THE ANGLO-IRISH HALFPENCE, FARTHINGS AND POST-1290
PENCE OF EDWARD I AND III

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A few years ago I published in this Society's *Journal* a fundamental reappraisal of the current classification of the early Irish "single-cross" pence of Edward I. Subsequently I suggested certain refinements to that of the halfpence and farthings which were published as notes in *Spink's Numismatic Circular*. In my paper on the pence the proposed varieties were distinguished by the letters A to D to avoid confusion with earlier classifications, and an extension of this method of designation to cover the later issues is discussed below. It is possible to incorporate the halfpence and farthings, including those of Edward III, into this system, although, as is the case with the English minor denominations, these do not always correlate in all details with pence in the same class.

At the end of this paper a summary of the entire classification is given in order to present a complete résumé in one volume for ease of reference. A few pence of groups A–D have been included in the plate for similar reasons, although it will, of course, be necessary to refer to my earlier paper for full details of those varieties.

**Pence post 1290**

Group E is distinguished by a rose on the breast, a feature of most English coins of class 7 with which it has other affinities such as the crown from the same punch. On the English coins of this period the size of the lettering was reduced and the previously open C and E became closed. On the earlier Irish pence only the reverse lettering was large, but this now follows the English pattern with similar small punches used on both sides. Crude examples of this variety were struck bearing the name of Waterford (Pl. 1, 15) and many numismatists have regarded these as forgeries. However, they cannot be condemned out of hand as records show that there were irregularities at Waterford about this time. An entry under 1299 in the chronicle of Walter of Hemmingford refers to coins made by Stephen, Bishop of Waterford, said to be debased copies of English pence called scaldings. Stephen de Fulburn was elected on 10 June 1274 and translated to Tuam on 12 July 1286, and cannot therefore be responsible for group E pence which must have been introduced post 1290. However, he was succeeded by Walter de Fulburn who held the see until ante 14 December 1307, and it is possible that the chronicler, writing over a decade after the transfer, confused the two bishops with the same surname. Stephen himself was the subject of an enquiry in 1285, having been accused of graft, corruption and inefficiency by his rival Nicholas de Clere. A halfpenny, discussed below, would seem to indicate that the Waterford mint was probably operative until the opening of the mint at Cork in 1295, and the group E pence under discussion may well have been struck from locally made dies. One point that militates against the suggestion that they are outright forgeries is the fact that no such coins from official dies, from which they could be copied, are known to exist. However, this cannot be regarded as conclusive since forgers of that time had

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no qualms about producing concoctions such as the English/Irish and Irish/English 'mules', both in Voided Long Cross and Single Long Cross varieties.

The opening of the Cork mint saw the introduction of a new obverse variety distinguished by a pellet in each angle of the obverse triangle and designated group F in this classification. None of the punches used to make up the portrait has been identified with that on an English die. Two minor varieties have been noted in the obverse dies used at Cork as follows:

2. Crown with minute crosses between fleurs (as at Dublin). Larger coarser lettering on obverse with both ns reversed.

There also exists a very crude obverse die based upon this variety which is combined with a Waterford reverse of better style (Pl. 1, 17). Although its extreme coarseness and apparent baseness suggest a forgery, it is the only penny of Waterford with the obverse pellets which are the distinguishing feature of this group. The argument advanced above about the unlikelihood of an unknown type for a mint being the subject of a forgery also applies in this case.

Group G is distinguished by a single pellet beneath the portrait and in this has affinities with the contemporary class 9 in England, which often has a star (extremely rarely a pellet) on the breast, although no English punches appear to have been used to make the Irish dies of this issue. The Dolley and Seaby classification distinguished four varieties, of which one with an oval pellet below the bust (var. a SCBI no. 533) has since been recognised as a continental imitation with stylistic affinities to sterlings of the EDWARA groups. In the classification proposed in this paper, the remaining three varieties are combined into two which are distinguished by the reverse lettering - small (often with a closed C and E) or large with an open E. Although one cannot be certain of their chronology, I have reversed the order of the earlier classification by placing the smaller lettering first since it has affinities with that used in groups E and F.

