core
Obv: king on horseback right; CAROLVS:D:G: [MAG'] BRI' [FRA'ET.HIB:] REX
Rev: round garnished shield; CHRISTO AVSPICE REGNO
 Weight: 11.4 g.
 (PAS DUR-471E06)

¹¹ To obtain the PAS data the numismatic search function was used, choosing Early Modern, then Charles I, with either counterfeit or copy in the object description. The hoard data are from Besly 1987.

3. Shilling (counterfeit) of Charles I (1625–49), as North 1991 no. 2231, Group F, initial mark Triangle-in-Circle, 1641–43 or later.

Silver plated with copper alloy core

Obv: crowned bust facing left with XII behind the head; CAROLVS D G MAG [---] REX

Rev: shield; CHRISTO AVSPICE REGNO

Weight: 5.8 g.

(PAS DUR-CF0ED6)

4. Half crown counterfeit blank, probably of Charles I (1625–49)

Silver plated with copper alloy core

Weight: 11.4 g.

(PAS DUR-CE8740)

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A NOTE ON VIOLET'S ANSWER

MARVIN LESSEN

IN 1653 Thomas Violet was asked by the Corporation (or Company) of Moneyers at the Tower of London to gather together for publication a document-based narrative explaining from the Corporation's point of view the circumstances surrounding the 'tryall' (competition) ordered by the Commonwealth Committee for the Mint in the summer of 1651, and its aftermath.¹ This competition took place at the Tower and Drury House in 1651. All of the action was initiated by Blondeau's petitions to provide new and superior coinage after he was invited to England by the Council of State in 1649.

Machine coinage was once again under consideration to replace the hammer methods; hence the trial of the established moneyers, represented by David Ramage, a moneyer himself, who claimed to be able to produce machine products better than Simon; versus the die making process by Thomas Simon, with his use of a machine process and Peter Blondeau's edge marking methods.² The 1651 pattern coins of the Commonwealth are the result; halfcrowns, shillings and sixpences. No matter, an insolvent government was not going to undertake new coinage methods, not for quite a few years.

How these coins were made is not always clear.³ Ramage, who was a worker at the Tower, would have had access to machinery there, such as some types of mechanical press (screw or rocker/*Taschenwerk*, but not roller press, for his coins do not have roller characteristics), using manual or horse or maybe water power, or perhaps even a hammer to a loose upper die, most likely the equipment Briot used for his Charles I machine (mill) coins, and his many medals – after all he had worked with or for Briot. This does not include Tower equipment supposed to have been shipped to Briot at York but intercepted at Scarborough around 1642. Ramage's

¹ See e.g. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series (1653–53)*, vol. 35, 280 (15 April 1653 Council of State, Day's Proceedings) and Henfrey 1877, 79 (Interregnum State Papers, Council Draft Order Book, No. 69. Friday, 15 April 1653) for the order 'That Sr James Harington bee desired humbly to present to y^e Parl^t y^e Propositions made by Peter Blondeau on y^e one part, and y^e Moneyers of y^e Mint on y^e other part, Concerning y^e Coyning of money in a way differing from w^t hath benee hitherto practised and used in this Com^{on}wealth and w^{ch} is propounded to bee for y^e securing of Coyne from being Counterfeited or Clipped.'

² Pagan 1988 is important on the Simon brothers, but does not address this trial subject; see Gaspar 1976 on edge-marking.

³ For discussions on dies and machinery from Mestrelle onwards, see Hocking 1909.