

SHORT ARTICLES AND NOTES

THE EARLIEST STATERS FROM THE AREA OF THE DOBUNNI?

S.C. BEAN

TRADITIONALLY the earliest indigenous coinage from this area has been identified as Allen's British Ra staters,¹ Van Arsdell's Dobunnic A.² The reverse of this type is modelled on Allen's British Q, whilst the obverse departs from this uniface model in depicting a 'tree' device.

During recent research on the coinage from the area of the Atrebatas and Regni, a new type of stater emerged, apparently belonging to the area of the Dobunni.³ Only three specimens have so far been identified, each from different reverse dies,⁴ and, in addition, two probable plated examples, also from new dies. Previously these coins have been classified as British Qb, and the type is not included in Van Arsdell's recent survey of the Dobunnic coinage.⁵ Like Qb staters they are uniface and the reverse is also closely modelled on this type.⁶ The style is however much heavier, closely anticipating that of British Ra, and, like Ra, the saw-tooth line below the horse is now rendered as a row of thick pellets (pl. 23).

Unlike the main run of Qb staters, which are encountered in yellow gold, the new type are struck in a far redder gold. This is confirmed by the recent metallurgical analyses shown in the table below.⁷ One specimen of the new type, in the British Museum, has

been tested, suggesting the type is similar to Ra but more cupreous than Qb. The new type appears to be rather lighter than the main run of British Qb,⁸ with a mean weight of 5.41g; the forty-two specimens of Qb available for study have a mean weight of 5.86g.

This peculiar group is further removed from the British Qb by its distribution. Whilst Qb are not unknown in the area of the Dobunni, they are concentrated in the area of the Atrebatas and Regni.⁹ By contrast, the list below illustrates that the provenanced specimens of this newly identified type come only from the area of the Dobunni.

In conclusion this would appear to be the earliest indigenous coinage from the area of the Dobunni. The new type would therefore appear to be the predecessor of Ra, as it lacks the innovation of the 'tree' device on the obverse. It confirms that Ra is ultimately based on Qb, not Qa, via the newly identified type. It will be suggested elsewhere that the prototype, British Qb, may be dated loosely to c. 60–40 BC,¹⁰ and hoards indicate that it did not survive long into the period of inscribed staters (c.30/20 BC onwards), so a date around 50–30 BC might be suggested for the new type.

Comparative metallurgy of British Qb, the 'new' type, and British Ra

Type	Au	Ar	Cu	Source ¹¹
Qb	66.5	22.9	11.6	Cowell
Qb	50.59	34.61	14.69	Northover
Qb	53.2	22.9	16.6	Cowell
Qb	51.2	34.1	14.7	Cowell
Qb	49.9	35.49	14.44	Northover
Qb	51.7	34.98	13.12	Northover
Qb	51.17	26.67	22.06	Northover
Qb	48.31	29.35	21.68	Northover

¹ D.F. Allen, 'The Origins of Coinage in Britain: A Reappraisal', in *Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain* edited by S.S. Frere (London, 1960).

² R.D. Van Arsdell, *Celtic Coinage of Britain* (London, 1989).

³ S.C. Bean, *The Coinage of the Atrebatas and Regni* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham 1994; publication forthcoming).

⁴ The identification of obverse dies is not possible, owing to the uniface nature of the coins.

⁵ R.D. Van Arsdell, *Coinage of the Dobunni: Money Supply and Coin Circulation in Dobunni Territory* (Oxford, 1994).

⁶ The obverses are completely uniface and do not appear to

be worn British Ra obverse dies; this is confirmed by the reverses which are distinct.

⁷ M. Cowell, 'An analytical survey of the British Celtic gold coinage', and P. Northover, 'Materials issues in Celtic coinage', in *Celtic Coinage: Britain and beyond*, edited by M. Mays, BAR 222 (Oxford, 1992).

⁸ This table excludes two distinct varieties of Qb to be published in Bean, as in n. 3, as types Q1–6 and Q1–7.

⁹ Bean, as in n. 3, figure 3.1.

¹⁰ Bean, as in n. 3, p. 214–221.

¹¹ Cowell, as in n. 7.