Halfpence

The bulk of the coins of this denomination belong to the early period and their design is similar to that of the pence of groups A to D without the trefoil of pellets found on these. No English punches have been identified on any of the dies and, apart from some variation in the stops and letterings, these halfpence closely resemble each other. In the Dolley and Seaby arrangement the presence or absence of a pellet at the head of the obverse legend and the punctuation have been used to subdivide the series, but it is debatable whether they have any chronological significance.

Some of the coins can be attributed to group C by the Roman letter E on the obverse and, very rarely, a gothic N on the reverse. Unlike the pence, where Roman N reverses are the exception, they appear to be normal on the halfpence.

The remaining coins of this variety have been attributed to group B since none has any distinctive features associating it with the pence of group A, which appears to have been a small issue. Halfpence were not introduced into the new English coinage of Edward I until class 3 and a similar position may have obtained in Ireland, with the initial issues being of pence and possibly farthings. Since all of the varieties of stops noted by Dolley and Seaby are found on the halfpence of both Dublin and Waterford, it seems likely that this denomination of group B was only introduced at the same time or shortly before the opening the mint at
Waterford. Earlier, when discussing the pence, I posited that group C was in issue before the end of B, and in the case of the halfpence (also only struck at Dublin) it may well be the earliest issue. It is not possible to distinguish any halfpence attributable to group D and, if any were struck during its issue, dies of B or C were probably used.

Halfpence of the later issues are quite rare, but sufficient have survived to enable us to attribute some to each group. Those with a rose on the breast or a pellet in each angle of the obverse triangle obviously belong to groups E and F respectively. However the attribution of one unmarked obverse die to group F is based upon its use at Cork (Pl. 1, 26), which only operated in that group. This die is somewhat perplexing in being also used at Waterford mint (Pl. 1, 27). Since the dies, both obverse and reverse, are of excellent style with the lettering closely resembling that on the Dublin coins of that period, there is no reason to doubt their authenticity, and these coins would appear to furnish proof that the mint at Waterford was still working officially at this time. It is puzzling that it should have received official dies for halfpence and apparently not for pence, but the existence of the former tends to confirm the suggestion that the irregular pence of E and F were struck there from locally-made dies rather than being outright forgeries. The use of this halfpenny obverse die at both mints could indicate that Waterford finally closed when Cork opened in 1295, although there is no proof which way it passed. The lack of distinguishing marks leaves the attribution of the obverse die to group F open to some doubt if it was first used at Waterford, but there can be no question that it belongs to this period.

In SCBI 10 it is suggested that a halfpenny of Waterford with an unusual portrait (Pl. XVI, 34) may belong to the coinage of 1295. However, the lettering is similar to that found on group B coins (open E and composite S), while the crown also resembles that on some halfpence of that issue. The coin is somewhat worn, but the face and hair could be from the punches used on a Dublin halfpenny of group C (SCBI 10, 560). One cannot be certain that it is not an imitation, but, if genuine, it appears to belong to group B where it may be early.

The late issues of halfpence were subdivided in the Dolley and Seaby classification by the presence or absence of a pellet on the breast, and they described both varieties as having late lettering. Although it does not alter their sequence, I have preferred to base the classification on the two distinct portraits coupled with variations in the lettering. Details of these distinctions are given below on page 17. The dating of the two varieties presents some difficulties, as some of the punches used to make obverse dies of English classes 6 and 7 have been employed for the portrait of group G(a). The most significant of these is the crown, which has a broken side fleur and was used in this stage on the dies of class 6, which is now considered later than class 7 and has been dated c. 1293 to c. 1296. The evidence of shared punches for dating must be treated with some caution in the light of the use and re-use of some (particularly crowns) over several years, but in this case the crown does not appear to have been used again on English dies and was probably soon discarded in view of its condition. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that the dies for G(a) were made during the currency of English class 6 or shortly afterwards, and the coins can probably be dated c. 1297. Accounts show that no halfpence were struck in England between September 1298 (or shortly before) and September 1300 (or shortly after) and it is possible that Ireland followed suit. If this were the case the halfpence of group G(b), which can be firmly associated with the pence of Group G2 by the pellet and larger reverse lettering, were possibly struck between the end of 1300 and the closure of the Dublin mint about mid 1301.

