

# THE 1961 FIND OF FOURTEENTH-CENTURY SILVER COINS FROM MAREHAM-LE-FEN IN LINCOLNSHIRE

By R. H. M. DOLLEY

ON October 9th 1961, a labourer digging a trench for a sewer at The Green in the village of Mareham-le-Fen in southern Lincolnshire came across a *rouleau* of 34 mediaeval silver coins. He promptly reported his discovery, and, at an inquest held at Mareham-le-Fen on March 6th, 1962, the coins were duly declared treasure trove, the finder receiving the full market value of the coins as the customary *ex gratia* reward from the Crown. The writer attended the inquest and has no reason not to believe that the 34 coins surrendered and here described represented the whole of the hoard, nor that there was any trace of a pottery or metal container. Presumably the coins had been wrapped in a screw of cloth or parchment which had rotted completely away. The 33 English coins, all of them of Edward III's fourth ('pre-treaty') coinage can be listed in tabular fashion as follows:—

## GROATS

### MINT OF LONDON

Lawrence Class <sup>1</sup>	Fleurs over crown	Letter-forms <sup>2</sup>						Weight (Troy)
		C	E	M	N	R	V	
(1) B	+	1/1	Open	Rom	N/N*	1/1	2	69.1 gr.
(2) C	-	2/1	Closed	1	11/N	1/1	2	59.8
(3) C	-	?/1	"	1	N/N*	1/1	2	66.4
(4) C	-	2/1	"	1	N/N*	1/1	2	69.2
(5) C	+ (?)	2/1	"	1	N/N*	1/1	2	69.8
(6) C	+	2/1	"	1	N/N*	1/1	2	70.7
(7) D	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	2/2	2	70.8
(8) D	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	2/2	2 ?	67.6
(9) D	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	2/2	2	67.3
(10) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	70.6
(11) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	70.1
(12) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	69.0
(13) E	-	3/3	"	1	N/N*	4/?	3	70.9
(14) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	?/4	3	64.7
(15) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	68.5
(16) E	-	3/3	"	1	N/N*	4/?	3	68.6
(17) E—lis on breast	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	69.7
(18) E	-	3/3	"	1	11/11	4/4	3	68.3
(19) E/G	-	3/4	Broken	1	11/11	4/5	4	69.5
(20) E/F—lis on cusps, fleur on breast	-	3/3	Closed	2	11/11	5/5	4	69.6
(21) F	-	3/3	"	2	11/11	5/5	4	67.9

\*All N's are reverse-barred.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *NC* 1926, pp. 417-469 and papers in continuation.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *NC* 1960, pp. 137-181 and especially p. 145.

## MINT OF LONDON (cont.)

Lawrence Class <sup>1</sup>	Fleurs over crown	C	E	Letter-forms <sup>2</sup>		R	V	Weight (Troy)
				M	N			
(22) Ga/E—annulet below breast	+	3/3	„	2	N/11	5/4	3	70.6 gr.
(23) Ga	+	5/5	„	2	N/N	5/5	4	68.1
(24) Ga	-	5/5	„	2	N/N	5/5	4	68.7
(25) Gb	-	5/5	„	2	11/11	5/5	4	65.9
(26) Gb	-	5/5	„	2	11/11	5/5	4	68.8

## MINT OF YORK

(27) E	-	3/3	Closed	1	N/-	4/4	2 ?	72.0
--------	---	-----	--------	---	-----	-----	-----	------

## HALF-GROATS

## MINT OF LONDON

(28) C	-	2/2	Closed	1	N/N*	1/1	2	35.1
(29) C	-	2/2	„	1	N/N*	1/1	2	30.5
(30) C	-	2/2	„	1	N/N*	1/1	2	30.7
(31) C	+	2/2	„	1	N/N*	1/1	2	35.1
(32) Gb/Ga	-	5/5	„	2	N/N*	5/5	4	34.3

## MINT OF YORK

(33) E	-	3/3	„	1	11/-	4/4	2	Broken
--------	---	-----	---	---	------	-----	---	--------

\*All N's are reverse-barred except on the obverses of nos. 22, 23 and 27 and the reverse of no. 23.

