The subject of this paper is the numismatic history of Rye, and it was only when I began to prepare it that I realized how varied was the series of coins, tokens, tallies, and medals that my native town had produced.

Rye, as a borough, might presumably have been privileged to strike coins of the realm at any time, but, as we shall see, she was only once called upon, so far as we are aware, to do so, her other issues being those of private persons, probably largely illegal, but winked at by the authorities.

Rye came into existence a few years before the date of the Domesday Survey, probably as successor to the rights and privileges of the Town and Port of Rameslie. This was the head of the large manor of that name which Canute, fulfilling a promise made by Ethelred II, had given to the abbot and monks of Fécamp in Normandy in the third decade of the eleventh century. The entry in Domesday, under the heading of the possessions of the church of Fécamp, reads: ‘The Abbot of Fécamp holds Rameslie of the King and held it of King Edward. . . . In this Manor is a new Burgh, and there are 64 burgesses returning £8 less two shillings. In Hastings 4 burgesses and 14 bordars return 63 shillings.’ Quite shortly the evidence for the attribution of this new borough to the later town of Rye is that the only other two possible claimants, Hastings and Winchelsea, had both been mentioned by name long before and so could not have been a new borough, without a name, in 1086. From this date Rameslie disappears from history and was probably submerged by the sea, and Rye came into being.

Those of us who have visited Fécamp Abbey will realize the wealth and importance of this Benedictine foundation and the many advantages that would accrue to Rye from her association with it. Meagre as material for our history is in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we know of two things which we owe to Fécamp Abbey: the first is our magnificent church, built in the Norman style as far as the chancel and transepts and completed in the transition period between Norman and Early English before the end of the twelfth
century, with two chapels added in the thirteenth century; the
second is a hospital for lepers on the hill outside the
town. It was while these works were proceeding that our
numismatic history begins.

King Stephen, having lost many of his mints to the Earl
of Gloucester, was in 1141, after his second coronation in
Canterbury Cathedral, opening new mints in the part of
the country that remained loyal to him, and Rye, as a
borough, was selected as a place of sufficient importance for
one of them. The story of our knowledge of the existence of
coins struck at Rye is an interesting one; for long they were
confounded with the issues from the mint of Castle Rising
in Norfolk, though the chief find had been at Linton in the
adjoining county of Kent. They were finally separated and
identified by our late member and former President, Mr.
W. J. Andrew, and published by him in a paper in the
Numismatic Circular in 1914. The Great War prevented
due notice being taken of his discovery, and it was only
after a visit he paid to Rye and the renewal of an early
friendship with my family that he decided to call attention
again to the matter. He had by this time acquired further
evidence for his attribution and was able definitely to prove
his case in a paper read before this Society and later pub-
lished in volume xx. I need not therefore go into the reasons
that he there gives in detail, but merely state the salient
facts.

It appears that our first moneyer was William (though
some express doubts of this attribution) and that he was sent
from Canterbury to open the mint in 1141. By Easter of
1142 the mint was definitely established under Radulf, Rauf,
or Ralph of Rye, probably one of the leading men of the
town, but of whom we have no other knowledge. There are
two coins of William’s minting extant and at least eight
pennies and two cut halfpennies of Radulf’s. On the acces-
sion of Henry II the mint was closed and Ralph transferred
to Canterbury, where he continued to issue coins as Ralph
of Canterbury. He was still there in 1176/7, when, as Ralph
of Rye, moneyer at Canterbury, he and his wife were fined
1,000 marks, the equivalent of between £600 and £700, but
worth vastly more to-day.