Type	Au	Ar	Cu	Source
New type	44.9	19.0	35.8	Cowell
Ra	46.5	22.7	30.4	Cowell
Ra	45.7	23.0	30.5	Cowell
Ra	45.2	26.4	27.7	Cowell

Extant Specimens

- 1 Fd.-; 5.01g; BM 1935-11-17, 909, ex T.G. Barnett. Au 44.9% Ag 19.0% Cu 35.8% (pl. 23).
- 2 Fd. Ozleworth, Kingswood, Bristol 1964; 5.60g; Bristol City Museum.
- 3 Fd. 'Gloucestershire'; 5.64g; Private collection, sold to Stanley Gibbons April 1977. Test cut to reverse.

- 4 Plated core. Fd. Bushwood Parish, Warwickshire 1990 (location confidentially recorded); 2.53g; Private collection.
- 5 Core of plated stater. Fd. Lloyds bank site, Alcester, Warwickshire 1975; 3.725g; Warwickshire Museum.

Illustration: Scale 2:1 *Photo:* Oxford Institute.

SOMERTON, SUFFOLK, TREASURE TROVE

ANDREW BURNETT

A total of thirty-one gold staters of Cunobelin were discovered, on three occasions between 7 October and 2 November 1990, in a field near Somerton, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. There was no trace of a container. They were declared Treasure Trove at an Inquest on 12 December 1990. No museum was able to acquire the coins, which were therefore returned to the finder.

The coins are all of the principal gold type minted by Cunobelin, depicting a corn ear with the inscription CAMV on the obverse, and a prancing horse and the inscription CVN (or CVNO) on the reverse. The inscriptions refer to the mint at Camulodunum (Colchester) and to the ruler.

Whilst gold staters of Cunobelin are regularly found in south-eastern England, particularly in Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire,¹ hoards are very unusual. A small hoard was found in Epping Forest during 1974, and consisted of four staters of Tasciovanus and at least eight of Cunobelin.² The finds from Chippenham, near Ely, Cambridgeshire in 1981 included five die-linked staters, although the extent and exact circumstances of

that deposit are not clear.³ The Somerton hoard is therefore the largest hoard of Cunobelin's coinage, although it lies somewhat on the edge of the area in which his coinage is normally found. It is not possible to be sure of the reasons for its deposit and non-recovery. The coins represent the full range of the coinage, and so were presumably deposited towards the end of, or soon after, Cunobelin's reign; one might be tempted to speculate that the concealment was connected with the Roman invasion of AD 43.

A full study of Cunobelin's gold was published in 1975 by D.F. Allen,⁴ and his classification is that generally used today.⁵ The Somerton find provides the opportunity to look again at Allen's study. The first point to make is that the thirty-one new staters (Allen had 159 available) have added hardly any new dies. Allen found sixty-nine obverse dies, and only two new ones were present in the Somerton hoard. A few new reverses have been found, but that is not surprising, as Allen himself found more reverse than obverse dies (ninety).⁶

	<i>specimens</i>	<i>obv. dies</i>	<i>rev. dies</i>
Allen	159	69	90
Somerton	31	23	27
total	190	71	98

¹ See D.F. Allen, 'The origins of coinage in Britain: a reappraisal,' in *Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain*, edited by S.S. Frere, Institute of Archaeology Occasional Paper no. 11, (London, 1960), pp. 225-35. For a distribution map, see *Coinage and Society in Britain and Gaul*, edited by B. Cunliffe (London, 1981), p. 82.

² *Britannia* 6 (1975), 18-9, with plate VII.

³ A.M. Burnett, 'Chippenham, near Ely, Treasure Trove,' *CHRB* VI (1986), pp. 1-6.

⁴ D.F. Allen, 'Cunobelin's Gold,' *Britannia* 6 (1975), 1-19.

⁵ For example, by R.D. Van Arsdell, *Celtic Coinage of Britain* (London, 1989), pp. 393-427.

⁶ The exact number of new reverses is not clear, as sometimes the illustrations in Allen's article are not good enough.

We can therefore be reasonably confident that the estimated total number of obverse dies was rather smaller than Allen's calculations suggested, and so we should perhaps marginally reduce the estimated size of the coinage made by Allen.⁷ It seems unnecessary to pursue the statistics in any further detail, given the wide magnitude of error in such calculations. Allen's implicit conclusion is supported by the new hoard, namely that the size of Cunobelin's coinage was not very great in terms of the probable amount of tribute paid to the Romans, and *a fortiori* the size of the economy under Cunobelin.

