

**Lincoln:** Class III: 6.

**Newcastle:** Class III: 1; IX: 7; X: 2 (1 attached to London class II?); uncertain class: 1.

**York:** Class II: 2; II–III? 1 (with fragments of London penny attached); III: 12; IX: 1; XVI: 2; Pre-Treaty: 1.

England: uncertain mints: 38.

**Ireland:** Dublin: 4; Waterford: 4; Cork: 1; uncertain: 1 halfpenny?

**Scotland:** Alexander III: 20; John Balliol: 2; Robert Bruce: 2; David II: 7; uncertain: 3.

**Continental:** 30 (references are to Mayhew 1983): Gui de Dampierre, Namur, M. 12; Gui de Dampierre, Flanders-Namur, M. 13; Jean d'Avesnes, Mons, M. 36; Valeran de Ligny, Serain, M. 225d–e; Gaucher de Chatillon, Yves, M. 238 or 239; Gaucher de Chatillon, Yves, M. 239 (M. 239 is erroneously printed as M. 234 in Mayhew 1983, 95); Gaucher de Chatillon, Yves, M. 239; Gaucher in name of Edward, 'London' M. 241; Gaucher in name of Edward, 'Waterford', M. 242a, but bifoliate crown; Gaucher in name of Edward, 'London' M. 243 (2 coins); Gaucher de Chatillon, Yves, M. 244; Gaucher de Chatillon, Yves, M. 245–7; John the Blind, M. 257; John the Blind, Luxemburg, M. 265m–M. 265t; John the Blind, Luxemburg, M. 265 (2 coins); John the Blind, Meraude, M. 277; John the Blind, Meraude, M. 278; John the Blind, Damvillers, M. 284 (2 coins); John the Blind, M -?, IOh----.REX.B / ...ETA .EX: .....; Ferry of Lorraine, M. 306; Louis of Bavaria, as King of the Romans, Aachen, M. 334; **EDWRE** 'London' M. 374; **EDWARAIIOIDISHYB** 'Lomdon', cf. M. 383–406; Hartrad of Schonecken, 3 fragments, cf. M. 345–352; **EDWARA** with open E, 'London'; John III of Brabant, Brussels mint, Chatel type, de Witte 307, but now dated by Ghyssens after 1317–18 (see Mayhew 1983, 48–9 n. 2, 85); John III of Brabant, Cross in field with no pellets, **MONETA**.... Lion rampant facing left, de Witte 368, Antwerp.

Unidentified fragments: uncertain number of coins.

Pottery fragments: few.

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## TWO HOARDS OF LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH GOLD COINS

MURRAY ANDREWS

RECENT studies have demonstrated the value of historic newspapers as a source of information concerning otherwise unknown coin finds.<sup>1</sup> This note draws attention to two 'forgotten' late medieval gold hoards recorded in nineteenth century newspapers, considering aspects of their numismatic contents and broader archaeological contexts.

### 1. Grimsargh, Lancashire, 1860

In May 1860 a hoard of three fourteenth-century gold coins was found in a field in Grimsargh, Lancashire. An account of the find in the *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, which also records the discovery of a hoard of silver coins of Elizabeth I, reads as follows:

DISCOVERY OF COINS. – We yesterday saw two fine gold coins, one of the reign of Edward the Third, and the other of Richard the Second. They were found in a field in Grimsargh, this week, along with another smaller gold coin, of the former reign. When found, they were enclosed in something like a shell box, which, however,

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Cessford and Newman 2011; Briggs 2012; Allen and Briggs 2013; Andrews 2015.

