NEW LIGHT ON THE MULLINGAR FIND OF HAND PENCE OF ÆTHELRAED II

By R. H. M. DOLLEY

The comparative wealth of Scandinavian coin-hoards, and especially of those from Sweden, is such that it may seem unlikely in the extreme that there should be any problem connected with the coinage of Æthelraed II to which they do not provide a clear-cut answer. In fact there is quite a real danger of the numismatist forgetting that the first systematic extortions of the Viking raiders did not begin until sixteen years after the death of Eadgar, and that for this period coin-hoards from Great Britain and Ireland can often be just as critical as their Scandinavian counterparts. For example, the 1914 'Pemberton's Parlour' hoard from Chester still is our best evidence that the variety of First Hand with left-facing bust (Hild. Typ. B.I. var. a = BMC ii = North 767) belongs early rather than late in the six-year currency of the issue proper, and the purpose of the present note is to demonstrate that it is an Irish find discovered more than a century ago which provides a crucial third piece of evidence linking the First and Second Hand issues of Æthelraed II. Until now the only coins which really connected the two issues were an only recently recognized 'mule-the-wrong-way-round' in Mr. H. H. King's cabinet, and two coins of Rochester of Second Hand type struck from an altered First Hand obverse die which in its unaltered state had been employed with at least two First Hand reverses.

The Irish hoard in question is no. 265 in the Royal Numismatic Society's recent Inventory, and as long ago as 1960 a hint was given that the entry there might require modification. Mr. Thompson's synopsis ran as follows:

265. MARL VALLEY, Co. West Meath, June 1841.
150 R Anglo-Saxon pennies (2 described) with N and R ornaments. (Deposit: XIth century?)
KINGS OF ENGLAND, Æthelraed II: 2 + an unspecified number. Lindsay (H), p. 125.

Disposition: The coins were sold in Dublin and two of them were acquired by the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald of Castle Town Delvin. The fate of the ornaments is unknown. They comprised 1 N ring, 2 R balls, and two R pins with large heads. This hoard was found on or close to a skeleton. Marl Valley is a bog lying between Collinstown and Turin.

It is instructive to compare this analysis with the passage from Lindsay's Heptarchy on which it is based, and especially since a comparison of the two may suggest that the source is far from being superseded. The all-critical passage runs as follows:

1841.—June.—About the middle of this month in Marl Valley, (a bog surrounded by very high hills, lying between Collinstown and Turin, County Westmeath,) a young man being employed in clearing a green patch of island in length about fifty perches and fourteen at its greatest breadth, in the course of his work came on a skeleton, on or within which he discovered one hundred and fifty silver coins, two large silver pins with large heads, a ring of gold about an inch in diameter with a small opening, and two silver balls something about rife size; the coins were sent by the finder to Dublin and sold for a few shillings, two only of them fell into the hands of Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, of Castle Town Delvin, and proved to be Anglo-Saxon coins of Ethelred II.

1 Inventory 85, cf. BNJ XXXIII (1964), pp. 39-44.
2 BNJ XXVIII, iii (1957), p. 519.
3 SNC 1965, p. 182. That Hild. Ethelred 1083
None of the coins are in fact 'described'—we have no details of type or moneyer—nor is it clear why the Inventory should have rejected the possibility, one had almost written probability, that the Æthelræd pennies which Lindsay mentions could have been struck—and concealed—in the tenth rather than the eleventh century. It is not only that considerably more than half of Æthelræd’s long reign falls before instead of after the millennium, but all those familiar with Irish coin-hoards, and with the collections of the National Museum of Ireland and of the Ulster Museum, will appreciate that early issues of Æthelræd II are much more strongly represented in Irish finds than later ones. There is the further consideration that Lindsay makes no reference at all to the presence of Hiberno-Norse coins in this find from the ‘Marl Valley’, and this in itself might be thought to indicate a date before rather than after c. 995, i.e. that the hoard belongs to the tenth rather than the eleventh century.