Secondly, the hoard provides the opportunity to look again at the internal classification made by Allen of the coinage. He divided it into four main phases, which he called linear, wild, plastic and classic. The first and last are easily definable; linear coins have no exergual line on the reverse; the inscription is always CVN (rather than CVNO); the horse sometimes has a bridle. The classic coins have generally small and neat lettering in the inscriptions, especially the obverse, and are engraved in a very polished or Romanised style. A small sub-group have the horse going left, with a flower (?) rather than the normal branch above. The wild and plastic coins usually have CVNO, and both groups include sub-groups with a ring-and-dot ornament underneath the horse. Otherwise the groups are rather difficult to differentiate; the wild coins tend sometimes have a dot or pattern of dots ('control-marks') on the obverse, and the plastic coins are sometimes rather crudely engraved and struck on odd-shaped flans. Generally speaking the mane on wild coins consists of a few lines which stick out from the neck, whereas on plastic coins it is neater and consists of more, shorter lines. Working through the Somerton coins, one felt oneself wondering about the validity of the distinction. Perhaps a more helpful one might be between coins with the ring-and-dot ornament (Allen's wild B and early plastic) and those without it (wild A and remainder of plastic).

There is also the question of the sequence of the groups. The main reason for hesitating about Allen's sequence is the way that the obverses have a strong central stalk in the middle of the corn ear, principally on most of the linear and classic series. The line does also occur on some of Allen's early wild group, but one is slightly reluctant to place the occurrence of the line at the beginning and end of the coinage, with nothing in between. On the other hand, it does not seem possible to place the coinage in a single series and keep all the coins with a central stalk together.⁸ Nor is it self-evident that the classic coins need to come at the end of the series; *a priori* it seems as likely that the coinage starts with the finest dies whose style then becomes

degraded, as that it should gradually become more and more Romanised. These considerations may suggest, in turn, that the organisation of the coinage is more complicated, and that it may have been the case that more than one style was in production at any given moment; or there may have been breaks in the coinage which account for the differences in style which can be noted.

Catalogue

'Linear' series

1.	5.46g	A/c
2.	5.41	C(?) / new (as 3)
3.	5.28	C(?) / new (as 2)
4.	5.47	E/f
5.	5.50	H/h
6.	5.42	H/new (as 7)
7.	5.46	H/new (as 6)
8.	5.19	L/n
9.	5.44	O/p

'Wild A' series

10.	5.40	A/b
11.	5.47	B/c
12.	5.58	E/new
13.	5.45	New/new
14.	5.54	I/new
15.	5.47	J/new (as 16-17)
16.	5.43	J/new (as 15, 17)
17.	5.45	J/new (as 15-6)
18.	5.54	G/k
19.	5.51	G/j

'Wild B' series

20.	5.42	C/f
21.	5.55	New (like B) / new
22.	5.42	C/g

'Plastic'

