In September 1954, Mr. James O'Donohoe was clearing land on Mr. Casey's farm in Moig South townland on the right bank of the Deel two miles or so to the north-east of Askeaton in Co. Limerick when in a cleft of the limestone outcrop under a whitethorn bush there came to light a heap of 86 silver coins, with one exception all of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The container, apparently a vessel and perhaps of pewter or leather, disintegrated into powder as soon as touched. Setting little store by his discovery, Mr. O'Donohoe gave the coins to his employer who was no more impressed but who happened some eighteen months later to mention the occurrence to an Askeaton chemist, Mr. F. A. Hanley, M.P.S.I. For the first time the possible antiquarian significance of the find was recognized, and on 10 April 1956 two representative coins were sent by Mr. Hanley to the National Museum of Ireland. Two days later the Museum authorities replied, and on 27 April an inquest was held at Askeaton, and the 86 coins were declared to be treasure trove. On 2 May the hoard was received at the National Museum, and by the end of the month the coins had all been listed, and the Royal Irish Academy had been recommended to pay a substantial reward to Mr. O'Donohoe. On 18 August 1968 one of the present writers (M. D.) was able to visit Askeaton, and through the good offices of Mr. Hanley he was introduced to Mr. O'Donohoe and to Mr. Casey and conducted by them to the actual findspot. This can be found by taking the Ballysteen road out of Askeaton for two miles to a point where a side-road goes off to the left just before Hogan's Bridge over a tributary of the Deel. On the right hand side of the road a long avenue leads up to a farm. Proceeding along this, one turns off after a couple of hundred yards or so into a field on the right, and the limestone
outcrop is some fifty yards to the south-east from the gate and rather further to the north-north-east of a circular grove of trees. It may be added that there is a tradition that the avenue is on the line of an old road from Askeaton to Limerick.

English readers may be interested to know that over most of Ireland the holding of a treasure trove inquest is exceptional, the administration of the treasure trove law being vested in the Royal Irish Academy. The normal procedure is for a find to be reported to the National Museum, and for the reward to be paid without the formality of a coroner’s intervention. The system is one that works well, and it is usual for finders to be rewarded within a matter of weeks of their discoveries being brought to the notice of the Museum authorities. There is the further advantage that the Museum is not seen to sit as judge and jury in its own cause where valuations are concerned, and the necessary approval of the Polite Letters and Antiquities Committee of the Academy means that the rewards proposed receive a measure of informed public scrutiny without embarrassing publicity. Equally, too, one may wonder whether the intervention of the police is always advantageous when one is concerned in the great majority of cases with law-abiding citizens whose one desire is to assist the authorities. In the present case an inquest was held very largely because of local misunderstandings of the legal position, the absence of all desire on the part of landlord and finder to conceal the discovery being evidenced by local newspaper reports which appeared after Mr. Hanley’s timely intervention. Indeed, it was these reports which prompted a particularly antiquity-conscious coroner and the Garda Siochana to investigate the discovery independently of the Museum, and it is satisfactory to know that the utter frankness and complete honesty of all those concerned with the discovery were the subject of favourable comment at the inquest. Despite the eighteen months’ delay between the finding and the public inquiry, this is one of the relatively few instances when one can be morally certain that the coins surrendered represent the totality of a hoard, a matter of some importance in the present case, for the discovery is without precedent where the Anglo-Irish and English series are concerned.