Other points that come to mind include the following. Firstly, Lindsay is quite specific that the coins were found ‘on or within’ and not ‘on or close to’ the skeleton, in other words the association seems certain. Secondly, it is not necessary to imply that Fitzgerald bought the two coins in Dublin. The relationship of (Castletown) Devlin to Tevrin and Collinstown is such that we may suppose that his purchases were of coins which had ‘got away’ locally before the main bulk of the hoard was dispatched to the capital. It seems a pity, too, that no attempt has been made to normalize Lindsay’s spellings of place-names, and the more so because ‘Turin’ is a form that has no place in any modern gazetteer that the English student is likely to consult. Perhaps more serious, though, is a failure to recognize in the ‘two silver balls something about rifle size’ the sheared ends of ingots, an almost inevitable component of Viking-Age hacksilver hoards of the tenth century from Ireland, N.W. England and the Scottish Isles. It is to be regretted, too, that the archaeologist is given no clearer impression of the size and form of the ‘A’ ring. In a tenth-century context—and even more in an eleventh-century one—the occurrence of gold invites remark, and a citation ‘1 A penannular finger-ring’ not only would have occupied very little more space, but would have been more than warranted by the object’s importance for the archaeologist who has here one of the very few instances of a gold finger-ring being found in Ireland in a securely dated Viking-Age context.

It would seem, however, that there are sins of omission as well as commission. Overlooked by the modern summary quoted, though occurring in a work which figures in its bibliography, is the following passage from the first volume of Richard Sainthill’s Olla Podrida:

Just as these sheets were going to press Dr. Smith informed me that he had been to Mullingar, and looked over about 120 pennies of Aethelraed II, all of the Hand type, among which were three of the Exeter mint, whose Reverses read:

BRUN M-O EXEEST
GODPINE M-O EXECESEX
LEOPISNU M-O EXEEXE

This last reverse confirms my previous suggestion. Dr. Smith adds, ‘these coins were found near Mullingar about a year ago. There was not any other coin in the hoard except one of Eadred. There were also a few bars or ingots of silver, and a very fine silver pin, with a polygonal head; it is about five inches long.’

Sainthill’s ‘Dedication’ of the volume in question is dated ‘1st January 1844’, and at first sight the phrase ‘about a year ago’ may seem to militate against any possibility of a hoard

\[^{1}\text{Ibid. pp. 126-131, cf. SCBI, BM H/N, p. 25.}\]
\[^{2}\text{Op. cit., p. 184.}\]
found near Mullingar' being identical with Lindsay's 1841 hoard from 'Marl Valley'. However, there is internal evidence that Sainthill composed his preface after completing his revision of the proofs, and it is abundantly clear that the worthy Cork wine-shipper dispatched his copy to the printer over a period of many months. It could very well be, then, that the sheets in question were leaving his pen in the summer or early autumn of 1842, in which case the identity of the two finds would seem not to be seriously in doubt.

It might be objected that the Dublin numismatist appears to be ignorant of the precise find-spot of the hoard which is described simply as from 'near Mullingar', whereas his Cork colleague, who should not have been so well-informed, gives a precise location, the 'Marl Valley', between Collinstown and Tervin. In fact this discrepancy is easily explained, and there is good reason why a future edition of the Inventory should list it under 'Mullingar'. The name 'Marl Valley' would seem to appear on no map of the area and enquiries addressed by the present writer to the Irish Ordnance Survey and to the local clergy have failed completely to establish even the approximate whereabouts of the bog in which the coins were found. To an English student this may seem astonishing, but factors to be taken into consideration include Lindsay's position as a representative of a class which was still attempting to anglicize Ireland even to the extent of 'Englishing' traditional place-names, and the circumstance that the coins were found at the beginning of the genocidal decade 1840-1850 which saw the population of Ireland halved by famine, pestilence and emigration. An Irish student, on the other hand, finds it not at all surprising that there should exist no local memory of the 1841 discovery, while the balance of probability must be that 'Marl Valley' was some ephemeral christening by the gentry which failed in the event to displace an enduring Gaelic name. Unfortunately there is more than one site 'between Collinstown and Turin' which seems to correspond to Lindsay's vague description, though, to judge from available large-scale maps of the area, it may be thought that the so-called Black Lough near Knockbrach, Edmondstown, is the sort of vicinity wherein the 'Marl Valley' could have lain. For the present, though, 'Mullingar' does not mislead, and especially when 'Marl Valley' is added in parentheses.

