THE MONTROSE TREASURE TROVE, 1973

C. J. WOOD AND P. WOODHEAD

During work on a building site in Castle Street, Montrose, in the County of Angus, in 1973 a quantity of silver sterlings was recovered, apparently constituting a small hoard. The coins comprise 73 recovered by the police from workmen on the site on 3 October 1973, and a further 4 handed in separately by the Revd. J. Wilson, 3 of which were accompanied by a note stating that they were 'excavated during the erection of houses in Castle Street in August 1973', the fourth being in a separate envelope dated 4 October 1973. The coins are said to have been found in a leather satchel, although this did not survive for examination.

Subsequently the coins were declared treasure trove and were submitted to Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson, Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, who invited us to make a detailed analysis and report on the hoard.

The hoard is typical in its proportions to a number of others found in Scotland which were deposited in the 1320s and 1330s. All the coins are sterlings (pence); there are no fractional denominations. A summary breakdown is as follows:

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation of English Sterling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bearing in mind the circumstances of discovery we cannot be certain whether any of the coins originally in the hoard have strayed, but, if so, as far as can be judged with a hoard of this small size, any losses have not been selective and have not impaired its numismatic integrity.

The conditions of nearly all of the coins is poor, many showing signs of heavy wear; others are apparently poorly struck-up examples and some are clipped. The impression is that of current money concealed in some emergency rather than that of a savings hoard of selected pieces of good weight.

Date of deposit

The latest coins in the hoard are the sterlings of Fox Group XVb\(^1\) of the mints of Bury St. Edmunds, Canterbury, and London. It has been calculated that XVa was introduced in late 1320 and that XVc was being struck well before October 1323 (on the evidence of the Canterbury mint).\(^2\) There is no real doubt that XVa, b, and c are chronologically sequential and although XVb is somewhat more abundant than either

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\(^{1}\) Reference to Fox Groups is to the standard work Shirley-Fox, *BNJ* vi, vii, viii, ix, and x (1909–13).

XVa or XVc it is not exaggeratedly so. It cannot be far wrong, therefore, to attribute the introduction of XVb to some time in 1321. Allowing time for coins to reach Montrose in sufficient quantity to allow for their representation in the hoard an earliest date for deposit could be c. 1322 and the absence of one or more specimens of XVc in a hoard containing no less than five specimens of XVb out of seventy-seven sterlings would tend to confirm this. However, the very worn condition, even of the latest coins, is suggestive of a considerably later deposit date—perhaps in the 1330s or early 1340s. While it is not surprising that a rare group such as XVd should not be represented and there are many examples of sterling hoards which exclude the halfpence and farthings struck throughout the 1320s and 1330s, the absence of any specimen of XVc is rather surprising if the hoard is indeed of late deposit. Essentially, however, the small size of this hoard precludes any firm conclusion on this difficulty and the possibility of a deposit date considerably later than 1323 must remain.

The coins

The English coins are representative and offer little of special note. However, we have thought it worth while to illustrate a late variety of Xc-e of London (no. 63, Pl. X, 63) which may in fact be a Xc-e/XI mule and another Xc-e of London (no. 64, Pl. X, 64) which shows an unusual crown variety. This crown type is illustrated in Burns Pl. A.46 and in Fox (1912), Pl. IX, 5. It does not fall readily into the breakdown into three crown types in Xc-e as set forth in BNJ xxxi, p. 83. The proper location of this variety in the X series will be discussed in a future paper.

The sterling described as an imitation of a London penny (no. 71, Pl. X, 71) is a coin of the type, apparently Group Xb, but characterized by a distinctive letter R which differs from that normal to Xa and Xb. The type is illustrated by the Fox brothers in BNJ ix (1912), pl. IX. 2 and has been discussed by Mr. North in Num. Circ. lxxxii, no. 1 (January 1974). The same type is found muled with a Dublin reverse in the Ulster Sylloge, pl. xv. 589. In our view the weight of the evidence now suggests that these coins form a group of irregular coinage not forming part of the official series and hence imitative.

