THE TOWER SHILLINGS OF CHARLES I AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE ABERYSTWYTH ISSUE

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The issue of shillings at the Tower Mint during the reign of Charles I is the most varied for the denomination in British numismatic history. Since Grant Francis published his paper on the subject in Volume XIV of this Journal a number of further varieties and indeed one or two new types have become apparent. Some have been published whilst others have come, without publication, to be recognized by students of the series. This paper attempts to bring the recording of the series up to date.

There are over thirty portraits and some twenty reverse types. In addition some two dozen mintmarks were used. These were often cut over one another and overmarks are therefore only mentioned when of particular significance, for example, when an obverse or reverse type is known only with an overcut mark. The abbreviation of the obverse legend varies throughout the series. The reverse legend CHRISTO AVSPICE REGNO is constant, but the type of harp used for the Irish arms varies considerably. The form of punctuation also changes, but to a lesser extent. These aspects reflect the number of dies used in this extensive series and distract attention from the establishment of a type sequence. This is not to say that their study may not be rewarding, however.

This paper is therefore one of type rather than die enumeration. Obverse and reverse types have been listed in group form for reference and, it is hoped, for ready assimilation of any further types that may be discovered. The paper concludes with a study of the relationship in style between the shillings of the Tower and Aberystwyth mints.

Group A embraces Francis's types 1 and 1b and contains two bust and three reverse types. The first bust (Pl. V, 1) is found only with the first reverse and the first mintmark, the lys. The King is portrayed in a ruff, which takes a horizontal line behind his head, rich ermine robes and a double arched crown with both arches jewelled. The second bust (Pl. V, 2) is similar but the ruff is clearly fuller and the crown of different dimension with jewels on the upper arch only. The band of the crown is, however, more richly jewelled than that on the first bust.

The first reverse (Pl. V, 3) has a cross fourchee over a square-topped shield bearing the royal arms. There are minor varieties of the cross ends (compare illus. 3 and 12). The second reverse (Pl. V, 4) was not recorded by Francis and I have noted only one example of it: it resembles the first reverse but the cross over the shield is of the type used on a number of the laurels of James I. Possibly a laurel cross punch was used in

1 The kind help given by Messrs. J. M. Ashby, A. O. Chater, and B. R. Osborne, Professor Anne Robertson and the Trustees of the British Museum in the preparation of this paper is gratefully acknowledged.
error in the preparation of the die but since halfcrown of Francis's types la and lb occur with shield garniture of the type found on the unites of James I, it may instead be that an attempt was made to retain some of the features of his coinage. There is no cross on the third reverse (Pl. V, 5) which shows the shield surmounted by Welsh plumes contained in a coronet and with a band of ribbon. These plumes denote that the coins were struck from Welsh silver, a further feature continued from the coinage of the previous reign.

Two mintmarks were used on coins of this group, the lys from 7th July, 1625 and cross on steps from 29th June, 1626. Obverses with the latter mark seem invariably to show this cut over the former, a point which Francis recorded.

The incidence of obverse and reverse types within the group is as follows:

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<th>Obverse</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>lys, cross on steps</td>
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Some of the A2/1 coins with the cross on steps mark are of the lightweight issue of 80 grains as opposed to 92-75 grains, following the commission of 11th August, 1626. Die links are known for coins of both weights. Francis and Symonds considered the lightweight coins were struck for a period of only five weeks. Since the next group contains a lightweight issue also, it is perhaps reasonable to conclude that September 1626 saw the introduction of coins belonging to it.

Francis recorded only one reverse die for A2/3 coins with the lys mark. Comparison of the illustration (Pl. V, 5) with the catalogue illustration of the Ryan specimen reveals another.