At this point mention should be made in passing of another Viking-Age hoard from the same general area, the May 1843—\textit{not} c. 1844—discovery from near Lough Lene—\textit{not} Lough Lyon—which Lindsay briefly listed in the 1843/1844 volume of the Numismatic Chronicle. Lough Lene, however, lies to the north of Collinstown instead of to the south, and, as we shall see, the 1843 find's composition and date alike are completely inconsistent with what we know of the 1841 discovery from 'Marl Valley'. What is desirable, perhaps, is to draw attention to the points which Lindsay's 1841 hoard from 'Marl Valley' and Sainthill's pre-1842 hoard from near Mullingar have in common, and the contrast with Lindsay's 1843 hoard from Lough Lynn is so marked that we may safely reject all possibility of the 1843 find being a parcel from that of 1841.

In the first place, it should be noted that Collinstown and Tervin are villages which lie within ten miles of Mullingar, and that Mullingar is the only place of any real consequence for more than twenty miles around. In other words, Dr. (Aquilla) Smith coming from Dublin could very well describe the 'Marl Valley' hoard as from 'near Mullingar'. Lough Lene, on the other hand, is by no means an obvious point of reference, and if Lindsay describes a hoard as 'found at Lough Lyn [sic]' we may be reasonably certain that the find-spot was not more than a mile or so from its shores. Such a location is inconsistent with the description 'between Collinstown and Turin'. Secondly, Lindsay's 'Marl Valley' hoard is described in a
book published in 1842 as having been found in June 1841, which accords well enough with
Sainthill’s vague reference in a book published in 1844 which had taken many months to go
through the press. Lindsay’s Lough Lene hoard, on the other hand, was not found until May
1843. Thirdly, Lindsay’s estimate of his 1841 find is ‘one hundred and fifty silver coins’
which accords surprisingly well with Sainthill’s estimate of ‘about 120 pennies’. In contrast
the Lough Lene find of 1843 consisted of only 27 coins (not 25)\(^1\). Fourthly, it should be noticed
that in the case of Lindsay’s 1841 hoard two coins taken at random both were of ‘Æthelred II’,
while Sainthill’s was composed—with just one exception—entirely of ‘pennies of Æthelred II’.
Lindsay’s Lough Lene find, on the other hand, contained no coin later than Eadgar,
even the two coins of that reign need be no later than the early 960s. Finally, a feature
common to the ‘Marl Valley’ and ‘near Mullingar’ hoards is their inclusion of silver ornaments
and ingots, whereas the 27 coins appear to be the totality of the obviously much smaller
deposit from Lough Lene.

A legitimate comment at this point is that Irish coin-hoards composed predominantly
of pennies of Æthelred II would seem to be quite exceptional. Indeed the only parallel that
comes at once to mind is the much smaller 1923 find from near Kildare (Inventory 134 s.v.
‘DUBLIN (District’) ). Moreover, Æthelred II pennies in any proportion are not exactly
common in Irish finds, the number of hoards where one or more are recorded as present
being half-a-dozen at most\(^2\).

