ON SOME HOARDS OF THE TIME OF STEPHEN

By C. E. BLUNT, F. ELMORE JONES and (FOR THE ASHBY HOARD) P. H. ROBINSON

We are singularly unfortunate in our hoard material from the time of Stephen. Brooke records no more than nine or ten hoards but Commander Mack in a recent number of this Journal was able to raise the number to 15 or 16. Of all these however, only the Bute and Awbridge finds appear to have been the subject of official enquiries. More fortunately, however, the major find at Watford and those from Sheldon, South Kyme and Linton were examined and recorded while they were, as far as one can judge, virtually intact. Of the others our records are far from complete. The following notes on four hoards, though they add regrettably little to our knowledge of them, may nonetheless be thought worth placing on record. Mr. Dolley has kindly read through them and made a number of helpful suggestions.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOCH, 1788 OR 1789. (Thompson 14)

The earliest reference to this hoard that we have traced is a note in the Gentleman’s Magazine of 1796 (p. 843) where ‘Observator’ illustrates a Martlets-type coin of Stephen, which he sought to identify as a baronial issue, and which he says ‘was found, with more than 300 other silver coins, in 1789, in digging to repair a mill-poolhead in Ashby Woulds, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire. They were chiefly of the reign of Stephen, or the early Henries; and almost all preserved for Lord Moira, the lord of the manor, who now possesses them.’

This provoked a reply from the Rev. Stebbing Shaw, written from Hartshorn (a village 3½ miles from Ashby) who claims that the coin illustrated by ‘Observator’ was one of his of which he had sent a drawing for Nichols’ History of Leicestershire with such information on the hoard as he then had. Shaw says that the hoard was found in October 1788 at Ashby Woulds at a place called Millstone Gutter. The hoard, consisting of about 450 coins, was, he says, found in an oblong leaden box which, on being moved ‘directly mouldered to pieces’. Most of the coins were, he says of Stephen ‘except a few of Henry I, Henry II and Henry III’. Upwards of 60 were cut halfpence and about a dozen cut farthings. Out of more than 400 coins of Stephen only 3½ were of the martlets type. Mr. Shaw had recently been to Lord Moira’s ‘beautiful new Gothic mansion’ Donnington Park where most of the coins then were. The Steward, Mr. Dawson, (the brother of the ‘Mr. Dawson’ mentioned by Nichols as owning one of the Martlets type coins) had drawn up an account of ‘the most rare and beautiful specimens’ for Mr. Nichols’ inspection.

This letter provoked an entertaining correspondence with a writer who signed himself ‘R’ (whom Nichols identifies as being Ruding) questioning the Martlets type coins which ‘give me great reason for suspicion’. It is not entirely clear whether it was the authenticity or the attribution that Ruding was questioning, but his Annals suggest that he may have been opposing its being a baronial issue ‘from its being of standard silver, and of full weight.

Nichols in his History of Leicestershire repeats the information given him by Shaw and adds that a few of the coins were dispersed ‘at their first being discovered; but by far the

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1 BMC, NK, I, pp. xxvi-xxxi.
3 Elsewhere in this volume Mr. Dawson reviews the Nottingham hoard in the light of today’s evidence.
4 Nichols in op. cit. refutes this and says it was in fact engraved from a coin in the possession of Mr. Dawson, Vol. III, pt. II, p. 613n.
5 Gents. Mag., 1789, pp. 983-4.
greater part of them were secured for Lord Rawdon (the present earl of Moira) as owner of
the manor; and in his Lordship's possession they still remain. One of the Martlets type coins
came into the possession of Mr. Sharp of Coventry 'who much laments that he parted with
it to his deceased friend Mr. Southgate'.

This suggests a total of 4 Martlets type coins: Lord Moira's, Mr. Dawson's, Mr. Shaw's
and Mr. Sharp's. But it is possible that Shaw's coin passed to Sharp as there is in the William
Salt Library at Stafford a letter from the latter to Shaw, dated 23 Jan. 1802, asking if he
could buy 'any that you may have remaining of the Stephens'.

There is also a scrap of paper in the same library among Shaw's papers on which is a drawing
of the obverse of a Martlets type coin and the legend (so far as it could be read) of the reverse;
also of the reverse (only) of the cut halfpenny (Fig. 1). This should be sufficient to identify
the piece, should it turn up again. On the other side of the paper is the following note:—

"Mr. Abney had 11
Mr. Vincent - 5
Mr. Presbury - 1
Mr. Dewes - 1 (looks more like Dewis)
kept by Pickering 1
Mr. Dawson's brother
in Pater noster Row
has a Stephens with
the Martlets."

