In the library of the Heberden Coin Room in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, there is a copy of an Act of Parliament of special interest for the numismatist.\textsuperscript{1} The Act is dated 9 June 1812 and its title is 'An Act to vest the Coins and Medals given by the Will of Robert Austen Esquire deceased, in the Governor and Company of the Bank of England'. Its importance will emerge in the course of this discussion. It is convenient to begin by summarizing its content. It states that Robert Austen, of Shalford House, Shalford, Surrey, directed in his will dated 26 December 1790 that certain of his possessions, including his 'Medals and Coins', should 'be considered as Heir Looms and go with his Mansion House at Shalford to his Children and their Issue'; that Austen died on 3 November 1797; and that on 16 April 1812 Austen's son had concluded a provisional agreement with the Governor and Company of the Bank to sell Austen's coins and medals to them for the sum of £2,650. Such a transaction would be in breach of the provisions of Austen's will and the proceedings had therefore to be regularized by Act of Parliament. The operative clauses of the Act follow and they simply provide this parliamentary sanction. Right at the end of the Act comes something more exciting. It had been thought necessary to have the collection inspected by experts so that a fair price could be put on it. The experts chosen were Taylor Combe of the British Museum and the veteran dealer Richard Miles, both numismatists of the greatest distinction; and what appears at the end of the Act is the list of the collection they drew up when making their valuation. It is not a very detailed list, but it does give the denomination and issuer of each coin and Combe and Miles give the occasional additional detail when the coin is of some importance. It is certainly detailed enough to show that Austen's was a collection of real distinction, particularly strong on Roman gold and English gold and silver.

Of the origins of the collection not much can be said. A certain amount of information about Austen's background and career is available.\textsuperscript{2} Born Robert Stoffold, second son of William Stolfold, of Albury, Surrey, about the year 1740, he was adopted at an early age by a Mr. Robert Austen of Shalford, who had married his aunt.\textsuperscript{3} He assumed the surname and arms of Austen and eventually inherited the Austen estate at Shalford. He was by profession a solicitor.\textsuperscript{4} He is mentioned several times in the diary of his

\textsuperscript{1} This copy formerly belonged to Sir John Evans. It carries occasional annotations in pencil by someone (not Evans) who had checked the list of coins attached to the Act against the coins themselves.

\textsuperscript{2} A collection of papers relating to the Austen family of Shalford is deposited in the Muniment Room, Castle Arch, Guildford, Surrey, but it contains nothing obviously relevant to the present inquiry (information kindly supplied by Miss G. M. A. Beck, Archives Assistant).

\textsuperscript{3} For the relationship see Manning and Bray, History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey, ii (1809), pp. 100-1.

\textsuperscript{4} According to the editor of Bray's diary (below) Austen was articled to Mr. Martyr, a Guildford solicitor, and 'afterwards purchased a Clerkship in the Six Clerks' Office in Chancery'. These clerkships were invariably held by solicitors. Austen was admitted to the Middle Temple on 28 Oct. 1763; is described as 'of the Temple' on his marriage in 1772 (GM 1772, p. 151); and was living in Gower Street at the time of his death (GM 1797, p. 987, where he is described as 'F.A.S. 1779', i.e. Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries since 1779).
contemporary and friend William Bray, F.S.A. (1736–1832), the historian of Surrey, extracts from which have been published in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*. One of the diary entries is perhaps worth repeating here: ‘1774. June 24. Rode with Mr. Pennock and Mr. Austen to Mr. Walpole’s, Strawberry Hill; saw that; dined at the “Toy” Hampton.’ More strictly relevant is the fact that ‘Robertus Austen arm., de Shalford in com. Surr.’ figures in a list of William Hunter’s numismatic acquaintances that appears in Charles Combe’s *Nummorum Veterum Populorum et Urbium qui in Museo Gulielmi Hunter asservantur Descriptio*, published in 1782. He also figures in a list of the principal collectors of the day given in Pinkerton’s *Essay on Medals*; is mentioned in passing both by Ruding and by the mid nineteenth-century numismatist J. B. Bergne; and is noted as a buyer in the marked sale catalogue of one coin sale of the period, that of the collection of John Ives, F.S.A. (Langford 13–14.2.1777), when he purchased on the first day lots 6, 11, 15, 27, and 33 and on the second day lot 49. He may of course have bought any number of coins at other sales through an agent; the agent’s name and not his would appear in a marked catalogue. One acquisition by him outside the sale room is on record: his Petition Crown came from the collection of David Alves Rebello, a city merchant prominent in the numismatic world towards the end of the eighteenth century. Nothing otherwise is known of his collecting activities.

