

## RECENT COIN HOARDS FROM WALES, 1985–1992

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SINCE the flurry of significant coin hoards from Wales between 1979 and 1981, which have been published elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the principality has reverted to its more normal pattern of occasional hoard finds, of modest size. The following eight small hoards of English coins have been recorded under treasure trove procedures at the National Museum of Wales between 1985 and 1992.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Monmouth, Gwent, 1991/2

Late in 1991 or early in 1992, the following twelve Anglo-Saxon coins were found by use of a metal detector on the Buckholt, a prominent hill two kilometres north of Monmouth. The coins were shown to the Monmouth Archaeological Society, but in spite of patient encouragement from the society and others, the finder did not make them available for official examination or treasure trove proceedings. Subsequent investigation by Gwent Constabulary confirmed the facts of the find, but the coins had by then been lost and may never become available for detailed recording.<sup>3</sup> The sole record of the coins is therefore that made by the finder.

The coins are said to have been scattered over several square feet on a steep slope and are said all to be of the CRVX type (*BMC* iiii) of Æthelræd II, with reverse legends stated to be as follows:

1. LEOSIGE M-O GLEA	(Leofsige, Gloucester)	<i>parallels</i> <sup>4</sup> :	I.435–9; V.235
2. PL.....E M-O GLEA	(Wihtsige, Gloucester)		I.440–3; V. –; C.360
3. ÆLFGET M-O HERE	(Aelfget, Hereford)		I.445–7; V.236
4. BYRHSTAN M-O HERE ('HE ligated')	(Byrhstan, Hereford)		I.448–9; V. –; C.427–8
5. LEOFRIC M-O GIEL	(Leofric, Ilchester)		I.481–2; V.251; <i>SCBI</i> 36,260
6. GOD M-O LVNDO	(Goda, London)		I.701–5; V.363; C.812–13
7. GO. .... DO, 'sheared coin'	(Goda?, London)		as no.6?
8. OSPOLD M-O SNOT	(Oswold, Nottingham)		I.863–6; V.436; C.1104
9. ÆDELPIÆN M-O OXNA	(Aethelwine, Oxford)		I.872–3; V. –; C.1043–4
10. ÆLFRIC M-O SVDBYR	(Aelfric, Southwark)		I.915–27; V.449–55
11. TVN.....O SVDBY	(Tuneman, Southwark)		I.997–1002; V.498–502
12. ...IN M-O EO....	(?, York)		?

The list of parallels is by no means exhaustive, but serves to indicate that the readings provided are nearly all consistent with coins of known moneymen in the CRVX type, eleven of them being mint/moneyer combinations represented by two or more examples in the Igelösa hoard. Confidence in the finder's readings is increased by the observations that the British Museum's specimen corresponding to no. 4 has H and E of 'HERE' ligated and the BM's penny of Leofric of Ilchester has the same reading 'GIEL', presumably the same die.<sup>5</sup> The mint

<sup>1</sup> G.C. Boon, *Welsh Hoards 1979–1981* (Cardiff, 1986); *ibid.*, 'A Great Recoinage Hoard from Builth', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 134 (1985), 210–24. The 1986 Gwent finds of third century Roman coins from Bassaleg (904) and Caerleon (51) have been published by the writer in *CHRB* IX (1992), pp. 87–104.

<sup>2</sup> The Cefn Coed and Allt-yr-Yn finds were dealt with by George Boon when Keeper of Archaeology and Numismatics at the National Museum.

<sup>3</sup> It was stated that the coins had been stolen in Hereford in December 1992 whilst in the keeping of a friend of the finder.

<sup>4</sup> Coins of similar type from the Igelösa and Värpinge hoards (K. Jonsson, *Viking Age Hoards and Late Anglo-Saxon Coins* (Stockholm, 1987), pp. 132–40 and 123–31) and the Copenhagen collection (*SCBI* 7).