The coins are all illustrated on the accompanying plates, where the numeration is preserved, the London groats 1-17 appearing on *Plate III*, and the London and York groats 18-27 and half-groats 28-33 on *Plate IV*. Attention may be drawn to the following details. On the London groats 1-6 there occur the following variations in the second element of the obverse legend:—

(1) D<sup>o</sup>GRA (2) D<sup>o</sup>' G (3) DI<sup>o</sup>' G (4) D<sup>o</sup>' G (5) DEI<sup>o</sup> G (6) DI<sup>o</sup> G.

On the London groat 21 in the obverse legend 'E' takes the form of 'C'. On groats 23 and 24 and on half-groat 32 there is an annulet in the second quarter of the reverse, and on groat 26 an annulet in the first quarter. The great rarity is, of course, the London groat 22 which is an unpublished and to some extent unexpected mule between non-consecutive Lawrence classes.

The thirty-fourth coin in the hoard is an Edinburgh groat of David II. Mr. B. H. I. H. Stewart has been kind enough to examine it, and has identified it as D1/D3 by his classification, though he feels it may be a legitimate variety in its own right rather than a mule (*Plate IV*, 34). The weight is exactly 66.0 grains. It is the occurrence of this Scottish coin beside the 33 English coins that gives the Mareham-le-Fen hoard its special interest and importance, and in another paper Mr. Stewart will be discussing the whole

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *NC* 1926, pp. 417-469 and papers in continuation.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *NC* 1960, pp. 137-181 and especially p. 145.

problem from the point of view of the Scottish numismatist. Here it is sufficient perhaps to indicate the difficulty in general terms. In theory at least it is the Scottish coin which should be dated by the English, but the 33 English coins would seem all to fall within the date-bracket 1351–1358, while the single Scottish coin not only is by no means the earliest piece in a series which did not begin until 1357, but might reasonably be expected to have been struck nearer to 1365 than 1360.

The handling of the Scottish evidence is beyond the competence of the present writer, but he would like to suggest one way in which the discrepancy of date may be reduced if not completely resolved. This is by drawing attention to an internal discrepancy hitherto unremarked in the composition of the English element in two nineteenth-century finds from Cumberland, the minor hoard discovered c. 1845 at Sandsfield (*Inventary* 321) and the major one which came to light in 1884 at Beaumont (*Inventary* 38). To take first the Sandsfield find, Mr. J. D. A. Thompson has analysed as follows the 1885 *Numismatic Chronicle* account of a parcel of nine coins:—

Edward I—London: pennies, 3. York: penny, 1. Edward III—London: groats, 2; half-groat, 1; penny, 1. Durham: penny, 1.

On this basis he has suggested concealment 'after 1344'—a date, however, which would seem a whole decade too early in view of the admitted presence of English coins which we know not to have been struck before 1351. In *Appendix A* of this paper, on the other hand, there will be found listed the actual nine coins inspected by Ferguson and Keary in 1885, and it will be seen that these new identifications based on the Lawrence classification are very different as well as being far more precise. Significant here is the fact that the later of the English groats is of Lawrence Class Ga whereas the three Edward III pennies include one certainly of Class Gd and one which is probably as late as Class Gg. In other words there would seem to have been a time-lag amounting to something like three years before the London-struck groat found its way into circulation in northern England where it rubbed shoulders with brand-new pennies put out by local ecclesiastical mints, the groat and half-groat having ceased to be struck when the royal establishment at York Castle was closed in 1355.

It must be stressed, however, that the Sandsfield parcel could be deemed too small to be considered a representative sample in its own right, and it is here that the much larger and considerably better recorded Beaumont hoard is so useful. Even from the abridged summary that appears in the *Inventary* there is an obvious discrepancy between the presence of a solitary London groat of Lawrence Class G and no fewer than 66 Durham pennies assigned to the same class, and examination of the Ferguson and Keary report suggests very strongly that the groat was of Class Ga or Gb but a proportion at least of the Durham pence as late as Class Gg. Nine coins from the hoard are in the British Museum and no fewer than 47 in the Carlisle Museum, and a collated description of the two parcels is given in *Appendix B*. The picture of the hoard which there emerges more than bears out the tentative conclusion already arrived at on the basis of the little parcel from Sandsfield. The latest groat, it will be noticed, is an F/G mule probably contemporary in date with the solitary Ga or Gb groat recorded by Keary and so unlikely to have been struck much after 1357, whereas the handful of Durham and York pennies is found to include specimens of the so-called 'transitional' issues which cannot well be dated before 1361.