The fate of his collection is easier to follow. After it passed into the possession of the Bank it more or less disappeared from view until late in the nineteenth century. When it reappeared it was as part of a large general collection of coins presented by the Bank to the British Museum in 1877; the coins that had belonged to Austen were not then distinguished from other coins that the Bank had acquired over the years, but they certainly figured in the transaction. The collection was then broken up. The Bank coins were not all of equal importance and the Governor and Company of the Bank, understanding that the museum would not require the collection in its entirety, had given the trustees permission to dispose of such coins as were surplus to their requirements and use the proceeds for the benefit of departmental funds. As a result the coins that had once belonged to Austen were divided several ways. Some were incorporated in the museum collection; others were dispersed at various sales of Bank duplicates held at Sotheby’s in 1877 and 1878; and others again may have been included in a parcel of Roman coins sold by the museum to a dealer by private treaty. It follows from this that there are no coins that are today associated with Austen. Those in the British Museum and those of the dispersed duplicates now traceable carry the provenance ‘Bank of

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1 SAC xlvii (1938), pp. 26–58.
2 Combe, op. cit., introduction p. x.
3 Essays on Medals, 2nd edn. (1789), i, p. 11.
6 NC xvi loc. cit. The history of the Rebello collection is obscure. The bulk of the coins collected by David Alves Rebello seem to have passed to a certain Isaac Alves Rebello who disposed of them early in the nineteenth century to a consortium of collectors which included Richard Miles. A coin of Eadweard the Elder once in the Rebello collection is now in Copenhagen: Copenhagen Sylloge 687 ex Montagu (1895) 596 ex Marsham (1888) 159 ex Rebello (Ruding, op. cit. ii, p. 298 and iii, pl. 28, no. 2).
7 He was probably a customer of the dealer John White. See remarks on coin 29 below.
8 The collection had been for some years on loan to the Department of Coins and Medals. The department was in 1877 engaged on a thorough overhaul of its holdings and it seems clear that the Keeper of Coins and Medals had suggested to the Bank that the ownership of the collection should now be formally transferred to the museum.
9 Details of the transaction are given in the Trustees' Minutes for 1877.
10 Sotheby 13.7.1877 (English); 13.2.1878 (Greek); 8-9.4.1878 (Medals and Miscellaneous).
England Gift 1877—for they have not been separated from those in the Bank collection which did not derive from Austen—and this Bank provenance has effectively obscured their true history.

So much by way of an introduction. It remains to present the results of an investigation into the fate of one particular group of coins which once belonged to Austen. It happens that in at least one respect Austen’s collection as listed in 1812 corresponds exactly to the known content of the Bank collection in 1877. In 1877 the Bank collection contained 67 coins which fell under the general heading Anglo-Saxon: 35 retained by the British Museum (which are all listed in *BMC Anglo-Saxon Series*) and 32 described in the catalogue of a duplicate sale held at Sotheby’s on 13 July 1877. Both in number and in identity these neatly match the sixty-seven Anglo-Saxon coins listed by Combe and Miles.¹ This means that between 1812 and 1877 the Bank authorities made no additions at all to this part of Austen’s collection and that if an Anglo-Saxon coin’s pedigree can be traced back to the Bank collection it must once have belonged to Austen. The discovery is of some importance. It enables the numismatist to say that about forty interesting coins known today must have come to light before Austen’s death in 1797 and he can in consequence discuss with much more confidence questions that arise about their attribution, authenticity, and likely connection with hoards; when their history could not be taken back before 1877 the problems the coins present could not be seen in so sharp a focus. It also raises the possibility that similar investigations into other portions of Austen’s collection would yield similar results. It is unlikely that in other series the Bank authorities were quite so content to leave Austen’s collection as it stood; but it seems that it could well be possible to work out the nature and scope of the additions they made and, in the light of this, trace many other coins back to the end of the eighteenth century.

A detailed analysis of the sixty-seven coins involved follows. The entries in Combe and Miles’s list are reproduced in italics and a full identification of each coin is given underneath. Points of interest about the collection are noted in passing.

Two stycas copper


Eight sceattas silver


Coins of Eadberht of Northumbria and sceattas of these *BMC* types were common in eighteenth-century collections. The coin of ‘Æthilræd’ is by contrast of extreme rarity; only nine specimens of the

¹ One unimportant discrepancy is discussed in the remarks on coins 22 and 23 below.
type are known today. If Austen's coin is one of these it is likely to be that in the possession of Cdr. R. P. Mack, which comes from the collection of William Brice, formed on the London market before 1887.

One Cuthred

Two Offa—with head

Two Coenwulf—with heads

One Coenwulf—without head

One Berhtwulf

Two Burgred

Two St. Eadmund, King of the East Angles

These were coins struck during Eadmund's reign (855–870), not coins of St. Eadmund memorial type. Coins of memorial type were not common in the eighteenth century and their absence from Austen's collection is not particularly surprising.

Two Æthelstan Do.

Where Combe and Miles list two coins of Æthelstan, the bank collection in fact contained one coin of Æthelstan of East Anglia (c. 825–c. 840) and one coin of his successor Æthelweard (c. 840–c. 855). The discrepancy is not disturbing. Coins of Æthelweard closely resemble those of Æthelstan (they were struck at the same mint from dies cut by the same engraver) and it is likely that Combe and Miles simply failed to read the obverse legend of the second coin with sufficient attention. They placed these coins after those of Eadmund in their list because they supposed that their issuer was Æthelstan II of East Anglia (Guthrum) (878–90).