Unfortunately the hoard arrived at the Museum at a time when no member of the staff was available to undertake its publication. However, the coins were carefully sorted and listed, and have been kept separate from the rest of the collections. For permission to publish the hoard here we are once again indebted to the kindness of the Museum authorities and in particular to the retiring Keeper of the Art and Industrial Division, Dr. William O’Sullivan, M.R.I.A. For special facilities to study the material in July and August 1968 our thanks are due to his assistants, Miss Catriona MacLeod, M.A., and Mr. John Teahan, M.A. As will very soon appear, the composition of the hoard is an unusual one, a summary being as follows:

| IRELAND | ENGLAND |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|         | 1/2-harp| Groat   | 1/2-groat| Penny  |
| Edward II|         |         |         | 1      |
| Edward IV|         |         | 6       |        |
| Henry VII|         | 1       | 38      |        |
| Henry VIII| 1    | 6      | 33      |        |
|                     | 1  | 7  | 77 |        |

All the coins are illustrated on the accompanying plates [Pl. VIII–XI] from direct photographs taken with the Ulster Museum’s portable fixed-focus polaroid camera. If the illustrations
are not in every case perfect, they give at least an adequate impression of the condition of
the individual coins, and especially of the extent to which the earlier issues had been clipped.
The weights were obtained on a modern portable semi-automatic balance, and are in theory
correct to the nearest half milligramme while the troy equivalents have been given to the
nearest tenth of a grain on the basis of the tables in *Grains and Grammes*. In the following
catalogue each coin is given a separate number, a brief description of the essential criteria
being followed by references to the standard literature, and a note of the weight.

**LORDSHIP OF IRELAND**

**HENRY VIII**

'Half-harp'

(1) With the initials ha (Lombardic) (Henry and Anne Boleyn): i.m. crown/crown:
Carlyon-Britton¹ 100 (?); Coffey², p. 66 (4th coining), 1 and 2: 1.125 g. (17.2 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 1]

**KINGDOM OF ENGLAND**

**EDWARD II**

*Penny*

(2) London: Fox³ XIa; North⁴ 1060: 1.280 g. (19-8 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 2]

**EDWARD IV**

**FIRST REIGN**

*Half-groats*

(3) Canterbury (Archbishop Bourchier): i.m. (pall)/—: B. & W⁵, p. 168, VII/Via;
North 1590: 1-150 g. (17-4 gr.) ... ... ... ... ...  [Pl. VIII, 3]

(4) Canterbury (Royal): i.m. (crown)/?: B. & W., p. 169, VII, 3; North 1589:
1-365 g. (21-1 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 4]

(5) London: i.m. crown/sun: B. & W., p. 159, VIIIc (no stops); North 1584: 1-330 g.
(20-5 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 5]

**SECOND REIGN**

*Half-groats*

(6) Canterbury (Royal): i.m. (rose)/?: B. & W., pp. 329/330, XVIIIb/XIX (?);
North 1637 var.: 0-855 g. (13-2 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 6]

(7) Canterbury (Royal): i.m. rose/?: B. & W., pp. 329/330, XVIIIb/XIX (1), North
1637 var.: 1-0675 g. (15-5 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 7]

(8) Canterbury (Royal): i.m. rose/rose: B. & W., p. 329, XVIIIb/XX; North 1637:
1-180 g. (18-2 gr.)  [Pl. VIII, 8]

¹ Table opposite p. 140 of R. Carlyon-Britton, 'Henry VIII Harp Groats and Harp Half-Groats
and Edward VI Harp Groats', NC 1964, pp. 134-149.


³ H. B. Earle Fox and J. Shirley Fox, 'Numismatic History of the Reigns of Edward I, II, and
III', *BNJ* vi-x (1909-1913) *passim*, but the essential
classification is neatly summarized in NC 1917,
pp. 279-297, and is now most conveniently available

⁴ J. J. North, *English Hammered Coinage*, vol. II,

HENRY VII
FIRST ('FACING') COINAGE
Half-groats

(9) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. lin/lis: P. & W., p. 297, A.1/A.2; North 1712: 1-155 g. (18-0 gr.)

(10) As previous coin: 1-165 g. (18-0 gr.)

(11) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. (tun over cross)/?: P. & W., p. 297, B.5a/f; North 1712: 1-255 g. (19-5 gr.)

(12) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. (tun)/tun: P. & W., p. 297, E.7/C.10; North 1712: 1-2375 g. (19-1 gr.)

