THREE WEST COUNTRY NOTES

By R. H. M. DOLLEY

THE COINAGE OF MILBORNE PORT

One of the rarest of the Wessex mints is Milborne Port in Somerset, but the attribution to that place of a number of late Saxon pence would not appear to have been seriously in doubt since the appearance of Carlyon-Britton's "Uncertain" Anglo-Saxon mints and some new attributions almost fifty years ago. In fairness to the memory of a foreign numismatist, however, one is constrained to observe that Carlyon-Britton's attribution was not quite so novel as he believed. It will be found in the 1846 edition of Anglosachsiska Mynt, and one of the minor mysteries of English numismatics is why Hildebrand should have changed his mind and in 1881 preferred the alternative attribution to Milton which Carlyon-Britton so rightly condemned. Nor can we any longer accept the attribution to Milborne Port of the Edward the Confessor coin in Carlyon-Britton's own collection, where the alleged M of the mint-signature proves on inspection to be one of the dittographies of the final N of the copulative which are so common in the late Saxon period.

On the accompanying plate (Pl. IV), I have sought to illustrate every specimen known to me of the authentic coinage of Milborne Port, and I think that it is worthy of remark that the thirteen coins prove to be from no more than three obverse and four reverse dies, all of which were represented incidentally on the four coins recorded in the nineteenth century. That thirteen coins from at least ten different sources should prove to be from so few dies is extremely suggestive, and we may contrast the position at the neighbouring mint of Langport where the two dozen or so coins that I have already seen have proved to be from at least eighteen pairs of dies. In other words, the mathematical odds against a fourteenth coin of Milborne Port turning up and proving to be from new dies are very considerably greater than would be the case with a coin from Langport, and for this reason, if for no other, the time may seem ripe for a listing of the known coins of Milborne Port, the more so because it is possible to correct errors in Brooke and in Hildebrand that could mislead the student of Old English personal names.

The catalogue of the thirteen coins is as follows:

ÆTHELRAED II

(978/9–1016)

Long Cross issue (Hild. D = B.M.C. iva—Brooke 5 = Hawkins 207)

1 B.N.J., 1910, pp. 13–47.
2 B. E. Hildebrand, Anglosachsiska Mynt i Svenska Kongl. Myntkabinettet funna i Sveriges ord, Stockholm, 1846. In 1958 one may still echo the description of Milborne Port as 'en obetydlig ort i Somerseetshire' (ibid., p. 316).
3 The dittography in question first occurs c. 1025 and persists until the Conquest.
4 The position as regards Axbridge in the same county seems even more remarkable—ten or so extant coins proving to be from as many pairs of dies—but for a variety of reasons I prefer to draw a comparison with Langport in the immediate vicinity of Milborne Port.
THREE WEST COUNTRY NOTES

(1) Obv. +cdcECldicEOREXANG<LOX  Rev. +ede|lE<|lR|cmQo|MYLE

(a) British Museum 24-9 grains 180°
   From the 1940 Shaftesbury Find.  (Pl. IV, 1)
(b) Stockholm 26-4 grains 180°
   From the 1920 Oxorve, Hemse, Gotland Find.  (Pl. IV, 2)
(c) Copenhagen 26-1 grains 180°
   From the 1875 Lubeck Find.  (Pl. IV, 3)
(d) London, Messrs. A. H. Baldwin & Sons 26-1 grains 180°
   Without hoard provenance.
   (ex Lockett vii, lot 2776)  (Pl. IV, 4)

(2) Obv. From the same die as no. 1  Rev. +ede|lE<|lR|cmIO|MYLE

(a) Stockholm 26-8 grains 180°
   Without hoard provenance.
   (Hild. 3093, not in 1846 edition)  (Pl. IV, 5)
(b) Stockholm fragment 180°
   Without hoard provenance.
   (Hild. —, but 1577 in 1846 edition)  (Pl. IV, 6)
(c) Stockholm 26-5 grains 180°
   From the 1942 Halsarve, När, Gotland Find.
   (Pl. IV, 7)
(d) London, F. Elmore Jones Coll. 27-0 grains 180°
   Without hoard provenance
   (ex Argyll Coll., ex Grantley, lot 1131)  (Pl. IV, 8)

Cnut
(1016–35)

Pointed Helmet issue (Hild. G = B.M.C. xiv = Brooke 3 = Hawkins 213)
   (Michaelmas 1023–Michaelmas 1029?)