23.	5.50	A/a
24.	5.47	New/a
25.	5.41	B/a
26.	5.42	I/g
27.	5.35	I/new

'Classic A' series

28.	5.84 (yes 8)	C/e
29.	5.41	E/f
30.	5.41	G/h

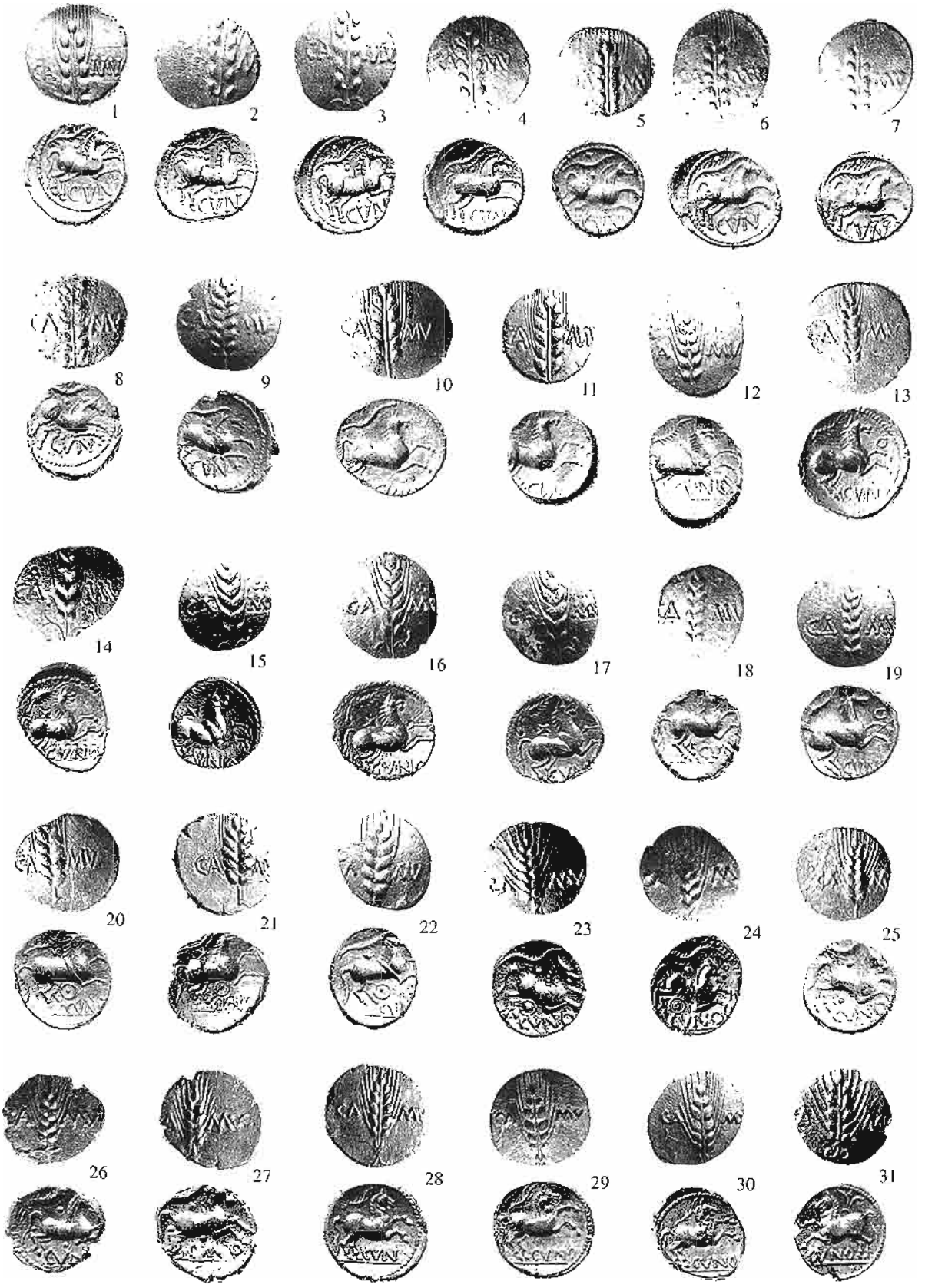
'Classic B' series (horse to left)

31.	5.45	A/a
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⁷ Allen multiplied the number of dies by a figure of 10,000 coins per die; this perhaps seems rather on the low side and 30,000 is the figure more usually used today.

⁸ Bearing in mind the obverse die link noted by Allen between his plastic and classic groups.

PLATE 12



BURNETT: SOMERTON TREASURE TROVE

A POSSIBLE MEDIEVAL FAIR SITE AT THE ALBANY, IPSWICH

J. NEWMAN

PART of a small Romano-British settlement was excavated in May and June 1991, prior to residential development of the area. The work was funded by the developers, J.S. Bloor Services Ltd. Only those parts of the site directly affected by the development were examined and in total an area of 1,300 square metres was excavated. The site is on heavy boulder clay and is adjacent to the Tuddenham Road on the northern side of Ipswich. Topographically it lies at the head of a small valley that drains southwards towards the River Orwell. The Albany site is 1.1km south-east of the well known Castle Hill villa site at Whitton.

Whilst the excavation did not reveal any definite evidence for post-Roman settlement on the site, an intensive metal-detector search of the spoil by a local enthusiast did recover numerous medieval coin

fragments as well as the expected Romano-British objects. In all twelve complete silver pennies, nine cut halves and twenty-one cut quarters were found, with a date range between the reigns of Stephen (1135–54) and Edward III (1327–77). Many of the complete coins that were dropped at this time were probably recovered straight away, but the smaller cut quarters were more easily lost, and it has taken an intensive metal-detector search to recover them. As can be seen in the following table, a particular peak in the chronological distribution of the coins occurs between the late twelfth century and the late thirteenth century, that is between the reigns of Henry II and Edward I. In addition one foreign coin, a Flemish *petit denier* from the Lille mint dated to c. 1220–50, and a Flemish coin-weight of late medieval date were recovered.

