

DOCUMENTS OF THE IRISH EXCHANGE AND MINT, 1251–54

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THE exchange set up in Ireland in 1251 for the recoinage of the currency left behind few records. The most important of these documents is the account in the English Exchequer's pipe roll, which recorded the final audited statements of revenue and expenditure for the sheriffs of each county and for officials like the wardens of the exchange. This shows the result of the audit of accounts after the Irish exchange closed, and appears not to have been published; references to it give the wrong date and omit much interesting detail. Two subsidiary accounting documents have been published in English summary and inadequate Latin transcription, but these publications were also misdated and incomplete. This note provides translations of these three documents, and looks into their relationship with one another. In doing so, it helps to explain the process of replacing the Irish coinage, the chronology of which was first established by D.W. Dykes in 1963.¹

The context can be described quite briefly. England and Ireland shared a common coinage, the silver penny. No coins had been minted in Ireland since the reign of King John, although the exchange of Ireland continued to exist on paper: Peter de Rivallis was appointed keeper of the exchange in 1232.² King Henry III and his brother, Earl Richard of Cornwall, agreed on 12 June 1247 that there should be a recoinage in England. This would be financed by the earl and they would share the profits. On 27 July 1247, this agreement was extended to cover Ireland and Wales. The recoinage in England involved the establishment of several temporary local exchanges, where the old Short Cross coinage was exchanged for the new long cross design. It was essentially complete by 1250, when these exchanges were closed.³

Meanwhile, Ireland continued to use the old coinage, which had evidently deteriorated in quality, by wear and clipping, and was no longer acceptable in England. In 1250, the Dublin exchequer was instructed to receive money only by weight, until the king sent new money. Old money from Ireland, received by the government in England, had to be recoined before it could be used for payments to the Pope and for works at Windsor.⁴

The extension of the recoinage to Ireland formally began with a new agreement between the king and Earl Richard, on 8 May 1251. The earl could make new money in the Ireland for twelve years from 8 September 1251. The king would receive half the profits of exchanging and minting, and the earl would be repaid by number in new money the full sum which he provided in old money to support the exchange. This was followed by a loan of 2,000 marks (£1,333 6s. 8d.) from the earl for making new money and to maintain the exchange in Ireland.⁵ On 17 September the king appointed his clerk Roger of Haverhill as keeper of the exchange for the whole of Ireland, for as long as it should please the king. The moneyers, clerks and other officials of the mint and exchanges were to obey him, and to enjoy the same customs and liberties as their counterparts in England. The bailiffs of Irish towns where money was made were to allow use of their prisons to hold mint officials who committed offences. Roger was granted an Irish benefice, and was to be paid 40 marks (£26 13s. 4d.) at Easter 1252.⁶

¹ Dykes 1963, 100–7.

² *Patent Rolls 1225–32*, 494.

³ Allen 2012, 62–6. Agreements transcribed in Cassidy 2012, 155.

⁴ *Close Rolls 1247–51*, 295, 326.

⁵ TNA: C 66/62 m. 9, 6. Calendared in *CPR 1247–58*, 94, 101.

⁶ TNA: C 66/62 m. 3. Calendared in Sweetman 1875, 3193–6, and in *CPR 1247–58*, 108, but inadequately, as pointed out in Churchill 2012, 402. *Close Rolls 1247–51*, 503. Roger of Haverhill had earlier been receiver of customs and revenues from Bordeaux and Bayonne (*CPR 1232–47*, 458), and it may be more than coincidence that the treasurer of England from 1240 to 1252 was William of Haverhill.