(3) Obv. +cn.e,v tr*eex  Rev. +epsdpineonmyle

(a) Stockholm 15-4 grains 180°
   Without hoard provenance.
   (Hild. 2897, not in 1846 edition)  (Pl. IV, 9)
(b) Stockholm 13-9 grains 180°
   From the 1876 Lilla Klintegårda, Väskinde, Gotland Find.
   (Pl. IV, 10)
(c) Visby 14-7 grains 180°
   From the 1910 Stora Sojdeby, Fole, Gotland Find.
   (Pl. IV, 11)

Short Cross issue (Hild. H = B.M.C. xvi = Brooke 4 = Hawkins 208)
   (Michaelmas 1029–Michaelmas 1035?)

(4) Obv. +cnEt, r·eE·x:  Rev. +spe tr*ic onmyle

(a) Stockholm 17-7 grains 90°
   Without hoard provenance
   (Hild. 2898, not in 1846 edition)  (Pl. IV, 12)
(b) Copenhagen 16-8 grains 90°
   From the 1875 Lubeck Find.  (Pl. IV, 13)

From the above ‘miniature corpus’ it will at once be seen that we are in a position to make an addition to Hildebrand—the reverse die reading MOO instead of MCO—and also a not unimportant correction—the moneyer of Hild. 2898 proves to be not Swetinc but Swetric. This latter emendation, of course, necessitates consequential corrections to the lists of moneyers printed in the second volume of the B.M.C. and in Brooke’s English Coins.

When at last the personal names of the Anglo-Saxon moneyers come to be
studied by those qualified to extract from them more than a tithe of their linguistic and demographic significance, a phenomenon that will surely command attention is a tendency for certain elements, protothemes as well as deuterothemes, to be characteristic of certain areas. For this reason alone we might have suspected the occurrence of the suffix -inc at a small West Saxon mint. In the reign of Cnut names compounded with -inc (-ing) occur outside Wessex at Chester, Cricklade, Derby, Dover, Hertford, Ipswich, Lincoln, London, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Southwark, Sudbury, Thetford, Warwick, and York. In many cases more than one -inc moneyer occurs in the same mint. Within the same period we find in Wessex a Lifinc at Exeter and Winchester, an alleged Wilinc at Lydford, and a very dubious Bruni(n)c at Bath who is more probably to be associated with Bedford. Consequently the discovery that the third and last of the Milborne moneyers is Swetric and not Swetinc should not come as too great a surprise.

While on the subject of Swetric it may be noted that the suffix, admittedly a very common one, is common to the name of one of his predecessors at Milborne Port. I would suggest the possibility not only that this Æthelric who strikes in Long Cross at Milborne is the same as the ÆEthelric who strikes profusely at Shaftesbury over the next thirty years, but also that Swetric may have been a kinsman (a son). Nor is it uninteresting that the name Swetric is one that is otherwise unrecorded on late Saxon coins except in the reign of the Confessor when for a time a moneyer of that name employs several dies at a third mint in the same general area, Wilton. While on the subject of this Swetric, too, it may be as well to consider one of his coins struck for the Confessor which almost incredibly has never been associated with Milborne Port—one suspects that this chance owes something to Hildebrand’s lapse in the matter of Swetinc. The coin in question is B.M.C. 1079 attributed by Keary (and later by Brooke) to Maldon in Essex—the Richborough attribution of B.M.C. 1132, scotched by Carlyon-Britton, has now been given the coup de grâce as a result of an ill-judged attempt at resuscitation in the Inventory. The coin has been in the National Collection since the eighteenth century, and Keary’s reading of the reverse legend +SPETRIC ON MEL may be considered almost traditional.

If the coin in fact read MEL, an attribution to Milborne Port would be by no means impossible—and certainly preferable to the Carlyon-Britton attribution to Malmesbury. Spellings in MEL- and MYLE- are found side by side in Domesday, and Milborne Port is not so far removed from Wilton that it would be impossible for Swetric to have struck at both places in the same type. Granted the accuracy of the B.M.C. reading, the principal objection to a Milborne attribution must be the long interval during which the mint would appear to have lain dormant, more than twenty years. The objection is not absolute—after all the mint had apparently been closed for at least as long earlier in the century—but there is a world of difference between the

3 The distance involved is just over thirty miles. Farther to the West there are well-attested instances of moneyers striking at two mints even farther apart (e.g. Exeter and Barnstaple).
conditions obtaining under Æthelræd when we know that certain minor mints were transferred to less vulnerable sites, and those which prevailed under the successors of Cnut. It is when we scrutinize the actual MEL coin, however, that the case for Milborne Port—and also for Maldon or Malmesbury—falls to the ground.