Mr Dewes may be identified as William Dewes, Esq., of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Nichols illustrates seven coins from the hoard:
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STEPHEN 1 Nottingham, Swein. (As BMC 85). No. 4.

,, ,, 1 Shrewsbury, Ravensart. (Cf. Lawrence sale lots 364-5, both illustrated). The king is shown in the engraving holding what appears to be an axe, but this seems likely to be the engraver's licence. No. 6.

,, 1 Southwark, Alfwine. (As BMC 93). No. 3.

,, ,, 1 Although a fairly complete legend is shown on the engraving, we are unable to suggest an attribution for this coin. No. 5.

Irregular IV, A, (a). The Martlets type of Derby, Walchelinus. This appears to be the Carlyon-Britton specimen, illustrated BMC, pi. lviii, 12, later lot 1482 in his sale. No. 1.


In a note-book of Ruding's in the British Museum (Add. Mss. 18095, fo. 54) is a drawing of the centre of the reverse of a penny of Henry I described as 'one of Ld. Moira's coins'. Ruding notes that it 'differs somewhat from Supplement Plate I no. 8'. The coin on this plate is a somewhat ill-drawn specimen of the rare type BMC; Ruding's drawing is a more accurate version of the type. Unfortunately he does not give the legend or even mention the mint. It may, we feel, be assumed that 'one of Ld. Moira's coins' means that it is from the Ashby hoard.

Brooke, for some reason, does not include the Ashby hoard in the list of finds in his British Museum Catalogue, but mentions it in a footnote when listing the one Martlets type coin in the catalogue, no. 245, which, he says, is ex Tyssen ex Hodsoll ex Moira and was found at Ashby, in 1789. Thompson, in his Inventory, no. 14, cites only a paper by W. J. Andrew in the British Numismatic Journal, where there is but a cursory mention of the hoard. Commander Mack gives the references to the Gentleman's Magazine but not to Nichols.

So much for sources. What can one say further about the hoard itself? It will be seen that Shaw refers to there being a few coins of Henry I, II and III. In assessing what reliance can be placed on this, one must remember that at the time Shaw wrote, the coins bearing the name of the early Henrys were still hopelessly confused. Henry III we can confidently rule out in the context of this hoard. Coins of Henry II's Cross-and-crosslets ('Tealby') type would not be so much out of context. Nichols selected for illustration the rarest and most beautiful coins. It does not follow, therefore, that they are necessarily representative of the hoard as a whole, but had there been any specimen of the later (and much rarer) types of Stephen, one might have looked for an illustration of them. It seems likely that the hoard was deposited relatively early in his reign which would, of course, rule out the possibility of there having been coins of Henry II. The probability is that the few coins in the name of Henry were of Henry I, perhaps of three different types.

The British Museum Catalogue lists five specimens of the Martlets type of which only their own has a recorded hoard provenance (the Ashby hoard). Commander Mack lists 9 whole coins and one half but the possibility of there being some duplication in this list cannot be ruled out. The specimen in the Carlyon-Britton sale, lot 1482, can now be added as from Ashby and at least one of the others is also likely to be from it. The cut halfpenny (not included in the BMC list) cannot now be traced. There is no record of any hoard provenance for this type other than Ashby, though there is a somewhat vague reference to one.

3 BNJ, xxxv, p. 68.
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having been ‘found in London’;\(^1\) in the Barclay sale, 21 March 1831, lot 47, was a coin of this type stated to have been ‘found at Gloucester’. It is particularly noteworthy that none is recorded from the Derbyshire find at Sheldon (Thompson 329).

We have been unable to find any evidence of the dispersal of Lord Moira’s part of the hoard, save for the reference under *BMC* already mentioned, and it seemed worth considering whether it might not still be in the possession of his descendants. The second earl of Moira was created Marquess of Hastings in 1817 and the titles continued united until the death of the fourth marquess when they became extinct. Mrs. Martin has very kindly shown us a catalogue in the British Museum of the sale of a good general collection of coins at Sothebys starting on 15 November 1880, the ‘property of a Nobleman’ who is there identified as the second Marquess of Hastings. The collection has only three coins of Stephen, all of the relatively common type, *BMC* 1, and the association of the collection with the second marquess must be open to doubt, because he died in 1844 and the sale includes a number of pieces from the Cuff sale of 1854. It seems unlikely too that any collection would have survived the fourth marquess who died in 1848 and who is said to have ruined himself on the Turf.\(^2\) That there was a collector called Lord Hastings in the nineteenth century is clear from a sale catalogue of 1845 in the possession of one of the writers with his book-plate. This shows that he was the former Sir Jacob Astley Bart., in whose favour the ancient barony of Hastings, dormant since 1541/2 was called out of abeyance in 1841. This Lord Hastings was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and died in 1859. If the ‘Nobleman’ of the 1880 sale was in fact a Lord Hastings, it seems likely to have been this man.

