THE ROYAL FARTHING TOKENS OF JAMES I

By C. WILSON PECK

I. INTRODUCTION

There is ample historical and numismatic evidence to show that from about 1300 until late Stuart times the English coinage was frequently and sometimes for long periods continually deficient in pieces of lower denomination than a penny, and further that this scarcity of small change was greatest or, at any rate, most acutely felt during about the last 175 years of this period,1 when, under the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, the economic structure of England was rapidly changing into that of a community consisting largely of manufacturers, merchants, and shopkeepers. This shortage was undoubtedly an inconvenience to everyone, but to small traders and the labouring classes it often amounted to real hardship.

From 1280 until 1613 the only official small change consisted of silver halfpennies and farthings,2 but these were rarely available in sufficient quantities to meet the demand. There were two quite independent reasons for their scarcity: firstly, they were uneconomical to make—four farthings, for example, required at least four times the time and labour that would be expended in making a single penny; and secondly, they were so small that they were lost almost as fast as they were issued.

To supplement this meagre supply the English tradespeople resorted to various expedients, and the writer would suggest that one of the earliest of these was the use of jettons, or reckoning-counters. These were quite substantial pieces some of which (especially the early ones) bore designs having a passing resemblance to the silver penny. They were made of copper or brass and first came from France at the beginning of Edward I’s reign or possibly a little earlier. English counters first appeared in about 1280 and continued until near the end of the fourteenth century.3 The English pieces (as distinct from the French) generally have a small circular indentation on one side (usually in the centre) or a hole punched right through them, a precaution which strongly suggests that their use as coins was known, or at least regarded as a very likely possibility.

From the time of Richard II onwards several scattered but enlightening references appear in the records to the scarcity of small change. Thus in 1379 the Commons pointed out that although certain weights for bread and measures for beer, such as the gallon, pottle, and quart, were ordained by statute, there was no small money to pay for smaller measures and other small purchases or for charity. In 1393 another petition explained how, “when a poor man would buy his victuals, and other necessities convenient to him, and had only a

---

1 Say from 1500 to 1675.
2 And some three-farthings pieces under Elizabeth I.
penny, for which he ought to receive a halfpenny in change, he many
times did spoil his penny, in order to make one halfpenny"1 and also
how, "when many worthy persons of the commonalty would give
their alms to poor beggars, they could not, on account of the scarcity
of halfpennies and farthings, to the great withdrawing of the sus-
tenance of poor beggars".2

In 1402 the Commons again petitioned the king that, "he would or-
dain some remedy for the great mischief amongst the poor people, for
want of halfpennies and farthings of silver, which were wont to be, and
still were, the most profitable money to the said people, but were now
so scarce because none were worked nor made at that time". They
complained that because of this shortage the people were using "the
money of foreign lands, as halfpennies of Scotland, and others called
galley-halfpence, and in some parts, halfpennies divided (to the great
destruction and waste of the said coin)".3 This appears to be the
first mention of galley-halfpence.4 These were small base silver coins
(soldini), brought by Venetian and Genoese merchants in their galleys
to London where they were circulated from Galley Key, in Thames
Street.5 They bore on the obverse a kneeling figure of the Doge
holding a banderole, and on the reverse the Winged Lion of St. Mark.

In 1406 the Commons reported that "the Scotch coming into the
realm did bring with them false money of Scotland, resembling the
coin of England, and of false alloy, . . . some [bringing] one hundred
pounds, and some forty pounds of halfpennies, to the defrauding of
the common people of England".

From early in the first reign of Edward IV we have a notable
instance of a long period during most of which farthings must have
been practically non-existent, for none is believed to have been
struck after the 3¾ gr. "heavy coinage" issue in 1464 until coining
was resumed, over 20 years later, under Henry VII, at only 3 gr.

The next important development was the appearance, at the begin-
ing of the sixteenth century, of the privately issued token. The first
of these were in lead or pewter and we first hear of them through
Erasmus, in his Adagia, printed in Paris in 1500. The next reference
comes under Elizabeth I: Snelling informs us that during her reign
there were frequent complaints that various tradespeople were "stamp-
ing and issuing tokens of lead, tin, latten, and even of leather, for
farthings and halfpence". Still later, in the proclamation authorizing
the royal farthing tokens in 1613, there is an admission that there
had been "some toleration" in the past of tokens of lead "commonly
known by the name of farthing tokens".

1 i.e. he had either to cut his penny in half or else receive no change.
2 Ruding I, pp. 237, 245.
3 Ibid., p. 250.
4 Craig, The Mint, p. 81, states they were prohibited under this name as early as 1399.
5 Stow, Survey of London, states, under "Tower Street Ward", that he had "seen them pass current" in his youth, from which it may be deduced that galley-halfpence were still in circulation as late as about 1544, in spite of several earlier enactments prohibiting their use. The Maidstone hoard (1952), presumed to have been buried about 1538, contained three Venetian soldini: Brit. Num. Journ., vol. xxvii, p. 58.
The commencement of the issuing of these tokens by the Trade Guilds and private individuals was a very significant event, for it suggests that the need for a more plentiful supply of small change had now become so urgent and so patently obvious as to make such an illegal practice seem quite justifiable, if only because, as Caldecott and Yates aptly put it, these tokens "supplied a want unfilled by the then existing currency, and by their very baseness hurried on the measures taken to replace them." The mere fact that they failed to solve the problem is beside the point, for the simple tradesman can hardly be blamed for falling into the trap of issuing pieces intrinsically worth only a fraction of their nominal value, when James I and his advisers, who should have known better, did precisely the same thing in 1613. By 1500, then, the dearth of small change can be said to have entered its most acute phase, which lasted until the regal issues authorized in 1672 had become well-established.