The main feature of the coins of Group B (Francis types la and lc) is the change of portrait style, the king being depicted in ruff, armour, mantle and a fully jewelled crown. There are five distinct bust types of this style. The mantle on the first (Pl. V, 6) has a sharply concave appearance, whilst on the second bust (Pl. V, 8) it is convex. Note that the upper arches of the crowns on these portraits are very richly jewelled. These busts were concurrent to a considerable extent but the first is more frequently encountered with the cross on steps mark and only rarely with the later marks negro's head and castle. Some coins of the first bust type occur with a small mark of value (Pl. V, 7). The third bust (Pl. V, 9) is distinguishable by the presence of only eight pearls on the upper arch of the crown. This bust is usually contained by the inner circle but does occasionally break it at 6 o’clock. The fourth bust (Pl. V, 10) is very similar to the larger version of the third but has ten pearls to the upper arch of the crown. The fifth bust (Pl. V, 11) is clearly the largest of the group and invariably extends to the edge of the coin. The crown, slightly flatter than on previous types, is again richly jewelled.

There are three reverse types. The first (Pl. V, 12) and second (Pl. V, 13) are clearly continued from Group A (A1 and A3). The third (Pl. V, 14) is a combination of these having Welsh plumes above the shield and cross ends at 3, 6 and 9 o’clock. Cross ends are less varied than those of Group A (Pl. V, 12 being the norm for Group B).

The plumes on the reverses of the second type vary considerably. There are

2 Glendining 23. 1. 1952 lot 1101.
differences in size, the amount of stem visible below the coronet and the ribbon ends may be plain or forked. A series of varieties from Groups A and B is illustrated (Pl. IX, 73–78). Two which occur only with mintmark plumes are worth special comment. One (Pl. IX, 77) has the distinction of having pearls instead of lys on the coronet; the other (Pl. IX, 78) has plumes of a smaller and neater style more in keeping with the plumes on coins of the next group (C).

Six mintmarks were used for the coins of Group B: cross on steps, negro's head (from 29 June 1626), castle (27 April 1627), anchor (3 July 1628), heart (26 June 1629) and plumes (23 June 1630).

The negro's head mark occurs in two sizes, large (Pl. IX, 79) and small (Pl. IX, 80).

There are four forms of the castle mark: the first (Pl. IX, 81) is fairly squat with large irregularly shaped apertures, the second (Pl. IX, 82) is smaller and more regular in appearance, although it is sometimes found double cut vertically, showing two rows of battlements, the third (Pl. IX, 83) is waisted and seems invariably to occur double cut vertically, the fourth (Pl. IX, 84) has a bulbous base which is horizontally lineated. This variety is normally found on reverses, being quite rare as an obverse mark.

The anchor mark takes two forms occurring with rounded (Pl. IX, 85) and straight flukes (Pl. IX, 86). The former is sometimes horizontal (to right—usually over castle) as a reverse mark. The latter, like the bulbous castle mark, occurs more frequently as a reverse mark. There is, however, a particularly large version of it (Pl. IX, 87) which occurs as an overcut obverse mark, the earlier mark (probably castle) having been totally obliterated. Incidentally both forms of the anchor mark are to be found on the shillings of Elizabeth I.

The incidence of bust and reverse types is as follows:
Bust 1 occurs with reverses 1 and 2 with m.m.s. cross on steps, negro's head and castle
Bust 2 likewise and in addition with reverse 2, m.m. anchor and with reverse 3, m.m. negro's head
Bust 3 with reverse 2, m.m. anchor
Bust 4 with reverse 2, m.m.s. anchor and heart (over anchor obv.)
Bust 5 with reverse 2, m.m.s. heart and plumes.

Some of the B1/1 coins with the cross on steps mark are of the lightweight issue, a factor which provides confirmation of the sequence of the first and second busts. Some of the reverses of types 1 and 2 die link with coins of Group A, having been directly carried on in the case of dies with the cross mark or in the case of the lys dies with the cross mark overcut. There do not appear to be any coins of the lightweight issue of either Group A or B struck from Welsh silver. However, coins with the last three marks, anchor, heart and plumes were struck only from Welsh silver.