It would seem, then, that London groats—and half-groats—moved northwards rather more slowly than the numismatist might have imagined, so that if the Beaumont hoard had lacked its pennies it might very well have been dated 'c.1357' instead of 'c.1362'—the

*Inventary* dating is a year or two on the early side in view of the presence of the 'transitional' pennies already remarked. In the same way, if the Mareham-le-Fen hoard had had a penny element, there seems no good reason why such pennies should not have extended at least as late as class Gg, and especially if we suppose that the find represents the 'wallet' of a traveller coming from northern England<sup>1</sup>, his 'purse' with all his pennies and halfpennies if lost having still to be found. On this telling a date 'c.1360' for the Mareham-le-Fen hoard would seem very reasonable, and it is the opinion of the writer that the estimate here hazarded is one unlikely to be out by more than a year or two. For a future edition of the *Inventary*, then, the hoard may be summarized somewhat as follows:—

MAREHAM-LE-FEN, Lincolnshire, 9 Oct. 1961.

34 AR English and Scottish. No Container. Deposit: c. 1360. ENGLAND (33): Edward III: *coinage of 1351-61*—London, groats, Lawrence cl.B, 1; cl.C, 5; cl.D, 3; cl.E, 9; cl.E/F mule, 1; cl. F, 1; cl.E/G mule, 1; cl.Ga/E mule, 1; cl.Ga, 2; cl.Gb, 2; half-groats, Lawrence cl.C, 4; cl.Gb/Ga mule, 1. York, groat, Lawrence cl.E, 1; half-groat, Lawrence cl.E, 1. SCOTLAND (1): David II: *second coinage*—Edinburgh, groat, Stewart D1/D3 mule, 1.

R.H.M. Dolley in *BNJ XXXIII* (1964), pp. 83-89.

Disposition: 3 coins are in the British Museum and the remainder in the Museum at Lincoln.

It only remains for the writer to express his thanks to Messrs. W. J. W. Potter and B. H. I. H. Stewart, M.A., F.S.A. (Scot.), for their assistance with the classification of the coins, and to Mr. E. Blezard, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., of the Carlisle Museum who so kindly made available the parcels from the Beaumont and Sandsfield hoards which are listed below.

#### APPENDIX A

##### THE CARLISLE MUSEUM PARCEL OF ENGLISH COINS FROM THE 1845 SANDSFIELD FIND

	EDWARD I	
	<i>Mint of London</i>	
(1) Penny, Fox cl. IVc (?)		15.7 grains
	<i>Royal Mint of York</i>	
(2) Penny, Fox cl. IXb		21.4
	EDWARD II	
	<i>Mint of London</i>	
(3) Penny, Fox cl. XIb/XIa mule.		20.5
	EDWARD III	
	Coinage of 1343-1351	
	<i>Mint of London</i>	
(4) Penny, cf. North 1116 (rev. I)		15.8
	Coinage of 1351-1361	
	<i>Mint of London</i>	
(5) Groat, Lawrence cl.C		48.7
(6) Groat, Lawrence cl.Ga		66.4
(7) Half-groat, Lawrence cl.D		19.8

<sup>1</sup> It should be remarked that the face value of the English coins is exactly ten shillings.

*Episcopal Mint of Durham*  
(Bishop Hatfield)

(8) Penny, Lawrence cl.Gd 15.5

*Archiepiscopal Mint of York*  
(Archbishop Thoresby)

(9) Penny, Lawrence cl.Gg (?) — saltire stops. 16.7

APPENDIX B

COLLATION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM AND CARLISLE MUSEUM PARCELS OF COINS FROM  
THE 1884 BEAUMONT FIND

(BM) — coin in British Museum. (C) — coin in Carlisle Museum

ENGLAND

EDWARD I

*Mint of Berwick*

(1) Penny, Blunt cl.IIIa 21.7 grains (BM)  
(2) Penny, Blunt cl.IVa/III mule (?) 18.0 (C)  
(3) Penny, Blunt cl.IVa 19.9 (C)

*Mint of Bristol*

(4) Penny, Fox cl.IIIb 17.7 (C)  
(5, 6) Pennies, Fox cl.IXb 21.1 (C), 21.0 (C)

*Mint of Canterbury*

(7) Penny, Fox cl.IIIc/o mule 20.1 (C)  
(8) Penny, Fox cl.IVd 21.3 (C)  
(9) Penny, Fox cl.Xa (?) 21.1 (C)