Of the two Scottish coins we illustrate the Bruce sterling (no. 76, Pl. X, 76) since it forms part of a restricted output of which a future die analysis may well be practicable and informative. The presence of one of these rare coins in this hoard lines up well with the evidence of the Renfrew hoard which pointed strongly to Bruce’s coinage being the product of a limited period of output commencing shortly before 1321.

Finally, we illustrate the anonymous Lorraine sterling (no. 77, Pl. X, 77). A similar type is illustrated by Chautard, plate xvi. 9, under the heading ‘Enigmatiques’. In his text he tentatively attributes the piece to the time of Thomas de Bourlemont, Bishop of Toul (1330–53) (pp. 131–3). While this would make the coin about ten years later than the latest English coin in the hoard it is unlikely that this is the case. The reverse reading, or a near variant of it, is found on sterlings in the name of Ferri, duke of Lorraine.

1 To illustrate this point the Loch Doon Treasure Trove (BNJ xxxviii (1969)) is fairly typical: XVa—16 specimens; XVb—36 specimens; XVc—31 specimens.

2 In a paper entitled ‘Edwardian Sterlings in the Montrave Hoard’, by G. L. V. Tatler and B. H. I. H. Stewart.


4 Reading + PIE MONETA NOSTRA and ION/TON/RHN/6IE ‘Imitations des Monnayes de Type Esterlin,’ J. Chautard, Nancy, 1871. The text, however, has NIC not PIE, p. 131.
and we are indebted to M. M. Dhenin, conservateur at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, who has informed us that the attribution of these coins to Ferri IV (1312–28) is now generally accepted in France.

In conclusion we should like to express our thanks to Mr. Stevenson for making the hoard available to us for study and to acknowledge the helpful information and suggestions he has provided during the preparation of this report.

A summary of the hoard in the Inventory format could be as follows:

MONTROSE, Castle Street, October 1973.

ENGLAND (70 Sterlings):

IRELAND (3 Sterlings):
Edward I sterlings: Dublin, Dolley 2/3, 1. 6(a), 1. Waterford, Dolley 2, 1.

SCOTLAND (2 Sterlings):

LORRAINE (Duchy):
Ferri IV (1312–28), 1.

IMITATIONS:
Imitation of London penny similar to Fox gp. Xb, 1.

Discovery and disposition: The hoard was found by workmen on a building site in Castle Street, Montrose, in a leather satchel(?) which did not survive for examination. Nos. 63, 64, 71, 76, and 77 retained by N.M.A.S., Edinburgh.

LIST OF COINS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Sterlings of Edward I and Edward II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mint of Berwick-on-Tweed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.  Blunt Type 4c</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weights in grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mint of Bristol</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.  Fox Group IIIc, hooked s</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mint of Bury St. Edmunds</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3–4. Fox Group XVb, both worn</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Coins were weighed to two significant decimal places in grammes on an automatic electronic scale and converted to grains using the British Museum tables 'Grains and Grammes'.

THE MONTROSE TREASURE TROVE, 1973

Mint of Canterbury

5. Fox Group IVa, (cf. Burns A20) 19-6 1
6. IVd/IVc mule 21-1 1
7. IXb, no star, pothook Ms 20-9 1
8. Xa or Xb, (double struck) 20-4 1
9. Xc-e, subtype indeterminate 19-7 1
10-12. Xc-e, crown 1 19-2, 15-8, 3
13. Xc-e, crown 3 17-9 1
14. Xf, small square initial cross 19-1 1
15. XIa, early type with round-backed G and straight-sided Ms 19-6 1
16. XIIb 21-4 1
17. XIII, broken-backed G, worn 20-8 1
18-19. XIV, one with broken-backed G, the other with large G with well-marked serifs. Both worn. 19-7, 20-5 2
20. XVb, very worn 18-5 1