It can be accepted, then, that Lindsay’s ‘Marl Valley’ and Sainthill’s ‘near Mullingar’
finds are one and the same, and it is instructive to attempt a new assessment of the hoard
on the basis of the two independent accounts. Of prime importance, naturally, is the positive
evidence that the hoard belongs to the tenth century. We are told specifically that all the
Æthelred II coins were of ‘Hand’ type, and, as we shall see, the recorded details of the
legends of three coins of Exeter afford a presumption that both the substantive
Hand issues
were present. In other words, the hoard cannot well be earlier than c. 985, while the absence
of Crux coins suggests a terminus ante quem c. 991. It seems legitimate, therefore, to substitute
‘c. 990’ for the earlier estimate of ‘XIth century?’ which failed in any case to attach sufficient
importance to the apparent absence of coins from the Hiberno-Norse series. A provisional
re-assessment of the ‘Marl Valley’ entry might run something as follows:—

MULLINGAR, district N.E. of, Co. Westmeath, June 1841.
120–150 Æ Anglo-Saxon pennies with 
and \(N\) ornaments etc. Deposit: c. 990.

KINGS OF ENGLAND. Endred, BMO(A) type ?, 1. ÆEthelred II, BMO(A) type ii, var. a-f, 120–150
(including 3 of Exeter, moneyers Brun, Godwine and Leofsunu).

The ornaments included 1 penannular \(N\) finger-ring, at least 2 \(R\) pins with large heads (1 polygonal
and the pin some 5 inches in length), and at least 2 sheared ends of \(R\) ingots together with others (?) more
complete. Both the coins and ornaments were associated with a skeleton. The identity of the find-spot
(‘Marl Valley’) is uncertain, but lay some 10 miles N.E. of Mullingar between Collinstown and Tervin.


Disposition: the coins—with 2 exceptions—were supposed by Lindsay to have been sent to Dublin for
sale, but Aquilla Smith was able to inspect the bulk if not the entirety of the hoard at or near Mullingar.

There indeed one might very well have had to leave the problem, but there are two further
sources which throw considerably more light on the composition of the hoard, and which
broadly vindicate the modifications to the Inventory summary detailed above.

\(^1\) NC 1843/1844 pp. 216 & 217 leaves absolutely
no room for doubt on this score. A new appraisal
of the find is in course of preparation.

\(^2\) SCBI, BM H/N lists only four (p. 51, nos. 123
& 127, and p. 52, nos. 137 & 154) but we should
perhaps not altogether exclude the possibility that
the odd coin of Æthelred II could have been present
in p. 51, no. 131 and p. 52, no. 135.
The first of these sources is represented by a run of 13 First and Second Hand pennies of Æthelræd II now in the coin-cabinet of the National Museum of Ireland, and appearing to derive from the Royal Irish Academy's collections appropriated when the Museum was first set up by the Morley/Hicks-Beach administration of eighty years ago. There are 5 entire coins all of First Hand type, the mints and moneyers and details of the reverse legends being as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Moneyer</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>Faethan</td>
<td>+FLERDINE M -O LIND</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 1764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Oseyetl</td>
<td>+OSEYETEL M -O LINDO</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 2846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Hamton'</td>
<td>Lifing</td>
<td>+LIFING M -O ANTYN</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 1268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thetford</td>
<td>Spyrllng</td>
<td>+SPYRLLING M -O DEODFO</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 3810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>Ingelri</td>
<td>+INGELRI M -O PINTO</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 4251</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this connection it may be observed that the second letter of the name of the moneyer of the Thetford coin is particularly clear, and is beyond doubt a 'P'. It is to be hoped that this will end once and for all injudicious attempts to restore Hildebrand's aberrant form 'Swyrling' which still creeps into print despite its rejection by no less an authority than the late Professor Eilert Ekwall (Early London Personal Names, Lund, 1947, p. 62).

There are 7 fragmentary coins of the same First Hand type, and details are as follows:

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<th>Mint</th>
<th>Moneyer</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>Osferth</td>
<td>+OSFERTH M -O DOFER</td>
<td>Hild. 427 var.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Cynsige</td>
<td>+CYNSIGE M -O VNDONI</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 2294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totnes</td>
<td>Manna</td>
<td>+MANNAN M -O TOTA</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 3855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>Frythmun</td>
<td>+FRENCH -O PINTN</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 4222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>Ingelri</td>
<td>+INGELRI M -O HINTONY</td>
<td>cf. Hild. 4253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>Thorstan</td>
<td>+THORSTAN M -O IFER</td>
<td>Hild. 934 var. (?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one coin of Second Hand type is fragmentary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Moneyer</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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There can be little doubt, though, that it is from the same hoard, and the patina is particularly convincing.

