THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COIN HOARD
FROM PILLATON HALL, STAFFS.

P. H. ROBINSON

There are relatively few coin hoards from Staffordshire deposited during the century following the Civil War which are known today and, to the writer’s knowledge, one only has been published. Apart from this one and the Pillaton hoard, the subject of this note, the writer has been able to trace only three other finds of this date and these may be summarized as follows:

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME (1824)

‘Four large gold pieces’ of James I, Charles I (2), and James II together with 207 silver coins none of which were later in date than the reign of James II were found in a jar of ‘brown colour and of simple form’, with a capacity of about one pint. The first three of the gold coins were presumably unites. If the last was indeed of James II and was also of similar size to these, it may have been a two-guinea piece.

Deposit: Uncertain date, probably within the reign of James II, although it is possible that, in spite of the absence of coins of William and Mary and William III, this was a hoard associated with the recoining of 1695–7.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 1 May 1824.1

MOSS PIT, STAFFORD (1864)

An unstated number of guineas of Charles II, James II, Anne, George I, and George II were found in a ‘small, highly glazed delf pot’ together with crown pieces and shillings of the same period.

Deposit: Uncertain date, probably within the reign of George II. It is possible that this hoard is to be associated with the ‘45 Rebellion.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 13 February 1864.2

1 Ingestre Hall (1798), Bibliography ES 10, and I. D. Brown, ‘Some Notes on the Coinage of Elizabeth I with special reference to her hammered silver’ BNJ xxviii (1955–7), p. 603, no. 183, both citing GM 1798, p. 922. See also Stebbing Shaw, History and Antiquities of Staffordshire, ii, part 1, 1801, p. 2 of the Additions and Correcions to the General History &c. in volume I. The apparent absence of coins struck under the Commonwealth in this find which was deposited probably during the reign of Charles II and which included coins of Charles I is paralleled in the hoard from Upwey, Dorset (G. K. Jenkins ‘The Upwey Treasure Trove’, NC 1949, pp. 261 f.), while it may be noted that the Yearby find deposited in 1697 produced only one Commonwealth coin out of a total of 1,197 coins (J. P. C. Kent, ‘The Yearby (Redcar) Hoard’, BNJ xxvii (1952–4), pp. 294 ff.). On 7 September 1661 Charles II declared by Royal Proclamation that coins of the Commonwealth should cease to be current after 30 November 1661.

2 The supposed discovery in a canal warehouse not far from Wolverhampton at an unknown date in the last century of what was believed to have been the military paychest of the Young Pretender (Sir Frederick Wrottesley, ‘Mr. Justice Talford and the Cannock Chase Mining Cause of 1842’, SHC 1947, p. 35) may also be mentioned. The present writer has been unable to confirm this report and would propose that it be treated with caution.

3 I am indebted to Mr. R. J. Sherlock for the references to this and the following find.
SLITTING MILL, RUGELEY (1932)

An uncertain number of coins said in one report to date from the seventeenth century and in another to be of both that and the following century were found 'in the walls' of the Old Mill House when it was pulled down to make way for a new pumping station for the South Staffs. Waterworks Company. It is not absolutely certain that these constituted a hoard; they may have been a number of stray coins.

Deposit: Uncertain date, probably in the first half of the eighteenth century.


Several, generally brief, summaries of the Pillaton hoard have appeared in print already.¹ The original account of a discovery of coins at Pillaton Hall² is a manuscript drawn up in 1742 by Frances Littleton, mother of Sir Edward Littleton, the fourth baronet, at the time of the discovery of the first section of the hoard. In this she listed the contents of the twenty-five purses (or money bags) then found, which contained English and foreign gold coins and English silver coins, and, with the exception of purse 24, gave the current values of the coins. Purse 24 contained English and Scottish hammered gold coins which since 1733 had not been legal tender. To this document a brief addition was made later to record the discovery in September 1749 of a further £5,763, which, it shall be seen, formed in fact the third part of the same hoard. This addition is in the form of a sum with a brief explanatory note by the side. Before, however, adding the £5,763 to the total of the twenty-four purses from the first part of the find (incorrectly put down as £8,525. 13s. 3d.), there was first added to the larger sum the figure £1,460. 11s. This figure is not explained in the manuscript, indeed an unknown other person has commented by it that ‘there does not seem to be any detail taken of the sum of £1660. 11. 0 [sic]’. It was, however, noted by the side of the total of the two that this was the sum found on 15 January 1741 (i.e. 1742 by modern reckoning). The £1,460. 11s. presumably represents a second discovery of coins very shortly after the first, but after the list of the twenty-five purses forming the first part of the find had been drawn up. In all, there were then three discoveries of coins.