dropped to pieces immediately on being exposed to the air. The coins we saw are remarkably fine specimens of the gold noble – or, as the coin was sometimes called, the rose noble – a coin introduced by Edward the Third. They were of the nominal value of 6s. 8d. In size they are slightly larger than a modern half-crown, but much thinner, their weight being rather more than a half a sovereign. On the obverse is a portrait of the king, completely armed, in a ship – a reference, probably, to the great naval victory of the English over the French, at Sluys, in 1340, the legend being the name and titles of the sovereign. On one of the coins is “EDWARD. DEI GRATIA REX. ANGL. FFRANC. D. HYB” (Edward, by the grace of God, King of England and France, Lord of Ireland.) On the coin of Richard, the inscription is, “RICARD. D.G. REX ANGL FRANC. D. HIB.” On the obverse of both is a cross fleury, lions, fleur-de-lis, and regal crowns, the legend being, “IHE [Jesus] AUTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIUM ILLORUM IBAT.” (Jesus passing over, went through the midst of them.) The gold of which these coins were made was supposed to have been the result of the work of alchemist Raymond Lully; and the inscription on the obverse was meant to imply that, as Jesus passed invisible and in the most secret manner by the midst of the Pharisees, so this gold was made by invisible and secret art amongst the ignorant. We have seldom seen such fresh impressions of a coin of that age. Upon the shield which the king holds are the royal arms (the arms of England and France quartered), the impression of which is as fresh as on that of a coin of the present reign. The third coin, which we have not seen, is, we believe, a quarter florin of the reign of Edward the Third. – Last week, a number of silver coins, of the reign of Elizabeth, were found in excavating on the Tulketh Park Estate. They were, however, not particularly good specimens.<sup>2</sup>

From the descriptions provided it is apparent that the Grimsargh hoard consisted of just three gold coins: one noble and one quarter noble of Edward III (1327–77), and one noble of Richard II (1377–99). This conclusion is supported by the obverse legends provided, though in each case their reproduction seems inadequate; the crossed Tironian *et* on the Edward III noble, for instance, is confused for an ‘F’ before ‘FRANC’, and the Richard II noble omits the Aquitanian title. While limited detail inhibits full identification, the Edward III noble can be attributed to the Fourth Coinage Pre-Treaty series (1351–1361) on the basis of its legend, although its subclass is uncertain. No further attribution is possible for the Edward III quarter-noble or the Richard II noble, an unusually ‘fresh’ specimen providing a *terminus post quem* of 1377+. While the hoard’s small size and limited record quality impede efforts to estimate its date of deposition, the relative preponderance of Edwardian coins is typical of many late fourteenth and early fifteenth century English gold hoards; on the basis of the available evidence, an approximate date of *c.* 1380–1412 seems most plausible.<sup>3</sup>