Group C (Francis types 2a and 2b). Coins of this group present a complete change of design. Francis recorded one bust and two reverse types. There are, however, three bust and six reverse types, but before dealing with these it is necessary to pay attention to a Francis type 2b coin with the heart mintmark (Pl. V, 15). This coin, which Hawkins recorded,3 is in my opinion clearly a pattern. There appear to be only two examples, one in the British Museum (illustrated), the other in the Ashmolean. It is interesting to note its unite equivalent.4 The flattish crown is continued from the last

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2 H. Schneider, BNJ xxviii (1955–7), Pls. XVI, XVII, Nos. 18, 19.
bust of Group B, but the style is otherwise very different. The first bust of the regular coins of this group (Pl. V, 16) closely resembles that of the pattern but the armour on the shoulder is riveted whereas that on the prototype is plain. Obverses with this bust all seem to be from the same die with the mintmark plumes cut over heart. This overmark was published by Mr. Ashby\(^5\) from a coin of Francis type 2a. It is now known for Francis 2b also. A true m.m. heart coin has not been recorded and probably does not exist. A m.m. plumes over heart reverse is also conspicuous by its absence. From the foregoing and with the evidence of the neat style of the last of the coins from Group B, it is evident that the transition to Group C was not a clean cut one.

On the second bust (Pl. V, 17) the crown is more full, the shoulder armour plain and the mantle tied differently. The third bust (Pl. V, 18) is similar but the crown is larger and the mantle tied with a bigger loop. This seems to occur only on coins of superior workmanship—an aspect which receives attention later in this paper.

The reverses of Groups A and B are replaced by a series with an oval garnished shield with the letters CR at the top. These sometimes break the inner circle. Three are without Welsh plumes and three with and it is in this order, one of basic type rather than in strict order of occurrence, that I propose to deal with them. The first shows the oval shield with a rather plain garniture\(^6\) and the letters CR divided by a lys. Two reverses of this type have been illustrated to show a feature of the coins from early dies with the plume mark, the presence of pellets in the field (Pl. VI, 19) and their subsequent absence (Pl. VI, 20). A number of pellets are sometimes found around the lys also and one is mindful of the rare 2a halfcrowns which have a rose between CR. This was (quickly?) overcut by a lys from which stamen appear to emanate as a result. These seem to have developed into pellets, a feature probably then adopted on the shilling dies, as none is known with rose between CR. The second reverse (Pl. VI, 21) omits the lys, perhaps just an oversight. The lys returns on the third reverse (Pl. VI, 22) taking a much taller form on some examples, probably from later dies (Pl. VI, 23). Both second and third reverses differ from the first in that they have what appears to be a rose petal turned over and through the base of the shield.

The fourth reverse (Pl. VI, 24) is perhaps distinguished more by its ornate garniture than for the Welsh plumes above the shield. The fifth reverse (Pl. VI, 25) has the rose petal garniture and the sixth (Pl. VI, 26) the plain garniture. This reverse has been placed last, despite its occurrence on the pattern m.m. heart because as a regular issue it occurs only with the rose mark.

There were only two mintmarks for the group, plumes and rose (introduced 30 June 1631).

The incidence of bust and reverse types is as follows:

- **Bust 1** occurs with reverses 1 and 4, m.m. plumes (over heart obv.)
- **Bust 2** with reverse 1, m.m.s. plumes and rose
  - with reverses 2 and 3, m.m. rose
  - with reverse 4, m.m.s. plumes and rose (over plumes rev.)
  - with reverse 5, m.m.s. plumes and rose (over plumes rev.)
  - and with reverse 6, m.m. rose
- **Bust 3** is known only with reverse 5, m.m. plumes.

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\(^6\) Adopted from the shillings of Philip and Mary.
Coins of Group D (Francis 3 and 3b) reflect another complete change of design. The King is shown wearing a lace collar and ribbon, presumably that of the garter, over armour of improved style. Although a number of minor portrait varieties exist, six basic types are evident. The crown on the first three is high arched and richly jewelled, whereas on the other three the arches are flatter and plain. The front arch of the crown on the first bust (PL VI, 27) breaks the inner circle. On the second bust (PL VI, 28) which is slightly larger, both arches break the circle. The third bust (PL VI, 29) is clearly much larger than its predecessors and the crown not only breaks the inner circle but extends almost to the edge of the coin. The coin illustrated has the m.m. portcullis, not recorded by Francis for this portrait, which is the only one of the jewelled crown portraits to occur with this mark. The fourth bust (PL VI, 30) is much smaller and the plain arched crown evident for the first time in the group. Francis recorded only two examples of this bust with the harp mark but today coins of this type and mark can only be rated scarce. The fifth bust (PL VI, 31) is larger with the nose and forehead rather pronounced. The sixth bust (PL VI, 32) is very small and much neater by comparison.