But to return to the small silver. As the price of silver increased, the size of these pieces necessarily diminished, and the smaller they became the more difficult they were to make and the easier they were to lose—a vicious circle which was not finally broken until, in Elizabeth's reign, it was estimated that a farthing of standard silver would weigh only about 2 gr.—"neither conveniently coined, nor handled for payment". None was struck. It was undoubtedly this predicament which ultimately forced the authorities to take a broader view of the whole problem and seriously to consider the only suitable alternative—copper. But before they did so they made one last, futile attempt to maintain the "farthing change" through the medium of silver by issuing silver three-farthing pieces, thereby enabling a farthing's worth of goods to be purchased by tendering a penny and receiving a three-farthing piece as change. Silver three-halfpenny pieces were also minted to provide a halfpenny change on the same principle.

It was probably in 1576 or soon afterwards, during the currency of these two new silver denominations, that the first proposal was submitted for the coining of copper halfpenny and farthing "pledges", to weigh 24 and 12 gr. respectively. This idea was so far approved that a proclamation to make such pieces current was actually drawn up, but for some reason not disclosed in the records it was never promulgated. Nevertheless this document, the exact date of which is unfortunately unknown, is of considerable interest and importance, for although no copper coins were put into general circulation during Elizabeth's reign, we see in this proclamation, for the first time, the expressed will and intention to provide such a coinage, and so, even if Elizabeth could not claim to have conceived the idea herself and may, in fact, have refused at the last minute to endorse it, she must at least be given the credit for having shown a much more enlightened appreciation of the whole problem than any of her predecessors.

2 Harleian MS. No. 698, p. 117 (British Museum).
Several proposals for coining copper tokens were considered during the period 1607–12, but despite the fact that James I well knew the advantages which had resulted from the issue of copper pieces in Scotland, nothing was done until he ultimately "conceived the unhappy idea of placing the issue of such money in the hands of private persons" who, as holders of the monopoly, could be heavily charged for the privilege and yield him, so it was estimated, a profit of £35,000. The plan was finally drawn up on 10 April 1613 and set out in a proclamation dated 19 May 1613.

This commenced with an admission that there had been "some toleration" in the past of leaden tokens which were used as small change between traders and their customers, "whereby such small portions and quantities of things vendible . . . may be conveniently bought and sold without enforcing men to buy more ware than will serve for their use and occasions". It objected, however, to the manner in which these tokens were issued; that they were subject to counterfeiting and in consequence were sometimes refused as "doubtful things"; that they were often discredited after the death of those who had issued them; and finally, that it was derogatory to the royal prerogative that such tokens should be allowed currency with the lawful money of the realm.

It went on to explain that the king, recognizing the need for such small moneys, had given power and authority, by letters patent, to John, Lord Harington of Exton, to issue sufficient copper farthing tokens for use within the realms of England and Ireland and the dominion of Wales, for a period of three years and that they were "to pass for the value of farthings . . . with the liking and consent of his loving subjects". In other words, they were not coin of the realm and could not be forced as legal tender: they were, in fact, intended solely for the convenience of any who chose to use them.

The proclamation also ordered that "the said farthings should be made exactly and artificially of copper, by engines and instruments, having on the one side two sceptres crossing under one diadem, and on the other side a harp crowned, with the king's title JACOBS DEI GRATIA MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ FRANCIÆ ET HIBERNIÆ REX; with a privy-mark to be set upon them, from time to time, whereby to discern and distinguish them, and to be altered according to occasion, for preventing the falsifying and counterfeiting of the same". It was also stipulated that the tokens should weigh not less than 6 gr.

1 Oman, p. 297.
2 For biographical details, see Weightman, p. 208.
3 Scotland is not mentioned and there is no evidence that these tokens ever circulated there.
4 Symbolizing the Union of England and Scotland (Martin-Leake).
5 These tokens and the royal and rose farthings of Charles I, although the smallest in size, have longer legends than any other coins in the copper series until quite recent times. Moreover, they are the only copper pieces issued for currency to bear reference to France and Ireland.
The Royal Farthing Tokens of James I

(i.e. 1 lb. (avoirdupois) was to yield 24s. 3d. in farthings), and that after the next feast of St. John Baptist, the leaden tokens should no longer be made or used.

The new farthings were to be distributed by Lord Harington at the rate of 21s. in farthings for 20s. sterling and, for a period of one year, a special concession was granted whereby anyone in possession of more tokens than he could conveniently use might rechange them into sterling at the same rate. Directions were issued to all mayors, sheriffs, justices of the peace, bailiffs, constables, and headboroughs to do all that lay in their power to assist in promoting their circulation. By the original terms of the patent Lord Harington was to receive half the profit from the issue of the tokens, but it appears that before the contract was finally sealed the king changed his mind on learning that the grant was worth £60,000, and finally fixed Lord Harington's share at £25,000, ordering that the surplus should be paid to himself. Lord Harington appointed as his agents Gerard Malynes and William Cockayne, but the latter, dissatisfied with some clauses in the agreement, soon resigned and was replaced by John Couchman. Three others, Christopher Warwick and Peter and Samuel Malynes, were also engaged as sub-contractors to supervise the making of the tokens with the assistance of an engineer, a graver, and other workmen.

Lord Harington died on 27 February 1613/14 and the patent passed to his son (who also died a few months later) and thence to Lady Harington, the widow of the original patentee. The transfer to Lady Harington was confirmed in a proclamation dated 21 June 1614. On 28 June 1614 Ludwick, Duke of Lennox, secured the patent: according to Snelling the duke had been anxious to acquire it from Lord Harington from the commencement. It is uncertain whether James, Marquess of Hamilton, shared the patent with the duke from this date, but that he was definitely a partner in 1622 is confirmed in a recommendatory letter from the king, dated 28 June 1622. In 1623 Lennox was created Duke of Richmond and Lennox, but he died early in the following year, the patent passing jointly to his widow Frances, Dowager Duchess of Richmond, and Sir Francis Crane, director of the Mortlake Tapestry Works.

