SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS

R. J. EAGLEN

Introduction

SARAH Sophia Banks is the most noteworthy female collector of coins and tokens this country has known. Besides numismatics her interests extended to many other spheres, and thanks mainly to her brother, Sir Joseph Banks, she moved in the most distinguished circles of Georgian England. This article makes no pretensions beyond giving an outline sketch of this remarkable woman, and peeping into a small but significant part of her large and diverse collection of coins, tokens and medals, assembled over more than thirty years.

Sarah Sophia Banks was known to her family as Sophie. Whilst not presuming to such unwarranted intimacy, the author will nevertheless take advantage of the modern habit of adopting Christian names upon the merest acquaintance and for simplicity refer to her throughout as Sarah.

Family background

Sarah was born on 28 October 1744, and died on 27 September 1818, shortly before her seventy-fourth birthday.1 Fig. 1 shows her descent from her great-grandfather, Joseph Banks (I). He was a successful Sheffield lawyer who advanced his fortune and social standing by shrewd property investment.2 In 1714 he acquired Revesby Abbey in Lincolnshire, which remained in the family throughout Sarah’s lifetime but was later demolished and replaced.3

Joseph (I) is said to have had antiquarian interests, as befitted an upwardly mobile gentleman.4 His son, also called Joseph (II), further enhanced the importance of the family, becoming a Member of Parliament for Peterborough,5 and a Fellow of both the Royal Society6 and the Society of Antiquaries.7 As an antiquarian he took an interest in Roman coins.8 He married Anne Hodgkinson, an heiress, thereby adding Overton Hall, Derbyshire, to the family estates.9 They had three children: Joseph (III), the eldest, who died in his mid-twenties before...
his father, William, Sarah's father, and Robert (Banks-Hodgkinson), the youngest, who inherited Overton Hall and at whose death in 1792 the property passed to his nephew Joseph (IV). Robert, like his father, became a Fellow of the Royal Society and Society of Antiquaries.

The second son, William, was barely of age when his father died in 1741. He likewise entered the House of Commons, as member for Grampound in Cornwall. Fashionably, he created a menagerie at Revesby Abbey and in 1741 wedded Sarah Bate, niece of Hannah Sophia Chambers, wife of the 8th Earl of Exeter, at Burleigh House, Stamford. These ladies were obviously the source of Sarah's first names. They had two children, Joseph (IV), born in 1743 and later to become the renowned botanist, and Sarah, born the following year. William, however, died whilst his children were still in their minority, his brother Robert and his widow assuming guardianship of Joseph and Sarah. The family's wealth was such that on reaching the age of twenty-one, Joseph (IV) was estimated to have an annual income of £5,000. By 1807 this had grown to £14,000 per annum, equivalent in today's terms to about £850,000.

The Enlightenment

To place Sarah's life in context, she was a child when the British Museum was founded in 1753. From her teens her life was almost contemporaneous with the reign of George III and her prime coincided with the height of the Enlightenment in England and elsewhere in Europe. This was the age when new discoveries were stimulating an excited fascination with the physical world, when collecting and recording – first of curiosities and then more comprehensively – nurtured the understandable if optimistic belief that man through reason was master of that world. The rational outlook, meticulous observation and dedicated recording of the period undoubtedly laid the foundations for the scientific advances of the

Fig. 1. Sarah's descent.
nineteenth century, in which, for example, Linnaeus was already a pioneering force. Sarah was both the child and embodiment of that age.

**Joseph Banks IV**

From 1780 onwards, when Sarah was in her mid-thirties, her life was so closely linked with and dependent upon her brother Joseph, that his career should be briefly recounted.

He was propelled to fame when, in his late twenties, he accompanied Captain James Cook between 1768 and 1771 on his voyage in the *Endeavour* to the South Seas. The expedition was primarily intended to observe the transit of Venus, but Banks and a small team sponsored by him were aboard as natural scientists and botanists. The specimens and descriptions of new flora and fauna observed and collected during the expedition dazzled the scientific community and society at large. Although he was not formally trained as a botanist, his renown, combined with his courteous and friendly manner, his dynamism, his practical outlook and his generous patronage of causes that fired his enthusiasm, resulted in his being elected as President of the Royal Society at the early age of thirty-five. Extraordinarily, he continued to hold the post until his death forty-two years later.

He became a close confidant of George III, effectively administering Kew Gardens on his behalf, and, particularly as a privy counsellor, advised the government on scientific and sundry other issues, including the currency. His lack of political aspirations and leanings made him acceptable to Whig and Tory alike and, doubtless, to the king. Banks was widely respected both at home and abroad and was one of the pall bearers at Dr Johnson's funeral, into whose circle he had been introduced in 1778. His only serious failing was a tendency, common in men of action, to be impatient of obstacles and opposition to his cherished aims. There were also those in the scientific community who criticised his want of formal academic qualifications and theoretical knowledge. Sir Humphrey Davey described him with economical praise as ‘a tolerable botanist’, but he comfortably survived a move to unseat him from the Presidency of the Royal Society in 1784.