With the incidence of six portrait types in the group it is perhaps surprising that there should be only two reverse types. These have an oval scroll garnished shield between the letters CR. The only difference being the absence of Welsh plumes on the first (PL VI, 33) and their presence over the shield on the second (PL VI, 34). Francis recorded only two specimens of the latter. To date I have seen six, all from the same reverse die. Four have the first portrait and are obverse die duplicates. The other two are of the third bust type but from different obverse dies.

There are two mintmarks for the group: harp (introduced 21 June 1632) and portcullis (11 July 1633). There are seven forms of the harp mark, three birdheaded (PL IX, 88–90) and four plain (PL IX, 91–94).

The incidence of types is as follows:

- Bust 1 with reverses 1 and 2, m.m. harp
- Bust 2 with reverse 1, m.m. harp
- Bust 3 with reverse 1, m.m.s. harp and portcullis and with reverse 2, m.m. harp
- Bust 4 with reverse 1, m.m.s. harp and portcullis
- Busts 5 and 6 with reverse 1, m.m. portcullis.

A shilling with reverse 2, m.m. portcullis is unknown and it would, therefore, appear that this mark was the only one not to have been used in the production of shillings from Welsh silver at the Tower prior to the opening of the Mint at Aberystwyth.

Coins of Group E (Francis 3a and 3c) are distinctive because of the absence of inner circles, although 'wire line' circles are occasionally met. These in all probability were drawn as an aid to the punching of legends during die manufacture.

There are five portrait and three reverse types. The first portrait (PL VI, 35) is quite large and clearly taken from the pattern with the portcullis mark (PL VI, 36). The second bust (PL VI, 37) is much smaller and is carried over from the previous group (D6). This is really the principle bust for the group being the only one to occur with all the reverses and mint marks within it. The third portrait (PL VII, 38) is slightly taller than the second and the crown sits straighter on the King's head. The fourth
TOWER SHILLINGS OF CHARLES I AND THE ABERYSTWYTH ISSUE

bust (Pl. VII, 39) is larger and of a very crude style. Unfortunately coins of this type, which are quite scarce, tend to occur in a fairly worn state—hence the rather inadequate illustration. However, the length of the profile and the lace on the collar are distinctive features. The fifth portrait (Pl. VII, 40) is very different again but still shows the King in armour and with a double arched crown.

The first reverse (Pl. VII, 41) has a large almost round shield with scroll garniture. The workmanship is crude by comparison with the second reverse (Pl. VII, 42) on which the shield is smaller and neater. The central panel of the garniture at the base of the shield is plain, lacking the horizontal lines of the earlier type. The shield is similar on the third reverse (Pl. VII, 43) but has the Welsh plumes over it. These are a little larger than those on coins of Groups C and D.

Three mintmarks occur: bell (introduced 27 June 1634)—this sometimes takes a large form, crown (18 June 1635) and tun (14 February 1636—new style).

The incidence of types is as follows:

Bust 1 is found with reverse 1, m.m. bell and with reverse 2, m.m. tun
Bust 2 with reverse 1, m.m. crown (over bell rev.) and with reverses 2 and 3, all marks
Busts 3, 4 and 5 occur only with the 2nd reverse, m.m. tun.

El/1 coins are more common than E2/2 coins with the bell mark, a point which strengthens the argument for their having been issued first. It will be noted that all five portrait types occur with the tun mark and this perhaps reflects experimentation of style prior to the opening of the Aberystwyth Mint.