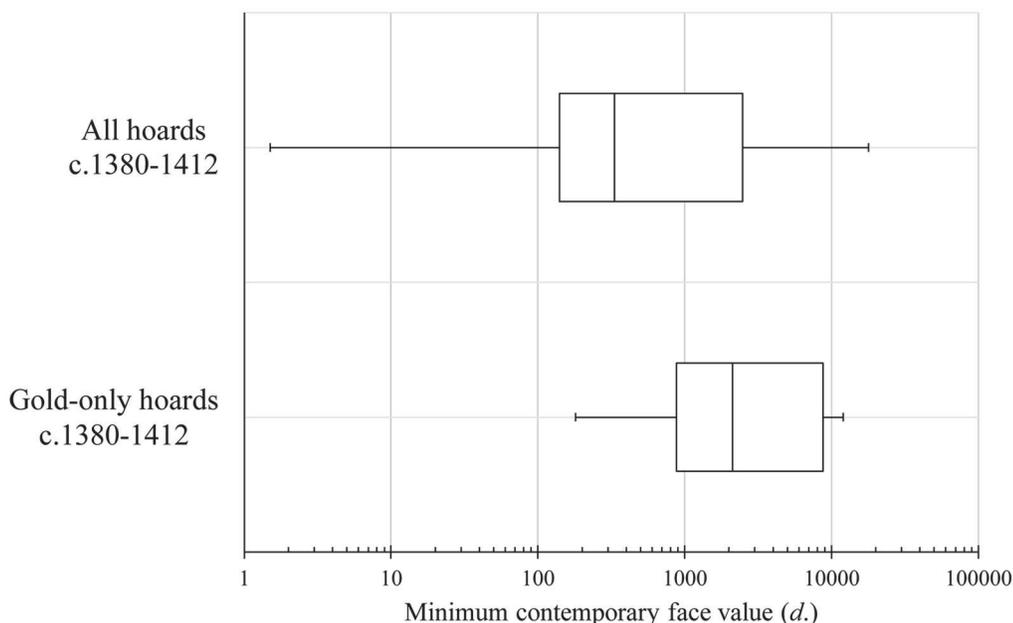


Fig. 1. Distribution of contemporary face values (*d.*) of English and Welsh hoards deposited *c.* 1380–1412

<sup>2</sup> *Preston Chronicle and Lancashire Advertiser*, 26 May 1860, 4.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, the hoards from Bredgar (Kent; Allen and Whitton 1947), Pinchbeck (Lincolnshire; Cook 1991), and Meopham (Kent; Archibald and Connolly 1977).

While little information concerning the precise findspot and topographic context exists, the description of an accompanying container ‘like a shell box’ provides strong evidence for the intentional deposition of a hoard whose small size might otherwise be used as testimony to its character as an accidental ‘purse loss’. We might suspect the box, which disintegrated on exposure, to have been of an organic or lead fabric, with comparable receptacles attested from elsewhere in England and Wales; the two large mid-fourteenth century hoards from Beaumont (Cumbria) and Chesterton Lane (Cambridgeshire) were apparently deposited in wooden boxes or chests, while the twelfth-century Ashby-de-la-Zouche (Leicestershire) hoard was deposited in a lead box.<sup>4</sup> Where the Grimsargh hoard differs from the aforementioned finds is in its considerably smaller numerical size; however, without any knowledge of the container’s relative dimensions, this apparent peculiarity may not be particularly significant.

Placed in a wider context, the Grimsargh hoard can be seen as an apparently unique north-western example of a group of ten gold-only English hoards closing with issues of Richard II, its contemporary face value of 15*s.* 0*d.* substantially below the group median of £8 16*s.* 8*d.* Compared to all English and Welsh hoards deposited *c.* 1380–1412, however, it ranks acceptably against a median of £1 7*s.* 9*d.* (Fig. 1). While in compositional terms, therefore, its closest parallel is the hoard of two nobles and one half-noble deposited at Upton Grey (Hampshire) *c.* 1380–1412, its face value can be reasonably compared to numerically-greater contemporary silver hoards like the 86 silver coins from Canon Pyon (Herefordshire).<sup>5</sup> Its economic significance in the local context was no doubt considerable, representing a sum of cash greater than the 13*s.* 4*d.* valuation that Grimsargh recorded in the 1334 lay subsidy and equivalent to perhaps three months of wages for a late fourteenth-century farm labourer.<sup>6</sup> In light of this it is important to note Grimsargh’s close proximity to Preston, the largest town in central and west Lancashire during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; located on the principal northbound road from Coventry to Carlisle, and with ready access to the Irish Sea, Preston would have provided a critical node connecting the agrarian communities of the Amounderness Plain to wider networks of British and Irish commerce.<sup>7</sup> We might anticipate, therefore, that the genesis of the Grimsargh hoard lies in the large-scale transacting of goods and produce through Preston’s weekly Wednesday market or its annual autumn fairs, although the identity of its owner or depositor must remain elusive.