In 1777, Banks acquired the lease of 32 Soho Square, London. This comprised not only domestic accommodation but also space to house an extensive herbarium and library which became a mecca for botanists. Typical of the man, anyone with a genuine scholarly interest in the natural sciences was welcome there and could borrow his books.

**Sarah**

Pl. 5, 3 shows Sarah, in her mid-twenties, from a watercolour miniature painted by Horace Hone in 1768. At that time she was a fashionable young lady, living mainly with her mother in Chelsea. Among her interests and pursuits then or later were horseracing, dancing,

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19 Smith 1911, 15–17.
21 Carter 1988, 278; Smith 1911, 94.
22 Carter 1988, 313, 520, 538–9; Smith 1911, 159.
23 Smith 1911, 160.
24 Carter 1988, 147; Smith 1911, 160.
25 Carter 1988, 537; Smith 1911, 72.
26 Smith 1911, 293.
28 Carter 1988, 331.
29 Smith 1911, 288; Gascoigne 1994, 70. At his death Banks bequeathed approximately 22,000 volumes to the British Museum Library.
30 National Gallery of Ireland.
31 Smith 1905, 231.
32 See manuscript letters from Banks to Sarah, 24 February 1773 and 21 September 1773, in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Australia.
the theatre, music, heraldry and chess. She was also reputedly a competent horsewoman and expert archer. Archery remained an interest throughout her life, as did fishing, and she kept detailed records of both pursuits.

Pl. 6, 1 shows her in her mid-thirties, from an oil painting by Angelica Kauffmann, dated to about 1780. This was an important year in Sarah’s life. Between 1776 and 1778 her close relationship to her brother, as evidenced by surviving correspondence, became strained because of his intimate liaison with a widow, Mrs Sarah Wells. However, when in 1777 Banks decided to acquire 32 Soho Square, his sister wrote a somewhat pathetic letter begging him to accept her ‘thousand mites’ towards acquiring the property or its contents. This letter is of further interest in demonstrating Sarah’s independent means. The following year, Banks ended his relationship with Mrs Wells and in March 1779 married Dorothea, daughter and co-heiress of William Hugessen of Norton, Kent. Soho Square became the couple’s London home where they were joined by Dorothea’s sister. When the sister left in July 1780 upon marriage, Sarah took her place. This was the beginning of an inseparable relationship between Banks, Dorothea and Sarah, which lasted throughout Sarah’s life. In a social context the three were invariably linked together. Banks habitually referred to ‘my ladies’, whereas salutations to Banks himself were habitually bracketed with ‘the ladies’. In her will Sarah summed up her own feelings towards her brother and sister-in-law with the words ‘they are everything to me’.

Thus from 1780, Soho Square became the main residence of Sarah and she was in consequence drawn into the circle of her brother’s acquaintances, with all the advantages – especially for a collector – thereby ensuing. It also meant that Sarah, as well as Dorothea, could support Banks in his scientific pursuits. This is illustrated at Spring Grove, Heston, where Banks had acquired the lease of a house and forty acres and conducted various scientific activities, including the breeding of Merino sheep. Sarah was put in charge of the hothouses and conservatories there, and Dorothea the dairy, where she also kept her collection of old china. Banks described his wife in a letter of 1803 as ‘a little old china mad’ and Dorothea may have felt the need to establish her own collecting domain to complement the avid pursuits of her husband and sister-in-law.

Pl. 6, 2 shows Sarah at the age of forty-four, from a pastel by John Russell. By this time she had become a keen collector. It may be ungallant to observe how the three portraits chart her increasing weight. However, this was true also of Dorothea and Banks himself. He recorded the weight of the family over many years and the only member remaining trim was Mab, the pet dog.

Pls 6, 3–4 illustrate a cartoon and detail from the same cartoon by Gilray, published in 1804 and entitled ‘An Old Maid on a Journey’. This unflattering portrayal has frequently been said to depict Sarah, but the attribution must be seriously questioned. The scene is clearly venal, with a cockerel sprouting from a pair of breeches on the inn sign, doors labelled ‘The Ram’ and ‘The Union’, and the faces of the innkeeper and his staff wearing knowing expressions. A cartoonist’s barb strikes home in exposing vice where virtue is hypocritically pretended but to insinuate vice where only virtue is to be found is neither apt nor amusing. There

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33 Carter 1988, 224; Pincott 2004, 6.
34 Smith 1905, 231.
35 Smith 1911, 233.
36 See Sotheby, 7 June 2006, lot 233.
38 Letter from Sarah to Banks, March/April 1777 (original), in Yale University (ref. JSB 920323/023. 19777). Part of this letter is quoted in Pincott 2004, 6.
40 Carter 1988, 158; Pincott 2004, 6.
41 MS extract from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury of Sarah’s will, 21 September 1818.
42 Carter 1988, 337; Smith 1911, 104.
43 Smith 1911, 317.
44 Addressed to an official of the East India Company on 30 August 1803 (Smith 1911, 271).
45 Pincott 2004, 10.
is no evidence to suggest that Sarah was other than chaste. On the contrary, after her death an obituary declared

Her moral worth, even more than her talents and knowledge, rendered her the object of esteem and regard to all who had the pleasure of being acquainted with her.  