The National Museum parcel, then, is characterized by the circumstance that it embraces two consecutive issues of Æthelræd II, with First Hand coins outnumbering Second. At this point we may revert to the 'Marl Valley' hoard, and recall that it was inferred that the same two types of Æthelræd II were there represented. The evidence is as follows. Three coins are described as of the Exeter mint, the moneyers being Brun, Godwine and Leofsanu. If we consult Hildebrand it is to find that Brun is there recorded for First Hand but not for Second Hand and Crux, while Godwine occurs in First Small Cross and First Hand, but again not in Second Hand and Crux. Leofsanu, on the other hand, is not recorded in Second Hand. The position is not modified if we take into account coins in the British Museum and those recorded in the Fitzwilliam, Hunter and Copenhagen Sylloges. In other words there seems a fair presumption that two of the three Exeter coins

1 Probably Northampton.  
2 The only -E moneyer at an H— mint recorded in this type in Hildebrand is Leofsanu(e) at 'Hamton' which is probably Northampton. The only -o moneyers at an H— mint are Leofsanu(e) and Lifing, likewise at 'Hamton' which again is probably Northampton.

3 Osulf is recorded by Hildebrand at London in Second Hand only. He was, however, a First Hand moneyer of Ipswich and a Crux moneyer of Thetford. Second Hand, of course, is not known of York the fourth mint where an Osulf is known in the first half of the reign of Æthelræd II.

4 Supra p. 15.
seen by Smith were of First Hand type and one of Second. Granted that in isolation this argument might be considered far from final—formally at least there seems no reason why Leofsunu might not one day turn up in First Hand, even though it might seem a little unlikely that Brun and Godwine should both be found eventually striking in Second Hand—the coincidence with the pattern of the parcel of 13 coins in the National Museum of Ireland cannot but impress an Irish student familiar with the pattern of late tenth-century hoards from Ireland and the Western Isles. Once again we must stress how different is the pattern presented by the only other hoard from Ireland with a substantial proportion of Hand coins, the 1923 find from near Killare which has been touched upon already. Most of the coins from this quite limited hoard are in the National Museum of Ireland, despite statements to the contrary, and deficiencies in the original publication and in the Inventory listing justify a summary recapitulation of its essential content:

**First Small Cross issue—'Hamtun',** 2 Cylm, 1.

**First Hand issue—Canterbury, 2: Exeter, Brun, 1:** Gloucester, Leofsaige, 1; Lincoln, Goding, 3; Grind, 1; Unbeng, 1; London, Æthelstan, 1; Byrunigne, 3; God, 1; Leofric, 1; Sibwine, 1; Lydford, Æthered, 1; Rochester, Sid(e)win(e), 2; York, Ælfstan, 1; Colgrim, 1; Frostulf, 1; Isu(l)f, 1; Thorstan, 1.

**First Hand variety (1. facing bust)** 3—Shrewsbury, JEvic, 1.

**Second Hand issue—Exeter, Byrhsige, 2:** London, Ælfwer(d), 1; Æthered, 1; Atheulf, 1; Lydford, Godwine, 1; Thetford, Eadgar 1.

**Benediction Hand variety—'Hamwic', 4 Isegel.**

To be stressed is the inclusion in a much smaller parcel of a much wider range of types and varieties, and in particular one would draw attention to the latest coin which provides a terminus post quem of c. 991, i.e. is later than any coin which it is possible to associate with the 1841 hoard from Mullingar.