Before the end of this century Rye, with old Winchelsea,
was admitted into the Confederation of the Cinque Ports,
as a member in aid of Hastings, and the barons were gradually buying back their privileges from Fécamp. As time went on, her association with her overlords became more and more one of money payments, though it still prevented her from being fortified and left her exposed and helpless to any foreign foe. In 1216 her undefended state tempted Louis the Dauphin of France to make Rye his head-quarters during his attempt on the English throne, and it was only the death of John and the Barons' preference for the young Prince Henry that caused the failure of his adventure. It was now evident that two towns so important as Rye and Winchelsea could not safely be left in foreign hands, and, after an abortive appeal to the Pope in 1226, a friendly agreement was finally arrived at with the abbey, by which these two towns were exchanged for certain inland places and in 1247 they were resumed into the king's hands.

About this time there was started in Rye, on a bank north of the town, a pottery, the site of which I accidentally discovered while searching for the foundations of the Leper Hospital in what is now known as the Spital field. I dug straight down the chimney of one of the three kilns that I afterwards found. Among the objects of interest found during an excavation lasting over five years was a floor tile, for the kiln made inlaid tiles for Rye Church as well as pots. On it is the upper half of a pattern representing King Edward I, which our late friend Mr. Andrew assured me was copied from a coin of that king, issued in 1279 or later. I have not a complete tile for the lower half, but sufficient pieces to draw it, so I show a sketch of the whole design Fig. 1.) I may say that King Edward I had a very close personal association with our town and incorporated us in 1289, together with New Winchelsea, which he had founded after the destruction of the Old Town in 1287. The companion double tile, which is probably a representation of Archbishop Winchelsey, was one of the series found. The fact that I turned the whole site over with the point of a trowel and did not find a single coin of the period I take to be negative evidence that workmen at the pottery did not carry any of their meagre wages in their pockets, but probably handed the whole over to their wives on Saturday night. The only money-box found had been broken open.

In the fourteenth century Rye and Winchelsea attained
full status in the Cinque Ports Confederation, and Edward III made grants to the town to enclose it with walls and gates; but in spite of these advantages she suffered many raids by the French, culminating in 1377 with the complete destruc-

![Fig. 1. Two Fourteenth-century Tiles from Rye. (From a drawing. The lower Tile is based on existing fragments.)](image)

tion of the town by fire, the sacking of the church and removal of the lead from the roof and the bells from the tower. I can produce as evidence of this a silver penny of Edward III—the raid took place a few days after his death—found under the floor of an old house, which was built on the site of one destroyed on that occasion. I also have a halfpenny.
In 1494 we have an entry in our records of some interest to numismatists; it is an ordinance of King Henry VII which states "that an Englishe peny, the whiche is called sterling round, without ony clyppyng, shall weigh 32 cornes of whete in the myddis of the eare, and twenty pence makyth an unce and twelve unces makyth a pound, that is to say, twenty shillings sterling".

Now I do not know if numismatists have ever thought out what became of some of the clippings from the silver coins that resulted from this dishonest but lucrative practice, a practice that seems to have been common from the earliest times. From the Rye records I can, at any rate, give you one instance of their use. In 1502 Rye required a new mace to be carried before its mayor on state occasions, and paid 6d. for the ironwork and 15s. for the workmanship. The Chamberlain was then able to produce out of his store of silver clippings, forfeited by convicted Clippers, 6 oz. of silver at 3s. 2d. the ounce. In 1507, in making another mace, 10 oz. was required, and this he supplied at 1s. 9d. per oz., the price seemingly having fallen to this figure, possibly from their being from base coins. Rye possesses two early maces, one for the mayor dated 1570 and one for the king's bailiff, which may possibly be one of those in question. The rule was, I believe, one office, one mace; and the reason why the mayor of Rye has two maces carried before him to-day is that he became ex-officio king's bailiff in 1705. When these maces needed repair early in the next century, silver medallions of James I were inserted in the heads.

In 1530 a French priest was arrested and imprisoned in Rye for clipping money. His keep cost the town 30s., and they were able to recover 26s. 4d. of this by selling his ill-gotten gains, which weighed over 7½ oz., at 3s. 6d. an ounce.