The exchange must have begun work shortly after Haverhill's appointment, as its accounts run from 14 October 1251. There were evidently some problems: in July 1252, the moneyers and other exchange officials were complaining that some of the Irish and others were often violent and insulting, and the justiciar of Ireland was ordered to protect them. The justiciar was also ordered to inquire into those who were exchanging money contrary to the law, and to amerce offenders; half of the resulting amercements was to be paid to earl Richard.⁷ Despite this, the exchange was soon building up its profits, and in August 1253 Haverhill was instructed to lend £400 from the revenues of the exchange to the treasurer of Ireland. The treasurer was to send this to the king in England, who was, as usual, short of cash.⁸

The Irish recoinage was soon complete. On 8 January 1254, the king's council decided that the exchange should close. Roger of Haverhill was ordered to send all the dies of the exchange to the council in England, and to dismiss all the moneyers. He was to stay in Ireland until some undefined inquiries into the exchange were complete, but this cannot have taken long, because the accounts of the exchange cover a period ending on 24 February 1254.⁹ Later, in January 1255, the Exchequer noted two sums which Haverhill had delivered to the treasurer of Ireland, the bishop of Ossory, and for which the Exchequer had letters from the bishop witnessing payment: the £400 mentioned above, and £107 16s. 9½d. which Haverhill had delivered to the bishop when he left Ireland.¹⁰

The accounts of the exchange then had to be audited, which involved the production of detailed evidence of sums received and spent. Expenditure had to be itemized, and often proved by receipts, either in writing, as with the payments to the bishop, or as tally sticks. The outcome of this process was the final record in the pipe roll, showing the amounts paid and owed as determined by the Exchequer. Much of the supporting documentation has been lost – we do not have a roll of silver purchases, such as occasionally survives from the English exchanges – and some may well have been destroyed after the audit, as no longer necessary. On the other hand, in this case we have two of the records giving the details behind the totals to be found in the final accounts. The first is a roll of expenses:¹¹

Roll of expenses made in the exchange in Ireland, beginning on Saturday 14 October 1251

For cloth bought for covering the exchequer of the exchange, 2s. 11d.

(In the roll.)¹² For one pair of scales for weighing coins, 20s. 6d.

For parchment for making rolls, 18d.

For one knife for making tallies, 4d.

For carrying 2,000 marks from Dublin castle to the exchange, 3d.

For an iron-bound chest bought for [storing?] coins, 9s.¹³

For locks for the same, 3s.

For 32 ells of canvas bought in pieces for making sacks and for the window of the exchange, 5s. 9d.

For small scales bought for exchanging in various places, 8d.

For five pairs [?] of saddlebags bought for carrying new money for exchanging in various places, 11s. 6d.

Also, for carriage of treasure from Dublin to Limerick for six days, 41s. 3d.

For an escort of watchmen guarding that treasure for that time, 6s. 8d.

And for hiring a house at Limerick for making the exchange for one whole year and 29 weeks, namely from 8 September 1252 to 30 March 1254, 27s. at 4d.¹⁴ per week.

For making an exchequer there, and for benches and doors and for repairing that house, with benches and other small [expenses], 11s. 5½d.

⁷ TNA: C66/63 m. 6; *CPR 1247–58*, 144. *Close Rolls 1251–53*, 482.

⁸ *Close Rolls 1251–53*, 410–11.

⁹ *Close Rolls 1253–54*, 13. Dolley 1987, 820, assumed that the mint closed when all the available silver had been called in and coined.

¹⁰ *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls 1251–60*, 192; the allowance of these sums may have coincided with the audit process. Dykes 1963, 106, misunderstood this as a payment of £507 to Haverhill, rather than the sum to be allowed in his final account for payments by Haverhill. There is of course no basis for the assertion in Dolley 1972, 10, that Haverhill took a commission on every pound struck and became £500 richer.

¹¹ TNA: E 101/230/1. The calendar in Sweetman 1875, 3201, misses some details, translates *cambium* as 'Mint' throughout, and for some reason gives the dates of the expenses in a marginal note as '1251, Oct. 14, to 1252, Sept. 8.' This dating was followed by Dykes 1963, 104, leading to the erroneous impression that the expenses concerned only the first year of operations. The transcript in Dykes 1963, 116, has some difficulties with the abbreviated Latin of the original, and misses the final phrase.

¹² This note has been added above the beginning of this sentence.

¹³ There is a note above this entry and the next, added in a darker ink: 16d.