Two further objections could be levelled at the attribution. Firstly, as Sarah and Dorothea aged they both became more eccentric in their dress; for example wearing, on socially inappropriate occasions, outer garments made out of wool from Banks's sheep. In a book published in 1845 – twenty-seven years after her death – the author penned this description of Sarah:

She was looked after by the eye of astonishment wherever she went. Her dress was of the old school: her Barcelona quilted petticoat had a hole in either side for the convenience of rummaging two immense pockets, stuffed with books... A tall servant, with a taller stick in his hand, went with her everywhere.

It is improbable that Gilray would have hesitated to use such trademark imagery had he intended to portray Sarah. Furthermore, association of the Old Maid with Sarah was first alluded to in a book on Gilray published in 1830 and, in that, the author was scrupulous not to endorse the link.

Female collectors

Sarah and Dorothea were by no means unique as female collectors, but then, as now, such women in comparison with male collectors were in a tiny minority. Amongst members of the British Numismatic Society, since its foundation in 1903, only eight percent have been female, and some of those have been a husband and wife team. Setting aside the possible effect of psychological differences between the sexes, the opportunity for women to collect has been strongly influenced by social circumstances. A woman generally had to enjoy independent means and leisure to pursue such an interest, arising either from spinsterhood or marriage to an affluent and considerate husband. The Duchess of Portland was in the latter category, the auction of her collections in 1786, including minerals, plants and fossils, extending over thirty-eight days. In the former category, the closest analogy to Sarah was the wealthy spinster, Helen Farquhar, who died at the age of ninety-four in 1953.

Sarah's collections

Sarah's collecting interests fell into four main categories: books, objects of natural history, ephemera, and coins, tokens and medals. After her death most of her books passed to the British Library, but those on numismatics were donated by Dorothea, the beneficiary, to the Royal Mint Museum and are now at Llantrisant. The objects of natural history doubtless became absorbed into her brother's collection, assuming that they were even at her death kept separately.

Her ephemera, now in the British Museum, amount to approximately 20,000 items and are of the utmost value as records of social history. They include cartoons (but not 'An Old Maid on a Journey'), advertising handbills, visiting and trade cards, playbills, bookplates and admission tickets. The collection has not been comprehensively studied, but a flavour of its significance can be gathered from the examples reproduced in London, 1753, the catalogue of

46 Smith 1911, 322.
47 Smith 1905, 230.
48 Smith 1905, 229.
49 Anon. 1830, 293.
51 Fara 2004, 16.
53 Letters of Banks to J. W. Morrison dated 29 October 1818; see below, n.70 and n.72.
54 Information from Dr Eagleton.
55 Pincott 2004, 14; Smith 1911, 322–3.
the exhibition mounted in 2003 to celebrate the founding of the British Museum. The last category is her extensive collection of coins, tokens and medals.

**Sarah's coins, tokens and medals**

Sarah's compulsion to compile records extended from archery scores and fishing catches through to the catalogue of her collection of coins, tokens and medals. The latter, now in the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, was written up in about 1810 in her best hand in eight bound volumes, to which she made modest additions until her death in 1818. **Pl. 7** shows a page from the section covering the Tealby pennies of Henry II. The comprehensiveness of the catalogue speaks eloquently of the importance she attached to the collection and her entries were so precise that no difficulty is usually encountered in identifying the pieces to which she was referring in the trays of the British Museum and Royal Mint Museum, as eventual recipients of her collection.

Table 1 shows the content of each volume. No one has so far counted the number of entries in the entire catalogue, but a measure of its extent can be judged from the fact that the first seventy-four pages of Volume I, which consists of more than twice that number of pages, lists 963 English hammered coins. Her collection of German coins (Volume II) was greatly enhanced by the gift of 165 coins in 1797 from Abbé Mann, a Belgian acquaintance and correspondent of her brother. Her collection of American coins (Volume V) was particularly impressive and may have been helped directly or indirectly by family friendship with Benjamin Franklin. Similar ties of friendship with Matthew Boulton resulted in a comprehensive representation of contemporary tokens (Volume VI). Large parts of the collection still await detailed study, but Catherine Eagleton at the British Museum is currently working on the African coinage (Volume V).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>England, Scotland, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Holland, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Switzerland, Spain, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Africa, Asia, America and Siege Pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Tokens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Medals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Coins (misc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the catalogue of the collection, Sarah compiled three other sets of records: an alphabetical list of acquisitions, a ‘list of coins etc which I have given away’ and an alphabetical ledger of purchases. These are naturally of great value, but were not as assiduously, comprehensively or neatly compiled as the catalogue. The list of acquisitions has entries from 1791 to 1818, with sparse additions after 1810, and does not distinguish between the numerous coins given to her and those purchased. The list of coins given away has entries from 1786 to 1817, and includes gifts to Her Majesty The Queen, Princess Elizabeth, the Revd Richard Southgate, and the coin dealers, Richard Miles and Henry and Matthew Young, with