<sup>5</sup> Byrhstan, Hereford: BM 1975-11-26, 27 (H.H. King); Leofric, Ilchester: BM 1928-5-7, 16.

reading [LVN]DO tends to confirm that no. 7 is a cut half of the same type as no. 6. At Oxford, 'ÆDELPIÆN' is a curiosity, which might arise from a misreading of 'ÆDELPINE' with N and E ligated, as BMC 297. The sole uncertainty surrounds no. 12, which was said to be badly corroded. The likely moneyer is [Dahf]in, who is known at York in Æthelræd's CRVX, Helmet and Last Small Cross and Cnut's Quatrefoil types.<sup>6</sup> However, other interpretations are possible: if, for instance, the character read as 'i' were the right half of an 'A' [+OBA]N M-O EO[FRPI], as SCBI 21 no. 71, would be a possible candidate.

Finds of Anglo-Saxon coins of any period from South Wales are very rare, although a small group of finds of Æthelræd II is beginning to emerge. In addition to Monmouth, one other hoard and four single finds are recorded:

Caerwent, Gwent, 1909	single find	CRVX; Lincoln, Leofman	<i>Arch Camb</i> 119 (1970), 16-17
Penrice, Gower, 1825	hoard	c. 30 Helmet pennies. Eleven coins were recorded in detail, from Barnstaple, Bath, Canterbury, Cricklade, Exeter, 'Gothabyrig' (this coin now in N.M.W.), Lincoln (2), London, Winchester (2).	NC 1959, 187-8; Boon, 1986, pp. 102-3
St Lythans, S. Glam., 1993	single find	Helmet; Lydford, Bruna	Coin Register 1993, no. 218, below, p.151
Sully Moors, S. Glam., 1989	single find	Last Small Cross; Shaftesbury, Aelfwine	<i>BNJ</i> 59 (1990), 230 Coin Register, no. 83
Llanstephan, Dyfed, date?	single find	Last (?) Small Cross; London, Wulfryd	Boon, 1986 (n.1), p. 18 fn 537

The Penrice and Monmouth hoards conform with the general pattern of other 'smaller' British hoards of the time in consisting of single types.<sup>8</sup> The closest parallels to Monmouth appear to be Isleworth, 1886 and Bradda Head, I.O.M., c. 1848.<sup>9</sup> The last, of which twelve coins from several hundred of BMC iiiia-c were recorded, includes a wide spread of mints, while the twenty-eight from Isleworth (again part of a larger hoard) show a strong regional bias, including sixteen London, four Rochester and three Canterbury coins, with single examples from Colchester, Exeter, Maldon, Thetford and Winchester. Allowing for the smaller numbers involved, the presence of two each from the relatively minor mints of Gloucester and Hereford also gives the Monmouth group a distinctly 'regional' composition.

The finding of a late tenth century hoard close to Monmouth is also important in local terms. Recent excavations in Monmouth have produced no coins earlier than William II, but small amounts of possible tenth century 'Chester' ware hint at earlier origins for the town. Given the general scarcity of coins of the period west of the Severn, the nearby presence of a hoard provides significant support for this view. In 997, 'the Danes went around Devonshire into the mouth of the Severn, and there ravaged in Cornwall, Wales and Devon'; the continuing vulnerability of the area to Viking raids might provide a valid context for the non-recovery of the hoard.

<sup>6</sup> K. Jonsson and G. Van der Meer, 'Mints and moneyers c.973-1066', in *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage*, edited by K. Jonsson (Stockholm, 1990), at p. 117. The CRVX and Helmet records are from 'Swedish published or unpublished finds'.

<sup>7</sup> Given there as First Small Cross. Jonsson and Van der Meer (n.6) record a London moneyer of this name from c.1003 (Helmet); Wulfryd, spelt thus, is known in Last Small Cross (SCBI 7, 958).

<sup>8</sup> M.A.S. Blackburn, 'The Welbourn (Lincs.) hoard 1980-82 of Æthelred II coins', *BNJ* 55 (1986), 79-83.

<sup>9</sup> M. Blackburn and H. Pagan, 'A revised check-list of coin hoards from the British Isles, c.500-1100', in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History*, edited by M.A.S. Blackburn (Leicester, 1986), pp. 291-313, nos 184 and 186.