Summarised table of finds¹

	1135–54	1154–1216	1216–72	1272–1377
Whole pennies	–	2	1(a)	9(b,d)
Cut halfpennies	–	5	4	–
Cut farthings	1	9	11	3(c)

The exceptionally high coin loss rate indicates that the Albany area may have been the location for some form of fair site from the late twelfth century to the mid-fourteenth century. Such minor fair sites may not have left any trace in the historic records, but intensive metal-detector searches can recover the relevant evidence. With this interpretation in mind it may be significant at this point to note that the antiquarian writer Wodderspoon recorded the presence of an

earthwork: 'On the road to Tuddenham, about half a mile from the town (Ipswich), are earthworks'.² The earthwork in question could have been the remnants of the Romano-British enclosure described above. If so, it may have formed the focus for the later medieval activity which resulted in the loss of numerous coins, providing the ideal setting for a rural medieval field fair away from the constraints of the nearby town of Ipswich.

¹ Some of the coin fragments were too worn/chipped for definite identification, and some reigns have therefore been amalgamated. Key: (a) Flemish *petit denier* of Lille, c. 1220–50, (b) mainly pennies of Edward I, (c) farthings of Edward I, (d) also a Flemish coin-weight, florin type.

14th/15th-century. English coins identified by E. Martin, Flemish coin by M.A.S. Blackburn, Flemish coin-weight by B. Cook.

² J. Wodderspoon, *Memorials of the Ancient Town of Ipswich* (1850), p. 66.

TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NOTES

EDWARD BESLY

1. An unrecorded Civil War hoard

THE following coins formed lot 262 of Bonhams' sale on 13 December 1994, and were examined there shortly before the sale. Their provenance is not known, but the coins are said to have been in the family of the vendor, from Ipston, Wallingford, Oxon. 'for several generations'. The state of the coins is in accord with this: when first examined they were grubby, and with a somewhat musty smell; several had been subjected to attempts at cleaning in the past,

using jeweller's rouge. A number bore iron encrustations.

In the list which follows, the weights of Elizabethan and Jacobean sixpences were taken using a portable electronic scale, supplied by Bonhams, to one decimal place. It subsequently proved possible to re-examine the other coins and they were reweighed at the National Museum of Wales, to two decimal places; 'c' indicates a coin that is noticeably clipped.¹

Edward VI (1)					
Sixpence, fine coinage, p.m. Y?		2.51g	1		
Mary (4)					
Groats, very much worn		1.59, 1.25, 1.21, 1.03	4		
Philip and Mary (2)					
Shillings	full titles 1554	N.1967	4.92		
	English titles 15[]	N.1968	5.40		
Elizabeth I (50)					
Shillings (15)	N.1985	Crosslets	5.41	1	
		Martlet	5.98, 5.74, 4.92c	3	
	N.2014	A	4.95c	1	
		Scallop	5.83	1	
		Tun	5.53, graffiti on obv	1	
		Hand	5.76, graffiti on obv	1	
		Woolpack	5.74, graffiti on obv	1	
		Key	5.82, 5.30, 5.18c	3	
		One	5.42	1	
		Two	5.83, 5.70	2	
	Sixpences (35)	N.1997	Pheon 1565;	2.5	1
			Portcullis 1566;	2.4	1
			Lion 1566, 1567;	2.6, 2.2	2
			Coronet 1567, 1568, 1569 (2), 156?;	2.6, 2.6, 2.8, 2.6, 2.4	5
Castle 1570 (2), 1571;			2.7, 2.7, 2.6	3	
Ermine 1572 (2), 15—;			2.4, 2.7, 2.6	3	
Acorn 1573;			2.6	1	
Eglantine 1574, 1575/4, 1575 (2);			2.6, 2.5, 2.5, 2.7	4	
Cross 1578 (2), 1579;			2.7, 2.6, 2.5	3	
Long cross 1580			2.4	1	
A/A over bell 1583;			2.2c	1	
Scallop 1585;			2.7, 2.9	2	
Hand 1590;			2.5, 2.8	2	
Tun 1593;		2.8	1		
Woolpack 1594 (3);		2.7, 2.5, 2.1c	3		
Key 1595;		3.0	1		
Two 1602		2.6	1		

¹ I am grateful to both Daniel Fearon and Nicholas Watts, of Bonhams, and to the purchaser of the bulk of the hoard, for the opportunity to make this record.