After this no further coins of any denomination were struck in Ireland until the reign of Edward III, when a shortage of silver brought about in England the issue of a debased coinage of halfpence and farthings between 1335 and 1343, distinguished by a star in the obverse

\[ NCirc \ 1992, 113. \]

\[ D.I. \ Greenhalgh, \ 'The Fox Class Seven pence of Edward V', RJN 59 (1989), 77-83. \]
and/or reverse legends. A few halfpence of this issue were struck in Dublin for a short period during 1339 to 1340 with the obverse inscription (Star)EDWARD/ARDV/SREX and a star after TAS on the reverse. At present only two specimens, from different dies, are known.8

Farthings
No attempt was made by Dolley and Seaby to classify this denomination, but it is possible to distinguish two varieties – early and late.9 The criteria for their recognition are detailed in the classification on page 17. It is uncertain when the issue of these coins commenced, but they may have preceded the halfpence as was the case in England.

There is a mis-shapen or fragmentary farthing which has been convincingly attributed to group H. The following summary of distinguishing features, if used in conjunction with the plate, should enable most coins to be classified in accordance with the proposed new arrangement.

PENCE

Early issues (c. 1279–c. 1284?)10
Triangle of three pellets beneath the portrait.
Open gothic letters C and £ (except in Group C). Pellet at head of obverse legend on most coins. Smaller lettering on obverse than on reverse.

Key to lettering

R.1. Wedge tail.
R.2. Scroll tail.

S.1. Composite – two crescents and two wedges.
S.2. Body from single punch with two wedges added.
S.3. Letter from single punch with thick waist.

Reverses

1. S.2. Roman N. Incurved or straight uprights.
2. S.3. Roman N. Incurved or straight uprights.

Group A (before late 1280?)11
Tall straight-sided crown. Dublin mint only.
(1) Small letter £ (open but appears closed as wedges touch). Straight uprights with serifs. R.2.
   (a) Barred A. S.3. No pellet before EDW. Reverse 1 (Pl. 1, 1).
   (b) Unbarred A. S.1. Reverses: 1, 2 or 3 (Pl. 1, 2)
(2) Larger £ (distinctly open). Incurved uprights. S.1, R.1. Neater crown with face and hair from different punches. Reverse 1 (Pl. 1, 3).12

9 NCirc 1992, 505.
10 It is not possible to be certain about the order or date of striking of any of the Dublin pence of groups A–C (see BNJ 61 (1991), 24).
11 However, most were probably struck in the following sequence:
   Group A. Reverse 1.
   Group C. Reverse 3.
   Group B2. Reverses 1, 2 and 3. A few earlier obverses combined with these reverses may have been struck at the same time.
12 It is suggested that these coins with reverse 1 represent the small issue of £200 for the period 1 May 1279 to 3 May 1280 published in BAR Int Ser 389 (1988), 87–96 (see NCirc 1991, 78–9).
13 In my paper in BNJ 61 (p. 37), I erroneously listed a coin of this variety with reverse 3. After cleaning, the coin from which this was noted proved to be of Group D and a correction and illustration was published in BNJ 65 (1995), 224.
ANGLO-IRISH HALFPENCE, FARINGS AND PENCE

Group B (late 1280-mid 1282?)

Crowns from punches used for English dies of classes 3g2 and 3g3.13
(1) Crown of 3g2.
   (a) Face, hair and lettering as group A (1b) above. Dublin mint only.
      Reverses: 1, 2 or 3 (Pl. 1, 4 and 5).
   (b) Late transitional obverses with face, hair and lettering of group A (2).
      Reverses: 1 or 3.

Varieties
   (i) Marks after R and ANGL only. Pellet-barred N on reverse (Pl. 1, 6).
   (ii) No pellets beneath bust.14 Colon before CIVI on reverse 1 (Pl. 1, 7).

(2) Crown of 3g3. Face, hair and lettering of group A (2), but a few have S.3 and/or R.2 and uprights are sometimes straight-sided.

Reverses
   Dublin mint: 1, 2 or 3 (Pl. 1, 8 and 9). Waterford mint: 1 or 2 (SCBI 10, 502–523).

Varieties
   (1) Marks after R and ANGL only (probably early). Dublin mint (SCBI 10, 466–7).
   (ii) New hair punches as Group D. Pellet-barred Ns. Waterford mint (Pl. 1, 10).