### 2. *Slebech, Pembrokeshire (Dyfed), 1991 (Plate 10, 1–12)*

Twelve Short Cross coins (ten pennies and two cut halves) were found early in December 1991 by use of a metal detector.<sup>10</sup> The coins were scattered in ploughsoil on land in Slebech Park, near Haverfordwest. The find was declared promptly to the local coroner, who deemed it not to be treasure trove. All of the coins are of classes Ib–c, apart from one IVa; none is noticeably worn, suggesting a date for their loss around 1195–1200.

The find comprises:

	<i>Class</i>	<i>Mint</i>	<i>Moneyer</i>	<i>Weight, die-axis</i>	
1.	Ib	Lincoln	Hugo	1.38g, 0°	
2.		London	Gefrei	1.37g, 280°	
3.		London	Pierēs	1.36g, 150°	
4.		Northampton	Raul	1.33g, 0°	
5.	I(b?)	Northampton?	–	0.66g, 270°	cut ½d
6.	Ib	Oxford	Owe(in)	0.78g, 180°	cut ½d
7.	Ic	London	Raul	1.30g, 350°	
8.		London	Raul	1.27g, 0°	
9.		London	Raul	1.22g, 180°	(chipped)
10.		London	Raul	1.16g, 135°	(chipped)
11.		Winchester	Gocclm	1.37g, 160°	
12.	IVa	London	Stivene	1.37g, 30°	

Slebech resembles the somewhat larger Scotforth (Lancs.) hoard in closing with a single IVa. It contains no class III, but its small size reduces any possible significance of this.<sup>11</sup> The findspot lies within 200 metres of the Commandery and church of the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem at Slebech, which was in their possession by 1176.<sup>12</sup> This would appear to be only the second hoard of the Short Cross period reported from Wales, the other being the late Wrexham hoard of 1926, which closed with a single VIIIb.<sup>13</sup> The ‘thirty-eight silver coins or shillings of Henry I’ found in a grave in Llangurig churchyard (Montgomery) c.1753 may perhaps record another, although the reference might imply a later, groat hoard.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. *Cefn Coed, Mid Glamorgan, 1986*

A hoard of thirty-one silver pennies, comprising twenty-six Edwardian sterlings, two Irish pennies of Edward I and three pennies of Alexander III of Scotland, was found around 20 May 1986 by Mr J.L. Haymer, in his garden at Morlais Villa, Lower Vaynol Road, Cefn Coed-y-cymmer, near Merthyr Tydfil (SO 03280805). The find was declared treasure trove at an inquest at Merthyr Tydfil on 16 July 1986. Nine coins (nos 3, 4, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 26, 27 in the following list) were purchased by the National Museum of Wales and the remainder returned to the finder.

<sup>10</sup> I am very grateful to Mr Arthur Duncan, the finder, for informing the National Museum of the find, and for his generosity in promptly making it available for recording.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Scotforth, Lancashire, 1854’, in M.M. Archibald and B.J. Cook, *English Medieval Coin Hoards* vol I (BM Occasional Paper, forthcoming).

<sup>12</sup> J. Rogers Rees, ‘Slebech Commandery and the Knights of St John’, *Arch Camb* 1897–99, in several parts.

<sup>13</sup> J.M. Lewis, *BNJ* 39 (1971), 19–23; Boon, 1986, pp. 106–9. Small numbers of Short Cross coins from south and west Wales are seen sporadically at the N.M.W., while recent discoveries from Llanfaes (Anglesey), as yet unpublished, point to the very active use of coinage in this commercial centre of the native Welsh throughout the thirteenth century.

<sup>14</sup> *R.C.A.M. Wales and Monmouthshire. I. Montgomeryshire* (1911), p. 108 no. 555.

*England*

1: Bristol, IXb; 2–4: Bury, Xcf, Xf, XIV; 5–11: Canterbury, IVd, Xcf, crown 3 (5), XVa; 12–14: Durham, Xcf (2), XIb; 15: Kingston-upon-Hull, IXb; 16–26: London, III d, III g (with pellet-barred Ns on obv.), VIIIa, IXa, IXb, Xb, Xcf (2), XVc.