From all accounts the tokens were very unpopular from the start. Several counties, notably Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Flintshire, and Denbighshire, refused to take them, and those counties that did accept them took such small quantities that the total value of the farthings distributed during the first six months amounted to barely £600. Rechange was also very heavy at first owing to the spread of a rumour that the tokens were to be altered and that the old ones would then be unacceptable.

Although the introduction of these tokens seems to have effected some reduction in the circulation of the lead tokens, a proclamation, dated 26 October 1615, was again necessary to prohibit their use. It was

1 Harleian MS. No. 4888, British Museum; quoted in full by Snelling, Appendix V.
also forbidden to mark, deface, bore, or clip the royal tokens and it was ordered that the currency of such mutilated pieces should cease. Counterfeiting of the new tokens was also prohibited. In the following year it was reported that many employers were taking advantage of the gain of a shilling in the pound on the purchase of farthings by buying large quantities and using them for the payment of wages. To scotch this abuse it was ordered in a proclamation, dated 17 March 1616/17, that in future only 20s. in tokens should be issued for 20s. sterling and that an exchange office would be set up in London where all persons could rechange their tokens at the rate of 21s. in tokens for 20s. sterling. Obviously, only those living near the metropolis would be able to avail themselves of this arrangement; most people living long distances away probably could not afford the time or expense for a long journey, quite apart from the risk of being robbed of their load on the way.

The original proclamation of 1613 had declared the tokens to be current in Ireland as well as in England and Wales, but it seems that any attempts which may have been made to enforce this had been unsuccessful, for another proclamation, dated 28 September 1622, was issued, prohibiting the use of all other tokens or "things in the nature of tokens" in Ireland and establishing the royal tokens in their place. This order, which was issued in Dublin, explained the great advantage which had been derived from their use in England and that the king had authorized Edward Woodward and Thomas Garret of London to make and distribute the tokens "upon such conditions as they were current in England". There are good reasons for believing that it was the oval-shaped series of tokens that was coined for Ireland in consequence of this proclamation.

**Classification**

Hitherto, the only important study of the royal farthing tokens of James I and Charles I was that by A. E. Weightman, who marshalled the main facts but made little attempt at any detailed classification. The great merit of his paper lies in his collection and arrangement of the historical details which form the background and without which a clear understanding of these tokens would be impossible. There is little concerning the actual tokens to be gleaned from the records apart from the general description of their design as set out in the proclamation and the fact that they were first authorized in May 1613. The pieces themselves tell us even less for they are all undated, and most of them present a monotonous similarity of types.

In the classification which follows an attempt has been made to arrange them in a chronological sequence of main types. This is admittedly quite tentative, but at least it takes into account a number of slight differences in the details of their designs which at present seem to provide the only clues. The key to the sequence of the sub-types and individual pieces probably lies in the privy-marks, but until some Tokenhouse records are discovered which give a clue to the
order in which these marks were used, it is unlikely that much head-
way will be made in the closer dating of these tokens.

The first problem—that of separating the Harington tokens from
those issued by the Duke of Lennox—was successfully worked out by
Weightman, and it is now generally agreed that the former comprise
all the small pieces with IACO between the sceptre-heads and bearing a
fret on the reverse, together with the slightly larger tokens, also with
IACO between the sceptres but with privy-marks other than a fret.
These Haringtons have now been slightly rearranged for reasons
which are explained later in the appropriate place. The remaining
tokens, including the ovals, constitute the Lennox series, in arranging
which it is essential to realize that they and the Richmonds of Charles
I form a virtually continuous series and that little of value can be
deduced about either unless they are first studied as a whole.

Weightman’s provisional separation of the Lennox pieces into two
groups reading BRIT and BR1 proved to be quite useless and was aban-
don ed in favour of a classification based on the obverse and reverse
crowns, two different types of which are distinguishable:

1. A small, neat crown with five jewels on the circlet.
2. A slightly larger crown, somewhat broader at the base, with nine
jewels on the circlet.

As the main issue of Charles I Richmonds all have the larger crowns
it seems reasonable to conclude that those of the Lennox series with
similar crowns (type 3d) were the latest of the James series. It re-
mained, therefore, to arrange the rest of the Lennox farthings with
the small crowns in their probable order between the type 2 Haring-
tons and the Lennox type 3d. The solitary piece with privy-mark
bell on the reverse (type 3a) suggests a temporary or experimental
type and is therefore probably the earliest, especially as it resembles
type 2 in having the privy-mark on the reverse only. The type with
privy-marks flower or fusil on both faces (type 3b), probably comes
next, followed by the main Lennox issue with small crowns. It will
be noticed that by this arrangement the majority of type 3c read
BRIT and all but three of type 3d read BR1, indicating that a slight over-
lapping of the two issues occurred during a transitional period. Fur-
ther, this classification by the crowns automatically places the bulk of
the BR1 pieces last, which is consistent with the fact that BR1 occurs
without exception for the main group of Charles I Richmonds.

There is no mention of the oval-shaped tokens in the patent or in
the subsequent records. Rather surprisingly Snelling fails us also, for
although he illustrates a Maltravers oval of Charles I, he makes no
comment on its unusual shape. An engraving in Simon’s Essay on
Irish Coins (Pl. 6. r28) to which Snelling refers (p. 8), depicts what is
obviously intended to be a James I oval, but it is incorrectly drawn
round. In his discussion as to the purpose of these oval pieces Weight-
man argued quite convincingly that:

1. It was unlikely that they were intended to circulate with the
round pieces because the difficulty of forcing the tokens on the public would have become even greater if pieces of two different shapes were issued at the same time.