The inner circle reappears on the coins of Group F which contains seven bust and two reverse types. The portrait types are of particular interest because of the strong links between the coinages of the Tower and Aberystwyth—opened in 1638 (during the use of the tun mark in London) as a satellite to the Tower Mint for the coining of the Welsh silver. Francis, when dealing with his type 4, said ‘undoubtedly some Aberystwyth punches were used’. It is, however, more likely that some Tower punches were used for the Aberystwyth pieces. Francis’s comment quickly gave rise to the adoption of the terms large and small Aberystwyth bust in the classification of busts which differ in features as well as size, and only three of seven were used at Aberystwyth anyway.

The first bust (Pl. VII, 44, Francis 4a) is continued from Group E. The mark of value is small on coins of this type. It is the only type of the tun mark in this group to occur with a double arched crown and as a fine work striking (Pl. VIII, 66). The second bust (Pl. VII, 45, Francis 4) is much larger but very similar except for the single arched crown. Like the first bust it is known only with the tun mark. The small mark of value is continued from the first type but the large figure (Pl. VII, 46) is re-introduced during the issue. The third bust (Pl. VII, 47, Francis 4b) is comparable to the first in size, has the large mark of value and is the only type to occur with the three principle marks for the group, tun, anchor and triangle. The fourth bust (Pl. VII, 48) closely resembles the first (Pl. VII, 44—note the double arched crown), but the shoulder is clearly much smaller, so much so that it would seem that a bust punch for a sixpence of Francis type 4 was used. Coins of this type, which have the mintmark anchor (flukes to right) are extremely rare; possibly the issue was a transitional one. Francis noted the type which he recorded as type 4b die 18. The fifth bust
(Pl. VII, 49, Francis 4b) is almost as large as the second bust (Pl. VII, 45) which it resembles, but the shoulder is now more rounded. It does not occur with the tun mark. The facial characteristics of the sixth bust (Pl. VII, 50) bear striking resemblance to Briot’s portrait with the stellate lace collar falling over an embroidered jacket (Pl. VII, 54) for which it may have been mistaken. The sixth bust is, however, clearly an armoured one and the crown small and single arched. The seventh bust (Pl. VII, 51) was published by R. Carlyon-Britton. Occurring as it does with m.m. triangle-in-circle it might be considered appropriate to place it in the next group, but it appears to be the result of a third bust punchen having been cut to show riveted shoulder armour and I have, therefore, felt it necessary to include it in the same group. It is perhaps a companion piece to the strange crown of the same mintmark. This shows Briot’s Scottish equestrian portrait rather than his Tower portrait—the King’s crown is different. Could it be that both were produced for a special purpose or were they just the result of casual experiments? It is worth noting that Charles I left London during the use of the triangle-in-circle mark and experimentation by Parliamentarian officials with odd punches might seem the most likely explanation.

The two reverses for Group F are very similar each having a cross over a square-topped shield. The first (Pl. VII, 52) has small, neat cross ends whereas on the second (Pl. VII, 53) they are large and rounded. The change occurs during the use of the triangle mark. The first reverse is scarce with this mintmark in its own right but fairly frequently encountered with triangle punched over anchor.

There are four mintmarks for the group: tun, anchor (introduced 8 May 1638), triangle (4 July 1639) and triangle-in-circle (15 July 1641).

The incidence of portrait and reverse types is as follows:

Busts 1 and 2 occur only with reverse 1, m.m. tun
Bust 3 with reverse 1, m.m.s. tun, anchor (vertical and horizontal with flukes to left or right) and triangle (over anchor obv.) and with reverse 2, m.m. triangle (over anchor obv.)
Bust 4 with reverse 1, m.m. anchor (flukes to right)
Bust 5 with reverse 1, m.m.s. anchor (flukes to left or right—NOT vertical) and triangle and with reverse 2, m.m. triangle
Bust 6 with reverse 1, m.m. triangle (over anchor flukes to right rev.) and with reverse 2, m.m. triangle.
Bust 7 with reverse 2, m.m. triangle-in-circle.