Mint of Durham

Bishop de Insula

21. Fox Group IIIe, (northern) nicked hair on right 18-8 1

Bishop Bek

22. Fox Group IVb, cross moline at start of obv. and rev. legends 14-8 (clipped) 1
23-4. Xc-e, crown 2 21-6, 19-1 (clipped) 2
25. Xc-e, crown 3 early (Mayfield) lettering 20-7 1
26. Xc-e, late type immediately preceding Xf 20-1 1

No episcopal mark

27. Fox Group Xc-e, crown 3, early (Mayfield) lettering, reads HVB' 19-3 1
Initial-mark obliterated

28. Fox Group Xc-e, crown 3, split chin variety 17-5 1

Bishop Kellawe

29. Fox Group possibly XIII, badly corroded 20-7 1

Bishop Beaumont

30. Fox Group XIII or XIV, badly worn 19-2 1
31. XIV, very worn 20-8 1

Mint of Exeter

32. Fox Group IXb, with star, pothook Ms on obverse, unbarred Roman Ms on reverse 20-7 1

Mint of Lincoln

33. Fox Group IIIc, crown of IIIId (Southern) hooked H 19-7 1

Mint of London

34. Fox Group Ic, Normal Ms on obverse, reversed Ms on reverse 19-4 1
35-6. IIa 20-2, 19-7 2
37-8. IIb 18-8, 18-2 2
39. IIIc, early type with unhooked H (Burns A12) 20-3 1

1 The breakdown of Fox Groups Xc-e based on three crown types, in BNJ xxxi (1963).
40. IIIc, double struck 20:2 1
41. IIIc, late type with hooked h 18:6 1
42. IIIg, late S/early S† 20:3 1
43-4. IVd 19:8, 18:5 2
45. IVe 18:2 1
46. IXa, Roman Nh one reversed on rev., top-tilted S both sides 19:9 1
47-52. IXb, one with star, two without star, presence of star uncertain on the rest 19:4, 20:1, 20:2, 20:5, 20:8, 20:6  6
53-4. Xa/IXb mule, one double struck 18:8, 18:8 2
55-6. Xb 19:4, 20:3 2
57. Xc-e, crown 1 18:9 1
58-9. Xc-e, crown 2 19:1, 21:5 2
60. Xc-e, crown 3 early (Mayfield) lettering 18:4 1
61-2. Xc-e, crown 3 one double struck 20:2, 18:5 2
63. Xc-e, crown 3 reverse of late type with straight sided Nh. May be a Xc-e/XI mule (Pl. X, 63) 19:3 1
64. Xc-e, special crown variety (see text) (Pl. X, 64) 21:3 1
65. Xc-e, late variety immediately preceding Xf 18:7 1
66-7. XIa, one an early variety with the initial cross of Xf 20:8, 22:1 2
68. XIV, worn 18:9 1
69-70. XVb, very worn 20:3, 20:1 2

**Imitation of London Penny**
71. Similar to Fox Group Xb, see text (Pl. X, 71) 18:5 1

**Irish Sterlings of Edward I**

**Mint of Dublin**
72. Dolley Group 2/3 mule 17:8 1
73. 6(a) 20:4 1

**Mint of Waterford**
74. Dolley Group 2 21:1 1

**Scottish Sterlings**

**Alexander III**
75. Stewart Class G. 4 mullets of 6 points (Berwick) 19:6 1

**Robert I**
76. 4 mullets of 5 points (Pl. X, 76) 18:9 1

**Continental Sterling**

**Duchy of Lorraine**
77. Ferri IV 1312–28 Obv. ΤHIC MΩΝΕΤΑ ΝΟΣΤΡΑ
Rev. ΙΩΝ/ΤΟΙ/ΙΩΝ
similar to Chautard No. 199, Pl. XVI, fig. 9 (Pl. X, 77) 11:7 1
(well worn)

† See reference to Skegby hoard report: op. cit., p. 50.