(13) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.6/B.7; North 1712: 1-420 g. (21-9 gr.)

(14) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.8/C.8; North 1712: 1-5225 g. (23-5 gr.)

(15) As previous coin: 1-510 g. (23-3 gr.)

(16) As previous coin: 1-400 g. (21-6 gr.)

(17) As previous coin: 1-400 g. (21-6 gr.)

(18) As previous coins: 1-3975 g. (21-6 gr.)

(19) As previous coins: 1-3975 g. (21-6 gr.)

(20) As previous coins: 1-280 g. (19-8 gr.)—pierced

(21) As previous coins: 1-050 g. (16-2 gr.)

(22) As previous coins: 0-9825 g. (15-2 gr.)

(23) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.8/C.8 (?); North 1712: 1-1875 g. (18-3 gr.)

(24) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.9/C.9; North 1712: 1-4175 g. (21-9 gr.)

(25) As previous coin: 1-305 g. (20-1 gr.)

(26) As previous coin: 1-300 g. (20-1 gr.)

(27) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun and pansy/—: P. & W., p. 297, C.10/B.6; North 1712: 1-415 g. (21-8 gr.)

(28) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.11/C.10; North 1712: 1-400 g. (21-6 gr.)

(29) As previous coin: 1-3725 g. (21-2 gr.)

(30) Canterbury (King and Archbishop Morton?): i.m. tun/tun: P. & W., p. 297, C.11/7; North 1712: 1-1525 g. (17-8 gr.)

(31) York (Archbishop Savage?): i.m. (martlet)/martlet: P. & W., p. 298, 1; North 1716: 1-435 g. (22-1 gr.)

(32) York (Archbishop Savage?): i.m. martlet/martlet: P. & W., p. 298, 1; North 1715: 1-400 g. (21-6 gr.)

(33) As previous coin: 1-2825 g. (19-8 gr.)

(34) York (Archbishop Savage?): i.m. martlet/martlet: P. & W., p. 298, 2; North 1716: 1-3875 g. (21-4 gr.)

(35) As previous coin: 1-255 g. (19-4 gr.)

(36) York (Archbishop Savage?): i.m. martlet/martlet: P. & W., p. 298, 6; North 1716: 1-3025 g. (20-1 gr.)

(37) As previous coin: 1-285 g. (19-8 gr.)

(38) As previous coin: 1-2225 g. (18-9 gr.)

SECOND ('PROFILE') COINAGE
Half-groats

(39) 'Canterbury' (King and Archbishop Warham?): i.m. martlet/martlet: P. & W., P. 17, 1/2 (cf. BNJ XVIII, pl. VI, 100); North 1750: 1-270 g. (19-6 gr.)

[Pl. VIII, 9]

[Pl. VIII, 10]

[Pl. VIII, 11]

[Pl. VIII, 12]

[Pl. VIII, 13]

[Pl. VIII, 14]

[Pl. VIII, 15]

[Pl. VIII, 16]

[Pl. VIII, 17]

[Pl. VIII, 18]

[Pl. VIII, 19]

[Pl. VIII, 20]

[Pl. VIII, 21]

[Pl. VIII, 22]

[Pl. VIII, 23]

[Pl. VIII, 24]

[Pl. IX, 1]

[Pl. IX, 2]

[Pl. IX, 3]

[Pl. IX, 4]

[Pl. IX, 5]

[Pl. IX, 6]

[Pl. IX, 7]

[Pl. IX, 8]

[Pl. IX, 9]

[Pl. IX, 10]

[Pl. IX, 11]

[Pl. IX, 12]

[Pl. IX, 13]

[Pl. IX, 14]

[Pl. IX, 15]

(40) 'Canterbury' (King and Archbishop Warham?): i.m. rose/rose: P. & W., p. 117, 4; North 1750: 1.670 g. [sic.] (25-7 gr.) [Pl. IX, 16]
(41) As previous coin: 1.3975 g. (21-6 gr.) [Pl. IX, 17]
(42) As previous coins: 1.185 g. (18-3 gr.) [Pl. IX, 18]