Group G (Francis 4c) is much less complicated containing but two obverse and reverse types. The first portrait (Pl. VII, 54) has a profile similar to that of the F6 bust, but the King is now shown wearing a widespread double arched crown and a stellate lace collar over a richly embroidered jacket with a trace of armour between 5 and 6 o’clock. This portrait is found with slight variations in size and the line of the shoulder varies also. The issue was quite a prolific one. This portrait was also used for Briot’s second milled issue and his hammered issue. The second portrait (Pl. VII, 55) is similar but of slightly inferior workmanship. The main difference is the clear appearance of armour between 5 and 6 o’clock.

The reverses are as for the previous group, F1 (Pl. VII, 52) and F2 (Pl. VII, 53).

There are seven mintmarks for this group: triangle (sometimes quite small), star (introduced 26 June 1640), triangle-in-circle (15 July 1641), P in brackets (29 May 1643), R in brackets (15 July 1644), eye (12 May 1645) and sun (10 November 1645).

7 R. Carlyon-Britton, NCirc Feb. 1949. 8 F. R. Cooper, BNF xxxvii (1968), Pls. XVI, XX.
The incidence of obverse and reverse types is:

Bust 1 occurs with reverse 1, m.m. triangle and with reverse 2, m.m.s. triangle, star, triangle-in-circle, (P) and (R). There is an obverse with this last mark on its side, viz.  

Bust 2 occurs with reverse 2, m.m.s. eye and sun.

The coins of Group H (Francis types 5 and 5a) are the last in the Tower series. There are three portrait and two reverse types. The first bust (Pl. VIII, 56) is tall and slim with the King's features rather crudely portrayed. The second (Pl. VIII, 57) is shorter and better proportioned. There is a slight similarity with the features and the style of crown of the first bust. The third bust (Pl. VIII, 58) was not recorded by Francis. The features are treated a little better, the crown is larger with less accentuated arches and the shoulder slightly different. This bust type also occurs with a medium sized mark of value (Pl. VIII, 59). Nice strikings of the second and third busts are unfortunately very difficult to obtain and a number of coins may have to be examined before one is satisfied as to their differences.

The two reverses are similar. The first (Pl. VIII, 60) is continued from the previous group. The second (Pl. VIII, 61) has a smaller shield, in keeping with the smaller flans used for these last issues.

There are two mintmarks for the group: sun and sceptre (introduced 15th February, 1647—new style).

The incidence of types is:

Bust 1 occurs with reverse 1, both mintmarks
Busts 2 and 3 occur with reverse 2, m.m. sceptre only.

Pieces of Fine Work

The series of Tower shillings of Charles I is punctuated by the appearance of a number of pieces which are clearly the product of superior workmanship. They are neater, often with fuller obverse legends and on very regular flans which were possibly machine made. Many of the coins have a proof-like quality. I have so far recorded the following types in this state:

B5/2 m.m. heart (Pl. VIII, 62)—the (test?) mark in the obverse field possibly having been made by someone suspicious of the coin's exceptional quality.
C2/4 m.m. plumes.
C2/5 m.m. rose (over plumes rev.—known with this m.m. in fine work only).
C3/5 m.m. plumes (only known in fine work).
D1/1 m.m. harp—well known as a proof-like striking.
D2/1 m.m. harp (Pl. VIII, 63)—scarcer than D1/1, the coin illustrated shows a (test?) mark in the obverse field.
E2/2 m.m. bell (Pl. VIII, 64).
E2/2 m.m. large bell obv./bell rev.
E2/2 m.m. crown.
E2/3 m.m. bell.
E2/3 m.m. large bell obv./bell rev. (Pl. VIII, 65)—the Welsh plumes are neater than on the normal issue (Pl. VIII, 43).
E3/2 m.m. tun.
F1/1 m.m. tun (Pl. VIII, 66).
F5/1 m.m. anchor (flukes to right).
The first and obvious conclusion from this table is that superior strikings occur for Groups B to F inclusive. The second conclusion is more subtle. The coins recorded are not as one might have expected all of the first types for their groups, nor do they all occur with the first mintmark for a group. What is apparent, however, is that with the sole exception of the E2/2 pieces with the crown mark, all of these pieces occur with the first mintmark for a new type of portrait or reverse. This conclusion does, I think, confirm the long held view that these pieces are proof or trial strikings rather than patterns, though it could be said that the bell strikings might be companion pieces to the patterns for the groat and threepence with that mark. There is, however, the inescapable fact that the three pattern shillings which subsequent issues closely resemble—the m.m. heart pattern for Group C, the m.m. rose pattern for Group D and the m.m. portcullis pattern for Group E—all occur with a mintmark from the previous group.