A silver gilt chalice and patten of early sixteenth-century date, both now in the Victoria and Albert Museum³ have also been said to have been discovered with the hoard.⁴ This is not noted in the manuscript and the source for the statement which, it appears was first made in print in 1885, is uncertain. For this reason, most recently C. C. Oman was inclined to doubt that the chalice and patten were indeed found with

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² The history of Pillaton Hall has been given most recently in VCH Staffs. v, pp. 119 f.


⁴ For example, W. H. St. John Hope, op. cit., and Sir C. J. Jackson, op. cit., and C. C. Oman, op. cit.
Another slightly later account records that the chalice, and presumably the patten also, were found bricked up in the walls of the chapel of St. Modwena by the side of Pillaton Hall, and the authority for this statement is given as Lord Hatherton quoting a family tradition. J. C. Tildesley, who gave an early, independent account of the hoard, says nothing directly concerning the findspot of the plate but does mention that it belonged to the chapel. This may suggest that he knew of this tradition, but probably not one that it had been found with the coins, as otherwise he would surely have mentioned it. There is no reason why the chalice and patten should not have been found with the coin hoard, for the second and third portions are very badly documented, while the purpose of the list of the first section may have been merely to count out or list a large and complex sum of money rather than be a detailed inventory of all items found (if there were any further items). However, the alternative tradition is perhaps slightly to be preferred for two reasons—that we are certain of the source for it and that the existence of an alternative tradition when there must be an obvious tendency to associate the discovery of the plate (if indeed there ever was one as such) with that of such a dramatic find of coins, suggests that it may very well be the true one. It may then very tentatively be concluded that the chalice and patten were probably not found with the coins.

The circumstances of the discovery appear to be somewhat uncertain. On 2 January 1741/2, on the death without issue of Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet, the extensive Littleton estates and title descended to Sir Edward Littleton, the fourth baronet (1727–1812), and son of Fisher Littleton (d. 1740). This latter Sir Edward Littleton was responsible for the demolition of Pillaton Hall and the building of the present Teddesley Hall to replace it as the new family seat. The date when demolition began is uncertain, but a Lady Littleton was still living at Pillaton Hall in 1754, while Teddesley Hall itself is believed to have been built during the 1750s. The coin hoard is invariably stated to have been discovered during the demolition of the hall, and the source for this assertion is the title to the manuscript account of the find, quoted below. The title is, however, not a contemporary one but was appended by 'W. L.', perhaps the Hon. William Francis Littleton (1847–89), who would have been writing after the middle of the nineteenth century. It is extremely unlikely that demolition could have begun as early as 1742 and certainly quite impossible for it to have been instituted so soon—thirteen days only—after Sir Edward Littleton inherited Pillaton Hall. If there is any truth at all in this assertion, then possibly the final portion discovered in 1749 may have been found during the demolition. How, therefore, the discovery of the first section was made remains uncertain. It will be argued below, however, that the hoard was deposited by Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet, at an uncertain date between

