THE DEFACED PENNIES OF STEPHEN FROM SUSSEX MINTS

PETER SEABY

In the Journal for 1980 I discussed the Cross Moline type pennies of Stephen struck from defaced dies and suggested that they were issued during the period of the Interdict of 1148. To my mind, these pennies fall into five regional or diocesan groups and symbolize the authority of the church being imposed on a recalcitrant monarch. As a result of condensing and re-arranging an early draft with insufficient care I find that I transposed parts of the descriptions of figures 6 & 7 in that paper. Figure 6 shows a wide bar defacing the shaft of the king’s sceptre and it is this coin, Mack 153, which was minted by the moneyer Edward of an uncertain mint. Figure 7 has the sceptre shaft defaced by a double fleur-de-lis (a thunderbolt?) and an uncertain object over the king’s shoulder (fig. 1,a). This coin, Mack 154 (BMC 231), fig 2,a, has a partly legible reverse inscription which was given by Mack as ‘+( )BE( )ANE’, while Brooke had suggested ‘+—BE—(C)A(N)E’. After examining the coin I had expressed the opinion that the mint signature was possibly ‘—TANF’ and the mint might be Stamford.

Recently a die duplicate of this latter coin came to light which is believed to have been found about 1978 at Lewes, Sussex. It is said to have come from foundation spoil at a hillside building site on the outskirts of the town and to have been located by means of a metal detector. I am indebted to Mr Gary Alliss who has kindly made the coin available for illustration (fig 2,b). The reverse inscription on Mr Alliss’s penny reads ‘RO—T:N:—A(N)E’, but though on this coin the penultimate letter looks more like a V than an N this is no doubt due to an aberration in the striking and the reading ‘—TANE’ seems reasonably probable. There is just room for another letter, illegible on both pennies, between the colon stop following the copulative and the T in the mint name. What is beyond doubt is that from the two coins the moneyer’s name can be reconstructed as RODBERT.

Dr Ian Stewart has remarked on the occurrence of the name Rodbert in the latter part of the reign of Henry I and during the reign of Stephen, showing that, in addition to a Rodbert at Shrewsbury in Stephen type I, the name occurs at London and Canterbury for

Fig. 1.  
 a. Steyning, moneyer Rodbert.  
 b. Hastings, moneyer Sawine.  
 c. Chichester, moneyer Godwine(?).  
 d. ‘WHRT’, uncertain moneyer.

Dr Ian Stewart has remarked on the occurrence of the name Rodbert in the latter part of the reign of Henry I and during the reign of Stephen, showing that, in addition to a Rodbert at Shrewsbury in Stephen type I, the name occurs at London and Canterbury for

each of Stephen’s substantive types, at Castle Rising for types II and VI, and at the Sussex mints of Hastings in types I, II, VI/VII (mule) and VII, and at Bramber in type VII. This, he suggests, indicates Rodbert may have been an important official moving between mints in the south-east. More recently a penny of type VII was published by Michael Sharp which has a reverse inscription reading ‘ERT:O—TEN’ and which he has attributed to the mint of Steyning.3

Though the mint of Steyning, first noted in the Pointed Helmet type of Cnut, is recorded in the Norman period for four of the eight types of William I and three of the five types of William II, it seems to have been inactive throughout the reign of Henry I and, until recently, was not known to have been active in the reign of Stephen. However, as the find site of Mr Alliss’s coin is only some fourteen or fifteen miles from Steyning it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that the Rodbert of the (S)tane defaced coin may have been the same moneyer who worked at the (S)ten mint and at the adjacent Bramber mint in type VII and at the Hastings mint for much of the reign of Stephen. The mint of Steyning is usually rendered as a contracted variant of STÆNIG or STENIG (the Æ diphthong not being used after William I type II)4 and the form STANE has not been noted. However, the borough of Steyning appears as Staninges in the Domesday survey.