The second neglected source of information concerning the 1841 hoard is the London sale-catalogue (Sotheby, 8: xi: 1894) of the Sir Benjamin Chapman collection. On this catalogue's title-page Sir Benjamin is described as 'of Killua Castle, Clonmellon, Co. Meath, Ireland', but in point of fact Clonmellon and Killua Castle lie just across the mearing in Co. Westmeath. It is possible that the explanation of the error could be that the post-town was Athboy which was also the nearest railway station, and which is in Co. Meath. What is more important is that Killua Castle is no more than twenty miles from Mullingar, and ten from Collinstown and from Tevrin. In other words, the Chapman seat was situate some twelve miles at most from the presumed find-spot of Sainthill's 'Marl Valley' hoard. It can be shown, too, that Sir Benjamin had inherited a very substantial portion of his coin-cabinet, if not indeed the totality of it, from Sir Montague Chapman who had been very active as a collector in the 1840s and 1850s. It was Sir Montague, for example, whom we may suppose to have acquired, in all probability from a find from near Belfast, the Ormonde pistole that is now one of the glories of the collections of the American Numismatic Society. There were 171 lots in the sale of which the first 27, comprising a total of 183 coins, purported to be composed of Anglo-Saxon coins. In fact the total of Anglo-Saxon coins did not exceed 175, since at least 8 of the coins so described belong patently to the Irish series, and of the Anglo-Saxon pieces no fewer than 92 were of the First and Second Hand issues of Æthelræd II, a disproportion that would suggest the acquisition of a parcel at least from an Irish hoard even if the cabinet as a whole

1 Supra p. 15.
2 Probably Northampton.
3 Cf. BNJ XXXIII (1964), pp. 34-38, but this
4 Certainly Southampton.
had not been dominated by Irish coins. What is remarkable, too, is how the pattern of the remaining Anglo-Saxon coins broadly confirms to their overall incidence in Irish finds, and it is made abundantly clear that the Chapman cabinet had drawn little if at all on English sources for its representation of the Anglo-Saxon series. Just how disproportionate, too, is the total of 92 coins of the Hand issues can be gauged from the circumstance that the cabinet could boast no more than a dozen pennies of Eadgar, and of Crux pennies of Æthelræd II precisely two.

The ten lots which contained the 92 Hand coins were described by the 1894 cataloguer in the following terms:

13. Æthelred II, Pennies (Rud. XXII, 9), Hand of Providence type, bust to right diademed, rev. Hand of Providence between date, struck at Bardney, Bath, Canterbury, Chester, Derby (2), Exeter, Huntingdon, Ipswich and Shaftesbury, all scarce mints, well preserved

14. Others of same type of Derby, Exeter, Huntingdon, Ipswich, Lydford, Norwich, Rochester, Shaftesbury, Stamford and Southampton, all scarce mints, well preserved

15. Others of same type of Derby, Exeter, Ipswich, Norwich, Southampton, Stamford (2), Thetford, Totnes, Watchet, and Winchester, mostly scarce mints, well preserved

16. Others of same type of Thetford (3), Totnes, Walton [sic] and London (5), well preserved

17. Others of London (5), Winchester (2), and York (2), well preserved

18. Others of London (4), Winchester (3), and York (2), mostly well preserved


20. Others of same type of Exeter (3), London (5), and Winchester [(2) ?], with various moneyers' names, well preserved

21. Others of same type of Exeter (2), London (7), and Winchester, well preserved

22. Others similar, of similar type, with bust only to left (Brit. Mus. Cat. vol. II. p. 203, type ii) of Chester (2) and London; and another of same type with sceptre before bust to left, of Canterbury, all very rare, the last an unpublished variety

By what can only be described as a fortunate chance, lot 22 was purchased for the English National Collection, and examination of the actual coins in the trays of the British Museum established that the Chester coins indeed had the left-facing bust which a recent note has argued constitutes an early and very localized variant of the First Hand issue proper. The London coin, however, proves to be a perfectly normal First Hand penny with a right-facing bust, the cataloguer having been led astray by a mis-striking from a very worn die. The Canterbury coin also proves to be mis-described but here we may be perhaps doubly tolerant of the cataloguer's shortcomings. He did at least recognize a rarity which is without parallel in the whole of the coinage of Æthelræd II, and the variety is one discussed in a separate paper in this same number of the Journal.