*Mint of Chester*

(10) Penny, Fox cl.IXb 19.7 (BM)

*Episcopal Mint of Durham*  
(Bishop de Insula)

(11) Penny, Fox cl.IIIe 16.6 (C)  
(12) Penny, Fox cl.IIIg 18.7 (C)

*Mint of Lincoln*

(13) Penny, Fox cl.IIIe 21.7  
(14) Penny, Fox cl.IIIg 19.3 (C)

*Mint of London*

(15, 16) Pennies, Fox cl.Ic 22.2 (C), 17.8 (C)  
(17) Penny, Fox cl.II/III mule 15.5 (C)  
(18) Penny, Fox cl.Xa/IXb mule 21.0 (C)  
(19) Penny, Fox cl.Xa 21.1 (C)  
(20) Penny, Fox cl. Xb 20.1 (C)

*Mint of Newcastle*

(21) Penny, Fox cl.IIIId 21.2 (C)  
(22, 23) Pennies, Fox cl.IXb 21.6 (BM), 19.9 (C)

<i>Archiepiscopal Mint of York</i>		
(Archbishop Wickwane)		
(24, 25) Pennies, Fox cl.IIIId		21-2 (BM), 17-8 (C)
<i>Royal Mint of York</i>		
(26) Penny, Fox cl.IIIId		20-0 (C)
EDWARD I OR EDWARD II		
<i>Abbatial Mint of Bury St. Edmunds</i>		
(Abbot Thomas of Totyngton)		
(27) Penny, Fox cl.Xc-f		21-6 (C)
<i>Episcopal Mint of Durham</i>		
(Bishop Bek)		
(28-30) Pennies, Fox cl.Xc-f		19-5 (C), 18-9 (BM) 17-3 (C)
EDWARD II		
<i>Mint of Canterbury</i>		
(31) Penny, Fox cl.XIa		17-0 (C)
(32) Penny, Fox cl.XIb		21-5 (C)
(33) Penny, Fox cl.XII		20-8 (C)
<i>Mint of London</i>		
(34) Penny, Fox cl.XVe (?)		21-2 (C)
EDWARD III		
<i>Episcopal Mint of Durham</i>		
(Bishop Hatfield)		
(35) Penny, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.C		17-4 (C)
(36) Penny, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.E		16-8 (C)
(37) Penny, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.Gg		17-2 (C)
(38) Penny, 'Transitional', <i>cf.</i> Lawrence, <i>op.cit.</i> ,		18-1 (C)
p. 192 — variety without annulets by <i>i.m.</i> (?)		
<i>Mint of London</i>		
(39) Groat, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.F/G mule		71-2 (BM)
(40) Half-groat, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.D		35-3 (C)
(41, 42) Pennies, 'Florin', <i>cf.</i> North 1116		18-6 (C), 16-2 (C)
<i>Royal Mint of York</i>		
(43) Groat, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.E		73-4 (C)
(44, 45) Half-groats, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.E — lis on breast		36-6 (C), 34-5 (BM)
(46) Half-groat, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.E — no lis on breast		35-5 (C)
<i>Archiepiscopal Mint of York</i>		
(Archbishop Thoresby)		
(47) Penny, 'Pre-Treaty', Lawrence cl.Gf		17-4 (C)
(48) Penny, 'Transitional', <i>cf.</i> Lawrence, <i>op.cit.</i> , p. 192.		17-4 (C)

## I R E L A N D

EDWARD I

*Mint of Dublin*

(49) Penny, Dolloy cl.III/II mule 18.9 (C)

*Uncertain Forgery*

(50) Penny, 'London/Dublin' mule 18.6 (BM)

## S C O T L A N D

ALEXANDER III

(51) Penny, second coinage, Stewart cl.II  
(2 mullets of 6 points, 2 stars of 7 points) 20.0 (C)

ROBERT I

(52) Penny, cf. Stewart no. 40 18.6 (BM)

DAVID II

(53) Groat, second coinage, Stewart cl.C.2 63.2 (C)

(54) Half-groat, second coinage, Stewart cl.A 35.8 (C)

(55, 56) Pennies, first coinage, Stewart cl.II 18.3 (C), 16.5 (C)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17









18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27



28



29



30



31



32



33



34



33