*Ireland*

27–28: Edward I, Waterford mint pennies, second coinage (2)

*Scotland*

29–31: Alexander III, sterling pennies (3)

There is one coin of numismatic interest, the IIIg penny of Edward I with pellet-barred Ns on the obverse (pl.10, 13). The significance of this feature has received differing interpretations.<sup>15</sup>

The latest coins are a little worn, so the Cefn Coed deposit, like those from Neath Abbey, was probably deposited at the end of Edward II's reign, when the turmoil in Glamorgan over the king's flight and the searches for the dispersed royal treasure would have caused many prudent people to conceal their cash. Another modest hoard of sterlings, 'several silver pennies of Edward I and one of Alexander I (*sic*) of Scotland', was found in 1859 at Morlais Castle, about two kilometres away to the north east.<sup>16</sup>

**Tudor and Stuart hoards***4. Cemaes Bay, Anglesey (Gwynedd), 1987–8*

Eight coins of Elizabeth I were found on 26 November 1987 and 27 February 1988, by use of a metal detector. They were scattered over an area of about seven square metres adjacent to a former footpath. There being no evidence for concealment, the coins were not regarded as treasure trove.

*England*

1–3.	<b>Elizabeth I</b>	Shillings	Martlet (1560–1), 5.68g; Bell (1583), 5.84g; Crescent (1587–90), 5.74g
4–8.		Sixpences	Lion 1567, 2.63g; Coronet? 1567, 2.59g; Coronet 1568, 2.82g; Scallop 1585, 2.78g; Tun 1593, 3.11g

The coins are corroded, but none is greatly worn. The finds appear to represent a purseful of coins lost around the turn of the seventeenth century.

<sup>15</sup> R.H.M. Dolley, 'An unpublished minor variety of a penny of Edward I', *NC* 1957, 244–5; J.J. North, *NCirc* 1981, 399 and *SCBI* 39 (1989), p. 5; N.J. Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations of Edwardian Type* (1983), p. 29; M.M. Archibald, in *Post-Roman Coins from York Excavations 1971–81*, edited by E.J.E. Pirie (1986), at p. 60.

<sup>16</sup> Neath: R.H.M. Dolley, *BNJ* 28 (1958), 294–8 and 555–9;

Boon, 1986, pp. 109–12. Morlais Castle: *Arch Camb* 1859, 101. A further local find (of 20–30 coins, said to include Edward III and David (II), and so later, if genuine) in woodland 'near Merthyr Tydfil' was reported by telephone on 8 Oct. 1991, but an appointment to show the coins at the N.M.W. was not kept.

5. *Mynydd Fochriw, Mid Glamorgan, 1991*

A hoard of eight silver coins was found by a metal detectorist on 28 April 1991, on common land on the north side of Mynydd Fochriw, near Merthyr Tydfil (SO 09980506). Subsequent excavation by the National Museum of Wales indicated that the coins had lain on an old surface at the side of a probable hillside way. The spot is a remote one, even today. A coroner's inquest at Merthyr Tydfil on 25 September 1991 ruled that the coins were not treasure trove.

*England*

1.	<b>Elizabeth I</b>	Shilling	Crosslets, 4.84g (clipped)
2–3.		Sixpences	Coronet 1570, 2.40g; Crescent 1589, 2.58g
4.	<b>James I</b>	Half crown	3rd coinage, Trefoil, N.2122, 14.34g
5.		Shilling	2nd coinage, 2nd bust, Lys, 5.48g
6.	<b>Charles I</b>	Halfcrown	Tun, 13.93g
7.		Shilling	Harp, Sharp D5/1, 5.53g

*Ireland*

8.	<b>James I</b>	Shilling	Tower Mint, 2nd coinage, 4th bust, Rose, 3.81g
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The find again appears to represent a modest sum of ready money (9s 9d), lost at the side of a hillside thoroughfare around 1638–40. The latest coin (no.6) is unworn. The Irish shilling is both worn and bent, as is usual in hoards of this time. This and the James I half crown have been acquired by the National Museum of Wales.

6. *Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan, 1988*

A hoard of thirty-five coins was found on 27 September 1988 by two metal detectorists on farmland at Cilfynydd, Pontypridd (ST 086911). The find was declared treasure trove at an inquest at Aberdare on 21 October 1988 and has been acquired by the National Museum of Wales.