Though the marquessate of Hastings and the earldom of Moira became extinct on the death of the fourth marquess, the earldom of Loudon, in the peerage of Scotland, devolved on his sister and, having again passed through the female line, devolved on the present countess. We have been unable to obtain any information from her about the hoard.

The writers are indebted to the Librarian and Trustees of the William Salt Library, Stafford, for permission to publish here the extract from the Shaw papers and to illustrate the drawing of the cut halfpenny.

The somewhat slender evidence that we have may therefore be summarized as follows:—

**Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics. (near) 1788 or 1789.**

C. 450 AR English

| Henry I (number uncertain) | Stephen (400 +) | (Henry II and III are mentioned, but are unlikely). |
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C. 375 were pennies, “upwards of 60” cut halfpennies and “about a dozen” cut farthings. Few coins identified:
Henry I: *BMC* IV, no details; *BMC* XV—London: Dereman.
*BMC* Irregular IV, C (d)—Durham (?): Fobund.

The bulk of the hoard went to the Earl of Moira and cannot now be traced. 20 coins went to the other named persons. One of the Derby coins is in the BM (*BMC* 246); others of the same type passed to the Rev. Stebbing Shaw; Mr. Dawson and Mr. Sharp (perhaps = Shaws’) from whom it went to Mr. Southgate. Found in an oblong leaden box which disintegrated.

\(^1\) BNJ, vi, p. 188.

\(^2\) The Complete Peerage, VI, p. 380.
This important hoard was first published by Jonathan Rashleigh in *NC*, 1851 (pp. 181-91), where 59 coins are listed and 9 illustrated. There were originally, he says, about 65, and on one place on page 186 he says they were ‘found in Kent, in the year 1825’ and lower down on the same page that they were ‘found near Dartford, Kent, in 1826’. The whole hoard, he adds, ‘soon after passed into the hands of Mr. Taylor, grandfather of Mr. C. R. Taylor, the Numismatist, 2 Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, who now has many of the specimens for sale and can give every information about them’.

Brooke in a summary of the hoard,1 lists 58 coins (he seems to have omitted one of Stephen type I) and corrects one or two of Rashleigh’s attributions, notably of an Oxford coin which the latter had attributed to Stephen but which Brooke points out was in fact of Matilda. It is illustrated in the Rashleigh sale catalogue, lot 630. He also gives four other coins to Matilda, coins that Rashleigh had treated as ‘unintelligible’; and he attributes to David I (?) of Scotland and to the mint of Carlisle (?) a coin which Rashleigh had attributed to ‘Canterbury?’. This last coin is now in the British Museum, ex Rashleigh 617 (ill.). Mr. Stewart has kindly confirmed Brooke’s tentative attribution and tells us that it is a coin of his type IV.2

In a copy of Lindsay’s *Coinage of the Heptarchy*, etc., which had previously belonged to Mr. C. R. Taylor and is now in the possession of one of the present writers is the draft of a letter from Taylor to Lindsay dated 7 May 1849. In it he refers to a coin of Stephen illustrated by Lindsay in his Remarkable Medieval Coins, 1849, pl. 2 no. 43, which he believes Lindsay bought at a sale on 17 July, 1848, (a surmise which Lindsay in his reply confirms is correct) in which case, says Taylor, it had belonged to him and ‘came with a trouvaille of Stephens made in 1817 near Gravesend which came wholly into the possession of my late grandfather—I knew little of them until they came in my possession but I believe the whole number to have been about 70—and sixty of them came into my hands & three of Henry 1st of the common type Hks. 255 *(BMC XV). The Stephens were all with the portrait in profile but of several varieties in character, and every one more or less illegible on one or both sides.’