One Ciolwulf

Combe and Miles supposed this to be a coin of Ciolwulf II (874–7).

One Egbert—with the head

Two Ethelwulf

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Two Æthelbert


It is satisfactory to establish that BMC 63 has an eighteenth-century provenance. Coins of this type are scarce today by comparison with coins of Name on Cross type, but in collections formed before the discovery of a hoard of coins of the latter type at Dorking in 1817 the two types tended to be equally represented.

In addition to these two coins of Æthelberht there was at one time in Austen’s collection a coin of Name on Cross type that purported to be of Æthelberht’s brother Æthelbald (king in Wessex 855–60). It is mentioned in a passage in Ruding’s *Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain* which is worth quoting in full.¹

Æthelbald. Of this monarch, who ascended the throne upon the death of his father in 857, no money is now known to exist. But in a set of plates of Anglo-Saxon coins, which was engraved by Hall, under the direction, as it is believed, of Mr. John White, of Newgate-street, a penny is ascribed to him. In type it is exactly similar to No. 1 of Ethelwulf in plate xiv., and has on its sides the following legend: obverse, AETHELBALD REX.—reverse, BEAHMUND MONETA. To this engraving the late Dr. Combe has referred in his Ms., and has marked the coin as being in the cabinet of Mr. Austin, where he assured me that he saw it, and had no doubt of its being a genuine coin. The coin, however, is not now in Mr. Austin’s collection, which was carefully examined by Mr. Taylor Combe. I have, notwithstanding, given the above account of this remarkable penny, because from Dr. Combe’s accuracy I am convinced he could not have been mistaken as to the existence of the coin; nor is it probable that the correctness of his eye could have been deceived by a forgery. The insertion of this description may possibly lead to the discovery of this valuable relic of the Anglo-Saxon mints.

Ruding’s reference to an examination of the collection by Taylor Combe is presumably a reference to the operations of Combe and Miles in 1812. Coins of Æthelbald are still unknown and it is hardly conceivable that Austen’s coin can have been genuine. Its association with John White of Newgate Street does nothing to advance its claims to authenticity and in fact rather suggests the character of the piece involved. It was in all probability a genuine coin of Name on Cross type of Æthelwulf or Æthelberht with the obverse legend tooled. Collections formed in the second half of the eighteenth century habitually contain coins tooled in this manner—there were at least two others in Austen’s collection (nos. 31 and 48 below)—and White happens to be the individual suspected of responsibility for this tooling.² It is likely, too, that the tooling of the legend of a coin that was otherwise genuine would have been the only kind of falsification that could have deceived a numismatist of the calibre of Dr. Combe.

Two Æthelred


The second coin is listed in BMC under Æthelred, but is a coin of Burgred with the beginning of the obverse legend tooled to give +ÆDL- instead of *BVRG-.³

One Ælfred—with the head—fine silver


This is perhaps the most important coin in the Austen collection. Now that its history can be taken back to the eighteenth century it may be identified as the specimen formerly in the collection of Dr. Richard Mead which is illustrated by Pegge, *Assemblage*, p. 98. It formed lot 5 of the Mead sale of genuine coins rather than in the production of struck or cast forgeries (cf. *BNJ* xxxiv (1965), p. 52).

¹ Ruding, op. cit., i, p. 124.
² There is a convenient summary of the literature on White in an article by C. E. Blunt and J. D. A. Thompson, ‘Forgery in the Anglo-Saxon Series’, *BNJ* xxviii, pt. 1 (1955), pp. 18–25. In recent years it has become clearer that White specialized in the tooled obverse legend were condemned, *BNJ* xxxiv (1965), p. 15.
Robert Austen and the Bank of England Collection

(Langford 11-19.2.1755), of which there is an excellent catalogue, Museum Meadianum, drawn up by the Revd. George North, a numismatist of considerable talent.

One Æfred—with the head—had silver

One Eadward the elder—with the head

One Eadward the elder—without the head

Two Æthelstan—with the head

One Æthelstan—without the head

One Eadmund—with the head

Two Eadmund—without the head

One Eadred—with the head

One Eadwig

One Eadgar

One St. Peter

One Sithric

One Anlaf—reverse the Raven

One Eric

This is a coin of Eadred with the obverse legend tooled to give ERICVS REX A instead of EADRED REX A. Recognition of it as a tooled forgery enables Hunred to be removed from the list of Eric’s moneyers (now reduced in this type to Ingelgar, Radulf, and Ulfelm); and removes the need to explain the abnormality of the obverse legend. No genuine coins of Eric carry his name in a Latinized form. I am indebted to Mr. C. E. Blunt for the suggestion that the coin might prove to be a tooled forgery; and to Dr. J. P. C. Kent for confirming this suspicion.
Three Eadward the Martyr

These coins must derive from the same find as the long run of coins of this period and region acquired by Austen's friend William Hunter and now also in Glasgow.

Four Æthelred the Second

Two Cnut

One Harold I

Four Edward the Confessor

Five Harold the Second