Before leaving the subject of trial strikings, three impressions of central (or master?) puncheons of Group G obverses and reverses on roughly cut lozenge shaped flans must be mentioned. One is illustrated (Pl. VIII, 67). The obverse shows a G1 bust with mark of value contained within an inner circle and the reverse a shield of G2, also within inner circle. This piece weighs 65-3 grains. A die duplicate appeared in a Sotheby sale, weight 62-5 grains. This piece is (officially?) cut. Nelson illustrated another thinking it might be an obsidional coin. This weighs 61 grains but its most important feature is the portrait G2. The introduction of this bust with the eye mintmark in May 1645 under the auspices of Parliament make the claim for this piece to be obsidional rather fanciful and certainly dispels Yeates’s claim that this was the Irish issue of 1642 struck by the Confederated Catholics. These pieces must, therefore, be regarded as rather haphazard trials for the two portraits of Group G bearing in mind the absence of fine work strikings for the group, the general deterioration of workmanship during its currency, and the weight.

Odd and Curious

Whilst the subject of spelling errors in die compilation has been ignored because of frequency, other and rather more dramatic errors are illustrated as they reflect the processes of die compilation. With the coins of Charles I the unexpected often occurs.

A Group A2 obverse exists with an inverted mark of value (Pl. VIII, 68). A Group D1 reverse survives with inverted CR (Pl. VIII, 69) and another of the same type exists without inner circle (Pl. IX, 70)—traces of a ‘wire guideline’ are evident, however. A Group E2 reverse has an inverted garniture (Pl. IX, 71); note the actual arms are the right way up. This error is also known on halfcrown and halfgroat reverses of the same type. Lastly, there is a Group G1 obverse m.m. (P) muled with a halfcrown reverse on a shilling flan (Pl. IX, 72). This piece weighs 90-1 grains.

The Coinages of Nicholas Briot have always and rightly I think, been given separate attention. There were two milled and one hammered coinages. The First Milled Coinage produced in 1631–2 would have been concurrent with

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9 Sotheby, 17.11.1976, lot 218.
the m.m. rose coins of Group C and the m.m. harp coins of Group D. This coinage produced two rather similar types. The first (Pl. X, 95) has the mintmark B. The obverse shows the King wearing a lace collar and mantle. The crown is double arched and widespread. The legend, which is unusually full, and the presence of stops by the mark of value reflect considerable care in engraving. The mintmark is at the beginning of the legend.

The reverse has a square-topped shield and a cross fourchee extending to the edge of the coin with lyre-shaped embellishments by the inner circle. Briot’s cleft-footed harp is used for the Irish arms. The m.m. is at the end of the legend, which has the unusual feature of commencing at 6 o’clock. Lozenge stops are evident on both sides.

The second type (Pl. X, 96) is very similar. The obverse mintmark is, however, B and flower. The reverse legend commences at 12 o’clock and the Scottish arms are smaller than on the previous type. The reverse mintmark B is again at the end of the legend.

The Second Milled Coinage produced 1638–9 closely resembles coins of Group G but was concurrent with the anchor coins of Group F. There is one type occurring with two mintmarks, anchor to right (Pl. X, 97) and anchor to right with a B placed horizontally below it (Pl. X, 98). The bottom of the anchor ring is invariably broken. Briot’s cleft-footed harp and lozenge stops are again evident.