1 Victoria and Albert Museum, Departmental Ledger re the chalice and patten.
4 A study of Sir Edward Littleton, the fourth baronet, has recently been published—M. W. Farr, 'Sir Edward Littleton's Fox Hunting Diary, 1774–1789', SHC 4th ser. vi (1970), pp. 136–70. On his death in 1812 his estates and the representation of his family devolved upon his grandnephew, Edward John Walhouse, who took the name Littleton and who was created Baron Hatherton in 1835.
5 VCH Staffs. v, p. 120.
6 M. W. Farr, op. cit., p. 136. Sir Edward Littleton was in fact in occupation in 1754 but at that time the building was not completed (VCH Staffs. v, p. 183).
7 The title was certainly added after 1812, since the fourth baronet is described as 'the last Sir Edward Littleton', and the first possible W.L. in the Littleton family after that date is this Hon. W. F. Littleton.
1722 and 1742. The fact that the supposed discovery of the first section was made so very soon after Sir Edward Littleton, the fourth baronet, inherited the title and the estate suggests strongly that the hoard may in fact never have been lost at all, but that either the hoard or the place of concealment were brought to the notice of Sir Edward Littleton and his mother virtually immediately on their arrival at Pillaton Hall by persons such as the solicitors of Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet, or, more probably, by his executors. It is not at all unlikely that some or all of those who added their signatures to that of Frances Littleton on the manuscript following the discovery of the first section, may have been such persons. This factor, of course, in no way affects our interest in, and the importance of, the hoard.

The manuscript itself reads as follows:

(Page 41) An Act. of the / money found at / Pileton 1741. Jan: 15 / 1749 Sept.)/ behind an oak casement / when the last Sir / Edward Littleton / pulled the House / down. W. L.

(Page 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>17 Single Johns</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Moydore</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>half a Moydore</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>113</td>
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<td>3 Single Johns</td>
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<table>
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<th>No.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>18 Moydores</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 That Sir Edward Littleton died without issue some seventy years after the discovery of the first section of the hoard would help to explain how an incorrect assumption concerning the original discovery of the coins could have arisen.

2 The manuscript has been deposited in the Staffordshire County Records Office where its reference number is D/260/M/F/4/8, pp. 38-41.

3 In 1722 John V introduced into Portugal a new gold coinage based on the gold escudo of 1,600 reis. Originally the 8-escudo piece was popularly named the Johannes or John or, in the British West Indies, the Joe, but later the 4-escudo piece was improperly given this name (A. R. Frey, Dictionary of Numismatic Names (1947), p. 68). From the values ascribed to these coins in the manuscript it may be seen that here John represents the 4-escudo piece. In 1727 the type of this coin was introduced into Brazil, coins from this country being differentiated solely by the mint initials placed on the reverse.

4 A gold coin struck first in Portugal in 1677 under Peter II. It was marked at 4,000 reis but in 1688 its value was extended by 20 per cent, and it passed at this rate until the termination of the issue by John V in 1722, although the coins continued to be marked at the old rate. In 1695 the denomination was introduced into Brazil where it continued until 1727, with a brief revival some time later. From 1703 the types for the Portuguese coins were adopted for the Brazilian issues, which may only be differentiated from the coins struck in Portugal by the mint initials placed on the reverse.
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THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COIN HOARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>109 Moydores</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>14 half Johns</td>
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<td>14.14</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1 5 Guinea piece</td>
<td>5.05</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 French Pistole†</td>
<td>16.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>248.46</td>
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† i.e. the Louis d’or, a French gold coin first struck in 1640 by Louis XIII and continuing until 1789. In the seventeenth century its value fluctuated between 10 and 14 livres; in the eighteenth century it was rated between 15 and 36 livres until it was eventually stabilized at 24 livres. See further below (p. 129 n. 8).
FROM PILLATON HALL, STAFFS.

No. 23 Silver

No. 24 18 Sceptres

20 and 2 quarter Broads

No. 25 8½ Guineas

Silver

£ s. d.

38 7 6

10 15 6

15 Jan. 1741 this Acc. was taken in y° Presence / of us

Frances Littleton

Sam Hill

Rich Wilkes

S. James

(Please note)

£ s. d.

8525 13 3

1460 11 0

There does not seem to be any
detail taken of the sum of £1660. 11. 0.

9985 04 3

1741 January 15. Found in the chest in

the Parlour.

5763 00 00

was overlooked and found in 1749. Sepr.

15749 04 3

There are a few errors in the manuscript. In purse no. 1 the 17 Single Johns should

be valued at £30. 12s. and not £30. 8s., and the 108½ guineas at £113. 18s. 6d. and not

£113. 10s. 6d. The total of the twenty-four purses is 6d. short. Finally the value of the

solitary French pistole in purse no. 22 has been erroneously written down as 16s.

instead of 16s. 9d. 8 Thus the actual total of the twenty-four purses in the first section of

the find is £8,526. 6s. 6d. and that of all three sections £15,749. 17s. 6d.