2. If they were not to be used concurrently and in the same place with the round pieces, "they cannot have been intended for use in England at all".

3. "They were not intended for use in Scotland, for the Scots at that time would on no account permit English interference in their coinage."

He therefore concluded that they were coined for Ireland and that their oval shape was simply a contrivance of the patentees to ensure that these tokens could be readily distinguished from the "rounds" issued in England, for as the aim of the patentees was to disperse as many tokens as possible—"they would prefer that those made for Ireland should remain there and not be sent back to England and so interfere with the dispersal of the English tokens". Quite apart from their shape the ovals differ from the rounds in having both legends reading from bottom-left upwards and their crossed sceptres do not form a true salière. As they most closely resemble the Lennox rounds (especially type 3b) they have been listed as type 4 Lennox ovals.

Despite the fact that the original patent of 1613 had declared the royal tokens to be current in Ireland, it was not until a second proclamation, dated 28 September 1622, had been issued in Dublin that they were finally established there, and it is practically certain that these ovals constituted the first issue. Their appearance so late in the reign may well explain their rarity and the occurrence of only one privy-mark. It is interesting to note that "Irish tokens" are specifically mentioned in an indenture, dated 15 February 1624, between the Duchess of Richmond and Edward Garrett, for this is clear proof that they were distinguishable from the English pieces and were referred to, at any rate by the patentees, by this distinctive name. But as there is nothing in the wording of the proclamation to suggest that the Irish pieces were to differ in any way from those issued for use in England, it is clear that identical tokens were officially intended to circulate in both countries. There is, therefore, no valid reason for excluding these "Irish tokens" from a catalogue of English coins merely because the patentees chose, for subtle reasons of their own, to make them of a slightly different shape and design.

**Small-size Harington Tokens**

The intended denomination of the small Harington tokens (types 1a and 1b) has never been satisfactorily settled. Montagu was inclined to regard them as farthings of low weight deliberately imposed upon the public. Weightman, following Snelling, thought they were half-farthings because of their small size and suggested that they

were tinned to distinguish them from farthings. This last assumption necessarily implies that the larger type 2 Haringtons were issued concurrently with the smaller pieces, but there is no reason for believing that they were. After pointing out that half-farthings were not mentioned in the patent, Weightman evaded the full significance of this all-important fact by reminding us that they had been referred to “in some of the proposals made to the King in previous years”. He appears to have considered this was sufficient reason for concluding that half-farthings were automatically included in the final patent. The fact that they are not mentioned in the proclamation or in the subsequent records is perhaps the strongest argument against Weightman’s contention. It could also be asked why, if the small tokens were half-farthings, they were struck at an average weight only 1 gr. less than the minimum ordered for the farthing. Weightman effectively disposed of Montagu’s suggestion that they were farthings deliberately made of low weight by pointing out:

1. That as the issuing of light farthings was a punishable offence, it was unlikely that the patentees would have considered the saving of a grain or so of copper per token as sufficient compensation for the risk involved. Even made at full weight, the profit was enormous.

2. That their small size would have attracted too much attention. Had the patentees wished to deceive the public they would have made the farthings thinner rather than smaller.

The whole problem of the small Haringtons clearly centres on their weight. Both Montagu’s and Weightman’s arguments are based on their low weight. But were they under weight? The proclamation had ordered that the farthings should weigh not less than 6 gr. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the patentees planned their first farthings at this minimum weight, as anything over 6 gr. would have reduced their profit. The fact that a constant 6 gr. was unattainable by the crude method of manufacture which they were to use probably did not occur to them.

The weights of a number of carefully selected tinned and untinned small Haringtons yielded the following data:

1. **Tinned** (27 specimens). Av. wt. 5·5 gr. Range 3·6 to 7·6 gr. Of these 37% were 6 gr. or more (two as high as 7·6 and 7·2 gr.) and 51% were 5·5 gr. or more.

2. **Untinned** (44 specimens). Av. wt., 4·8 gr. Range 3·0 to 6·9 gr. Of these 11·4% were 6 gr. or more (two as high as 6·9 and 6·8 gr.) and 22·7% were 5·5 gr. or more.

3. **Tinned and untinned** (mixed) (71 specimens). Av. wt., 5 gr. Range 3·0 to 7·6 gr.) Of these 21% were 6 gr. or more and 38% were 5·5 gr. or more.

These figures throw a new light on the problem, for the rather high proportion of pieces weighing 6 gr. or more is hardly consistent with
the idea that they were farthings deliberately made below weight and still less that they were half-farthings. On the other hand, the 5 gr. average for the mixed pieces (3), one in every three of which weighed 5.5 gr. or more, is a reasonable one for farthings produced, as they undoubtedly were, with a keen eye on the profits, with crude machinery, by workmen as yet probably inexperienced in its use.

No reference to the tinning of these pieces has been found in the records. In the writer’s opinion the tin wash was put on with the intention of making them resemble the old silver farthings, thereby rendering them more acceptable and, if anything, less likely to attract attention. It is impossible to be certain whether all or only some of them were treated in this way, for the tin easily wore off, but as it occurs most frequently on the lettered tokens of type 1a it is very probable that these, at least, were issued tinned.

To sum up: it seems fairly certain that the small-size Haringtons were farthings issued at a weight which complied within reasonable limits with the minimum of 6 gr. as stipulated in the proclamation and that the first issues, at any rate, were given a tin-wash to disguise their mean appearance into some resemblance to the old silver farthings. But apparently this simple trick was of no avail. The public was so infuriated with their small size and flimsy fabric that the patentees were forced, in their own interests, to replace them by the 9 gr. Haringtons (type 2).