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57 Sarah’s alphabetical manuscript list of acquisitions (see n.60 below), under M, 27 December 1797.
59 Carter 1988, 313; list of acquisitions, under B (multiple entries).
60 These records are held in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.
whom there was reciprocal generosity beyond a purely commercial attachment. The ledger of purchases, unfortunately, only covers the period between 1791 and 1795. These records, however, throw a fascinating light upon the sources from which Sarah’s collection was compiled. A leaf from the list of acquisitions is illustrated in Pls 8 and 9, 1. The entries include, apart from members of the royal family, Matthew Boulton, Lord Frederick Campbell, Lord Dundas, Sir William Hamilton, Lord and Lady Liverpool, William Wellesley Pole, John Rennie, John White and, touchingly, Mrs Harding, a cook-housekeeper. The entries under Jonas Dryander, Banks’s curator and librarian at Soho Square, occupy no less than two pages.61 He was so well known as Sarah’s agent, particularly when he travelled on the continent, that at his death the Bishop of Carlisle observed in a speech that

a collector of medals and coins for Mrs Banks . . . could be found . . . But someone with Dryander’s bibliographical erudition . . . did such a man exist? 62

The earliest date appearing in the records is 1786, in the list of coins given away. It would appear that this was about the time Sarah became seriously interested in forming her collection. Fortuitously, her precise habits resulted in her inscribing the dates on which she acquired volumes for her library, and her numismatic books can still be consulted at Llantrisant. These show, for example, that in 1786 she was acquiring important earlier works of reference, such as the third edition of Folkes’s *Tables of English Silver and Gold Coins* (London, 1763), and two years later the second edition of Leake’s *English Money* (London, 1745). However, Noble’s *Two Dissertations upon the Mint and Coins of the Episcopal Palatines of Durham* (London, 1788) was acquired in the same year and the second edition of Pinkerton’s *An Essay on Medals* was inscribed as a gift to Sarah from the author in 1789, the year of its publication. One of the last works acquired by Sarah was Ruding’s *Annals* (London, 1817) to which her brother but not Sarah herself had subscribed. Perhaps significantly, her copy is devoid of annotations.

There is little doubt that Sarah, between the mid 1780s and about 1810, was an assiduous collector and was able to use the network of contacts made through her brother to good effect. Banks himself referred to her in a letter to Matthew Boulton as ‘a great pusher’.63 In one exchange it is apparent that her correspondent felt he was being pressed to accept an unequal swap of tokens.64 Her skill in numismatic identification is demonstrated by the account of a parcel of coins being left for her at Soho Square in her absence. A few hours later Sarah returned the parcel by coach to the owner because she had found nothing of interest to her.65 Her knowledge and trained eye are also apparent from the annotations and corrections in her hand found in her wide-ranging numismatic library. The breadth of her interests, however, doubtless militated against her making innovative progress in the study of any particular series.

In addition to the catalogue and other records, Sarah also wrote out coin tickets, on discs printed with her initials SSB, reproducing her own way of writing the letters. However, no such tickets survive in the English hammered series considered below, possibly because they were discarded when Taylor Coombe went through that part of the collection at the British Museum after her death.

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61 On Dryander, see Carter 1988, 141, 333, 457, 632; Smith 1911, 64, 243; Gascoigne 1994, 28, 105.
63 Pincott 2004, 14; Birmingham Assay Office, MSS, letter of 19 December 1791.
64 MS in Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.
Death of Sarah and disposal of her numismatic books and collections

As already explained, Sarah's interest in her numismatic collection was maintained, but with less zeal, in her last years. Her death arose as the unexpected result of an earlier mishap. On 25 August 1818 a drunken driver caused the coach in which Banks, Dorothea and Sarah were travelling to overturn and it was some time before they could be rescued. Although Sarah suffered a cut to the head they all appeared to be otherwise unharmed and resumed their normal lives within a few days. However, something must have been amiss because on 21 September Sarah made her will and six days later, on 27 September 1818, she died.

Her will began with the extraordinary request 'that I may not [be] buried till I change sufficiently that there may be no doubt of my being dead.' After desiring to be buried at Revesby Abbey, and leaving £20 to the poor of the parish, she continued:

I give and bequeath to my brother the Rt. Honorable Sir Joseph Banks Baronet and KB etc etc etc all of my property that will remain after payment of just debts and legacies to my sister Lady Banks two hundred guineas for a remembrance my dear mother's picture by Zinks all my royal presents all my trinkets diamonds seals etc all my music all my coins medal[s] books tickets etc no two people ever contributed more to the happiness of others than they both have to mine they are everything to me. . .