As is well known, the neglect of the authorities to provide sufficient and suitable small change led in 1648 to the commencement of the series of seventeenth-century tokens which have such great local interest to-day. Although our sister town of Winchelsea, so far as has been discovered, did not issue a single token, Rye, the more flourishing of the two towns, issued five.

Three of these, all farthings, are of similar type and, as one is dated 1652, I will place it at the beginning of the series. (The references are to Boyne and Williamson.)
A Numismatic History of Rye

W. 156. Obv. WILLIAM . KEYE . AT . THE . A Ship. m.m. A Mullet.
Rev. SHEEPE . IN . RYE . 1652. Inner rope circle; within W K I m.m. A Mullet.
Note. I have nothing to add to the particulars of this issuer that I gave in my Riddles of Rye, 1925, except that a Dock near the Strand Quay was named after him in a map dated 1668, the same year as the token, and that the present Ship Inn is much too late to have any connexion with him. At any rate, he was living in 1656 in a house on the west cliff. There is no evidence that he was ever an innkeeper.

B. 73. Obv. THOMAS + BOYCE + OF Inner rope circle; within, Grocers Arms. m.m. A Mullet.
W. 154. Rev. RYE + IN + SVSSEX Inner rope circle, + B + T + E m.m. A Mullet.
Note. All I have to add to my note in Riddles of Rye is that he was a Jurat of the Corporation from 1655 to 1658.

B. 74. MICHELL . CADMAN . AT . THE A Mermaid; no inner circle or m.m.
Note. Owing to the rough lettering I feel inclined to place this as the earliest of the three farthings, but I think the dies were made by the same man. The m.m. is the same on all and the difference in date, if any, a year or so at the most. To my note in the Riddles of Rye I can only add that he was a Jurat from 1655 until his death in 1673.

W. 157. Obv. THOMAS . TUTTY . 1668 Inner circle; within two men carrying a barrel slung on a pole. m.m. Sexfoil rose.
Rev. IN . RY . IN . SVSSEX Inner circle; within HIS HALF PENY in three lines. m.m. Sexfoil rose.
Note. The only halfpenny of the series and about
inch in diameter. This is by far the rarest of all, and I only know of about half a dozen examples. Williamson, who was the first to describe it, wrongfully places an E after RY and spells PENY as PENNEY. Possibly he never saw one.

B. 72. Obv. FOR . YE . CORPORATION Inner circle: W. 153. within three-masted ship under sail. m.m. Cinquefoil rose.

Rev. OF . RYE . 1668 Inner circle and within Rye Church. m.m. Cinquefoil rose.

Note. While preparing this paper I have discovered two entries in the Corporation Books relating to these tokens, namely,

1669 Aug. 28. Recd. in farthings at twice from John Burket. £9-16-0

Worked out in farthings, the number passed to this date is 9,408, probably out of an issue of about 10,000, and the profit on these was £6 14s. 6d. How much of this was lost when, three years later, they had to be redeemed I have not yet discovered. They were struck in both copper and brass and are to-day the least rare of the series.

There is in the British Museum a specimen of a variety of this token, which has not, so far as I know, been described. There is an electrotype in the Rye Museum. The differences are:
(a) Lettering larger. No stops except . 1668:
(b) Less detailed ship with more sails set.
(c) Less detail in church.

That none of the Rye tokens are common speaks well for the solvency of the tokeners and generally for the prosperity of the town, as it is evident that the common ones are those of bankrupt and defaulting issuers. They were probably struck in the Mint, at the lower end of Rye High Street.

Of the series issued in the latter years of the eighteenth century, Rye can only boast of one, and that only intended for private circulation. Dalton and Hamer, quoting Charles
Pye, state that it was intended as a private token for the late Mr. Tysson but that he did not approve of it. Thirty only were struck; the obverse die then broke. The reverse die was later used as an obverse, but we can hardly claim these varieties as anything to do with Rye.