As the period of issue of types 1 and 2 together amounted to barely fourteen months, it is probable that type 1, which is by far the rarer, was limited to two or possibly three months at the most.

Privy-marks

In spite of Weightman’s splendid work the royal farthing tokens have not proved very attractive to collectors, chiefly, perhaps, because of their poor fabric and often worn condition. The difficulty of correctly identifying many of the privy-marks and the avidity with which some collectors have added to the confusion by accepting without question any piece which seemed to present an unrecorded mark has undoubtedly increased their unpopularity.

An even greater assortment of heraldic devices was used as distinguishing marks on the royal farthings of James I and Charles I than on the silver issues during the same periods. Many of the marks are, of course, common to both series, but any attempt to date the tokens by reference to the silver coins is beset with difficulties, for the greater number of marks on the tokens suggests that they were changed more frequently than on the silver. In fact, there may be no connexion whatever between the silver and copper marks, for it is practically certain that the Tokenhouse worked quite independently of the Tower Mint. The use of the term privy-mark instead of initial mark throughout the following lists is admittedly open to criticism. The objection that it is incorrect in that it implies a secret or hidden mark is acknowledged, but it is also true that these marks do not serve
quite the same purpose as the so-called initial marks on the gold and silver coins. In the end it was considered not only justifiable but preferable to retain the original term privy-mark, as used in the proclamation.

Considerable care is necessary in judging worn or flawed privy-marks, for it is generally these, wrongly identified, that have led to the recording of a number of quite imaginary marks in the past. The privy-marks on counterfeit pieces are mainly confined to clumsy imitations of the simpler official marks. The chief danger with these is failure to recognize the pieces as forgeries, for by so doing the marks they bear are liable to be recorded for certain groups for which, in fact, they do not exist.

The marks on some forgeries are often so crude as to be easily mistaken for one of several marks, e.g. an intended cross patee fourchee may be so poorly executed as to pass equally well as a trefoil or even as a dagger with the blade downwards.¹

No claim is made that every existing privy-mark has been recorded, for in view of the chaos caused by over-zealous "wishful thinkers" in the past it was thought advisable to ignore all marks which were so worn or indistinct as to raise any doubts as to their identity. The marks listed were all recorded from clearly struck specimens, and if this list is to remain reliable it is important that no supposedly new marks should be accepted unless they are clearly beyond dispute.

---

PRIVY-MARKS, JAMES I ROYAL FARTHING TOKENS

1. Annulet
2. Ball
3. Bell
4. Cinquefoil
5. Coronet
6. Crescent
7. Cross patee
8. Cross patee fourchee
9. Cross saltire
10. Dagger
11. Eagle's head erased
12. Flower
13. Fret
14. Fusil
15. Grapes
16. Key
17. Lion passant
18. Lion rampant
19. Lis
20. Lis, three
21. Martlet
22. Mascle
23. Mullet
24. Quatrefoil
25. Rose (double)
26. Star
27. Star, pierced
28. Stirrup
29. Thistle
30. Trefoil
31. Triangle
32. Triangle (pellet below)
33. Tun
34. Woolpack
35. Λ

¹ All genuine examples of dagger have the blade pointing upwards.
Counterfeits

It is very evident from the frequent proclamations, inquiries, and complaints concerning the counterfeiting of the royal farthing tokens that forging was rife, especially during the period of Charles I. Many of these counterfeits were imported from abroad and were said to be so like the true farthings that the patentees complained they could not distinguish them from their own. Considering the low intrinsic value of the genuine tokens and the enormous quantity struck, it is very unlikely that any of the forged pieces now existing are later fabrications made to deceive the collector, but as contemporary counterfeits they undoubtedly circulated quite freely, and Weightman was forced to the conclusion that "many of the better-made forgeries are now indistinguishable from the genuine pieces and to attempt to separate them would appear to be hopeless and they will continue to be retained in our cabinets". Weightman's failure to make a more critical study of the counterfeits is perhaps the only weakness in his excellent monograph. Consequently, in revising it for the present paper special attention has been paid to forgeries, particularly in their relation to the privy-marks, for it seemed extremely likely that some marks had been recorded for some of the groups in error, due to his inclusion of unrecognized counterfeits. A particular privy-mark may, and often does, occur for a certain group on both genuine and forged pieces, but it is quite another matter when this mark is only to be found on counterfeits. By working to this principle several of Weightman's marks have been proved to be non-existent for certain groups.

Although counterfeiting was common throughout the series there is no certain evidence of forging of the two Harington issues. This is really not surprising, for the opposition to these first tokens was so widespread that very few circulated, hence they were not worth forging. On the subject of weight it is important to bear in mind that the genuine tokens were issued at a considerable profit to the patentees even when made at 9 gr., which was 3 gr. above the minimum required. Forgers could therefore easily afford to make their counterfeits at approximately the official weight, thereby lessening the risk of their detection. From 1 lb. of copper, at a shilling a pound, a forger might make upwards of 24s. 3d. of farthings at 6 gr. apiece or 16s. 2d. worth at 9 gr. Nevertheless, it is true that counterfeit pieces do often weigh less than the average genuine tokens, but as the latter also show considerable variation, weight alone is of little significance in distinguishing between them and they must be judged almost entirely on their workmanship. Even a casual glance at any assortment of these tokens will reveal differences in their quality. This can be attributed within limits to the varying skill of the die-cutters, but considering the cut-price, profit-making basis on which they were produced and that the workmen undoubtedly lacked the ability and experience of

their counterparts at the Mint, the quality of these farthings is, on the
whole, better than would be expected.