James I (16)						
Shillings (9)	1/2	N.2073	Thistle	4.90c		1
			Lys	5.18c		1
	2/3	N.2099	Lys	5.70, 4.91c		2
			Rose	5.49, 5.07c		2
	2/4	N.2100	Rose	4.85c		1
	2/5	N.2101	Mullet	5.63		1
	3/6	N.2124	Thistle	5.33		1
Sixpences (7)	1/?	N.2074/5	Thistle 1603	2.6		1
	1/2	N.2075	Lys 1604	2.7, 2.5		2
	2/4	N.2103	Rose 1605;	2.7		1
			Scallop 1606;	2.6		1
			Grapes 1607	2.6		1
	3/6	N.2126	Thistle 1622	2.8		1

Charles I (48)*Tower Mint*

Half Crowns (5)	N.2207	Harp		14.49		1
	N.2211	Triangle		14.97		1
	N.2214	(P)		15.02		1
	N.2215	Sun; Sceptre		14.68; 14.94		2
	N.2223	Harp (2); Portcullis		5.86, 5.84; 5.62		3
Shillings (33)	N.2225	Bell; Crown		5.83; 6.00		2
	N.2229	Tun; Anchor (r;u)		5.68; 5.86, 5.70		3
	N.2231	Triangle; Star (2);		5.76; 5.80, 5.76		3
		Triangle-in-circle (9)		6.00, 5.98, 5.93		
				5.92, 5.87, 5.79,		
			5.73, 5.67, 5.57		9	
		(P)		6.20, 6.02, 5.90		3
		(R)		5.82, 5.81, 5.60		3
		Star - (R), unc.		5.70		1
		Eye (2); Sun		6.18, 6.06; 6.06		3
		Sun (2); Sceptre		5.79, 5.63; 5.70		3
	Sixpences (9)	N.2241	Bell; Crown (2)		2.90; 2.98, 2.93	
		Tun		2.73		1
N.2242		Tun		2.88		1
N.2243		Tun		3.19		1
N.2244		Anchor (u)		2.72		1
N.2245		Anchor (r)		2.57		1
N.2246		(P)/(P) over T-in-C		3.02		1

W Mint (Worcester?)

Shilling	Allen A3			5.85		1
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*Scotland***James VI (1)**

Thistle Merk. Eighth coinage, 160? (1601-4)				5.90		1
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*Ireland***James I (1)**

Shilling	2/3	S.6515	Rose	3.83		1
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Total: 123 coins, face value £5-1s-8½d

Weights summary²

	<i>Sixpence</i>			<i>Shilling</i>			<i>Half crown</i>		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Edward VI	2.51	1	(83.4)						
Philip and Mary				5.16	2	(85.7)			
Elizabeth I (all)	2.58	35	85.8	5.54	15	92.0			
James I	2.64	7	87.8	5.23	9	86.9			
Charles I to Star	2.88	8	95.5	5.79	11	96.2	14.73	2	(97.9)
later	3.0	1	(99.7)	5.86	22	97.3	14.88	3	(98.9)

² For each denomination, the three columns show 1: the average weight, in grams; 2: the number of specimens weighed and 3: the percentage of the post-1601 standard represented by the first figure.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



BESLY: SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NOTES

The coins, as a group, appear to form part or all of a previously unrecorded Civil War hoard. Relatively few of the many such hoards recorded close with the Tower privy-mark Sceptre (1647–9), though this may to some extent reflect the much reduced output from the Tower during this mark, and the brevity and localised nature of the 'Second Civil War' in 1648.³ Nevertheless the presence of unworn specimens with the Sceptre mark (pl. 13, I–2), though not of the latest bust on the shillings, may link the deposit to the unrest in 1648. There is one royalist coin, a shilling from the 'W' mint, now generally accepted as Worcester (pl. 13, 3); this and the vendor's address form the only clues as to provenance, and Oxfordshire or the West Midlands would seem to be feasible. The evidence of clipping is mixed: five of the nine James I shillings are clipped – a high proportion of a small sample; but none of the coins of Charles I is clipped, and this would appear to rule out a northern source for the hoard as a whole, since the clipping which characterises Yorkshire hoards, in particular, usually extends to all reigns. As is usual, the Scottish and Irish coins are much worn, and have been bent. Of the three Elizabethan shillings which have graffiti, one bears a letter 'W' scratched behind the queen's head on the obverse (pl. 13, 4); the other two also bear the same letter, but in front of the queen's face.