*England*

1–7.	<b>Mary</b>	Groats		7
8.	<b>Philip and Mary</b>	Groat		1
9–12.	<b>Elizabeth I</b>	Groats	Lys; Crosslets (2); uncertain	4
13–26.		Sixpences	N.1997 Pheon 1561 (2); Coronet 1567, 15??; Ermine 1572; Eglantine 1574, 1575, 1577, 15??; Plain cross 1578, 1579; Long cross 1580; N.2015 Scallop 1584; Tun 1592	14
27.		Threepence	N.1998 p.m.?, 15??	1
28.	<b>James I</b>	Shilling	1st coinage, 2nd bust, Thistle	1
29–32.		Sixpences	1/2 Lys 1604; 2/3 Lys 1604; 2/4 Scallop 1606 (2)	4
33–4.	<b>Charles I</b>	Shillings	N.2231 Anchor; N.2232 Triangle	2
35.		Sixpence	N.2241 Tun	1

The latest coin is unworn, which suggests a date of deposit around 1640–2, on the eve of the Civil War. The site of the discovery consists of a rectangular platform bounded by low banks, about 10 (E–W) × 25 (N–S) metres, cut into a steep west-facing hillside above the river Taff, ENE of Pontypridd. Within this, at the northern end, is an uneven mound of stone rubble. Apart from a few strays the coins were found scattered in the western part of this feature; they

appear to have been concealed within a building which subsequently collapsed. Pottery sherds, mainly of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, were also found. No building is marked on the local 1841 tithe map, though the first edition 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey, carried out in 1873, marks a patch of rough ground/shrubs at the spot. The site has much in common with the long huts and *hafotai*, or summer dwellings of farmers and shepherds, of which several examples have recently been identified in upland Glamorgan.<sup>17</sup> These have been attributed to the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries, which accords with the evidence from the Cilfynydd site.

The Fochriw and Pontypridd hoards are small (£0 9s 9d and £0 16s 9d respectively), and their compositions also demonstrate the slowness of penetration of new money into rural Wales, which at this time was lightly populated and remote. Two other local parallels are the Llysworney and Pendoylan finds from the Vale of Glamorgan, while in North Wales coins of Charles I accounted for only 6.3 and 2.9 per cent respectively of the large hoards from Conwy and Prestatyn.<sup>18</sup> Five or so years later, the picture had changed dramatically under the impact of the Civil War, with Charles's coins comprising 63 per cent (nineteen shillings out of £1 10s) of the nearby Trehafod (Rhondda) find and 75 per cent of the Penybryn (Ruabon, Clwyd) hoard, both deposits of 1644–5.<sup>19</sup>

## Sovereign hoards

### 7. *Allt-yr-yn, Newport, Gwent, 1985*

The hoard comprises seven sovereigns and twelve half-sovereigns, all of Queen Victoria, found by metal detectors on land belonging to Strawberry Farm, Allt-yr-yn, Newport (ST 29878884), not far from a barracks erected in 1845. The coins were declared treasure trove at Newport on 31 July 1985, and returned to the finders.

#### *Great Britain*

<b>Victoria</b>	Sovereigns	1851, 1863, 1864, 1869, 1872 (2)
	Half-sovereigns	1856, 1867 (2), 1869, 1870, 1871 (2), 1873, 1874, 1876, 1877, 1878

#### *Australia*

<b>Victoria</b>	Sovereign	Sydney Mint 1866
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The coins were described in evidence as 'fairly evenly graduated in point of wear from the earliest to the latest' and a date of deposition *c.* 1878–9 postulated. The Sydney mint sovereigns were legal tender in Britain from 1866, and the presence of a specimen close to a seaport is unsurprising.<sup>20</sup> The St Pancras (1963) hoard of 62 sovereigns and the Wisbech (1964) hoard of 96 sovereigns and one half, both of which closed in 1875, each included five Sydney sovereigns of Australian type.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> P.R. Davies, 'Long-huts in the Rhondda Valley', *Archaeology in Wales* 28 (1988), 37–8; 'Long-huts and hafotai in Upland Glamorgan', *ibid.*, 29 (1989), 66–7.