The first essential for the recognition of counterfeits is a thorough
familiarity with the characteristics and general appearance of genuine
pieces. These are briefly as follows:

1. The design of the crowns for each group is fairly constant and
there is nearly always the correct number of jewels on the circlets,
though sometimes these are slightly out of line or irregularly
spaced. The occurrence of one jewel too many or too few is
usually accompanied by other irregularities indicative of forging.

2. The harps vary considerably in shape and ornamental detail but
they are almost invariably neatly designed and have sharp
strings.

3. The legends are always complete, the letters being fairly evenly
spaced and usually in good alignment.

The workmanship of the counterfeits varies considerably. Only
very few of them appear to have been cast, for the casting of such
small, thin flans was no doubt impracticable as a routine method. The
designs on the poorest grades are so crude as to be practically unre-
cognizable, and they are often rendered still worse by double-striking.
The best forgeries resemble the poorer genuine pieces so closely that
it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish between them.

The principal defects to be looked for on the better-class counter-
feits are:

1. The designs are, in varying degree, scrimped, less well struck-up,
and often badly off-centre.

2. The crowns usually differ in shape from the genuine designs and
are often very clumsily cut. There are often too many or too few
jewels on the circlets.

3. The harp is nearly always a weak feature, as no doubt a graceful,
well-balanced design was difficult for a forger to achieve. Apart
from this, it usually lacks detail or has flawed or weakly struck
strings. The occurrence of less than five strings is almost certain
proof of counterfeiting. The crown above is often placed slant-
wise or is too large in proportion to the harp.

4. The lettering is often coarse and irregular and the spelling is
sometimes blundered. Letters are occasionally upside-down or
omitted (especially the last one) owing to lack of space. The
cross-bar of the N's is sometimes reversed, but this occasionally
occurs on genuine pieces also.

5. The punctuation of the legends is not a reliable guide in the
detection of forgeries, for although an analysis of over 3,000
specimens revealed that for some sub-types one particular system

---

1 Sometimes a jewel is missing from genuine pieces, due to weak striking or a faulty die,
but the space which the jewel would have occupied is always discernible.
of punctuation usually predominated so markedly that it could reasonably be assumed to be the official arrangement for that group, deviations from it nearly always occurred, due no doubt to carelessness on the part of the die-cutters. Thus, while it is true that many counterfeits have irregular punctuation, a wrong set of stops is insufficient, *per se*, as proof of forging. In a way it is fortunate that the punctuations are not an important consideration in the detection of forgeries, for in many cases the stops cannot be accurately made out owing to the worn or flawed state of the pieces.

6. Although counterfeits bearing any of the official privy-marks might be expected, only the simpler ones, such as were easiest to copy, are usually met with, e.g. annulet, the various crosses, dagger, fusil, mascle, trefoil, triangle, tun, and woolpack.

It is hardly necessary to add that most forgeries will exhibit several though not all of the characteristics described: only very rarely would it be safe to condemn a piece on the strength of a single defect. It is not unusual to find, when comparing two or more counterfeits with the same privy-mark, that they are from the same pair of dies, which suggests that the variety of counterfeit dies in use may have been relatively small. There would certainly be little point in a forger cutting several dies, which he could probably ill afford to make, so long as one pair would serve his purpose.

The royal farthing tokens of James I all conform to the following general description:

**Obv. type** IACO D G MAG BRIT (or BR I or BR)

Two lis-headed sceptres *in saltire* through a crown. Legend around. All within a beaded border. The crown, which is *single-arched*, is ornamented with alternate crosses and lis and the circlet at its base is studded with either 5 or 9 jewels.

**Rev. type** FRA ET HIB REX

A harp surmounted by a crown. Legend around. All within a beaded border. The crown is *single-arched*, similar to that on the obv. The harp has 5 to 8 strings and is ornamented (top left) with either a knob or an eagle's head.

Edge, plain. Shape, round or oval.

Privy-marks (pm) occur on the obverse or reverse and occasionally on both sides. Punctuations consist of colons and stops; no commas occur (cf. Charles I). The arrangement of the punctuation for each sub-type is given in the form which occurs most frequently. The commoner variations are given in brackets.

---

1 On the Lennox ovals the sceptres are more accurately described simply as crossed sceptres, as the angle at which they cross is not a true saltire.
2 With the doubtful exception of no. 25.
3 The number of jewels on obv. and rev. crowns is indicated, when necessary, as a fraction.
4 Numbers in [ ] indicates number of harp-strings.
5 Except nos. 24, 25, 40, 57, and 59.
6 Numbers in ( ) against the privy-marks refer to the diagrams.
IDENTIFICATION INDEX

A. ROUND FLANS

1. IACO between sceptre-heads
   Privy-mark, fret (13), on rev. . . . . . . . . 1 to 19
   , other than fret, on rev. . . . . . . . . . . 20 to 28

2. IACO begins close to right sceptre-head
   Privy-mark on rev. only . . . . . . . . . . . . . 29
   , on obv. and rev. . . . . . . . . . . . . . 30 to 32
   ,, on obv. only; 5 jewels on circlet of rev. crown . 33 to 66
   ,, on obv. only; 9 ,, ,, . . . . . . . . . . . . . 67 to 81

B. OVAL FLANS

Legends read bottom left upwards . . . . . . . . 82 to 84

TYPES I AND 2. HARINGTONS
19 May 1613–28 June 1614

Type I

Small, round flans; Diameter (average), 12.25 mm.
Weight (average)—5 gr. Range 3 to 7.6 gr.

Obv. IACO D★G • MAG BRIT (or D • G •)
   1. Legend begins with IACO between the sceptre-heads.
   2. Crown with 5 jewels on circlet.