There are signs that the will was prepared in haste and, no provision having been made for executors, Banks was appointed administrator of the estate in October 1818. Thereupon, on 29 October, Banks wrote to James Morrison, Deputy Master of the Royal Mint as follows:

In compliance with the intentions of my deceased sister Sarah Sophia Banks I send with this her books on the subject of coins and medals which I desire may be preserved in H. M. Mint as a legacy from her. The collection of coins which is considerable will follow as soon as the Librarian of the British Museum has selected from thence such parts of the collection as are wanting in the B. M.

It was subsequently realised that this letter was not in accordance with the terms of the will, and Banks substituted a letter, also dated 29 October, in similar terms but beginning with the words 'in compliance with the wish of Lady Banks. . . as a gift from Lady Banks.'

Disposition of Sarah's numismatic books and collection

It was thus that Sarah's numismatic library came into the possession of the Royal Mint. Banks himself had in August 1818 donated his modest personal collection of coins and medals to the Mint, in response to the desire of Wellesley Pole as Master to build up a reference collection of old coins to complement his systematic preservation of contemporary coins, medals and dies produced at the Mint.

Sarah's coins, tokens and medals were duly compared with those in the British Museum trays, an exercise directed by Taylor Coombe. The Museum not only selected coins unrepresented in their collection, but also better specimens of certain pieces already in their trays. The duplicates and those superseded by Sarah's pieces were packed and sent to the Mint, but the cases were not opened until Taylor Coombe had provided a catalogue of the contents in February 1820. This catalogue, now held at Llantrisant, does not distinguish between the two

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66 Smith 1911, 322.  
67 Lincolnshire Archives Office, 2 Haw 2/B/64, at pp. 1–2, quoted in full by Pincott 2004, 12–13.  
68 C.F. Zincke, the renowned eighteenth century portrait miniaturist in enamel (see Fawcett 1972, 590–1).  
69 Lincolnshire Archives Office, 2 Haw 2/B/64, at pp. 2–3.  
70 Transcript in Royal Mint Museum, Llantrisant.  
71 Doubtless caused by the omission of an ‘s’ after the word ‘medal’ in Sarah’s will.  
72 Transcript in Royal Mint Museum, Llantrisant.  
73 Dyer 1988, 8.
categories of coin, but happily Sarah’s own catalogue was annotated by the British Museum to identify by the letters ‘BM’ the coins that the Museum had selected as hitherto unrepresented in their trays, and by the word ‘exchanged’ those that had been substituted (see Pl. 8). In consequence, it is usually possible to identify coins from Sarah’s collection in both museums with confidence.

The Royal Mint was understandably grateful for the gift. Morrison wrote on 30 October 1818 in reply to the first version of Bank’s letter of 29 October that ‘our coin and medal cabinets . . . (which are poverty itself) will now be enriched with many scarce and beautiful specimens forming a collection worthy of the institution of the Royal Mint.’ Wellesley Pole also wrote to Banks on 22 January 1819, in response to the second version, that

As Master of the Mint I beg you will have the goodness to express to Lady Banks my very high sense of the value of her present to the establishment, where their splendid addition is made to the valuable gifts of the same nature by you. It will possess a collection of very great importance and be rescued from the disgrace of having neither specimens of British Coins or works upon coins and medals to guide it in its operations or to stimulate its exertion or improvement’.

The importance of pieces from Sarah’s collection to the Royal Mint Museum may be judged from comparing the 1820 manuscript catalogue with two catalogues of their coins and medals published in 1874 and 1906. The earlier of these was printed without acknowledgement of authorship but was, in fact, compiled by William Webster, a London coin dealer. Webster was allowed to acquire any duplicates coming to his attention. Comparing his catalogue with the 1820 manuscript, sixty-two English hammered coins appear to have been culled, including forty-two Tealby pence, and not all of these were duplicates. The identifying numbers in the later catalogue, compiled by W.J. Hocking, are normally used when referring to coins in the Mint’s collection.

Sarah’s English hammered coins

It is impractical, in a short article, to treat in detail the content of Sarah’s collection, even by limiting the exercise to her English hammered coins. Accordingly, the scope of that part of her collection will be outlined statistically, the significant contribution made to her collection by four hoards considered and, finally, six important coins from her collection portrayed.

Table 2 shows the 963 English hammered coins in her collection, and their disposition between the British Museum and Royal Mint Museum. The significance of the four hoards (see below) will be immediately apparent. The reign of Charles I was also particularly well represented. Owing to the state of numismatic knowledge, Sarah categorised Short Cross coins as the first issue of Henry III and Long Cross as the second, but distinguished between REX III and REX TERCII coins, in that order. The silver pence of the first two Edwards were divided into those with large (Edward I) and small letters (Edward I or II) and coins of Henry IV, V and VI, were grouped together. But within the applied classification individual specimens were recorded with admirable precision.