Note. I have never been able to find a grocer by the name of G. Bennett living in Rye at this date.

Before the end of the sixteenth century hop-growing was introduced into England, and hops are first mentioned as being grown in Rye in 1592. To those of you who are not familiar with this crop I would point out that its name is thought to be derived from the extreme fluctuations in price to which it is subject on the market. In 1817 they fetched £30 per cwt., and I have myself known them to fetch 30s. per cwt. only. As the price received fluctuated, year by year, so the price paid to the pickers had to fluctuate and was not fixed until the crop was picked and priced. The pickers, often imported from the slums of London, were very poor and ignorant and the problem arose as to how to keep account between the hop-grower and the hop-picker. Sometimes tally-sticks were used, but from, at any rate, the early eighteenth century the custom arose of each hop-grower cutting out, punching, striking, or casting hop tallies of zinc, lead, pewter, or brass, inscribed with a value in money or the measure in bushels to be credited to the picker. These were paid out as the picking proceeded, circulated in the neighbouring shops as money, and were all redeemed by the grower at the end of the picking in current money, at the price then fixed, the tallies being put back into a bag and kept until the following year.

The Parish of Rye is divided into two parts, the Borough, that is the Corporate Cinque Port Town, and the Foreign, that is the part which was retained by the Abbey of Fécamp in 1247. In the former there is only one farm where hops were formerly grown, namely Cadborough, but in the latter there are three, Watlands, Leasam, and Lea.
It is said that at one time you could walk out of Rye for ten miles without passing out of a hopfield; to-day the acreage has sunk to almost negligible quantities and you have to look for them. No tokens are used to-day, though some of the issuers are still alive, and the invariable custom is to enter the amount of hops picked in the pickers' books, which are duly produced on pay-day.

The tallies of early date generally had only the grower's initials on one side and the amount of bushels picked or of money advanced on the other, and it is almost impossible to identify either the issuer or his parish, much less his farm. Those of later date, especially when times were good, and
they could be very good, were often of very artistic design, with the full name of the issuer, his farm and parish, and thus the collection and classification of these pieces has become a very interesting study.

The largest hop-grower in England was Jeremiah Smith, and he built and resided in a large house in the Foreign of Rye. Mr. Smith filled the office of mayor of Rye on six occasions and was an alderman and J.P. of the borough. One occasion he entertained the Lord Mayor of London to a banquet at Rye, and within six months was in prison, after a conviction for perjury. The case was a political one, and on his receiving a pardon from the Queen, he was welcomed back to Rye with uproarious enthusiasm. He died in 1864 in great poverty.

My great-great-uncle, Samuel Selmes, was another large hop-grower and occupied 190 acres of Leasam Farm. He issued a token (Fig. 2, No. 4), which is a good example of the prosperous period. Other issuers for Leasam were Major Edward Barrett Curteis, the squire of Rye and at one time our Member of Parliament, whose tally is dated 1844 (Fig. 2, No. 5), and Richard Kenward, whose tally is dated 1862 (Fig. 2, No. 6). Cadborough Farm is represented by John Barnes, who occupied it from 1722 to 1762 (Fig. 2, No. 1), and Thomas Brown Lovett, 1835 to 1875 (his tally is dated 1845) (Fig. 2, No. 3). Watlands was occupied by Charles Skinner from 1781 to 1823, when he was succeeded by his son, George Skinner, who used the same tallies (Fig. 2, No. 2). These pieces between them give a good consecutive series.

The Richardson tallies were cast from bell-metal from Brede Church. Two issuers are still living to-day, namely, James Winser Lord, now aged 94, whose tally is illustrated (Fig. 2, No. 7), and Edward John Bates. Bates was probably the last issuer of tallies.
UNPUBLISHED VARIETIES OF COINS AND TOKENS OF THE BRITISH POSSESSIONS OVERSEAS

Plate 1