Rev. FRA • ET • HIB • REX
   1. Legend begins to right of crown, preceded by a fret (13).
   2. Crown, with 9 jewels (often indistinct), on circlet.
   3. Harp, with 7 or 8 strings and knob ornamentation.

These type I Haringtons present rather a problem, partly because of their small size but mainly owing to the scarcity of well-struck specimens in a sufficiently uncorroded condition to allow of detailed examination. Consequently the identification of the letters below the crown and the modified central jewel on the circlet is often impossible.

Although for the sake of uniformity the fret has been treated as a privy-mark, it is very doubtful if it really serves this purpose on these pieces, for the proclamation clearly stipulated that "a privy-mark [was] to be set upon them from time to time whereby to discern and distinguish them and to be altered according to occasion for preventing the falsifying and counterfeiting of the same", yet throughout these type I Haringtons the fret persists unchanged. To accept the fret as the privy-mark is tantamount to assuming that this order was not observed and, moreover, it leaves the changing letters and central jewels unexplained. It seems more probable that these letters, &c., were in fact the privy-marks and that the fret, which was the Harington device, was merely an added family flourish. It is significant that after the Haringtons ceased this mark was never used again.
The following classification is based on this assumption: the division into types 1a and 1b merely emphasizes what appear to be two distinct series of privy-marks. The change to the more usual heraldic privy-marks, as on type 2, was probably resorted to when the letters and other minute marks were found (as we find them today) too difficult to distinguish and consequently useless for their intended purpose. The lettered pieces were probably all issued tinned, and although the tin easily wore off or became corroded, specimens are still to be found with most of it intact. These pieces are usually better struck and of higher weight. Tinned specimens of No. 7 and 11 have also been seen, and no doubt others exist.

Of the nine lettered pieces recorded by Weightman, viz: A, B, C, D, E, F, O, I, 2, no certain examples of E, O, or I have yet been verified by the writer. On the other hand, an undoubted S, apparently unknown to Weightman, has recently turned up. The supposed E is most probably a faulty or corroded F. The O is almost certainly a C which has become closed by corrosion, while I is merely the upright of a defective B or D. Weightman's 2 is probably one and the same as 2, for this curious mark would need little corrosion or wear to make it appear like a 2 or Z. Weightman's belief in these nine letters fitted in so well with the existence of an uncut strip of nine Charles I Richmond farthings as to lead him to conclude that these Haringtons were also roller-struck in strips of nine. This theory breaks down, of course, in face of the extra letter S, irrespective of whether E, O, and I exist or not. Further, if, as suggested above, the letters are the real privy-marks, each impression on a strip would have borne the same letter, not nine assorted ones.

Type 1a. Obv. With letter or other mark between the sceptres, on or below cushion of crown. Rev.—as type.

1. A  
   D★G  8  (Pl. IV, 4)
2. B  
   ..  8
3. C  
   ..  8
4. D  
   ..  8
5. F  
   ..  8
6. S (double fret on rev.)  
   ..  P  8  (Pl. IV, 6)
7. Pellet  
   ..  8  (Pl. IV, 7)
8. Pellet (pierced)  
   ..  R  8
9. 2  
   D★G★  7  P  (Pl. IV, 9)
10. 2  
    D★G  7

Type 1b. Obv. Central jewel on circlet as follows. Rev.—as type.

11. Unmodified  
    D★G  8  (Pl. IV, 11)
12. A trefoil (30)  
    ..  8  (Pl. IV, 12)
13. A saltire (9)  
    
14. Unmodified  
    D★G  7  AM.
15. Unmodified  
   ..  R  8
16. As 15, with trefoil (incuse) punched over obv. crown. BM.  (Pl. IV, 16)
17. A trefoil (30)  
    D★G  8
18. A crescent (6)  
    
19. A mullet (23)  
    
(Pl. IV, 19)
It is extremely doubtful whether r3 (saltire) exists: it was first recorded by Weightman and is only listed here to invite further search.

**Type 2**

Round flans. Diameter (average), 15 mm. Weight (average), 9 gr.

*Obv.* **IACO • D • G • MAG • BRIT** (also **DG** and **BRIT**)

1. Legend begins with **IACO** between the sceptre-heads.
2. Crown with 5 plain jewels on circlet.

*Rev.* **FRA:ET-HIB: REX** (also **HIB**)

1. Legend begins to right of crown, preceded by a **pm**.
2. Crown with 5 jewels (usually indistinct) on circlet.
3. Harp, with 7 or 8 strings and knob ornamentation.¹

Occurs with **pm** on rev. only:

20. Cinquefoil (4) [7]
22. Cross saltire (9) [7] (Pl. IV, 22)
23. Lis (19) [7]
26. Mullet (23) [7]
27. " [8]
28. Trefoil (30) [8] (Pl. IV, 28)

This issue is merely an enlarged version of type 1, the same crown and harp punches having been used for both. The larger flans, which, as already suggested, were made to satisfy the public demand for a more substantial token, enabled the legends to be placed farther from the designs. The use of the same punches is fairly conclusive proof that type 2 were also Harington issues: it was not until the patent was purchased by the Duke of Lennox, who doubtless employed new die-cutters, that the designs changed.³

**Type 3. LENNOX “ROUNDS”, 1614–25**

Round flans. Diameter (average), 15·5 to 16·5 mm. Weight (average), 9 gr.

Divisible into 4 groups:

Type 3a.

*Obv.* **IACO:D:G:MAG:BRIT**

1. Legend begins at top centre.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.

¹ Except Nos. 24 and 25.