The accompanying enlarged direct photographs should make it clear that the coin does not read MEL at all! The three letters of the mint-signature quite obviously have been tampered with either on the die or on the coin, or possibly on both. Elsewhere in this number I am publishing conclusive evidence that a Saxon die could be altered by the engraver before it left the workshop, but inasmuch as B.M.C. 1079 is without hoard-provenance one cannot rule out the possibility of 'improvement' by so notorious a character as Mr. John White. On the supposition that the alteration is on the die—and on balance this is, I think, the greater probability—the engraver would seem to have faltered after having put in the uprights of the copulative and mint-signature, and then to have dithered between ON PILT and ONN PIL with the result that the superimposition of P on N gives the effect of a crude M. It is not easy to suggest how Keary should have transcribed this curious freak of engraving, but the fact that the second letter appears as P while the last letter is clearly an L leaves no room for doubt but that we are dealing with a blundered coin of Wilton—the one mint where the moneyer is known and in this very type. Swetric, then, joins Æthelwi(g) among the mythical moneyers of Maldon, and the probability is that there is no direct connexion between the Swetric whose name appears on a single reverse die at Milborne Port c. 1030 and his namesake who strikes on an only less exiguous scale at Wilton c. 1058.

1 Once more we may cite the concentration c. 1009 of the Bruton, Crewkerne, and Ilchester moneyers at Cadbury.  
2 Supra, p. 58.  
3 We must never forget that B.M.C. 466 of Cnut—a tooled penny of the Confessor—was perpetrated in the eighteenth century.  
5 It will be obvious that a note such as this could not have been written without the co-operation of all the possessors of coins mentioned, and my thanks are due to Mr. Elmore Jones and Messrs. A. H. Baldwin who submitted their coins to me, and to the authorities of the Coin Rooms of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and London who supplied the direct photographs which illustrate this paper.
THE IDENTITY OF THE MINT OF 'LA(N)G'

Since Carlyon-Britton's survey "Uncertain" Anglo-Saxon mints and some new attributions' in the British Numismatic Journal for 1910, serious students of the late Saxon series have accepted, at least implicitly, his attribution to Langport in Somerset of a number of eleventh-century coins on which the mint-signature appears usually as LAG or LAN.\(^1\) His individual arguments may not always bring conviction, but there can be little doubt but that in essence his case is sound. During the last few years, too, welcome corroboration has been furnished by the systematic stylistic analysis of the LA(N)G coins belonging to Cnut's Quatrefoil issue, all of which have proved to belong to one or other of two groupings which are peculiar to the southern part of Somerset.\(^2\) The accession to Saxon numismatics of trained students of Old English, moreover, means that we are now in a position to offer reasoned explanations of forms such as LAG for LANG (cf. GRAT for GRANT) which before had to be dismissed as irrational aberrations on the part of barely literate engravers.\(^3\)

Quite recently, however, attempts have been made to evoke from the distant past the shades of an Anglo-Saxon mint at Lancaster, and this in spite of the fact that there is valid numismatic and historical evidence to the contrary. One has only to contemplate the parcel of twenty-one Normandy deniers in the Cnut hoard from Halton Moor to realize that north of the Mersey the peace of the English king was honoured more in the breach than in the observance.\(^4\) That a mint should have been set up there is unthinkable, and it is

\(^1\) e.g. B.M.C. Cnut 1, Hild. Cnut 1288/9, Harold 323, Harthacnut 72, B.M.C. Edw. Conf. 609, Hild. Edw. Conf. 3, &c. The LANDC coins, of course, are to be quite otherwise explained.


\(^3\) Ibid., 1958, pp. 161-2.

\(^4\) For the identification of these twenty-one 'Danish' coins as Normandy deniers see my forthcoming note in Hamburger Beiträge.
unfortunate, too, that the names of the LA(N)G moneyers should be so uniformly West Saxon. In this note I wish once and for all to lay the ghost of a Saxon mint at Lancaster by drawing attention to a hitherto unnoticed observe die-link between a coin of Ilchester in Stockholm and a coin of LA(N)GP in Copenhagen.