In my 1980 paper I had briefly mentioned the defaced Cross Moline penny of Hastings of the moneyer Sawine, Mack 153, from the Nottingham hoard. This is recorded as no. 148 by E. W. Danson in his listing of the hoard5 and it is described by both Mack and Danson as having the obverse die ‘defaced by arc of circle through King’s chin and vertical line downwards.’ However, I had not seen the coin or any illustration of it and I had somewhat dismissively commented that the defacement might be merely the result of accidental damage. Since then Mr Danson has kindly let me have a sight of a pencil rubbing of this coin (copied in fig 1, b) and I am now persuaded that it may be of more significance than I had originally supposed as the defacement has the form of an inverted anchor.

The third defaced coin of Sussex, assuming that the first is of Steyning, is a Cross Moline

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5 E. W. Danson, ‘The Nottingham find of 1880: A Stephen hoard re-examined’, BNJ 37 (1968), 59. Mr Danson informs me that this coin was in the collection of the late Mr W. H. Andrew, of Nottingham, until 1963.
penny of Chichester from the Prestwich hoard that Miss Archibald has kindly brought to my attention. It has a long bar struck across the lower part of the king’s bust extending to the sceptre. In addition, there appears to be a minor diagonal defacement across the sceptre shaft (fig 1,c and fig 2,c). The coin has been struck off-centre and the moneyer’s name is illegible, only ...:ON:CICE being visible. Of the two Chichester moneymen known for the type, Brand and Godwine, it is Godwine’s name that would fit the space available and there appear to be vestiges of serifs to the left of the first colon stop.

The proposition that dies may have been defaced as a result of falling into enemy hands or that they were defaced to prevent their use by Stephen’s opponents can hardly be tenable as most defaced coins come from areas that did not support the Angevin cause until 1153-4.6 There is the possibility that at a number of towns minting privileges could have been temporarily withdrawn for some reason or that certain moneymen had to surrender their dies which were then cancelled by defacement, but it has to be stressed that, apart from the East Anglian variants with roundels on the reverse (Mack 159–68), the defacements are all to the obverse dies, particularly to the king’s portrait and to his sceptre, and not to the reverses which bore the moneyers’ names. There would seem to be no obvious occasion when officially cancelled dies from widely separated mints would have been brought back into use. The more likely alternative is that the defacements result from the imposition of the Interdict at Michaelmas 1148.

The only Sussex mints to be mentioned in Domesday are those of the boroughs of Lewes, held by Count William de Warenne, and Pevensey, which was held by the Count of Mortain. Stephen was to obtain the Mortain properties by grant from Henry I and Stephen’s son, William, was to acquire the Warenne lands by marriage. It is to these two mints that the late Cross Moline ‘Star’ variants have been attributed.7

Aethelstan’s Grateley ordinance of 928 specified three moneymen at Chichester, two for the king and one for the bishop. The number of moneymen at Chichester seems to have ranged between two and four in the later Anglo-Saxon period, but from about 1060 until the end of the eleventh century two moneymen appears to have been the norm. Evidence is sketchy for the earlier types of the reign of Henry I but two moneymen, Brand and Godwine, were both active in types XIII and XIV and probably earlier. It is possible that, at least during the Norman period, both of the Chichester moneymen coined for the bishop. When the Chichester mint was reopened under John for the recoinage of 1204–5 the cuneator, William Fitz-Otho, was ordered to supply the bishop with one die. However, it appears that the bishop was able to substantiate a claim for further dies because in 1205 he was granted two more dies and the mint with all its liberties for one year at a rent of thirty marks.8

The use of an annulet as a mark of difference may give some indication of the ecclesiastical status of the Chichester mint. Some of William I Paxs type obverse dies of the Chichester moneymen Brunman and Edwine have an annulet on the king’s shoulder in place of the usual trefoil of pellets (BMC 606–9 and 614–6); Andrew describes a Henry I type VI Chichester penny of Brand from the J. Verity collection as having an annulet at the centre of the reverse cross;9 the type X penny of Brand (BMC 58, pl. XLI, 11) has two annulets on the king’s breast, and the type XII penny of Godwine (BM, ex H. H. King) has annulets in the band of the king’s crown. Further, the name of Brand appears in the Latin form Brandus on pennies of type XIII (BMC 89), one of some twenty-five moneymen whose names are sometimes latinised in this reign, a number of whom appear to have had an