2. A counterfeit Commonwealth half crown dated 1657.

The subject of this note was examined at the National Museum of Wales through the kindness of a private collector in West Wales (pl. 13, 5). It appears at first sight to be a Tower Mint half crown of the Commonwealth of England, dated 1657, a year for which no half crowns have hitherto been published. The existence of such a coin is, however, feasible, both because other silver coins

of this year are known (shillings, ESC 996, 996A (pl. 13, 6), 997 and sixpences, ESC 1493 (pl. 13, 7), 1493A) and because there exists a variety of 1658 half crown (ESC 440) with altered date 1658 over 57.⁴

In some ways, the coin is convincing: it is a struck piece and its dies have been created by the use of positive punches; and the '7' of the date shows no sign of alteration from another figure, a likely method of creating such a rarity from a genuine coin of another date. Closer inspection shows that the letter punches are crude in form and on the obverse generally thicker than those to be found on authentic Tower half crowns (pl. 13, 8). The asymmetric 'M' is particularly obvious in this respect. The digits of the date, though similar in form to genuine punches, likewise cannot be matched. The '5', for instance, appears to be complete, but its shape gives the impression that the bottom part is broken. The rays of the Sun privy mark are coarse, the inner circle beading on the reverse is uneven and the harp, too, is sketchy. The coin's weight appears to be decisive: though unclipped, it weighs a mere 10.94g, or 73 per cent of the contemporary standard. The weights of individual coins did, of course, vary, but to put this in perspective, it may be noted that of 223 Tower half crowns of the 1640s studied for another paper, the lightest weighed 13.09g and the mean weights for different privy marks ranged from 14.77g to 14.93g.⁵ The metal of the coin, too, appears to be debased, though analysis to check this has not been possible. In short, the coin has the typical appearance and low weight of a contemporary counterfeit, albeit a skilfully made one.⁶

This is not to say that a genuine 1657 half crown might not yet be found. Unless he copied a shilling or sixpence, the counterfeiter is likely to have seen a half crown dated 1657 (the form of the last numeral is convincing) and the existence of counterfeits of the rare 1655 half crowns has previously been noted.⁷

³ E. Besly, *English Civil War Coin Hoards* (London, 1987), pp. 56, 97–8, 117.

⁴ For a representative series of Commonwealth currency silver coins, see Spink Sale 55, 8 October 1986, lots 4–83.

⁵ E. Besly and M. Cowell, 'The metrology of the English

Civil War coinages of Charles I', *BNJ* 61 (1991), 57–75 at p. 66.

⁶ See, for instance, E. Besly, *English Civil War Coin Hoards* (1987), p. 8.

⁷ D.S. Freeman, 'New evidence concerning the authenticity of the 1655 half-crown', *BNJ* 38 (1969), 190–3.

MAGENS DORRIEN MAGENS: A NEWLY-DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT

JAMES MORTON

THE detailed paper on the 1798 shilling previously published in this journal offered a comprehensive study both of the coins themselves and of the source material available at the time.¹ However, an intriguing document

has since come to light which contributes some additional data as well as serving to confirm the existing record on a number of points.

During 1980 and 1981 Messrs. Dyer and Gaspar

¹ G.P. Dyer and P.P. Gaspar, 'The Dorrien & Magens Shilling of 1798', *BNJ* 52 (1982), 198–214.

² Sotheby's catalogue, London, 6 October 1994, lot 188.

were able to examine fourteen specimens of the 'Dorrien & Magens' shilling whilst speculating that at least ten further pieces might well be in existence. One such coin emerged in the autumn of 1994, well preserved in a twist of tissue and remarkable in that it was accompanied by a manuscript entitled *Coinage of 1798*, written by Magens Dorrien Magens himself. Dated 1814 and evidently intended as an historical account, it relates in some detail and in characteristic style the circumstances surrounding the attempted issue. Interestingly the shilling 'sent herewith' is described as one of four pieces which Magens was eventually able to obtain 'as a memorial of the transaction'.