¹⁴ There is a gap in the text for this figure, which is provided in the margin.

Also, for hiring serjeants and horses to escort and carry £2,000 from Limerick to Carrickfergus, for making an exchange in Ulster, £13 11s. 4d.

And for wages of doorkeepers guarding the doors of the exchange of Ireland for 2½ years, receiving 1*m.* a year, 33s. 4d.

And for the watchman guarding the chest with the king's treasure and the exchange for the same time, at 40s. a year, 100s.

Total £27 6s. 5½*d.*¹⁵

For carrying dies from Ireland to London.¹⁶

The original roll is written as continuous text, apart from the heading and total, but has here been divided into a list, for clarity. Most of the text of the roll has been crossed through in dark ink, making some words hard to read, perhaps as part of the process of copying details from this roll to the final account in the pipe roll: as each sum was entered, that entry was crossed out. The added note 'In the roll' was also part of this process, showing that an item had been copied onto the pipe roll. Most of the small expenses concern the office supplies needed by the exchanges, such as the chequered cloth used for counting coins, and the wages of non-specialist staff (the expenses of minting, and the wages of specialists, such as moneyers, were paid out of mintage charges). The details about the movements of cash indicate how the exchanges attempted to cover Ireland, beginning in Dublin. The 2,000 marks carried from Dublin castle to the exchange may be the original sum provided by earl Richard to launch the exercise.¹⁷ After nearly a year, new coins were carried from Dublin to Limerick, where a subsidiary exchange was set up. There was then another transfer of a large sum, with appropriate escort, from Limerick to Carrickfergus, for an Ulster exchange. The final note echoes Haverhill's instructions on closing the exchange, for the dies to be returned to London. Oddly, the dies were apparently not destroyed, but turned up several years later in 1262, when the wardens of the London exchange delivered them to the treasurer.¹⁸

The other subsidiary document is a short roll of pleas and perquisites:¹⁹

Roll of pleas and perquisites concerning the exchange in Ireland

From William son of Walter for trespasses against officials of the exchange, 40s.

From Thomas of Carmarthen ... [illegible], 20s.

From someone who bought and sold with clipped money, 7s. 8d.

From someone else for the same, 2s.

From a clerk who brought 23¼*d.* to the exchange and they weighed 28¼*d.*, £11 13¼*d.*

From someone for false money ... to be put before a jury, 61s. 8d.

From Bartholomew of Denmark who exchanged [against the assize], 2s.

From a chaplain of Carrickfergus for large old halfpence, newly clipped, 28s. 2d.

From Makan for a false farthing of the new money, ½*m.*

(In the roll.)²⁰ Total £19 9s. 3¼*d.*

(In the roll.) Also by weight and by number, £6 9s.

Total £26 18s. 3¼*d.*

Memorandum concerning 27s. 8d. of new money seized on someone who was found exchanging in Thomastown, and Robert de Braham, sheriff of Kilkenny, has [him/it] in custody.

Also, L. [Luke] archbishop of Dublin has 7s. 6d. for a clerk who stole 6d. in the exchange.

Memorandum concerning 6d. which the moneyers took from the keepers.

This is mostly just a list of amercements for the usual exchange offences: forging, clipping and unauthorized exchanging. The largest sum, however, seems to relate to coins which weighed more than they should. Some of the entries are quite unspecific – just 'De quodam', from someone. The list is marked 'In the roll' to show that the total has been copied to the pipe roll. The other sum marked 'In the roll' also crops up in the pipe roll account, where the

¹⁵ This sum is repeated in the right margin, possibly a rough note checking the calculation.

¹⁶ This note is in the left margin, below the body of the account. Perhaps a reminder of an expense which has not been covered above.

¹⁷ Dykes 1963, 104, suggested that the coinage was struck in the castle, then transported to nearby but separate exchange premises.

¹⁸ TNA: E 159/36 m. 7, E 368/36 m. 8d.