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8 Close Rolls, 6 John, m.3.
eclesiastical connection. Neither Brand nor Godwine seem to have been active in the final type of Henry I though they both appear again in the first type of Stephen’s reign. Brand is recorded in the 1130 Pipe Roll as owing the Exchequer £20 for not having been mutilated with the other moneyers (ne esset disfractus cum aliis monetariis), obviously referring to the inquisition and punishment of moneyers that took place in 1124. If, as Mr J. D. Gomm has suggested there are some grounds for believing that type XIV may have been in issue at this time, and as there appear to have been only a score or so of moneyers who avoided mutilation or were not removed, one may reasonably speculate as to whether most of those owed their escape from extreme physical punishment to eclesiastical privilege.

Bishop Hilary had been appointed to Chichester with the approval of the pope in 1147 and he was amongst the small group of bishops who rallied to the support of Archbishop Theobald in Suffolk at the time of the Interdict in 1148. If, on its promulgation, an order for the defacement of coinage dies was sent out to all those moneyers under eclesiastical control the defacement of Godwine’s die is no more than might be expected, and if Brand was still active in 1148 a defaced coin with his name may yet come to light.

As far as I am aware, there is no literary evidence specifically referring to eclesiastical minting privileges at either Steyning or Hastings. According to the Annals of St Neot’s the church of Steyning is said to have been the burial place of Ethelwulf of Wessex, though the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that he was interred at Winchester. The church at Steyning, together with its land, was granted by Edward the Confessor to Fécamp Abbey at some time prior to 1048. It appears that the borough had fallen into Earl Harold’s hands before he became king, but Duke William of Normandy promised seizin of Steyning to the abbot of Fécamp if his invasion of England should be successful. After his victory at Hastings William confirmed King Edward’s grant to Fécamp and gave the abbey all royal liberties in Steyning, including jurisdiction over all matters arising in its lands. At the time of the Domesday survey the borough of Steyning, with 123 dwellings, was held by the abbot of Fécamp at a revenue of £121.18s. During the reign of William II it appears that the rights of the church of Steyning were encroached upon by the lords of Bramber, William de Braose and his son Philip, but these were largely recovered under a concordat confirmed by Henry I in 1103. It may well be that the moneyer Rodbert of Steyning came under eclesiastical jurisdiction, and if he was the same man who issued Cross Moline type coins at Canterbury, London and Hastings perhaps he travelled between those places on important eclesiastical business.

The Domesday entries relating to the borough of Hastings are somewhat obscure. The count of Eu held the major part of the rape of Hastings and the entry for Bexhill states that the castelry of Hastings had been granted to the count. Under the entry for Bullington it is noted that the count had twenty burgesses, which presumably refers to the borough of Hastings, and under Guestling Hundred a Robert is named as holding one ferlang from the the count, a term that can refer to a quarter or ward of a borough. The only specific reference to the town of Hastings occurs under the entry for the Fécamp Abbey holdings which shows that in 1086 the abbot had only four burgesses and fourteen smallholders in the borough. However, in a charter of 1085 William I had granted the abbot the manor of