## 2. Colchester (St John’s Green), Essex, 1834

On 9 January 1834 a young boy uncovered a small hoard of gold coins whilst playing on St John’s Green, Colchester. An account of the discovery in the *Colchester Gazette & Essex Independent* reads as follows:

Ancient Gold Coins. – On Thursday last, as some boys were amusing themselves on St. John’s Green, in this town, one of them found something sticking in the ground having the appearance of a button placed edgewise in the earth, but which, on closer inspection, proved to be a Gold Coin of the Reign of Henry I. in excellent preservation. This led to a more minute examination, when on turning up the earth with their hands, the youths had the good fortune to find, embedded only a few inches from the surface, several more of the same date and value. Information of the circumstance having reached the inhabitants of that neighbourhood, some of them commenced a general search, when, in the whole, fourteen Gold Coins were discovered, a brass tap, and some other relics of antiquity. The coins are about the size of the half-crown piece, but very thin; and the standard value of each about eighteen shillings. Several gentlemen freely offered sovereigns for them, but the holders did not manifest any willingness to dispose of them at that price.

<sup>4</sup> Ferguson and Keary 1885; Allen 2005; Thompson 1956, no. 14.

<sup>5</sup> 2015 T825; Stevenson 1999, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Glasscock 1975; Broadberry *et al.* 2015, 311.

<sup>7</sup> Higham 2004, 198.

The account provided by the *Colchester Gazette* was subsequently disseminated in the local and national press.<sup>8</sup> An alternative account, however, was printed on the same day in *The Essex Standard*.<sup>9</sup> It reads:

CURIOUS DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT ENGLISH GOLD COIN. - On Thursday last, a young lad playing on St. John's Green, observed something sticking up rather above the ground, which he thought was a button; upon removing it, he found it to be a gold noble of Henry VII. This induced a farther search, and the result was that under the roots of the same tree were found 9 or 10 gold nobles of Henry VII., and 2 of the same description of Edward IV. and there is a great probability that more may be found. The coins are very perfect and fresh.

The accounts differ in some important details, and, though the *Colchester Gazette* records the unwillingness of the finder(s) to part with the coins on the day, the hoard's subsequent disposition is not stated. While it may have been melted down, a fate that befell an apparent Iron Age gold coin found in Maldon only weeks earlier, it is not wholly implausible that at least some coins found their way into private hands – a possibility that, as will be seen, may have some implications for the dating of the deposit.<sup>10</sup>

As far as can be determined from newspaper accounts, the hoard contained between eleven and fourteen gold coins described as nobles, comparable in diameter to the nineteenth century half-crown and valued by contemporaries at roughly 18s. 0d. each. The coins were inscribed with the names 'HENRIC' and 'EDWARD', the former apparently much more common than the latter, and were interpreted variously as issues of Henry I (1100–35), Edward IV (1461–70, 1471–83), and Henry VII (1485–1509). Disentangling these confused and sometimes contradictory claims is a difficult task. The attribution to Henry I can be immediately discounted as fanciful, although the attributions to Edward IV and Henry VII are more plausible; for these to be correct, however, the denominational attributions must be erroneous, the noble coinage terminating in 1464/5 with the introduction of the ryal and the angel.

To move beyond this impasse we must ignore the suggested attributions and focus instead on four consistent characteristics of the newspaper accounts: inscriptions, material, morphology, and contemporary valuation. The first two properties confirm a dating somewhere between the introduction of gold in 1344 and the introduction of regnal ordinals on the gold coinage in 1509, while the claim that the coins were 'about the size of a half-crown, but very thin' suggests an approximate diameter of 32 mm, a size consistent with a noble of 1412–64 or ryal of 1464–1526 but slightly larger than an angel of 1464–1544. The contemporary standard valuation 'of each about 18s.' equates, at 1830s prices, to an approximate gold weight of 111 gr., for which the noble of 1412–1464 (108 gr.) is a better fit than the ryal of 1464–1526 (120 gr.). On balance of probabilities, therefore, the coins were most likely correctly identified as nobles but assigned to the wrong issuers; the numerous 'HENRIC' nobles are more plausibly attributed to Henry IV–VI (1399–1461), and the scarcer 'EDWARD' nobles to either the heavy coinage of Edward IV (1461–1464/5) or Edward III (1327–77), at a ratio of perhaps 4.5:1 or 5:1. The subsequent fate of the hoard is here a matter of interest. Though no later medieval coins were represented among George Joslin's nineteenth century collection of Colchester antiquities, in 1846 the *Essex Standard* recorded the donation of a 'Gold noble of Henry V' to the collection of the newly-established Colchester Museum and Library by a Henry Vint, Esq.<sup>11</sup> A London-born manufacturer and former mayor of Colchester, Vint was an enthusiastic collector of fine art and antiquities whose prominent position in city affairs facilitated his acquisition of local finds, including an 'extensive series of coins, many hundreds of which were found at Colchester'; his residence in 1834 at Crescent House, Lexden, lay just 1.5 miles west of St John's Green, and it is not implausible to suggest that Vint may have