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74 Transcript in Royal Mint Museum, Llantrisant.
75 Anon. 1874; Hocking 1906.
76 Dyer 1988, 22.
77 The most striking disappearance was a penny of William I, reading Godwine on Lun.
TABLE 2. Sarah’s English hammered coins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No. of coins British Museum</th>
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<td>Ancient British</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sceattas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgred</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eanred</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peter, York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Æthelstan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eadred</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eadgar</td>
<td>12 (a)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Æthelred II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cnut</td>
<td>91 (b)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward the Confessor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>William I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William II</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry II (Tealby)</td>
<td>172 (c)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Cross</td>
<td>86 (d)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Long Cross</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Edward I (large letters)</td>
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<td>Edward I – II (small letters)</td>
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<td>Richard II</td>
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<td>Henry IV – VI</td>
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<td>Edward IV</td>
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<td>Henry VI (2nd reign)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VII</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward VI</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth (hammered 34)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(milled 19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(E. India Co. 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James I</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles I (Tower 64)</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Briot 19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(siege 14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(other 80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromwell</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles II (1st coinage)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Tiree hoard (1782)
(b) 82 ex Caldale hoard (1774)
(c) most ex Tealby hoard (1807)
(d) 22 ex Tiree hoard (1787)
Coins from four hoards

The four hoards noted in Table 2 – Caldale (1774), Tiree (1782 and 1787) and Tealby (1807) – contributed significantly to Sarah’s collection, representing some 30% of her English hammered coins.

Tiree hoard (1782)

Apart from the twelve coins from the Tiree (Hebrides) hoard (1782),78 the period from 925 to 1016, as Table 2 shows, is represented by only six coins. The hoard, amounting to several hundred coins,79 was found on land belonging to the 5th Duke of Argyll whose donation to the British Museum in 1789 included fifty-four coins of Eadgar.80 In 1807 his brother, Lord Frederick Campbell, gave the twelve coins of Eadgar to Sarah.81 In 1819 four of these were kept by the British Museum and the remaining eight passed to the Royal Mint.82

Caldale hoard (1774)

The Caldale hoard, from Orkney, is said to have consisted of more than three hundred coins, many of which were dispersed before the hoard came to the notice of the landowner.83 The remainder were presented to Thomas Dundas, whose father – Sir Lawrence Dundas, Bart. – had acquired large estates on Orkney and Shetland.84 The scale of the hoard prompted the antiquarian and collector, Richard Gough FRS, FSA, (1735–1809), to publish a catalogue of Canute’s coins in 1777. The Plate accompanying his catalogue reproduced five coins from the collection of John White (three Quatrefoil, one Pointed Helmet and one ‘Cnut’ Arms and Sceptre type), one engraving of a Short Cross obverse and forty-two of Short Cross reverses from twenty mints. Sarah obtained a copy of the catalogue in 1800, and in time this evidently led her to approach Thomas Dundas,85 who had become a baronet on his father’s death in 1781 and a baron in 1794.86 On 19 August 1803 Lord Dundas gave Sarah eighty-two coins from the hoard,87 all of Cnut’s Short Cross issue (BMC xvi). Amongst the parcel were forty-one of the forty-two coins illustrated by Gough, only Figure 21 of the Plate (engraved as PEDLOS ON LINC) not being included.88

Sarah’s annotations to Gough’s catalogue illustrate her numismatic insight. Against the reading SPEARTBRAND (ON) LV she comments:

This penny I believe to belong to Lincoln. In the figure is only LI [in fact, LII] and I saw none among Lord Dundas’ coins, with LV, but three with LI.

Again, here fluctuating between the first and third person, on SPEARTINC ON LV she further comments:

This also is, in my opinion, of Lincoln. Both the figure, and the coin now in Miss Banks’s collection, have LII, which I take to be the beginning of LIN, there being not room enough for the remainder of the N.

Lord Dundas also donated thirty-two coins of the type to the British Museum. This must have occurred after the gift to Sarah because the British Museum examples are limited to the mints of Lincoln, London and Stamford, including a number duplicating Sarah’s coins. The

78 Ruding MS gives the year of discovery as 1780, quoted by Martin 1961, 232.
79 Stevenson 1966, xxiii; Dolley 1959, 159.
80 Martin 1961, 232. SCBI British Museum Anglo-Saxon Coins V lists fifty-two. Another thirty-six coins of Eadgar in the trays of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland have also been attributed to the hoard (Stevenson 1966).
81 Sarah’s MS register of acquisitions.
82 See Table 2 above.
83 Gough 1777, 3.
84 Information from Hugh Pagan.
85 Sarah’s annotated copy, in Royal Mint Museum, Llantrisant.
86 Information from Hugh Pagan.
87 Sarah’s MS register of acquisitions.
88 A coin with this reverse reading was in the Mossop collection (see Mossop 1970, where a die duplicate is illustrated at Plate LVI, 9).
The most likely date of the donation is thus between late 1803 and Dundas’s death in 1811. Consequently, in 1819 the British Museum retained seventy-eight coins of Cnut from Sarah’s collection before passing the residue (thirteen coins) to the Royal Mint. Since all Sarah’s coins of Cnut were of the Short Cross issue (BMC xvi), except for one Quatrefoil penny (BMC viii), more than eighty-two of the ninety-one coins of Canute in Sarah’s collection may have originated from the Caldale hoard.