\(^1\) Infra p. 22.
The Chapman cabinet, then, contained 62 First Hand and 30 Second Hand pennies of Æthelraed II, and it is noteworthy that the patina of the four coins purchased by the British Museum should prove to be consistent with that of the 12 First Hand and 1 Second Hand pennies in the National Museum at Dublin. Admittedly the British Museum coins may give a superficial appearance of being marginally darker, but allowance has to be made for the well-known ‘B.M. colour’, a feature of those silver coins in the English National Collection which have been exposed for any length of time to the London atmosphere. It is only in the last year or two, it may be noted, that the staff of the Coin Room has ceased to include at least one member who could remember the days when the Department was heated by an open coal-fire with a lockable fire-guard! What this present paper is going to suggest, then, is that the parcel of Hand coins seen by Aquilla Smith in the Mullingar neighbourhood c. 1842 included those pieces in the Chapman cabinet dispersed in 1894, while the smaller parcel without provenance which passed from the Royal Irish Academy to the National Museum at Dublin represents a proportion of the residue dispersed in Dublin very soon after the hoard’s discovery. Sir Montague probably took his pick of the find, and the present writer is reluctant to accept Lindsay’s suggestion that the bulk of the hoard was disposed of in the metropolis. It seems much more likely that it remained in Co. Westmeath, and, remembering that c. 1842 Ireland was still virtually without railways, we may wonder whether the statement that Smith ‘had been to Mullingar’ does not imply a visit to Killua Castle itself. The county town of Westmeath would have been the obvious centre for such an excursion, and a natural route would have been for Smith to proceed to Mullingar by express canal-boat, and to continue to Killua Castle by car. In 1843 the express boat covered the 52 miles from Dublin to Mullingar in seven and a half hours, and the fare was 5/6 (first-class) with breakfast 1/3d and dinner 2/- (wine and/or spirits included). Mullingar, too, was the only place of real consequence in the whole county, and the only one with which Smith could assume that his Munster correspondent would be familiar.

Accepting, then, that lots 13–22 in the 1894 Chapman sale represent a very substantial parcel from the 1841 Mullingar (‘Marl Valley’) hoard, we have still to consider the implications for the date of the treasure’s concealment. Already in the Sainthill account there was a hint that the hoard included both the substantive Hand issues (BMC types ii var. a and ii var. b: North 766 and 768), but it would have been to go beyond the evidence to have argued that a 2 : 1 ratio of the issues is to be inferred from Smith’s note on the readings of 3 Exeter pennies. In this connection, incidentally, it should be observed that Smith recorded only 3 legends, whereas the Chapman parcel appears to have included at least 9 coins of Exeter. The explanation of this discrepancy is probably that Sainthill edited Smith’s communication, and selected the readings which were ‘new’. However, the same 2 : 1 ratio is broadly reflected in the Chapman parcel where there are—minor variants excepted—60 First Hand pennies as against 29 Second Hand pennies. There is a certain amount of evidence that Second Hand was not struck on the same scale as First Hand—Hildebrand for example records 291 varieties of his Type B.1 and only 192 of his Type B.2, and in the 1923 Kildare hoard certainly deposited in or after 991 there were 24 normal First and only 7 normal Second Hand pennies. On the other hand, there is more evidence than is usually conceded that the Second Hand type was a substantive sexennial issue in its own right—we may instance the neglected implications