_Groat_

(43) 'London': i.m. _pheon_ / _pheon_: P. & W., p. 115, 5; North 1747: 2.7925 g. (43-1 gr.)—pierced [Pl. IX, 19]

_Half-groats_

(44) 'York' (Archbishop Bainbridge?): i.m. _martlet_ / _martlet_: P. & W., p. 117, 2; North 1751: 1.3875 g. (21-4 gr.)—pierced [Pl. IX, 20]
(45) As previous coin: 1.0975 g. (16-9 gr.) [Pl. X, 1]
(46) As previous coins: 1.0025 g. (15-5 gr.) [Pl. X, 2]
(47) As previous coins: 0.955 g. (14-7 gr.) [Pl. X, 3]

HENRY VIII

_FIRST COINAGE_

_Half-groats_

(48) 'Canterbury' (Archbishop Warham): i.m. Warham's mark / Warham's mark: Whitton, p. 209, I, (ii); North 1765: 1.4075 g. (21-7 gr.) [Pl. X, 4]
(49) York (Cardinal Wolsey): i.m. plain star / plain star: Whitton, p. 210, II, (ii); North 1771: 1.3975 g. (21-6 gr.) [Pl. X, 5]
(50) As previous coin: 1.2925 g. (19-9 gr.) [Pl. X, 6]

_SECOND ('WOLSEY') COINAGE_

_Half-groats_

(51) Canterbury (Archbishop Warham): i.m. Warham's mark / Warham's mark: Whitton, p. 209, (ii); North 1802: 1.4475 g. (22-3 gr.) [Pl. X, 7]
(52) As previous coin: 1.3675 g. (21-1 gr.) [Pl. X, 8]
(53) As previous coins: 1.325 g. (20-5 gr.) [Pl. X, 9]
(54) As previous coins: 1.2825 g. (19-8 gr.) [Pl. X, 10]
(55) As previous coins: 1.275 g. (19-7 gr.) [Pl. X, 11]
(56) As previous coins: 1.200 g. (18-5 gr.)—pierced [Pl. X, 12]
(57) As previous coins: 1.1975 g. (18-4 gr.) [Pl. X, 13]
(58) Canterbury (Archbishop Warham): i.m. Warham's mark /—: Whitton, p. 209, (ii) 4; North 1802: 1.300 g. (20-1 gr.) [Pl. X, 14]
(60) Canterbury (Archbishop Warham): i.m. cross patonce / cross patonce: Whitton, p. 209, (iii); North 1802: 1.300 g. (20-1 gr.) [Pl. X, 16]
(61) As previous coin: 1.290 g. (19-9 gr.) [Pl. X, 17]
(62) As previous coins: 1.285 g. (19-8 gr.) [Pl. X, 18]
(63) As previous coins: 1.220 g. (18-8 gr.) [Pl. X, 19]
(64) As previous coins: 1.1975 g. (18-4 gr.) [Pl. X, 20]
(65) Canterbury (Archbishop Warham): i.m. cross patonce / t: Whitton, p. 209, (iv); North 1802: 1.185 g. (18-3 gr.) [Pl. X, 21]
(66) Canterbury (Archbishop Cranmer): i.m. wheel /—: Whitton, p. 210, (vi); North 1804: 1.2775 g. (19-7 gr.) [Pl. X, 22]

As previous coin: 1-2675 g. (19-6 gr.)

As previous coins: 1-265 g. (19-5 gr.)

As previous coins: 1-185 g. (18-3 gr.)

As previous coins: 1-175 g. (18-1 gr.)

Canterbury (Archbishop Cranmer): i.m. wheel/ wheel: Whitton, p. 210, (vi):
North 1804: 1-2325 g. (19-0 gr.)

Groats

'Th'London': i.m. rose/rose: Whitton, p. 207, (i) 3; North 1797: 2-7475 g. (42-4 gr.)