Group C (between late 1280 and late 1281?)15

Small cross (in place of pellet) before EDW. Crown of 3g3. Roman E. R.2. Incurved uprights. Face of A (1) with S.1 or A (2) with S.3. Dublin mint only.
Reverses: 2 (extremely rare) or 3 (Pl. 1, 11; SCBI 10, 491–7 and pl. XVI, 29).

Group D (c. 1282 or later)

Crown of 3g3. New oblong face. Hair from same punches as group B (2) var ii. S.1, R.1.

Reverses
   Dublin mint: 3 (BNJ 65 (1995), Pl. 19, 1). Waterford mint: 1 (Pl. 1, 12).
   A mule exists combining an obverse of this group with a Dublin reverse of group E (Pl. 1, 13).

Intermediate issues (c. 1292–c. 1296?)

Neat lettering of similar size on both sides with closed gothic G and G. No triangle of pellets beneath bust, but marks as shown.

Group E (between 1292 and 1294?)

Rose upon breast. Portrait and lettering from punches used for English dies of classes 6 and 7. Hair similar to group D. Dublin mint (Pl. 1, 14).

13 A few rare dies in Group B (Pl. 1, 6 and 10) have pellet-barred Ns, a feature which also occurs on dies of English class 3e (late) and a very few class 3g as well as the reverses of some groats. This mark has tentatively been associated with the die-maker (see SCBI 39, 115), but Nick Mayhew has expressed doubts about this interpretation in view of its common use on continental coins.
14 Presumably this is unintentional, but a second die without the pellets has been noted, suggesting the unlikely possibility that it is a deliberate variety.
15 The position of this group is uncertain as it possibly precedes Group B (BNJ 61 (1991), 29).
Irregular dies with the obverse copying those of Dublin and the reverse having the Waterford mint signature may be of local manufacture (Pl. 1, 15).

**Group F (between 1294 and 1296?)**

Pellet in each angle of obverse triangle. Wire-line hair. Spread crown with minute crosses between central and side fleurs (some Cork coins have a pellet on stalk). Pointed back to G and E.

Dublin mint: 1 die appears to read GDW (SCBI 10, pl. XVI, 32) and another reads GDWR'/ANGL/DShYB (Pl. 1, 16).  
Waterford mint: Very crude dies - see page 12 (Pl. 1, 17).

Cork mint (SCBI 10, 528–32). Some dies read GDW.

**Late issues (c. 1299–c. 1301)**

Single pellet below bust. Crown with tall central fleur. Thin wedge after ANGL.

Dublin mint only.

**Group G**

(1) Small lettering with pronounced serifs to uprights on both sides. Closed gothic € (distinguished by curved front extending beyond top and bottom of letter).  
Letter € on reverse may be closed (SCBI 10, 545–6) or open (SCBI 10, 544 & 547).

(2) Larger lettering on the reverse. Composite open gothic € which appears closed on the obverse due to the coalescence of the wedges at the front. Wider crown (PI. 1, 20).

A variety has a pellet at the head of the obverse legend (PI. 1, 19)

HALFPENCE

**Early issues (c. 1281–1284?)**

No marks beneath portrait. Spread crown which does not appear to be from a punch used for English dies. Open C and €.

**Group B**

R.1, S.1. Dublin and Waterford mints.

(1) No mark at head of legend, which is often without stops. Smaller lettering on obverse than reverse (Pl. 1, 21–22).

(2) Pellet before EDW. Usually stops on obverse. Large lettering both sides (Pl. 1, 23).

A variety, possibly late transitional, has R.2 on the obverse and may have an uncertain mark beneath the bust (SCBI 10, 558).

**Group C**

Roman E in EDW preceded by a pellet. R.2 on obverse. S.3 and gothic N on reverse. Some have a crown with straighter sides, possibly the original one in a worn state. A few have a wider face (SCBI 10, 560). Dublin mint only.

'Mules' with reverses as group B are commoner than those with a gothic N. (Pl. 1, 24).

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15 The crude pence of Groups E and F with the name of Waterford are discussed on p. 11-12.
17 NCirc 1983, 299.
19 The variety with an oval pellet designated type a in SCBI 10 (no. 533) is now considered to be a continental imitation (see p. 12).
20 This reverses the order suggested in SCBI 10 – see p. 12.
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**Group D**
Not distinguished. Probably dies of group B continued to be used during this period.