The coin illustrated by Lindsay appears to have meaningless legends on both sides, as is sometimes the case on other irregular and baronial coins of this time. That it is a faithful reproduction of what can be seen on the coin is clear from the following remark in Lindsay’s reply to Taylor: ‘I have compared the coin itself with the engraving & the delineation appears to be correct particularly as to the CM & the 4 following, the other letters on the obverse are of a more uncertain character except the first letter after the cross I have no doubt is an R’. The type generally resembles that of Stephen *BMC* type I, but differs in showing the bust contained within the inner circle, thus making the legend which, if Lindsay correctly identifies the initial cross, begins at 8 o’clock, continuous. What appears to be the same coin was illustrated as lot 946 in the Ryan sale (1952) ex Reynolds 95. Commander Mack lists it as no. 199c in his recent corpus of the coinage of the time of Stephen.3

Taylor’s letter continues with a description of ‘the most remarkable varieties’ in the hoard:—

1. “*Obv.* as Hks. 277 reading Stephunus but with the common reverse of Hks. 270. Two, both sold.” (These must be presumed to be coins of *BMC* type I of coarse work. Without an illustration it is not possible to be more precise.)

2. “*Obv.* indistinct: *rev.* Hks. 275. Ricard on Cant. very distinct and good. Wt. 21 grs.” (This is illustrated as no. 9 on Rashleigh’s plate and is in fact the coin of David I already mentioned).

1 *BMC, NK*, I, p. xxviii.  
3 *BNJ*, xxxv, p. 73.
3. "Obv. Hks. 270. Rev. unpublished. Two, one sold." (There is a drawing of the reverse which shows it to be Brooke's Irregular issue IV, B (a). Three are listed in Rashleigh's report and two of them are illustrated in his sale catalogue, lots 615–16. The third is BMC 248, ex Marsham collection, "found at Gravesend, 1817".)

4. "One of William Hks. 284, sold." (This is the type of BMC 285-6. No comparable coin is found in either Rashleigh's or Brooke's list).

'The remainder', he says, 'are of the type 270 with much difference however in the character of the portraits (;) the moneyer or the mint is rarely legible but I have the following Ces, Cant, Her, Lund, Ox, Stan, Sud, Pilt, Pin.' All these are found in Rashleigh's list.

Taylor sends Lindsay two coins, one, he says unpublished, '½ bust with scepter, rev. On Lrei cross formed of four segments of a circle reversed to each other the points terminated by a pellet one also enclosed in the opening of center and having in the angles fleur de lis similar to those of Stephen. The Helmet appears ornamented with fleur de lis or rather a continuation of the Helmet & Crown. I had described this as a Baronial coin from its weight being 16 grains only but afterwards concluded I must be wrong from its having the emblems of royalty in the crown and scepter'. (This coin is not in either Rashleigh's or Brooke's list. It must in fact be that great rarity BMC V.)

The other coin enclosed 'more nearly resembles the one you have engraved and as such I send it.' But he gives no more details. Taylor concludes by saying that Lindsay is the only person to whom the account of the Stephens has been communicated.

In replying, Lindsay says, 11 May 1849, 'the three quarters face coin is indeed very curious & the type of the reverse different from that of any of the coins of Hen. I or Stephen hitherto published. I fancy I can trace some remains of the former King's name on it.' He adds that he has sent it to Sainthill for an opinion. 'The other coin I have no doubt is a Stephen the letters NE being distinctly legible.'

Commander Mack lists four specimens of Stephen BMC type V, his 76a-d. It cannot be 76b (BM, post-catalogue) or 76c, (the Lockett specimen) as the mint name is not legible on these. It is unlikely to be 76d since, on this specimen there is no trace of an obverse legend. 76a (BMC 179) qualifies in that what is legible of the obverse legend could be taken to be the remains of the name of Henry; but the reverse ends with an a. The weight is 16·2 grs, which compares favourably with Taylor's 16 grs.

From the above the following conclusions may be drawn:—

1. Coins said to have been found at Gravesend in 1817 and at Dartford in 1825/6 are in fact from one hoard. The two places are nearby.

2. The date of finding must be left open, but should reference to any of the coins be found between 1817 and 1825, it need no longer worry us.

3. To Rashleigh's and Brooke's list of the hoard it is now possible to add:—

   (a) A William of Gloucester, no. 4 above. (Type as BMC 285-6; Mack type 3).
   
   (b) A Stephen of BMC type V, probably BMC 179.
   
   (c) The curious piece that has in the past (very improbably) been attributed to Randolph, Earl of Chester. (Mack 190c).
   