As previous coin: 2-725 g. (42-1 gr.)

'Th'London': i.m. lis/rose: Whitton, p. 207, (ii)—ADIVTO/E; North 1797: 2-715 g. (41-9 gr.)

As previous coin: 2-7125 g. (41-8 gr.)

'London': i.m. lis/lis: Whitton, p. 207, V (a); North 1797: 2-795 g. (43-2 gr.)

As previous coin: 2-7675 g. (42-7 gr.)

Half-groats

York (Cardinal Wolsey): i.m. voided cross/voided cross: Whitton, p. 211, (i);
North 1805: 1-2175 g. (18-8 gr.)

As previous coin: 1-185 g. (18-3 gr.)

York (Cardinal Wolsey): i.m. voided cross—: Whitton, p. 211, (i); North 1805: 1-3475 g. (20-8 gr.)

York (Cardinal Wolsey): i.m. voided cross/voided cross (+): Whitton, p. 211, (i) var.; North 1805: 1-2725 g. (19-6 gr.)

York (Cardinal Wolsey): i.m. voided cross (†)/voided cross (†): Whitton, p. 211, (i) var.; North 1805: 1-115 g. (17-2 gr.)

York (Archbishop Lee): i.m. key/key: Whitton, p. 211, (ii); North 1806: 1-2775 g. (19-7 gr.)

As previous coin: 1-320 g. (18-8 gr.)

York (Archbishop Lee): i.m. key/key: Whitton, p. 211, (iii); North 1807: 1-3175 g. (20-3 gr.)

York (Archbishop Lee): i.m. key/key: Whitton, p. 211, (iv); North 1807: 1-2375 g. (19-1 gr.)

Obviously the first problem that confronts the student is the date of the hoard's concealment. As regards the Anglo-Irish element, a quite useful terminus post quern is afforded by the 'half-harp' with initials hA (Lombardic). Elsewhere it will be argued 1 that pieces of this description were struck in London during the period of Henry's 'marriage' to Anne Boleyn (25 January 1533–17 May 1536). It is a coin too which exhibits at least one early feature—DOMINVS (instead of DNS). We are given accordingly 1534 as the earliest likely date for the concealment of the Askeaton hoard, while the absence of other Anglo-Irish coins of the reign must suggest that a date much later than 1535 is unlikely in the extreme. The English element in the hoard ends with London groats with initial marks rose and lis only, Canterbury half-groats with several of the marks of Cranmer who received the temporalities on 29 April 1533, and York half-groats with all but one of the marks of Lee who had received his temporalities on 3 December 1531. Although, then, the late Professor Reddaway was able to adduce documentary evidence that the Canterbury mint had a limited existence after 1534, 2 most English numismatists would feel that the English part of the hoard is unlikely to have been brought

together much later than 1535. It is unfortunate that the numismatic world still awaits a convincing chronology for the London groats with initial marks rose and lis. According to Mr. Potter the examples in the hoard all belong before 1532, but we find it hard to believe that the latest are substantially earlier than the latest of the half-groats. While, too, we believe that Mr. Potter was right to place the sun-burst mark after arrow where the silver is concerned, we are not convinced by the chronological argumentation of his paper. The 1952 Maidstone hoard, for example, suggests very strongly that he has dated the sunburst too early, and we would need a lot of convincing that the initial mark arrow was brought in all that much before 1534. The question is one to which the Irish numismatist will have to revert when he comes to publish the smaller but not all that dissimilar but predominantly groat find which came to light in 1948 at Sligo Abbey, but in the case of the Askeaton hoard it is probably safe to say that a date of concealment c. 1535 meets the requirements of the Anglo-Irish and the English evidence alike.