**Intermediate issues (c. 1291–c. 1296?)**
Small lettering with closed gothic G and S and single-punch S on both sides.

**Group E**
Rose on breast. Dublin mint only (SCBI 10, pl. XVI, 33).

**Group F**
Wire-line hair. Obverses have G for S in GDW.
(1) Pellet in each angle of obverse triangle. Crown with low central fleur. Dublin mint only (Pl. 1, 25).
(2) No marks. Portrait from different punches with crown more spread. Cork and Waterford mints. Only one obverse die noted shared by both mints. (Pl. 1, 26 and 27).

**Late issues (c. 1297–c. 1301)**

**Group G** (Dublin mint only)
(a) No mark below bust. Wide neck with slight drapery. The crown has a broken fleur on right which resembles a spearhead and may be from the punch used for English dies of classes 6 and late 7. The face and hair also closely resemble those on some English halfpence and the portrait appears to be similar to that on the Dublin halfpence of group E but without the rose. Only one obverse die has been noted used with two reverses, one with lettering resembling that on groups E and F (SCBI 10, 561). The lettering on the other die (SCBI 10, 562) seems mixed with some larger letters, notably the E, and may belong to the next issue.
(b) Usually a pellet below bust (omitted on one die). Tall crown with straight sides. Wire-line hair. Pointed drapery. Large lettering on reverse (SCBI 10, 563 and Pl. 1, 28).

**Debased coinage of Edward III**

**Group H** (March to August 1339?)
Dies made from English punches with Crowns 1 and 2. Large oval pellet beneath bust. Star at head of obverse legend which reads GDW/ARDD/VSRX and after TAS on reverse. Dublin mint only. (SCBI 10, 579).

**FARTHINGS**

**Early issues (c. 1280–1284?)**

**Late issues (c. 1299?–c. 1301?)**

**Group G?**
Debased coinage of Edward III

*Group H (March to August 1339?)*

A badly chipped (or mis-shapen) farthing has been attributed to this issue with some reservations, as the portions on which the critical star would appear are off flan on both sides. However the portrait has affinities with that on English farthings of the debased issue as does the small portion of the crown visible, amounting to only the right side fleur. There is a large pellet beneath the bust and the obverse reads --/ARDV/-R--. Dublin mint only.

**Contemporary forgeries and imitations**

The considerable imitation of sterlings during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was mainly of English type. However a few Irish exist, although these were extremely rarely used as prototypes for coins bearing the names or mints of the issuers. This was probably due not only to the much smaller proportion of Irish coins in circulation, but also to the fact that none were struck after c. 1302, which was before the bulk of the named sterlings with a crowned portrait were minted.

Many of the imitations are of crude style and appear to be forgeries pure and simple, possibly struck in Ireland. However those from dies of better workmanship are probably of continental origin and a few have been tentatively attributed by their style to a foreign mint. A number of 'English/Irish' and 'Irish/English' mules exist and for many years these were accepted as being struck from official dies. However the disparity in the dates of the prototypes used for the obverses and reverses combined in some cases alerted numismatists to the imitative nature of such coins. This carelessness in the combination of dies which would not normally be used together is a feature of imitative issues.

In the main there should be no difficulty in distinguishing most imitations, although there are a few deceptively accurate copies.

**CONCORDANCE**

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21 See Mayhew (as in n.5 above), 138–9 and pl. 43 & 45; also N.J. Mayhew, "Imitative sterlings in the Aberdeen and Montraive hoards", *NC* 1976, 85–97 (at 90–91) and *SCBI* 10, nos. 588–604A.

22 Mayhew (n.5), 97, nos. 241g, 242a and 243i; also p. 138, no. 379a.

23 Three coins listed as official issues in *SCBI* 10 (nos. 468–9 and 533) are now considered to be imitations.
### Halfpence

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### Farthings

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<td>Coinage of 1339–1340</td>
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### Pence

17. Group F. Irregular dies (local or contemporary forgery?). Waterford mint.

### Halfpence


### Farthings

29. Group G. Dublin mint.

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24 At the time of writing all of the coins illustrated were in the writer’s collection, but they have now been dispersed.