<sup>18</sup> E. Besly, *English Civil War Coin Hoards*, B.M.O.P. 51 (1987), pp. 89, E14 (Prestatyn); 100, K11 (Conwy); 105, K42 (Llysworney); 106, K49 (Pendoylan).

<sup>19</sup> Besly, *Hoards*, pp. 92–3, F13 (Penybryn) and F14 (Trehafod).

<sup>20</sup> J. Sharples, 'Sovereigns of the overseas branches', in *Royal Sovereign 1489–1989*, edited by G.P. Dyer (Llantrisant, 1989), at p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> M.M. Archibald, *BNJ* 33 (1965), 156–8 (Wisbech); J.P.C. Kent, *BNJ* 37 (1969), 144 (St Pancras).

8. *Llanafan, Dyfed, 1990*

On 8 March 1990, Mr Richard Askie found a hoard of 33 gold coins while planting a new hedge inside the boundary of his property at Eithin Bach, Brynafan, Llanafan (ST 71157275). The coins had been buried in rouleaux in a small metal container, approximately thirty centimetres deep within the boundary bank at the foot of one of three ash trees, which still stand. The hoard was declared treasure trove at an inquest at Aberaeron, Dyfed, on 6 July 1990. It comprises thirty sovereigns and three halves, as follows.

**Victoria***Sovereigns* (21)

1.	London	Young Head/shield 1856	7.91g
2.		Young Head/St George 1876	7.92
3–8.		Jubilee Head 1889 (2), 1890 (2), 1892 (2)	7.98, 7.97, 7.99, 7.95, 7.95, 7.99
9–15.		Old Head 1893, 1894, 1896 (2), 1898 (2), 1900	7.98, 8.00, 7.98, 7.96, 7.97, 7.97, 7.99
16.	Sydney	Young Head/shield 1875	7.94
17–19.	Melbourne	Jubilee Head 1888, 1890, 1891	7.96, 7.96, 7.97
20.		Old Head 1893	7.93
21.	Perth	Old Head 1900	7.99

*Half-sovereigns* (3)

22.	London	Jubilee Head 1892	3.96
23–4.		Old Head 1895, 1899	3.97, 3.92

**Edward VII***Sovereigns* (8)

25–30.	London	1906 (2), 1909, 1910 (3)	7.98 (all six coins)
31.	Melbourne	1903	7.95
32.	Perth	1902	7.95

**George V***Sovereign* (1)

33.	London	1913	7.98
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The latest coin, of 1913, shows slight signs of wear, so a deposit date of 1914–15, following the outbreak of the Great War, would appear likely. The war curtailed circulation of sovereigns sharply and although they continued to be produced in London until 1917 new issues probably reached remote areas such as west Wales very slowly, if at all. The Llanafan hoard could therefore have been deposited distinctly later than its latest coin. Sovereigns were certainly hoarded in England until at least the late 1920s, since the Atherstone (Warwicks.) hoard, dated by its silver and bronze coins to 1928, contained 69 sovereigns and 79 halves, none later than 1910. On balance, though, the Llanafan hoard was probably buried in 1914; it parallels closely the recent Bentley (Suffolk) find, where there is good evidence for burial in August 1914.<sup>22</sup> The proportion of Colonial issues (eight coins: 25.4 percent of the total value), too, is similar and appears to be typical of hoards from rural areas.<sup>23</sup>

The weights of the coins are recorded, for completeness, and fully bear out the famous consistency of Royal Mint sovereigns. Over half lie on or within 0.01g of the standard (123.274gr/7.988g), while only four of the sovereigns (including the three oldest) and one half sovereign lie at or below the least current weight of 122.5gr (7.938g) set in 1821 and confirmed in the 1870 Coinage Act.

Thirteen sovereigns and one half (nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 27, 31 and 33) have been acquired by the National Museum of Wales, one sovereign of 1892 and the half-sovereign of that year by the Ceredigion Museum, and the remainder were returned to the finder.

<sup>22</sup> M.M. Archibald, *BNJ* 34 (1966), 173–5 (Atherstone); P. Attwood, *BNJ* 62 (1993), 199–200 (Bentley).

<sup>23</sup> G.P. Dyer, pers. comm.