The Stockholm coin (Hild. 881) does not appear in the 1846 edition of *Anglosachsiska Mynt*, and the presumptive provenance is one of the mid-nineteenth-century hoards from Sweden and in all probability one from the island of Gotland. The coin in the Royal Danish Coin Cabinet is from an 1859 hoard from Kelstrup (Kjeldstrup) in Zealand (Skovmand, p. 154, no. 17) which seems to have been deposited by the end of the third decade of the eleventh century. In both cases the moneyer is Ælfsgie who is known at both mints from other coins, and the mint-signatures GIFL and LAGP seem impeccable even if on the Langport coin P is written almost as a P. When we compare the two obverses there can be no doubt but that they are from the same die, and I would draw especial attention to the triangular flaw immediately below the G in the ethnic. It is to be hoped, then, that we have heard the last of the mythical mint of Lancaster, and that henceforth the eleventh-century coins with mint-signatures ranging from LA(N)G to LAGEPOR will always be associated with the tenth-century coins of Æthelstan, on some of which the mint-signature actually reads LANGPORT.1

**An Unpublished Cnut Moneyer of Lydford**

On p. 273 of the 1881 edition of Bror Emil Hildebrand's classic *Anglosachsiska Mynt*, two coins attributed to London are described as follows:

| 2509  | a 6 (?) | +HV . . . NE N LVN | E. (fragment) |
| 2510  | b 2.    | +HVFINE ON LVNDAN  | G.            |

The two coins are here illustrated by enlarged direct photographs supplied by the kindness of the Royal Swedish Coin Cabinet, and it will be suggested that there is sufficient evidence for us to transfer them to the Devonshire mint of Lydford (æt Hlydanforda), Cnut coins of which are extremely rare.

The first point concerns the transcription of the reverse legends. On 2509 little is absolutely certain beyond the fact that the second letter of the mint-signature is a Y of which the tail runs across the horizontal bar of the L. The third letter is composed apparently of two uprights, but there is no trace whatever of a bar between them, and it is not inconceivable that it is a carelessly written D. In other words, there would seem to be nothing at all inconsistent with what is discernible on the coin if we read the mint-signature LYD, and I would suggest that the true transcription of the legend should be:

\[+HV| V?|LYD\]

As regards 2510 I would claim that there can be no doubt whatever but that the reverse legend reads:

\[+HVFINE ONLYHDAN\]

1 e.g. *B.M. Acq.* 530. Since the above went to press Miss G. van der Meer has discovered a die-duplicate of the Copenhagen coin in a Swedish hoard and independently has remarked the die-link with Hild. 881.
Both coins, of course, belong to the same moneyer, a certain Hun(e)wine, and in a recent note I have indicated what I believe to be the explanation of the frequent omission of N from the legends on Anglo-Saxon coins. The moneyer Hunewine is not otherwise recorded at London, and I would also suggest that the two mint-signatures in conjunction favour Lydford rather than London. Throughout the late Saxon period the initial aspirate seems to have perplexed a succession of die-engravers, and my belief is that LVHD is an error for HLVD, while the attribution to London is absolutely precluded by the AN which follows this critical grouping.

An additional argument for attributing the two coins to a Devonshire mint may seem to be provided by prosopography. In the whole of the late Saxon period the name Hunewine has a marked West Country flavour, as least as far as moneys are concerned. In the Second Hand type of Æthelraed II we find the name at Totnes, and in the Crux type at Exeter and Ilchester as well. In the Long Cross, Helmet, and Last Small Cross types of the same king, Hunewine is the sole moneyer of Watchet. In the Quatrefoil issue of Cnut he is also found at Exeter, but thereafter, with the exception of Hild. 2510, vanishes entirely from the scene. Nobody would pretend that such an argument is of itself conclusive, but it must be conceded that it is curious that we should find both mint-signature and prosopography pointing towards the same county.
There is, however, one argument in support of the reattribution of Hild. 2509 and 2510 to Lydford that is of itself wellnigh decisive. If we examine carefully the obverse die of the broken Quatrefoil coin, we find that it belongs to a stylistic grouping that is associated exclusively with the West Country. It is a style, moreover, that is present on four of the six coins of Lydford that are recorded for the type by Hildebrand, and after the examination of literally thousands of London coins of the type in question I can state with confidence that dies of this style did not find their way to the metropolis. A die-link has still to be found, but possessors of the second volume of the *British Museum Catalogue* should compare the enlarged direct photograph of the Stockholm coin with Plate XVIII, 10, a Lydford coin of the moneyer Saewine erroneously attributed to Hythe. Again the initial aspirate gave trouble to the engraver, and a form LHYD or LHVD (V and Y are for practical purposes indistinguishable at this period) only goes to show that a form LVHD is not impossible for HLYD at the period in question.