The importance of the Caldale hoard in enhancing the British Museum’s representation of Cnut’s Short Cross issue is illustrated in Fig. 2, showing holdings of the type before and after both accessions from the hoard. It also shows the subsequent impact of the Wedmore hoard (1853), and coins from Scandinavian hoards acquired through the Morgan/Evans bequest (1915).

![Fig. 2. British Museum: sources of Cnut Short Cross type (BMC xvi).](image)

**Tealby hoard (1807)**

Disposal of the Tealby hoard (1807) was overseen by Sir Joseph Banks. This doubtless arose because he came to hear of it when he was at Revesby Abbey that autumn, only twenty miles south of Tealby as the crow flies.

On 27 August 1808 Banks wrote to the landowner, George Tennyson, rendering an account of the disposal of the coins as follows:

Melted at the Tower 5127
Disposed of to collectors 277
Reserved as a specimen [sic] of the general condition of the collection 20
Remains undisposed of 273
Collection delivered by Mr Dryander to Mr Tennyson 34

*Total* 5731

This total, counted by Dryander, was 333 coins short of the number (6,064) written upon a paper with the coins. The price paid to Tennyson for the first three items, consisting of 5,424 coins, was £99 15s. 11d., made up of £64 18s. 5d. for the ingot made of coins melted by the Mint, £34 12s. 6d., representing 277 coins sold to collectors at 2s. 6d. each, and 5s. for twenty ‘ill struck pieces reserved from the melting’ at 3d. each. Banks arranged for a cheque to the value of £34 17s. 6d. to be drawn on his bankers and for Morrison, as Deputy Master, to pay for the ingot and reserved specimens.89

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It is most regrettable that little over an eighth of the copious hoard escaped melting. Banks certainly perceived the main interest of the coins to lie in the lack of good workmanship they displayed, describing them as 'of much antiquary interest and in my opinion of amusement also', rather than in the opportunity to learn more about the coinage as such. He nevertheless mentioned to Tennyson his hopes that 'a friend will draw up an account of these pennies and print it in the *Archeologia*'.90 This was duly accomplished with publication of a paper read on 24 February 1814 by Taylor Coombe, a copy of which the author presented to Sarah on 16 November 1815.91

In his paper Taylor Coombe related that

The best specimens of all the varieties of towns and mint masters were selected for the collections of Mrs Banks, the British Museum and also of a few private individuals; the rest, to the number of 5127, were melted at the Tower.

This sentence must allude to the 277 coins included in Banks's letter to Tennyson. Of these 238 can be accounted for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Coombe readings in 1814 paper</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other likely BM coins</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>238 (86%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All or nearly all of Sarah's coins of the Tealby issue must have come from the hoard. In her manuscript catalogue, coins of Carlisle, Launceston and Pembroke were given to Cardiff, Lancaster and Wainfleet respectively, as they were by Ruding in his *Annals* of 1817.92 In 1819 the British Museum retained 104 coins and passed sixty-eight on to the Royal Mint.93

**Tiree hoard (1787)**

Sarah acquired eighty-six Short Cross pence, which she took to represent the first coinage of Henry III. Of these, twenty-two from the mints of Canterbury, London and Bury St Edmunds were the gift of Lord Frederick Campbell, who also gave her the coins of Eadgar from the Tiree hoard of 1782, referred to above. The hoard containing these coins was found in the Hebrides in 1787 and weighed 'several ounces', three ounces representing about sixty coins.94 According to a note in the British Museum's copy of Thompson's *Inventory*, forty-three coins were acquired by the Museum, suggesting that their and Sarah's holdings represented the totality of coins discovered.

The five coins retained by the British Museum from Sarah's collection are still identifiable, but both Webster and Hocking catalogued only five of the remaining seventeen coins passed to the Royal Mint Museum. It thus appears that the twelve missing coins were most likely culled by Webster in 1874. The twenty-two coins recorded by Sarah in her manuscript catalogue as emanating from Lord Frederick Campbell are listed in Table 3. The dates on which the Museum and Sarah acquired the coins from Lord Frederick Campbell are not recorded.

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90 Sturman 1989, 51.
91 Coombe 1817. Sarah's pre-publication copy of the paper is in the Royal Mint Museum.
92 Ruding 1817. These attributions were still maintained in the third edition of 1840.
93 See Table 2 above.
94 Thompson 1956, 136.
Examples of important English coins from the collection

A few examples have been chosen to illustrate the importance and interest of Sarah’s English coins, in addition to the significant hoard material already discussed.