10 Pipe Roll, 31 Henry I, p.42. The entry is not in the Sussex section but appears under the Honor of Arundel which was accounted for by William de Pont de l’Arche, sheriff of Hampshire.
14 Register Regum Anglo-Normannorum, I, no. 1 (hereafter RRAN)
15 RRAN no. 253
16 RRAN nos 416, 423-4.
17 RRAN.II, no. 626.
Bury, near Amberley, Sussex, in consideration of any claims against him for the abbey’s possessions in Hastings held in the time of King Edward.\textsuperscript{19} It appears that some time after 1086 Fécamp recovered a major holding within the borough and that this included the parish church of St Clement’s and considerable property around it in the town centre, together with other land on the outskirts of the borough.\textsuperscript{20} The original church of St Clement’s was probably on low ground near the sea for it was devastated by a storm in the thirteenth century. In 1286 Alan the cheesemonger and his wife gave a rood of land to the abbot of Fécamp on which to rebuild the church.\textsuperscript{21} If the defacing mark on Sawine’s die was intended to be an inverted anchor it may be pertinent to speculate whether it was merely a symbol of the borough’s maritime importance or whether it may have been the anchor symbol that was conventionally employed to allude to the martyrdom of St Clement.

Fécamp’s interests in Sussex may not have been as extensive as those of the archbishopric of Canterbury but they were of substantially greater value than those of the poorly endowed bishopric of Chichester. Stephen’s nephew, Henry de Sully, was appointed to the abbacy of Fécamp in 1139/40. He was confirmed in his abbey’s holdings by Geoffrey of Anjou after the latter had taken over the duchy of Normandy in 1144.\textsuperscript{22} Geoffrey also separately confirmed the abbey’s control of a group of seaports along the Normandy coast.\textsuperscript{23} In addition to its holdings in Steyning and Hastings the abbey of Fécamp also held the borough of Rye\textsuperscript{24} and prior to 1131 it had acquired an interest in the vill of Winchelsea.\textsuperscript{25} The abbey’s littoral estates in Normandy and in East and West Sussex must have provided a substantial revenue from tolls on cross-Channel trade. Though in the second half of the reign of Stephen Fécamp itself was in Angevin controlled territory the abbey’s English interests are likely to have been under archiepiscopal protection. If the defaced dies of Steyning, Hastings and Chichester owe their origin to the clash between king and church a further defaced coin of Rye may yet materialize.

Recently Mr Mark Blackburn has kindly drawn my attention to a defaced penny that I had overlooked. This coin (fig. 1,d and fig. 2,d) was sold at Sotheby’s on 15 November 1984 (lot 544) and was catalogued as ‘Watford style, Watchet mint (?) struck from irregular dies with heavy bar extending from chin across sceptre to edge of legend.’ The coin was stated to have been found by the then owner’s father some twenty years previously at Rowland’s Castle, on the Sussex/Hampshire border. The obverse reads ‘-TEPINE R:EX:’ and the reverse ‘IIL(?>—ON:WlhT:’, and comparison was made to an irregular penny in the British Museum (BMC 113) with the mint name WACET which has been attributed to Watchet. Mr Blackburn remarks that WlhT is not a convincing signature for Watchet and that the only factor that might support a South Western attribution is its findspot. The mint signature WlhT is otherwise unknown but, though the obverse legend is irregular and the lettering somewhat coarse, the king’s bust is quite carefully engraved and the weight, at 19.5 grs, does not suggest forgery. The defacement bar across the king’s sceptre is larger than on the penny of uncertain mint by the moneyer Edward (Mack 153) and considerably larger than on the coins of Gladwine of Lincoln (Mack 150) and Lefsi of Stamford (Mack 151). In fact, the length of the defacement is closer to that across the bust of the Chichester penny dealt with above.

There are various places which the name ‘WlhT....’ might represent, though none would seem to be obvious mints. Witham, Essex, was the site of one of Edward the Elder’s \textit{burhs} but it is not recorded as a mint at a later date. It was a part of Queen Matilda’s honor of