¹⁹ TNA: E 101/230/3. Calendared, Sweetman 1875, 1660, under the date 1228–1255 (the dates when Luke was archbishop of Dublin); although there is no specific date in the document, the sums marked 'In the roll' are found in the pipe roll account, so it clearly covers 1251–54. Transcript, Dykes 1963, 115.

²⁰ This note is in the left margin, with lines bracketing all the entries above.

context helps to explain this otherwise enigmatic entry. The pipe roll account itself is clearly based on these rolls of expenses and pleas, plus the crucial additional information about the amount of coin produced and the amount of revenue thus generated.²¹

Account of the exchange of Ireland, namely of Dublin and Limerick, from 14 October 1251 to 24 February 1254

Roger of Haverhill for the king, by writ of the king, and John de Ispania for Earl Richard, brother of the king, account for £1,080 19s. 3d. revenue of the exchange of Dublin and Limerick, namely from £43,238 11s. 7d. manufactured for the foresaid time. And for £6 9s. for the increment of coins received by weight and delivered by number. And for £19 9s. 3d. for pleas of the exchange for that time.

Total £1,106 17s. 6d. In the treasury, nothing.

And in the loss (of weight)²² of 2,000 marks received by number from Earl Richard, for the support of that exchange, £10 10s. 9d. And for hire of a building for the exchange at Limerick, 27s. And in the expenses of watchmen in the exchange, ½m. And in wages of the doorkeepers, 33s. 4d. And in wages of a serjeant guarding the chest in which the treasure was stored, 100s. for the whole time. And for a large balance, 20s. 6d. And in small and necessary expenses in those exchanges, 35s. 8½d.²³ And in carriage of the king's treasure from Dublin to Limerick, 41s. 3d. And in carriage and escorting of £2,000 from Limerick to Carrickfergus for exchanging, £13 11s. 4d.

Total expenses, £37 6s. 6½d. And they owe £1,069 10s. 11½d. Of which the king should have half, namely £534 15s. 5½d. For this, Roger answers for himself below. And Earl Richard should have the other half, by the agreement made between the king and that earl, namely £534 15s. 6d., for which John de Ispania should answer for himself.

Roger of Haverhill accounts for £534 15s. 5½d. for the remainder of the exchange on behalf of the king, as shown above. In the treasury, nothing. And to Roger himself, for the arrears of the 40 marks a year which he should have received to maintain himself in the king's service in the exchange of Ireland, 40 marks by writ of the king. And to H. [Hugh de Mapilton] bishop of Ossory, the king's treasurer in Ireland, £400 by writ of the king. And to that bishop, £107 16s. 9½d. by the same writ. And he owes 5s. 4d. (and he answers in London in roll 45.)²⁴

The roll shows that the Irish mint manufactured over £43,200 in less than two and a half years. Assuming that this is calculated in the same way as in English exchange accounts, this is the weight of silver passing through the mint, which, at 242 pence minted per pound weight, comes to nearly £43,600 by value of the coins produced. (For comparison, this is about one-tenth of the estimated volume of the English currency at the time of the recoinage.²⁵) The gross revenue from the exchange, £1,081, is equivalent to 6d. per pound manufactured, the same seigniorage charge as was applied in England. The distinction between weight and number explains the figure of £6 9s. taken from the plea roll; it is the increment, to take account of the impact on the revenue of the exchange resulting from this difference between weight and number. In this instance, it is an addition of some 1.4 pence per pound. The final source of income is the sum of £19 9s. 3d. for pleas, also taken directly from the plea roll.

The total revenue was accounted for jointly by Haverhill and by Earl Richard's representative, John de Ispania, who is otherwise unknown.²⁶ It was divided equally between king and earl, after the deduction of expenses. Most of these expenses are taken from the roll of expenses, either as individual items, such as the large balance, or as the sum for small expenses. (This does not match the original figures in the roll of expenses: as the added note in that roll

²¹ The pipe roll account is in TNA: E 372/98 rot. 6d. The other version, in the chancellor's roll, TNA: E 352/47 rot. 13d, is almost identical, but provides a few details which have been lost where the margins of the pipe roll have been worn away. Neither version has been published, but some figures were used, with trivial errors, in Dolley and Seaby 1968, xl. This gives the closing date as 21 September 1254 (the feast of St Mattheus) rather than 24 February (St Mathias, which is not only more likely, but also a feast day used in Exchequer dating, unlike St Mattheus). The pipe roll account is mentioned in Blunt and Brand 1970, 65, also giving the dates as October 1251 to September 1254.