<sup>8</sup> *Colchester Gazette & Essex Independent*, 11 Jan. 1834, 4. On the following Monday this account was reproduced in *The Times* and *The Morning Post*, with subsequent publication in the *Ipswich Journal* (18 Jan. 1834) and the *Hereford Journal* (22 Jan. 1834) amongst others. The considerable exposure afforded to the Colchester find makes its omission from the antiquarian and numismatic literature all the more surprising.

<sup>9</sup> *The Essex Standard*, Saturday 11 Jan. 1834, 2.

<sup>10</sup> For the Maldon coin, ascribed to 'Queen Boadicea', see *Essex Standard*, 4 Jan. 1834, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Price 1888; *Essex Standard*, 4 Jan. 1843, 2.

acquired at least a portion of the coins found there for his private collection.<sup>12</sup> If this possibility is entertained, we might anticipate the noble donated by Vint in 1846 to have originated from the hoard, supporting the proposed reconstruction.

The equivocal attribution of the Edwardian nobles, however, has significant implications for the dating of the deposit. If, as suggested, the given dimensions and weights are indicative of nobles struck in 1412–64, then the relative proportions of Edwardian and Henrician coins might be suggestive of a hoard closing weakly in the heavy coinage of Edward IV; the Fishpool (Nottinghamshire) hoard would provide an obvious compositional parallel, its dominant Henrician component (90% of English gold coins) mirroring that of the Colchester find.<sup>13</sup> However, clipped or worn nobles of Edward III could also meet both morphological criteria, in which case the stated proportions would indicate a hoard closing strongly in the reigns of Henry IV–VI with a tail of older gold, a profile echoing the gold component of the Brokes Road, Reigate (Surrey) hoard. Against this, however, we might note the absence of gold of Richard II, although how meaningful this is in so small a find is questionable. The description of the coins as ‘very perfect and fresh’ is ambiguous and scarcely resolves the question; in lieu of further evidence, therefore, a broad date of deposition *c.* 1412–64 seems most appropriate.

In a wider context St John’s Green hoard can be seen to represent an upper stratum of hoarding in early- to mid-fifteenth-century England and Wales, its minimum contemporary face value of £3 13s. 4*d.*, amounting to more than six times the median of 11s. 0*d.* for all hoards deposited between 1412 and 1464 (Fig. 2). As with the Grimsargh hoard, the comparatively small numbers of gold coins present at St John’s Green belie face values best compared to large silver hoards, of which finds from Hampshire and Near Eye – containing upwards of 250 and 470 coins respectively – provide the closest parallels.<sup>14</sup> Though representative of perhaps a year’s wages for a mid-fifteenth-century labourer, the findspot implies a depositor of somewhat greater means. Located south of the city walls immediately north of St John’s Abbey, St John’s Green lay in the centre of a zone of extramural settlement associated with clothworking since at least the fourteenth century; that the hoard may bear some association with the fortunes of the textile industry, which remained the pre-eminent source of wealth in Colchester in the later fifteenth century, seems highly probable.<sup>15</sup>