\begin{footnotesize}
\item[19] \textit{RRAN}, I, no. 206.
\item[22] \textit{RRAN}, III, no. 304.
\item[23] \textit{RRAN}, III, no. 303.
\item[25] \textit{RRAN}, II, no. 1690.
\end{footnotesize}
Boulogne and was given by her to the Templars about 1147/8\textsuperscript{26} while the church of Witham was granted by the queen to the canons of St Martin-le-Grand, London.\textsuperscript{27} Whitby, Yorks., would seem too far north, the only Yorkshire defaced coins having two bars cut right across the obverse dies.\textsuperscript{28} Witney (Oxon) might be one possibility and it was in the same diocese at this time as the mints of Lincoln and Stamford. Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, had a palace there but there is no record of Witney having burghal status prior to 1208–9.\textsuperscript{29} In view of the find site one might also consider West Wittering in Sussex, at the entrance to Chichester harbour, only eight miles from Rowland’s Castle as the crow flies (and four miles from the royal manor of Bosham). Both East and West Wittering were held by the bishops of Chichester after 1106 and, though so close to Chichester itself, it is just conceivable that, as a possible point of embarkation for Normandy, a mint may have operated here for a short time in Stephen’s reign. However, in view of the short moneyness and mint names and the amount of space available in the reverse inscription it may be that a mint name of only four letters was intended, and perhaps one has only to look south-west from Rowland’s Castle across the Solent to a temporary mint on the Isle of Wight. The island appears as Wihtware, Wihtgare, Wieht and Wihland, but more usually as Whih in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle;\textsuperscript{30} it is Wih in Domesday, Wict and Wicht in Archbishop Theobald’s confirmations of grants to Quarr Abbey,\textsuperscript{31} and Wich in Henry of Anjou’s grant to the same abbey.\textsuperscript{32} The caput of the island lordship was traditionally at Carisbrooke, Whhtgarasburh, Karesbroc, etc., but the Domesday entry for Carisbrooke appears under Alwinestune (Alvington in Carisbrooke).\textsuperscript{33} It is unfortunate that the moneyer’s name on this coin is not fully legible, but even if the characters ‘TIL—’ could be extended to ‘Alwin’ it would hardly warrant a proposition that the inscription omitted a moneyer’s name and only contained the name of the mint, Albwin(ston) on Whih! But if there was a mint on the island the most obvious location would seem to be Carisbrooke.

The Isle of Wight had been granted to William I’s marshal William Fitz-Osbern, passing back to the king on Fitz-Osbern’s death in 1071. About 1100 the lordship and castle was granted to Richard de Redvers and then passed to his son, Baldwin de Redvers, earl of Devon. On King Henry’s death Baldwin supported the Empress Matilda, and when his castle of Exeter was besieged by Stephen in 1136 Baldwin raised other troops and occupied his fortress in Wight.\textsuperscript{34} Stephen quickly moved from Exeter and assembled a large force at Southampton, whereupon Baldwin fled to Normandy. Baldwin de Redvers had founded the abbey of St Mary’s at Quarr, near Ryde, in 1132, and it was from the quarries at Quarr that much of the material came from that was used in the construction of Winchester cathedral.\textsuperscript{35} He also founded the abbey of St Helen’s, near Bembridge, and is said to have founded the Benedictine priory at Carisbrooke.\textsuperscript{36}

Further evidence will be needed before ‘Whih’ can be definitely attributed and it would certainly be premature to add Whih to the list of Sussex mints. The photograph of this coin is reproduced courtesy of Messrs. Sotheby, and I would wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by the County Records Officer, East Sussex County Council, Lewes.

\textsuperscript{26} RRAN, III, nos 845–8. 
\textsuperscript{27} RRAN, III, nos 539–42. 
\textsuperscript{28} Scaby, ‘King Stephen and the Interdict’., p. 54 and fig. 11. 
\textsuperscript{31} A. Saltman, Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury (New York, 1969). Charters nos 203 & 204, confirming grants of the chapel of St Nicholas in Carisbrooke Castle (castello de Caresbroc) and the land of Whitefield in Brading, dated 1158 x 1161. 
\textsuperscript{32} RRAN, III, no. 666, dated to April 1149. 
\textsuperscript{33} VCH Hampshire, I, 518. 
\textsuperscript{36} Gesta Stephani, pp. 87 and 102.