Seventeen gold coins contained in the broken base of an earthenware flower-pot¹ were found on 23 October 1970 by Mr. R. F. Farrance during repair work being carried out at Boys Hall, Willesborough, near Ashford, Kent. The hoard was discovered in a loose patch of earth in the natural land surface below the floor-boards at the foot of the main post in the hall of the house. Boys Hall was built by Thomas Boys in 1632 using materials brought from The Moat, Sevington, and his descendants lived in the house until the end of the eighteenth century.² The coins were declared treasure trove at an inquest held at Ashford on 6 April 1971.

The composition of the hoard was unusual: fourteen hammered coins from Henry VIII to Charles I and three milled coins of George I dated between 1715 and 1720. Among the hammered coins it is remarkable that apart from the three unites of James I—all of different initial marks—no more than a single example of each denomination in each reign was present. The condition of the coins was also abnormal. The angel and the sovereign of Henry VIII were both bent but relatively unworn. The coins of James I were generally fairly worn; the Scottish unite had been pierced for suspension, and the double crown was an obverse brockage. The unite of Charles I of 1625, the latest of the hammered pieces, had also seen some circulation and the 3/4 ducat of Maastricht was in similar condition. All three guineas of George I were worn and if anything the latest coin of 1720 was in worse condition than the others. The final deposition of the hoard is therefore difficult to date precisely but is probably to be placed somewhere around 1725–30.

Since hammered coins were not finally demonetized until 1733³ it is at least a possibility that the Willesborough coins could have been recovered gradually from circulation. The abrupt closure of the hammered element in 1625, and in the complete absence of both later hammered coins and the common milled issues of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries make it virtually certain, however, that we are here dealing with an earlier hoard or the remnant of one. The original hoard had probably been gathered together a year or so after 1625 or at least had not been added to much after that date. The presence of the two fine gold coins of Henry VIII in good condition in such a context is not easy to explain except on the grounds of chance survival, although the baser gold issues of Henry VIII are known from hoards buried in the reign of Charles I.⁴ The one-of-each composition suggests that only a small

¹ A note on the container kindly provided by my colleague Mr. John Cherry is appended.
² Lilian Boys Behrens, Under Seven Kings (London, 1926), p. 98.
³ In 1701 Sir Isaac Newton estimated that about 8 per cent of the gold coins in circulation were still hammered. See Sir John Craig, The Mint, p. 193.
⁴ e.g. a crown of Henry VIII's Third Coinage was present in the 1957 Newark hoard buried in 1641 (BNJ xxxvii (1968), p. 138. Bibliography, EP 20.) The Botley (Bucks.) hoard buried in 1633 also contained a crown of Henry VIII as well as a ryal of Edward IV which, if it was not a later continental imitation, suggests that fine gold coins might occasionally survive to be included in hoards of the reign of Charles I (NC 1890, p. 48. Bibliography, EP 28.)
sample of the hoard may have survived. The coins could have come from a local hoard unearthed shortly before the final deposition but it seems more plausible to suggest that the original hoard also was concealed in Boys Hall. The hoard could have been recently rediscovered in 1725–30 or have been handed down from one generation of the family to the next until that date when for some reason it was dispersed except for a few representative pieces. The occasion for this may have been some entirely personal crisis, but the date of c. 1725–30 may have a wider significance. It might well be that the Great Recoinage, culminating for the gold in the act of 1733, caused family hoards of old coins to be brought out of hiding, reappraised, and largely dispersed. The eighteenth-century owner may have had no better reason for keeping some of the coins than a vague scruple against the total destruction of the family hoard, even making a token addition to it himself, but if we are dealing with only a part of a bigger original deposit it is difficult, for once, not to see some antiquarian interest in the choice of the coins to be preserved. We may, however, be dealing with the complete original hoard and if so an alternative interpretation is possible. If the augmented hoard was replaced in the same position as the earlier one it may be that the hoard, sited at the foot of the principal timber in the house, with its one-of-each composition of coins of anomalous type and condition for a currency hoard and closing with a circulated coin of 1625, can be explained as a foundation deposit placed in his new house by Thomas Boys in 1632, rediscovered in the eighteenth century in the same way as in the twentieth when repairs were being done to the fabric of the building.