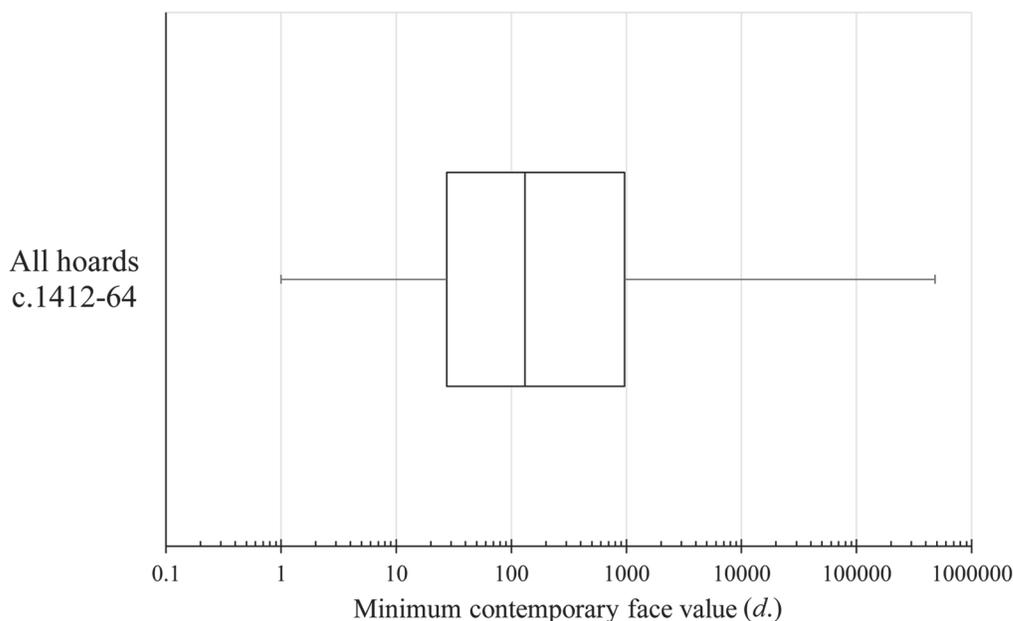


Fig. 2. Distribution of contemporary face values (*d.*) of English and Welsh hoards deposited *c.* 1412–1464

<sup>12</sup> *Essex Herald*, 20 Oct. 1846, 3

<sup>13</sup> Archibald 1967

<sup>14</sup> Thompson 1956, no. 183; 2010 T314.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper 1994, 44; Britnell 1986, 211.

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## AN UNRECORDED TOWER MINT QUARTER-NOBLE OF THE TREFOIL ISSUE OF HENRY VI

MARTYN FREDERICKSON

GOLD quarter-nobles of Henry VI minted at the Tower of London cover all periods from the Annulet issue through to the Leaf-Trefoil issue.<sup>1</sup> No later quarter-nobles (or half-nobles) of Henry VI are known;<sup>2</sup> the corresponding nobles of the Trefoil, Leaf-Pellet and Cross-Pellet issues all exist but are extremely rare. This note describes a hitherto unrecorded quarter-noble that is tentatively assigned to the Trefoil issue on the basis of similarities that it bears to some Trefoil issue nobles and groats.

The coin in question (Fig. 1) is of an appropriate weight and diameter (1.74 g; 26.9 gr; 18.4–19.4 mm), and bears characteristics common to other Henry VI quarter-nobles, with an initial mark of a large lis on both the obverse and reverse,<sup>3</sup> together with a lis in the central compartment of the reverse; a single lis lies over the shield on the obverse suggesting that the coin was minted at the Tower of London.



Fig. 1. Quarter-noble of Henry VI

*Acknowledgments* The author wishes to thank Martin Roberts (AMR Coins Ltd, Leeds) and Martin Allen (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) for helpful discussions and advice.

<sup>1</sup> Whitton 1938–41, 59–90, 205–67.

<sup>2</sup> Stewartby 2009, 320–3.

<sup>3</sup> For quarter-nobles of Henry VI bearing an initial mark of a small lis see Stewartby 1999.