2 The First Hand total includes 3 coins of York 1800-45 (ed. R. B. McDowell, Dublin, 1957), pp. wrongly erected by Wells into a variant.
of the Isleworth find (Inventory 203)—and it must be accepted that Benediction Hand variety (BMC type ii f : North 769) was not present in the 1841 hoard from near Mullingar. Consequently the year 990 may be accepted as a terminus ante quern, and the only real question outstanding is how soon after 985 the 'Marl Valley' hoard was concealed. That the interval of time was not very great seems to be suggested by an analysis of the mints of the Second Hand coins which may be listed as follows:

- Exeter (6)
- Ilchester
- Shaftesbury
- Totnes
- Wilton
- Winchester (4)

Granted that Lincoln and York appear not to have been striking in this issue, granted that the output of the crippled mint of Chester was still exiguous, there is evidence in plenty that coin moved freely around England. One cannot ignore the absence of coins of mints such as Canterbury and Thetford, and the predominance of coins struck south of the Thames, and the very high proportion of coins from the mints of Wessex, both facts being indisputable, must surely mean that the latest coins left England not all that long after the inception of the Second Hand type. We will probably not be very far wrong if we suggest that the 'Marl Valley' hoard was buried in or about the year 986, a far cry, it may be thought, from the 'XIth century?' proposed not all that many years ago.

One minor problem is propounded by the solitary coin of Eadred (946–955) to which reference was made by Aquilla Smith. As is well known, it is quite exceptional for tenth-century hoards to include English coins struck both before and after the great reform of Eadgar, but sufficient instances are recorded that it would be difficult indeed to shake the Dublin doctor's testimony on this point. Admittedly one is tempted to speculate that EADRED could be misread and blundered EADPEA(rd), but the fact remains that Smith was a numismatist who excelled in description, and there are few of his contemporaries less likely to confuse the very different portrait pennies of Eadred—bust breaking legend and head crowned—and of Edward the Martyr—diademed head within an inner circle. There is the second consideration that Sir Montague Chapman would appear to have 'creamed' this hoard from just outside the gates of his demense, and it is noteworthy that the 1894 sale include no coin of Edward the Martyr, though clearly the cataloguer was competent to recognize one, but five pennies of Eadred (lot 8), all apparently of the common two-line type (BMC type i : Brooke 1: North 705/6). The inclusion of hacksilver is quite an archaic feature of the find under discussion—there are not many hoards from Ireland or indeed Great Britain which include post-Eadgar coins and sheared ingots—and the present writer is perfectly happy to accept the Eadred penny as a parallel anachronism, as a piece of bullion rather than as a coin.

1 One may instance from this reign coins of London or Southwark and of Thetford found at Cheddar, and of Maldon found at Winchester—the only coins of Æthelred II found to date in the highly competent excavations directed by Messrs. Philip Rahtz and Martin Biddle respectively.
In conclusion it may be found useful to have a revised summary of the 1841 Mullingar ('Marl Valley') hoard taking account of all the evidence reviewed in this paper: —

MULLINGAR, district N.E. of, Co. Westmeath, June 1841
120-150 AR Anglo-Saxon pennies (106 listed) with N and R ornaments etc. Deposit: c. 986.


BMC(A) type ii unpublished var.—Canterbury, Leofric, 1.

The ornaments included 1 penannular N finger-ring, at least 2 R pins with large heads (1 polygonal and the pin some 5 inches in length), and at least 2 sheared ends of R ingots together with others (?) more complete. Both the coins and ornaments were associated with a skeleton. The identity of the find-spot ('Marl Valley') is uncertain but lay some 10 miles N.E. of Mullingar between Collinstown and Tervin.


Disposition: the coins—with 2 exceptions—were supposed by Lindsay to have been sent to Dublin for sale, but later Aquilla Smith travelled to Mullingar to inspect the bulk if not the entirety of the hoard, very probably in Sir Montague Chapman's cabinet at Killum Castle near Cloneen. More than 90 of the coins were dispersed in the London saleroom in 1894, 4 of them finding their way to the British Museum. Another 13 coins apparently from the hoard are in the National Museum of Ireland ex the cabinet of the Royal Irish Academy.