CATALOGUE OF CONTENTS

References

| Henry VIII | C. A. Whitton, *BNJ* xxvi (1949), pp. 56–89 |
| James I | J. P. C. Kent, Arrangement in B.M. trays |
| Brabant | A. Delmonte, *Le Bénéfice d’Or*, 1944 |

ENGLAND

**Henry VIII**

1st Coinage 1509–26

1. **Angel**
   - i.m. portcullis. Whitton type iii 2, FR/A
   - Same obverse die as B.M. coin ex Roberts

3rd Coinage 1544–7

2. **Sovereign**
   - i.m. lis. Tower mint. Whitton type II(b)2, C×d
   - Same dies as his no. 6 in B.M.

**James I**

2nd Coinage 1604–19

3. **Unite**
   - i.m. lis. Bust 2 Harp 1 FRAN ET HIB
   - Same dies as B.M. coin 1964/12/3/32

4. **,,**
   - i.m. escallop. Bust 2 Harp 1 FRAN ET HIB
   - Same dies as B.M. coin 1946/10/4/646

5. **,,**
   - i.m. coronet. Bust 2 Harp 2 FRA ET HI

| wt./gr. | 151.8 |
| 153.2 |
| 152.3 |
6. **Double crown**
   i.m. coronet. 4th Bust Obverse brockage
   76·1*

7. **Britain crown**
   i.m. trefoil. 1st Bust 1st Harp 1st Crown
   36·3

8. **Half-crown**
   i.m. tun. 4th Bust 1st Harp 1st Crown
   Same obverse die as unprovenanced B.M. coin
   18·3

9. **Thistle crown**
   i.m. coronet. 1st crown on both sides
   Same dies as B.M. coin 1859/5/29/12
   29·9

3rd Coinage 1619-25

10. **Half-laurel**
    i.m. lis. 3rd Bust 2nd Harp 2nd Crown
    ‘x’ very low in field beside bow
    **HENRIC’...IACOB’**
    68·2

11. **Quarter-laurel**
    i.m. lis. 1st Bust 2nd Harp 3rd Crown
    **IACOBVS/HENRICVS...IACOBVS**
    lis after **REGNA**
    33·1

    **CHARLES I**

12. **Unite**
    i.m. lis. 1st Bust **BR’ FR’ HI**
    Schneider Group A Class II No. 8
    Bust I, Harp B, shield 2
    137·9*

13. **Guinea**
    1715
    127·9

14. **”**
    1719
    129·5

15. **”**
    1720
    127·8

**SCOTLAND**

**JAMES VI**

2nd Coinage after accession to English throne 1609-25

16. **Unite**
    i.m. thistle. Stewart 204. Small lettering on both sides. Pierced.
    Obverse die duplicate of B.M. coin 1937/5/13/2 ex Wantage T.T.
    151·8

**BRABANT**

**ALBERT AND ELIZABETH 1598-1621**

17. **Albertin**
    (§ ducat) 1600 i.m. star (Maastricht mint)
    Delmonte 164.
    2·81 g.
    43·3*

**DISPOSITION OF THE COINS**

The coins marked by an asterisk in the catalogue have been acquired by the British Museum which rewarded the finder with their market value. As the local museum was not in a position to acquire the remainder of the coins they were returned to the finder in lieu of further reward. A complete photographic record of the hoard was made before the coins were dispersed and may be consulted at the British Museum.
THE WILLESBOROUGH HOARD POT
JOHN CHERRY

The base of the vessel containing the hoard (see Fig. 1) survived to a height of 3½ in. It was made of a plain red fabric, and lacked any traces of either glaze of decoration. The fabric, however, does not appear inconsistent with an early eighteenth-century date. The hole through the base of the pot appeared intentional rather than accidental and suggests the possibility that it may have been a flower pot.

FIG. 1