² The double-arching is not convincing but the crown is certainly very different from that on the other farthings of this group: note the five jewels on the circlet, thus: :::

³ See Weightman, p. 189.
The Royal Farthing Tokens of James I

Rev. FRA : ET • HIB : REX • (or : REX)
1. Legend begins to right of crown, preceded by pm.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Harp, with 7 strings and eagle’s head.

Occurs with pm on rev. only:
29. Bell (3) [7] (Pl. IV, 29)

Type 3b.

Obv. IACO : D : G : MAG : BRIT :
1. Legend begins close to right sceptre-head.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Privy-mark at top centre.

Rev. FRA : ET HIB : REX (or : REX •)
1. Legend begins to right of crown.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Privy-mark at end of legend.
4. Harp, with 6 or 7 strings and eagle’s head.

Occurs with same pm on both sides:
32. " " [7]

Pm’s cross and rose were recorded by Weightman, but no specimens, genuine or otherwise, have been traced.

Type 3c.

Obv. IACO : D : G : MAG : BRIT : (or : BRI :)
1. Legend begins close to right sceptre-head.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Privy-mark at top centre.

Rev. FRA : ET HIB : REX • (or : ET : — : REX)
1. Legend begins to right of crown.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Harp, with 5 to 7 strings and eagle’s head.

Occurs with pm on obv. only:
33. Annulet (1) [5] BRIT R. BM.
34. " [6]

1 Except Nos. 35 and 36, which have large crowns with nine jewels on obv. These are perhaps transitional between Types 3c and 3d.
2 Except Nos. 40, 57, and 59, which have a plain-fronted harp, i.e. Weightman’s “headless harp”.

Pm's cross and rose were recorded by Weightman, but no specimens, genuine or otherwise, have been traced.
All specimens examined with the following *pm*'s were almost certainly counterfeits. Until unquestionably genuine examples turn up, these *pm*'s are best regarded as non-existent for Type 3c.

(a) **BRIT** with ball, key, lis, and stirrup.

(b) **BRI** with tun.

Specimens with small *obv.* crown and 5 jewels bearing *pm* crescent (with mullet above) should exist, as Richmond farthings with this *pm* (reading both **BRIT** and **BRI**) occur for Charles I with **CARO** cut over **IACO**. It is possible, of course, that the James dies were made but never used during his reign, or alternatively that a mullet was added to a James crescent die at the time it was altered to Charles.

Sun (**BRIT**), listed by Weightman, has not been traced, but as pieces with *pm* tun, though common, were not recorded by him, it is likely that sun was a misprint for tun in Weightman's monograph.

He also listed *pm* star (**BRIT** twice, in addition to star (pierced), but as he omitted the very common *pm* grapes, it is probable that

---

2 Probably unique: does not appear to be a counterfeit.
3 This may be merely a pierced star with the central hole blocked up due to a flawed or worn die. It is significant that except for this difference in the stars, Nos. 56 and 57 duplicate Nos. 58 and 59 respectively.
he considered this last *pm* to be a variety of star, which it does, in fact, somewhat resemble.

Type 3*d*. Legends and designs similar to Type 3*c* but with *larger crown* on *obv.* and *rev.* and *9 jewels* on both *circlets*.

Occurs with *pm* on *obv.* only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Dagger (10)</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td>BRI</td>
<td>(Pl. IV, 67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>Fusil (14)</td>
<td>[7]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td>Lion rampant (18)</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pl. IV, 71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>Lis, three (20)</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pl. IV, 72)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>Mascle (22)</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td>BRIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>Stirrup (28)</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td></td>
<td>[7]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td>Trefoil (30)</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td></td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>Triangle (31)</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td>BRIT</td>
<td>B. R.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>Tun (33)</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Pl. IV, 81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type 4. LENNOX OVALS, 1622–5**

Oval flans. Max. diameter (average), 16.5 to 18 mm.

Weight (average), 9 gr.

*Obv.* IACO : D : G : MAG : BRI : (or : BR.)

1. Legend reads from bottom left upwards.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Privy-mark immediately to left of sceptre-handles.

*Rev.* FRA : ET HIB : REX

1. Legend reads from bottom left upwards.
2. Small crown with 5 jewels on circlet.
3. Harp, with 6 or 7 strings and eagle’s head.
4. Privy-mark at end of legend.

Occurs with same *pm* on both sides:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82.</td>
<td>Cross patee (7)—Cross patee</td>
<td>[6]</td>
<td>MAG : BRI :</td>
<td>(Pl. IV, 82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td></td>
<td>[7]</td>
<td>MAG : BRI :</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.</td>
<td></td>
<td>[7]</td>
<td>MAG : BR : B. P.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each has a *pellet* between the sceptre-handles and the *pm* on the *rev.* is followed by a *stop*.

No. 84 hitherto unpublished. Dies reading MA : BRI and MA : BRIT must also have existed, as Charles I Richmond ovals occur with these legends, struck from altered James I dies, but as no specimens have so far been traced, it is probable that these dies were altered to CARO without ever having been used in their original state.
The illustrations are from specimens in the British Museum except the following, which are in the writer’s collection:

Pl. IV, Nos. 6, 7, 9, 11, 19, 22, 40, 49, 54, 57, and 72.

The illustration numbers correspond with the list numbers.

Locations are only given for the rarest pieces: one location = the only known specimen; two locations = the only two known. No reference indicates that at least three (usually more) have been examined. My thanks are due to the undermentioned who have allowed their coins to be described:

AM  = Ashmolean Museum.
BM  = British Museum.
B   = Fred. Baldwin, Esq.
J   = Dr. E. A. Johnstone.
R   = The Very Revd. E. Rogers.
P   = C. W. Peck.

Works referred to:
Snelling = The Copper Coin and Coinage of England (III)