1 Popular name for the Scottish hammered gold coin first struck in 1604 and valued originally at £12

(Scottish) and 20s. (English).

2 i.e. the unite or 20s.-piece.

3 i.e. Walter Gough of Perry Hall, Handsworth (1713-73); of the same family as Richard Gough, the

antiquary.

4 Presumably the Samuel Hill (d. 1782), who was a member of the Hawkstone, Shrop., family and who

in 1713 purchased the manor of Weston Jones, Staffs. (VCH Staffs. iv, p. 159).

5 Presumably the John Biddulph who leased land in the Cannock and Rugeley areas for industrial

purposes from 1734 onwards (VCH Staffs. v, pp. 63 and 161 f.), and who in 1752 and 1761 gave in trust

land in Cannock to help support the school there (ibid., p. 71). He may or may not have been a member of

the Biddulph family of Elmhurst, a John Biddulph of which died in 1772 (Steebing Shaw, History and

Antiquities of Staffordshire, i (1798), p. 352).

6 i.e. Dr. Richard Wilkes (1691-1760) of Willenhall, Staffs., the fashionable doctor and antiquary on whom

see most recently N. W. Tildesley, 'Dr. Richard Wilkes an Eighteenth-century County Doctor', Transactions

of the Lichfield and South Staffs. Archaeological and Historical Society, vii (1965-6), pp. 2-10. No mention

of the supposed discovery appears in Wilkes's diary (inf. from Mr. N. W. Tildesley).

7 The writer has not been able to identify this person.

8 The value in English coin of the French pistole is given as 16s. 9d. by Sir Isaac Newton (Table of

Foreign Silver and Gold Coins (1700)). There is no evidence that the louis d’or was ever valued as low

as 16s. although the term ‘pistole’ can also refer to other continental gold coins passing current at

mainly (but not entirely) between 16s. and 16s. 6d. (Snelling, Current Coins of Europe, 1766, p. 12. ‘The

Modern Universal Table’ in the London Magazine (Nov. 1769). J. Ede, A View of the Gold and Silver

Coins of All Nations (1808), pp. 34 ff.). The term was used also to describe various foreign gold coins

which passed current for approximately double this sum (J. Ede, ibid.). Sir Isaac Newton also uses the

term to describe a French gold coin which passed current in 1700 for 20s. 6d. The writer is unable to

identify this coin; those English money weights marked ‘(one) pistole’ which he has seen, which date from

approximately 1700 and certainly refer to a French coin, all correspond to the louis d’or and are the

equivalent of 16s. 9d. or thereabouts in English coin, valuing the guinea at 21s.
That the coins were found on either two or three separate occasions might at first
suggest that the three groups are unlikely to belong to one single hoard. The total of the
three sections, excluding for the moment purse no. 24, is only 2s. 6d. short of 15,000
guineas, a figure which is most unlikely to be coincidental, and the discrepancy may be
explained by the loss or miscounting of a single coin. Furthermore, the totals of each of
the three sections vary in small amounts from round figures in guineas: that of the first
section is only £21. 6s. 6d. over 8,100 guineas, while that of the second part is 9 guineas
short of 1,400 guineas and the third, £15 short of 5,500 guineas. Finally, it may be noted
that the author of the manuscript assumed that the three sections belonged together,
while the use of the phrase ‘was overlooked’ suggests very strongly that the third section
was discovered in a place very close to where the first two sections had been found.
It is, therefore, most probable that the three sections did belong to a single hoard and
at one time were stored together so that small amounts of money could be transferred
from purse to purse. Later, possibly for added security, when the sum was concealed,
it was split up into three portions. This must mean also that the hammered gold coins
in purse no. 24 are to be considered as essentially separate from the main hoard.
Although, as has been stated, these coins remained in circulation until 1733, the fact
that they do not appear in any of the other purses may support this hypothesis. This
problem is examined further below (p. 132).

It is unfortunate that a few further details of the individual coins found in the first
section have not been given. It would be of great interest to know how the £80 purses
containing silver coin were made up. Certainly the irregular figures given in purses 2
and 25 indicate that some low-denomination coins were present. The total of the silver
coin is £639. 12s. 3d. excluding the missing 2s. 6d.