   (d) The irregular Stephen coin of Lincoln (BMC 248).
This hoard, as recorded by Mr. D. F. Allen, contained one cut halfpenny of Stephen of BMC type III and an indefinite number of coins of Henry II of the 'Tealby' type. The cut halfpenny, which was lot 612 in the Rashleigh sale, had, as the cataloguer noted, been engraved in NC, XIII, 1851, plate facing p. 181, no. 14. What does not appear to have been recently noticed (it was not, of course, relevant for Mr. Allen's purpose) is that two other coins illustrated on the same plate, nos. 7 and 8, are there stated to have been found with the cut halfpenny. Both are Scottish and Mr. Ian Stewart has very kindly supplied us with the following information on them:

'No. 7—this is of the general group of imitations (Burns class II, Stewart II) which copy the moline type of David I (B.I., S.I.). It is however, of the rare variety with the cross saltirewise with two or all four arms pommée over a plain cross instead of a cross with a pellet in each quarter—cf. B. figs. 18–9. More legible examples show traces of the inscription Ricard on Car. I read no. 7 as RICAR( - - - and it is uncannily like Bute no. 6 which is in Edinburgh, even to the visible parts of the inscription, the shape and the wear! (Pollexfen, NC, NS, V, 1865, p. 59). If Rashleigh had been writing after 1863, I would have suspected that he had mixed up his illustrations. Pollexfen correctly refers to Rashleigh's plate. See Burns I, p. 34.

'No. 8. B.IV, S.III—the other main imitative group, with well punched inscriptions, but nonsense. There are very few obverse dies of this kind, and this seems to be from the same obv. as B. fig. 8B (see Burns I pp. 33–4, where he refers to the Rashleigh coin). Comment. Burns addsuces the two coins on Rashleigh's plate as evidence that the David imitatives are of Tealby date. He is probably right. They only begin to appear in the Bute hoard (?mid 1150s) and were not present in early civil war hoards like Dartford.

'The earlier Stephen hoards, e.g. Watford, contain only the 'Erebald' Scottish group (copies of Stephen type I). Dartford shows that the (very rare) annulet type is not much later than 1140. The Scottish coinage of the 1140s I believe consists of derivative copies of Stephen I (e.g. Burns 24C and D and Stewart fig. 5). Not much before 1150 I think the typical David Moline type (Stewart fig. 1) appeared, at Berwick, Roxburgh and Carlisle, and was still going early in Malcolm IV's reign (Stewart figs. 11–14).

'Later the derivatives appear (Stewart figs. 3 and 4). Rashleigh no. 7 seems to me to copy Burns fig. 6c and the traces of inscription on this and other similar pieces (e.g. Bute no. 6, and specimen in my collection) seem to indicate Ricard at Carlisle; this would in turn make the attribution of Burns fig. 6c to Carlisle more probable, and bears out the theme of BNJ XXIX paper on David I.'

Both the coins in question were in the Rashleigh collection but are not identifiable in the sale catalogue. They may be lot 1091* which was added to the Scottish series after the catalogue was printed and which made £1 18s. 0d. No details of this lot are recorded in the British Museum copy of this catalogue.

Unknown Site, (Norfolk?) 1660

Mr. H. E. Pagan has most kindly drawn our attention to a reference to a hoard of coins of the time of Stephen in the correspondence of Sir Thomas Browne. In a letter to his son, Thomas, dated Norwich, Apr. 22, 1661, he writes:

"... My coyns are encreased since you went I had 60 coynes of King Stephen found in a grave before Christmas, 60 Roman silver coyns I bought a month agoe, and Sir Robert Paston will send me his box...."
of Saxon and Roman coins next week, which are about thirty, so that I would not buy any there except some few choice ones which I have not already; but you do very well to see all such things, some likely have collections which they will in courtesy show, as also urns and lacrimatories; any friend will help you to a sight thereof, for they are not nice in such things".  

The following year Sir Robert Paston is found writing to Sir Thomas Browne in a letter dated Parsons Green, Sept. 19, 1662:—

"You may justly wonder my pen has been so long a stranger to you, though, through many removes, I could never till now come at my medals. All I have of the British and Saxon I have this day sent you in a box, by the Norwich coachman, which I hope will be with you this night, with a large one of Heraclius, and some copper ones, which I hope are good".  

Mr. Pagan says that he is unable to shed any light on the subsequent fate of Browne's coins. In the 1660's he was clearly a keen collector, but very little of his correspondence of this time survives (these are the only mentions of Saxon/English coins, but there are a few other references to Roman coins). Later we have rather more of his correspondence, but he had clearly abandoned the pursuit of numismatics. We know that his medical MSS. eventually came into the possession of Sloane, but there is no evidence to suggest that his coins did likewise.

In Inventory format this hoard may be summarized:—

**UNKNOWN SITE** (Norfolk?), December, 1660.
At least 60 coins of Stephen, (no details).
The coins were found in a grave and 60 passed to Sir Thomas Browne.

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2 Ibid., p. 409.