1. Edward the Confessor, Sovereign-Eagles/Hammered Cross mule of the Lincoln moneyer Elfnoth (Pl. 9, 2, from Ruding’s *Annals*).

   This coin, now in the British Museum trays as *BMC* 723 (Plate xxvi.8) was included in the Appendix to Ruding’s *Annals*, Plate 28, no. 3, originally engraved in 1803. In his preface, Ruding remarked:

   The Rev Mr Blick, of Tamworth, was pleased to communicate a very rare coin of Edward the Confessor, from his valuable collection. A penny of similar type is engraved amongst the additions to the 28th Plate of Anglo Saxon money, No.3, from a specimen in Mrs Banks’ select cabinet. The drawing was put into my hands by Mr Taylor Coombe.  

   This was one of only four coins from the reign of the Confessor in Sarah’s collection, acquired from John Rennie in 1799. In her acquisition register the coin is described as ‘unique’. John Rennie must have been the notable civil engineer who became an FRS in 1798 and was acquainted with Banks through his involvement with the Privy Council’s reform of the coinage and their mutual interest in fen drainage. Although Sarah’s coin is still the only such mule recorded from Lincoln, similar mules are known from Bedford, Hertford, Huntingdon, Malmesbury, Taunton, Wallingford and York.

2. Elizabeth I, Silver Crown, Sixth issue (1601–2), mintmark 1 (1601) Webster 287; Hocking 960 (Pl. 9, 3).

   This coin has been selected as an example of a coin acquired by Sarah from the dealer ‘Mr Young’, on 12 February 1793, for which she paid ten shillings. This was probably Henry Young rather than his son, Matthew, also a dealer.

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TABLE 3. Sarah’s coins from the Tiree hoard (1787).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Reverse reading</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>GOLDWINE ON C(A)</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlc2</td>
<td>HENRI ON CAN</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>IOAN CHIC ON CA</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIa3</td>
<td>IOAN ON CANTE</td>
<td>RMM (W115, H410)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>NICOLE ON CA</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIIb1</td>
<td>ROGER OF R ON C</td>
<td>RMM (W116, H411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>ROGER ON CANT</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>ROGER ON CAN</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlb2</td>
<td>ADEL ON LVNDE</td>
<td>RMM (W123, H378)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIIb1</td>
<td>ADAM ON LVNDE</td>
<td>RMM (W124, H414)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIIb2</td>
<td>ADAM ON LVND</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIa3</td>
<td>ELIS ON LVNDEEN</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>ILGER ON LVNDE</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>LANVLF ON LVN</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>NICOLE ON LVN</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>RICARD ON LVN</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
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<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlc1</td>
<td>WALTER ON LV</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlc1</td>
<td>WALTER ON LVN</td>
<td>BM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>WALTER ON LVN</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIa3</td>
<td>NORMAN ON SAN</td>
<td>RMM (W132, H418)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>SIMVND ON SANT</td>
<td>RMM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Charles I, Twenty Shilling Gold Unite, mintmark plume, with oval shield between C and R on the reverse. Webster 364; Hocking 1099 (Pl. 9, 4).
This coin was probably acquired from John Innocent, a London goldsmith and jeweller, on 19 March 1791 for £1 6s. Innocent’s museum and entire stock was auctioned at Christie’s in June 1807.

This coin, with no. 6 below, is one of the jewels of the Royal Mint holdings from Sarah’s collection. Its provenance, however, is not recorded.

The two final coins represent the transition from hammered to milled coinage, when in the course of Cromwell’s reign the hand-powered machinery of the Frenchman, Peter Blondeau, was used to strike coins engraved by Thomas Simon.

5. Cromwell, Unite of twenty shillings, 1656, by Thomas Simon. Webster 491; Hocking 1264 (Pl. 9, 6).
This coin was again acquired from ‘Mr Young’, in 1794 for the less than princely sum of £1 11s. 6d.

This spectacular coin was rejected in favour of an inferior bust and reverse design by Jan Roettiers of Antwerp, who had superseded Simon, in 1662, as engraver at the Royal Mint.100

Sarah’s coins, tokens and medals represent one of the most catholic and best-documented numismatic collections ever assembled, with the added virtue of not having been dispersed. As Table 1 demonstrates, however, this paper touches only upon a small part of the whole, leaving extensive areas of the collection awaiting fuller recognition.

REFERENCES

100 Hocking 1906, 124.
Smith, J.T., 1905 (new ed.). A Book for a Rainy Day: or, recollections of the events of the last sixty-six years (London).
EAGLEN: SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS (1)
EAGLEN: SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS (2)
EAGLEN: SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS (3)
PLATE 8

EAGLEN: SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS (4)
PLATE 9

EAGLEN: SARAH SOPHIA BANKS AND HER ENGLISH HAMMERED COINS (5)