Most of the gold coin is English: in the first section, excluding purse no. 24, there is
£7,417. 4s. (7,064 guineas) as opposed to only £469. 10s. 3d. in foreign gold coin. Apart
from the solitary French pistole, i.e. louis d’or, this is entirely in Portuguese or Brazilian
coin, but without further details of the coins it cannot be determined from which of
these two countries these coins came. Only the 5-moidore piece and the 2½-moidore
piece may be said to be definitely Brazilian as these denominations were not issued in
Portugal.

Again, for the number of each type of coin in the first section the manuscript is not of
great help. The johns are always counted separately and may be summarized as follows:

Dobra de 8 escudos (12,800 reis) = double john: 15 examples
4 (6,400 reis) = john: 69
2 (3,200 reis) = half john: 14
1 (1,600 reis) = quarter john: 1 example
½ (800 reis) = eighth john: no examples

However, although the different denominations of the moidores in purses 1 and 22
are counted separately, in purse no. 2 they are not. It is, therefore, not absolutely certain
whether the moidores in purses 3–7 are in single 4,000-reis coins or whether they,
together with purse no. 2, include any 2,000-reis coins or even any further 10,000-

1 The Portuguese 16- and 24- escudo pieces dated 1731 were not placed in circulation and may, therefore, be
omitted from this table.
or 20,000-reis pieces. If we ignore these purses, the number of different coins of this denomination may be summarized as follows:

- Marked 20,000 reis = 5-moidore piece: 1 example
- 10,000 reis = 2½-moidore piece: 1
- 4,000 reis = moidore: 115 examples
- 2,000 reis = half moidore: 1 example
- 1,000 reis = quarter moidore: no examples
- 400 reis = one tenth moidore: no examples

The apparent predominance of the 4,000-reis coin suggests that the greater part of the remaining 82½ moidores in purses 2–7 may also have been in 4,000-reis pieces.

The position is similar with regard to the English gold coins. In purse no. 22 the 5-guinea piece is counted separately whereas in purses 1, 4, 7, and 25 guineas and ½-guineas and possibly other coins also are counted together. It is in consequence impossible to determine the number of examples of each different coin, but the absence of a reference to 2-guinea pieces may be remarked upon, for it is difficult to imagine that examples of this coin were not present in the first part of the find.

Because of the inadequacy of the evidence, the date of the final deposition of the coins may be determined only within very broad limits. The conclusion reached by Sir Frederick Wrottesley was that the hoard represented the accumulated savings of Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet, a relatively shadowy figure who was born c. 1672, succeeded his grandfather in 1710, and died only a short while before the discovery of the first section of the hoard. The latter conclusion, which was arrived at also by C. C. Oman, is undoubtedly correct. However, the fact that the total of the three sections was almost certainly originally 15,000 guineas exactly, makes it more likely that the coins represent a substantial reserve in current coin put aside by the depositor. The absence of banknotes in the first portion of the find may support the view that the coin hoard is not to be seen simply as a strong-box with its contents, but was in essence a bullion deposit. This, however, involves the assumption that banknotes did not occur in either of the other two sections. Moreover, even as late as the second quarter of the eighteenth century banknotes were still somewhat of a novelty in England and the possible omission of banknotes in a deposit of this size might possibly merely reflect the idiosyncrasies of the depositor. Although there is no recorded coin hoard from this period with which it may satisfactorily be compared, the Pillaton hoard does, however, bear comparison with the manuscript list of the contents of the strongbox of Henry, fourth Earl of Drogheda, drawn up shortly after his death in 1727. This is examined in more detail

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1 A 32,000-reis coin, which would have been an 8-moidore piece, was prepared in 1711 but not placed in circulation, it may, therefore, be omitted here.
3 There is very little information available on the life of Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet. He was sheriff of the county in 1712–13 but would appear, unlike many of his predecessors, to have otherwise avoided public office. Among the relatively few family documents which have survived from his time and which at present are deposited in the Staffordshire County Record Office, none offer any good reason why he should have put aside this sum of money. Equally, there appears to be no political or economic event which took place in the period c. 1722–42 and which would satisfactorily explain the deposit. It may, however, be relevant that the third baronet's wife Mary (d. 18 April 1761) was a daughter of Sir Richard Hoare M.P., a member of the banking family and Lord Mayor of London.
below (p. 134) but it may be noted at this point that £12,535 of the total of approximately £14,400 was made up in banknotes.