Identified amongst the effects of a London home where they had apparently lain undisturbed for many decades, the coin and manuscript were offered together for sale by public auction in October 1994.² It was subsequently suggested that a transcript of the document might be of interest to a wider audience, and this reads as follows:

Coinage of 1798

Previous to the Year 1797 – the great expences of the Nation abroad, by the payment of Subsidies, and the maintenance of both land and naval forces, together with a discredit of country Bank Notes, required such large supplies of Bullion & Specie, that at length the Bank became unable to satisfy the calls upon it for Money, in exchange for its notes; and in consequence obtained an Order in Council to dispense with the payment of Money, except in very small Sums: this Order was subsequently confirmed by Act of Parliament – The suspension of the Bank occasioned a general withholding of Money in all transactions till eventually it became very difficult to acquire Gold in any way – The Silver had been for years of a debased Quality, which was easily accounted for, from the Circumstance of twenty one Shillings of mint Silver being worth more than twenty one Shillings otherwise a Guinea of mint Gold – originally all computations and exchanges were in Silver, but since the amelioration of the gold coin in 1773, they may be said to have been in gold, by which a general Loss of about 2½ pc^t took place, twenty shillings in gold comprizing only nineteen shillings & sixpence in foreign exchanges, though twenty shillings in silver still bore their full value: – this difference was sufficient to banish all good weighty silver from circulation, and no new could be coined but at a loss, for no one would sell twenty shillings in silver for twenty shillings in gold, or in other words for nineteen & sixpence: In this Situation were affairs at the time of the suspension of Cash payments by the Bank in 1797 –

The state of affairs could not but occasion considerable anxiety to the Government, and in consequence it was in contemplation to make a new coinage of silver at a lower rate, say Sixty Six Shillings to the Pound Troy, instead of Sixty Two, thinking thereby, however erroneously to secure a good and satisfactory money to the public, not considering that the moment Silver should become so much cheaper than Gold, that what little did exist would be melted down & sold for silver, which latter alone would be in circulation while the public would be losers to the whole amount of the difference of value as all exchanges would immediately fall to the

standard of the existing Coin –

[Footnote: At present 1814 – the only monies foreigners can get are Bank Tokens, of course their calculations are made upon them, & in proportion as these are debased, so will the exchange be reduced]

It so happened at this time that in consequence of the Bank paying only in Notes, Persons soon found that it was willing to advance money much more abundantly than heretofore, and the needy readily fabricated paper to be discounted, with which they carried on a forced foreign Trade upon an extensive Scale (the bad Consequences of which were most severely felt afterwards) this Trade aided the improvement of the Exchange so much, that Silver could be bought from 3 to 4 pc^t under the mint price –

Deprecating the Idea of depreciating our Standard, and consulting the mint Laws, I found great inducements held out to all persons who would bring Money to be coined in repeated Acts of Parliament, I therefore was induced after mentioning the Circumstance to those who officially superintended those affairs at that time, and with their approbation to purchase a small Quantity of Silver, and sent it to the Mint on the 4th April 1798 to be coined (the Mint Bill is now in my possession) – It soon was buzzed about what was done, & specie being very scarce many other persons followed my Example, and the Operation of coining begun; as I had sent first, mine was ready for delivery by the 16th May, & I was directed to prepare proper bags to receive it on that day; on the 14 May however One of the Committee of the Privy Council, Sir Joseph Banks I believe, came to the Mint, and verbally informed the Mint Master that he was not to deliver any coined Silver to anyone whatever – The law says 'That no confiscation or restraint shall be made in the Mint, of any gold or silver brought in to be coined, for any embargo, breach of the peace, Letters of mark or reprisal, or war with any foreign Nation, or upon any pretence' – (An Act of the present Reign Geo 3^d) – This is only noticed to instance the unfortunate prevalence which exists in making ex post facto laws, and subjecting our Acts of Parliament to the epithets of faithless & deceitful to the parties acting under them – Hence a restraint was laid upon the Silver, and subsequently it was ordered to be seized, & re-melted, which was done, an act was also passed to repeal the former Laws, and to stop all coinage of silver, the parties were to be paid in Bank Notes, but though these proceedings took place in May, it was not till the succeeding October that even those could be obtained after repeated remonstrances to the Treasury –

During these Transactions of course I went frequently to the Mint, and finding that the money was absolutely to be melted again, I prevailed upon the Mint Master previously as a great favour to let me have 4 of the shillings, as a memorial of the transaction, One of which is that sent herewith, how many other persons might procure 2 or 3 I know not, but I believe scarcely any one did except Sir Joseph Banks himself at whose House I have seen one

The whole Sum coined & begun to be coined was upwards of £30,000 paid for in Bank Notes – An amount of Bullion sent in besides & returned to the Owners was I believe upwards of £70,000 Sterling – £100,000 more was ready for the purpose –

22 Jan^y 1814

M. Dorrien Magens –