The issues of the Hammered Coinage are a little more complicated as they overlap types of Groups F and G with which they are sometimes muled. The first type (Pl. X, 99) was recorded by Francis as a class 4c coin although he did remark on its strong links with Briot’s second milled issue and the fact that a normal 4c did not exist with the anchor mark. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the large rounded cross ends on the reverse do not occur with the m.m. anchor issues of Group F. For these reasons and in spite of the semi-colon stops on the obverse and pellet stops on the reverse, I am convinced that this great rarity is the earliest of Briot’s hammered pieces. The next coin illustrated (Pl. X, 100) has always been regarded as something of a puzzle. It appears initially to be a Group F5/2 coin with Briot’s harp on the reverse. The mintmark is triangle over anchor and the reverse stops are pellets. The mintmark leads to the solution of the puzzle. Since the F2 reverse did not occur with the anchor mark, one would expect a die link with the reverse of the first type of Briot’s hammered issue (Pl. X, 99), but the legends are differently spaced. Further scrutiny reveals, however, that the outline of the shield and cross, together with the positioning of the arms, coincide—note the flaw above the Scottish arms and the irregularity of the line of the shield at 5 o’clock. Thus the link is established and the coin must be classified as a Group F5 obverse muled with a Briot Hammered Issue first type reverse. Supporting evidence is also given by the trial striking (Pl. VIII, 67) of the G1/2 punches, introduced with the triangle mark, from which it is apparent that different dies could have been produced from the same central puncheons.

The second type of Briot’s hammered issue is very similar to the first, differing only in the presence of lozenge stops both sides. It occurs with two mintmarks, anchor (Pl. X, 101) and triangle over anchor (Pl. X, 102). Coins with the former mark are excessively rare.
Mules with triangle over anchor occur both ways with normal Tower types. A Tower G1 obverse m.m. triangle is muled with a Briot second type reverse (Pl. X, 103) and a Briot second type obverse is muled with a Tower F1 or G1 reverse m.m. triangle (Pl. X, 104). It will be remembered that this reverse is common to both groups.

The Aberystwyth Shillings

The Aberystwyth Mint opened in 1638 when the tun mintmark was in use at the Tower. As this mint opened in peacetime it was probably subordinate to the Tower. In the case of the shillings this is borne out by the fact that each of the three portraits used on the Aberystwyth shillings was used at the Tower. Study of the links between these mints reveals the sequence of the Aberystwyth types.

Before the Aberystwyth Mint opened it is clear that there was considerable experimentation of bust types at the Tower. The tun mark was in use on coins of two groups, E and F, and no less than seven portraits were used, five for Group E and three for Group F (one being common to both). The evolution would appear to be E2 (Pl. XI, 105), E3 (Pl. XI, 106), E1 (Pl. XI, 107) reintroduced from the early m.m. bell issue, E4 (Pl. XI, 108) and E5 (Pl. XI, 109). This last bust continued into Group F as F1 (Pl. XI, 110)—note the inner circle and small mark of value. F2 with small mark of value is next (Pl. XI, 111) and it is on this that the first Aberystwyth obverse is modelled (Pl. XI, 112). It has the same portrait and mark of value but no inner circle, the influence of Tower Group F perhaps. The Tower F2 obverse type with large mark of value (Pl. XI, 113) was used for the second Aberystwyth obverse (Pl. XI, 114) and F3 (Pl. XI, 115) for the third (Pl. XI, 116). F4 (Pl. XI, 117) and F5 (Pl. XI, 118) were not adopted at Aberystwyth but the newly discovered Tower F6 (Pl. XI, 119) links with the fourth and last Aberystwyth obverse (Pl. XI, 120) which was subsequently used at Shrewsbury.

Translating to Morrieson types to include the Aberystwyth reverses it would appear that the likely chronological type sequence was: A1, A2 (figure 3 reverse)—the plumes above the shield are as the Tower group E2/3 fine work pieces, A2, C2, C3, B2 and D3.

CONCORDANCE OF CHARLES I TOWER SHILLINGS
WITH SEABY, NORTH AND FRANCIS

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¹¹ See H. W. Morrieson, BNJ x (1913), pp. 181-97.
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