²² Inserted above the line in both rolls.

²³ Amended from 34s. 8½d. in pipe roll.

²⁴ The final phrase has been added later in a different hand and ink, referring to the 1261 pipe roll.

²⁵ Allen 2012, 326.

²⁶ There does not seem to be any other connection between Earl Richard and John. It is possible that he is the John de Ispann' who received a tun of wine in London in March 1253 (*Close Rolls 1251–53*, 330). John de Ispann' was also involved in a case of novel disseisin in 1272–73, involving land in Willingale Spain, Essex (TNA: C66/92 m. 2). This provides a less exotic source for his name than the obvious assumption that there was a Spanish clerk in the Dublin mint. I am grateful to Adrian Jobson for his advice, and for this reference.

showed, the cost of the chest and locks had been restated to 16*d.*; with this amendment, the figures for small expenses do come to the same total). The loan of 2,000 marks from Earl Richard also turns up again. He had made this loan on condition that he should be repaid the full sum in new money, and £10 10*s.* 9*d.* was needed to cover the difference between weight and number. This loss is only about 1.9 pence per pound (presumably because the original loan would have been in recently recoined English pennies, and thus nearly full weight). From the king's share of the net revenue, Haverhill received his own arrears, and nearly all the rest had been paid to the treasurer of Ireland, as noted above. Only 5*s.* 4*d.* was left to be accounted for, and a note was added to the account some years later, to link it to an entry in the 1261 pipe roll, where Haverhill accounted for this amount. As Haverhill had died in 1261, this may have been part of the process of sorting out his estate.²⁷

With the completion of the recoinage, English and Irish coins were again identical in weight and fineness, and circulated freely in both countries.²⁸ At the same time, the English government was insisting that Scottish coins should be brought into line with English standards of fineness, so that the coins of the three countries were interchangeable, but with English coins predominant throughout the British Isles.²⁹ The surviving documents of the Irish exchange show us something of the process of retaining Ireland within this common currency area. They omit many details, particularly concerning the sources of silver, the actual mechanics of minting, the staff of the mint, rather than the exchanges, and the amount charged as mintage. Despite these omissions, they still provide more detail about the process of recoinage and regulation than is available for comparable provincial mints in England. For this reason, it is, I hope, worthwhile to provide the full texts in translation for the first time.

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- C 66 Chancery and Supreme Court of Judicature: Patent Rolls
- E 101 Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Accounts Various
- E 159 Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Memoranda Rolls
- E 352 Exchequer: Pipe Office: Chancellor's Rolls
- E 368 Exchequer: Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer: Memoranda Rolls
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²⁷ TNA: E 372/105 rot. 17d. *Close Rolls 1259–61*, 362. After leaving Ireland, Haverhill had evidently become quite prosperous, farming the manors of Combe and Stonesfield in Oxfordshire for £22 15*s.* 5½*d.* a year: TNA: E 372/101 rot. 10, E 372/103 rot. 3.

²⁸ Dolley 1972, 9. Irish coins also circulated beyond the British Isles, as the Brussels hoard showed, but English and Scottish coins provided the 'overwhelming preponderance' of the coins in Irish hoards (Churchill and Thomas 2012, 192–200; Dolley 1969, 48; Dolley 1972, 50, 59).

²⁹ *Close Rolls 1253–54*, 2. Allen 2017, esp. p. 82. As Taylor 2016, 396, pointed out: 'Scotland is one of the clearest examples of the distinction between mint output and the volume of currency.' The same must usually have been even truer of Ireland, with no mint except during the recoinage.

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