The occasion of the concealment was doubtless the great Geraldine rising which broke out in the summer of 1534 and which collapsed after fourteen months. Askeaton (Eas Géitine), we must remember, was one of the principal seats of the Earls of Desmond, and that the whole weight of the Desmond power was not thrown behind the Kildares at this juncture was due only to dissensions within the Munster line. In 1534 Thomas Fitz Thomas died at a ripe old age, and he was followed by a young grandson James Fitz Maurice (d. 19 March 1540) whose succession was successively challenged by a great-uncle John Fitz Thomas (d. June 1536) and a cousin and eventual heir James Fitz John. Nor may this be the only hoard from the Askeaton neighbourhood which could have been occasioned by these years of turmoil. Neglected by numismatists has been the following passage taken from p. 229 of the first (1844) volume of Richard Sainthill’s *Olla Podrida*:

In 1828, a silver crucifix, gilt and enriched with jewelry, was found by a labourer when digging near the ruins of the abbey of Askeaton, county of Limerick, together with some coins, and two pieces of ring-money. The latter were sold to Major Sirr. The crucifix came into the possession of Miss Mary Purdon, of Limerick, who not wishing it to be despised, as ‘such an old thing’, had the date A.D. 1534, carefully erased.

The ‘abbey’, incidentally, though strictly speaking a friary, lies to the north-east of Askeaton beside the road to Ballysteen, but one hesitates to insist on a connection with the coin-hoard from Moig South. As one of the principal Desmond strongholds, Askeaton paid a heavy price in the sixteenth century, and we may instance the disgraceful episode in 1579 when Malby butchered the friars and tore up the Desmond tombs, and it could be that the 1534 crucifix was hidden years and not months after its manufacture.

A remarkable feature of the Moig South find is its inclusion of a penny of Edward II, a coin more than two centuries old when the hoard was brought together. There can be little doubt, though, that by then it was masquerading as a half-groat. Weighing just under 20 grains, it compares very favourably with the clipped Edward IV half-groats (average weight just under 18 grains), and not all that badly with the English half-groats generally (average weight virtually 20 grains). While on this subject of clipping, too, it is instructive to note the average weight (just under 20½ grains) of the 22 Canterbury half-groats of Henry VII


and Archbishop Morton. Messrs. Potter and Winstanley have indicated the average loss by clipping of 100 of these coins which passed through their hands, and it is clear that the run of these coins with English provenances turned the scale at 21½ grains. In other words, the state of the English coin circulating in Ireland seems to have been half as bad again as it was in the country of its origin, and it is even likely that the Askeaton coins compared favourably with the generality of English money of Henry VII current in this island. In 1897 there was found near Ballymoyle in Co. Wicklow a hoard of perhaps forty London half-groats, all apparently with initial mark lis and double-arched crown. They were described by MacIlwaine as being 'considerably clipped', so that 'most of the legends on both sides had been removed', a description which does suggest that the mutilation was even more savage than that inflicted on the coins from Moig South. In the remarkable Shearman collection at Clongowes Wood College, too, we have seen a roughly contemporary groat of Henry VII (P. & W. type IIIb; North 1705) clipped back to the inner circles in a manner reminiscent of the prototypes of the 'O'Reilly money', and weighing no more than 18½ grains. One could argue in fact that the absence of the Anglo-Irish issues of Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII is an indication that the Moig South hoard had been put together out of money brought into Ireland only comparatively recently, and Irish numismatists as well as English are eagerly awaiting the British Museum's report on the 1964 hoard from Hartford near Huntingdon which should give a good impression of the condition of the English coinage at the beginning of the sixteenth century. What is interesting about the Askeaton hoard is that the profile coins of Henry VII and Henry VIII for all practical purposes are no better than the facing bust coins which immediately preceded them. In other words, the preference for salfás ('half-face') money evinced by the native Irish from the 1540's onwards is seen even more clearly as a consequence not of the clipped state of the old money but of the Henrician debasements.

2 J. B. S. MacIlwaine, 'A Find of English Half-Groats of Henry VII in the County of Wicklow', BNJ, x(1913), pp. 313 and 314.