This will mean that the hoard was made up into its final form after 1717 when the value of the guinea was finally fixed at 21s. Sir Frederick Wrottesley also believed the latest coin represented in the hoard to be the john which was ‘not coined before 1703’ (in fact 1722), but the latest coins which may be identified in the manuscript are the 5-moidore and 2 1/2-moidore pieces which were issued only between 1724 and 1727.

There remains, however, the question of the absence of English hammered gold coins in those purses of the first section of the hoard which contained mixed gold coin, coupled with the presence of what, in the present writer’s opinion, must be interpreted as a separate purse, no. 24, containing solely hammered gold coins. The manuscript plainly records that this purse was found in direct association with the other purses of the first section, and there appear to be two main alternative interpretations of its presence. The find spot may have been a place regularly used for the concealment of coin and other valuables and thus purse no. 24 may represent money which had been put aside a long time before the deposition of the main hoard. Alternatively purse no. 24 may have contained hammered gold coins which originally did form part of the main hoard but which were removed from it in or before 1733 when they became no longer legal tender; current gold coins will then have been substituted for them so that the hoard should continue to total exactly 15,000 guineas in current coin and, finally, for some unknown reason the extra purse of hammered gold coins was left with the first section. Chronologically the implication of the first would be that the Pillaton hoard was deposited after 1733, since it apparently included no hammered gold coins. It must be allowed, however, that the extent of the circulation of hammered gold coin in England in the two decades or so prior to 1733 is very imperfectly known\(^1\) so that the validity of this is questionable. The second interpretation would restrict the date of the deposition of the hoard to between c. 1724 and 1733 and allow that alterations may have been made to the hoard after its deposition. It would also then follow that, if this is accepted as a possibility, then it is equally possible that the single 5-moidore and 2 1/2-moidore pieces may perhaps have been among the later additions to the hoard. There is no way of choosing between these alternatives. The lower limit for the compilation must, therefore remain as 1722, the earliest date for the johns, which almost certainly represent too large an element in the hoard for them to represent later additions to it: the upper limit, in view of the inadequacies of our information on the find, must remain as 1742, the date of the death of the depositor.

Although the Pillaton hoard is probably to be interpreted in its final stage as a bullion deposit, it may not be assumed that the entire sum was necessarily made up at

\(^1\) Hammered gold coins are recorded from relatively few of the hoards deposited after 1697:

Stockerton, Leics. (deposit: c. 1698), Bibliography
GA 2. 62 N coins found including one unite of James I (i.m. trefoil), a ¼-unite of James I (i.m. lis) and a unite of Charles I (i.m. lis).

Liskeard, Cornwall (deposit: c. 1725), Bibliography
GB 3. 87 plus ? N coins found on two different occasions. On the latter in 1907, three of the thirty-one coins were identified as unites.

Oxford, Merton College (deposit: c. 1723), Bibliography
GB 4. 12 N coins found, of which one was a ¼-laurel of James I (i.m. lis).

Cardiff (deposit: uncertain date between 1697 and 1714), Bibliography
GB 8. 46 N and 33 plus ? R coins found. Three gold coins said to have been the size of 4-shilling pieces, may possibly have been unites.

Willesborough, Kent (deposit: c. 1725–30), Bibliography
—. 17 N coins found, 14 of which were hammered, but this seems to be a re-buried seventeenth-century hoard. See pp. 120–3 of this volume of the BNJ.
a single time or in a single place, as, for example, a bank. A sum of money particularly of this size might have its origin in two or more radically different sources, for example, savings accumulated by Sir Edward Littleton, the third baronet over a considerable period of years until some time after 1722, augmented by a sum of money withdrawn from a bank and added at the time of the final deposition to increase the size of the deposit, round it off to 15,000 guineas, or perhaps to replace banknotes. In view of these uncertainties, it may not be assumed that this hoard reflects the broad pattern of the gold currency in circulation either generally in England in about the second quarter of the eighteenth century, or, more specifically, in the west midlands. It is unfortunate that the hoard may not be used as positive evidence to confirm or refute Ruding's statement1 that at the beginning of the eighteenth century so much Portuguese2 gold coin was in circulation in this country that in the 'Western Counties' the gold coin in circulation was predominantly Portuguese. Bearing in mind that Staffordshire is not, strictly speaking, among the 'Western Counties' and that the date of the final deposition of the Pillaton hoard may be slightly later than that envisaged by Ruding, it may be seen that in the first portion of the hoard, the Portuguese–Brazilian coins make up only about 6 per cent of the over-all total value of the gold coin. The evidence from the relatively few other gold hoards of approximately the same period is equally unhelpful: one (Gawthorpe Hall, Lancs., Bibliography GC 3, deposited in 1745) contained numerically 43 per cent Portuguese–Brazilian gold coin, while a second (Liskeard, Cornwall, Bibliography GC 3, deposited c. 1725) may have contained 25 per cent. There are, however, other documented hoards of this period where the Portuguese–Brazilian element is either much smaller or completely non-existent.3

To what extent the pattern of the individual denominations represented in the Pillaton hoard may be said to illustrate even broadly that of the different coinages in circulation in England in about the second quarter of the eighteenth century is also uncertain, not only because of our ignorance of the exact composition of the hoard and the circumstances of its compilation and deposit, but also because of the lack of a sufficient number of other well-documented hoards of about the same date. Comparison of these hoards with that from Pillaton is difficult on account of its size and possible complexity as outlined above. Approximately twenty-five hoards only are known from this country deposited between 1697 and 1760. Of these only that from Pillaton is known to have included a French gold coin. The only other recorded occurrence of a French coin in an eighteenth-century English hoard is in one deposited as late as c. 1796 (Bridlington, Yorks, Bibliography GD 5). This would seem to imply that few French gold coins were apparently to be found in circulation in England in the eighteenth century. However, in complete contrast to this picture is evidence from the contents of

1 Annals (1817), i. p. 262.
2 The word is possibly loosely used and could be taken as including coins struck in Brazil.
3 For example that from Stockerston, Leics. (deposit: c. 1698), Bibliography GA 2. The Inkpen, Berks., and Upper Dean, Bedford, finds (deposit: c. 1719 and 1734 respectively, Bibliography GB 5 and GC 1) lack foreign gold coins but are admittedly tolerably small hoards. The same reason might explain the absence of foreign gold coins in the Moss Pit, Stafford, find (see above). The substantial hoard from Aveton Giffard, Devon (deposit: uncertain date prior to 1714), Bibliography GA 7, is unusual in that it consisted only of gold coins of Anne, and may represent coins withdrawn directly from a bank or similar source, rather than from general circulation. This would explain the absence of foreign gold coins here. Finally it may be noted that the Portuguese–Brazilian element in the strongbox, etc. of Henry, fourth Earl of Drogheda (see below, p. 134) was extremely small.
the strongbox of Henry, fourth Earl of Drogheda, listed shortly after his death in 1727\(^1\) and which may be summarized as follows:

- Banknotes: total of £12,535
- Guineas: 1038
- Hammered gold: 1 unite
- Crowns: 200\(^3\)
- Pistoles: 823\(^\frac{1}{2}\)
- Moidores: 20
- Ducats: 2

An additional sum of money in ‘my lord’s scrutore closet’ consisted of:

- Guineas: 53
- Hammered gold: 1 five-unite piece
- ‘English coin of before 1695’: total of £1. 13s. 9d.
  - excluding a forged crown
- ‘brass’: total of 1/11
- Moidores: 2
- Pistoles: 146\(^\frac{1}{2}\).

Even allowing that this is a single unsupported item of evidence, so that the predominance of pistoles may very well be exceptional, that the date and method of the original formation of the contents of the strongbox are quite uncertain, and particularly that it comes from Ireland where the pattern of the currency is historically distinct, nevertheless the inference is clearly that at the present state of our knowledge it would be premature to draw even broad conclusions regarding the pattern of the circulation of French\(^2\) gold coin in England in the eighteenth century from the surviving hoard evidence.

Turning to the other denominations, of the moidores it would appear possible that the 4,000-reis coin (passing current at 4,800 reis) may have been that most commonly met with in England at about the time of the deposition of the Pillaton hoard, with proportionately much fewer of the smaller and large-denomination coins. Three other hoards of the period 1697–1760 are known to have included these coins:

- **Merton College, Oxford (deposit: c. 1723), Bibliography GB 4.** Twelve \(A'/\) coins found including one \(\frac{1}{2}\)-moidore piece of John V (dated 1715 and minted at Bahia).

- **Liskeard, Cornwall (deposit: c. 1725), Bibliography GB 3.** Eighty-seven plus? \(A'/\) coins found on two separate occasions. The second, the only one of which details have survived, was found in 1907 and consisted of thirty-one coins of which eight were identified by a local jeweller as being ‘milreis’ pieces with a date range of 1682–1725 (i.e. of Peter II and John V). However, neither the 1,000-reis (\(\frac{1}{2}\)-moidore) nor the 2,000-reis piece were issued in 1682. This suggests that, unless this date is incorrect the coins must in fact have been 4,000-reis pieces, and ‘milreis’ may perhaps be tentatively seen as a slip for ‘moidores’.

- **Gawthorpe Hall, Lanes, (deposit: 1745), Bibliography GC 3.** Ninety-one \(A'/\) coins found of which thirty-nine were Portuguese–Brazilian. Two of these are anachronistically said to have been johns of Peter II dated 1693 and 1701. It is possible that these were 4,000-reis pieces as this coin is nearest in size and value to the john.

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1 Anne, Countess of Drogheda, *History of the Moore Family* (Belfast, 1902), p. 118. I am grateful to Mr. M. Dolley for bringing this list to my attention.

2 It is almost but not absolutely certain that the pistoles in this manuscript were French louis d’ors. See above, p. 129 n. 8.
Finally, it may be noted that the strongbox and 'scrutore closet' of Henry, fourth Earl of Drogheda included in all 22 moidores, but whether this was in 4,000-reis coins is not certain. Thus the evidence appears to confirm, within its very obvious limitations, the hypothesis that the 4,000-reis coin was the coin of that series most commonly found in circulation in England in the first half of the eighteenth century.

For the johns, the Pillaton hoard implies that the dobra de 4 escudos (6,400 reis) was the coin most commonly met with, but that both 8- and 2-escudos pieces were to be found in reasonable quantities while fewer of the smallest denominations appeared. The coin is attested in two other eighteenth-century hoards only:

Gawthorpe Hall, Lanes. (see above). This find included two dobras de 8 escudos of John V, dated 1730 and 1732; thirty-four dobras de 4 escudos of John V ranging in date from 1709 and 1745 and a single dobra de 2 escudos of John V, date not recorded.

Flemstead, Herts. (deposit: 1745), Bibliography GC 2. 100 AV and 195 AR coins found, including a solitary dobra de 2 escudos of John V, date not recorded.

This evidence does not contradict this impression although it is clear that further evidence is required before more satisfactory conclusions may be drawn concerning the circulation in England of these coins.

Finally, with regard to the disposition of the coins from the find, it has been said that the building of Teddesley Hall by Sir Edward Littleton to replace Pillaton Hall as the family seat, was largely defrayed by the coins from this find,¹ and as the greater majority of the coins were legal tender at the time of the discovery, it is quite likely that they may have passed once more into circulation within a short period of time in such a way as this. W. H. St. John Hope remarked in 1885 that none of the coins appeared to have survived.² ‘Pitman’, however, who was on close terms with the family, has written that a number of the coins were preserved within the family while others were deposited in the British Museum.³ The present writer has not, unfortunately, been able to locate as yet either group.

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¹ VCH Staffs. v, p. 183. It is perhaps more likely that Sir Edward Littleton’s decision to build Teddesley Hall was influenced by his inheritance of a surplus of £9,737 in coin, i.e. the first two sections of the hoard. ² Op. cit. (supra, p. 125 n. 1). ³ Op. cit. (supra, p. 125 n. 1), p. 53.