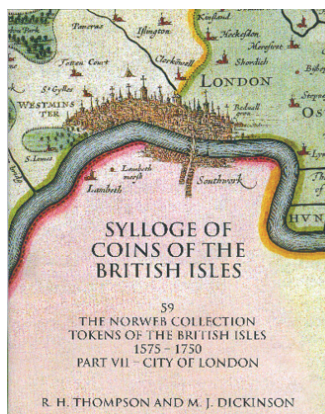


## Sylloge of coins of the British Isles 59

### The Norweb Collection Tokens of the British Isles 1575-1750 Part VII City of London



RH Thompson & NJ Dickinson

2007

Spink & Son Ltd

381 pages

59 plates (B&W), 4 indexes,  
concordance and bibliography  
£35.00

Reviewed by David Thorold

The sylloge of coins of the British Isles is a long running project aimed at publishing detailed descriptions and photographs of British coinage with the aim of making this information more widely available for further study. With a long history (the first publication was in 1958) and – initially – a predisposition towards Saxon coin issues, the sylloge has more recently expanded to include a wide range of coinage including short cross pennies, the issues of Henry VII and trade tokens.

The latter subject has now become an important series of volumes within the sylloge itself, volume 57 being the seventh of eight volumes dealing with trade tokens of the 16th to 18th centuries. The final volume, on Middlesex, uncertain pieces and

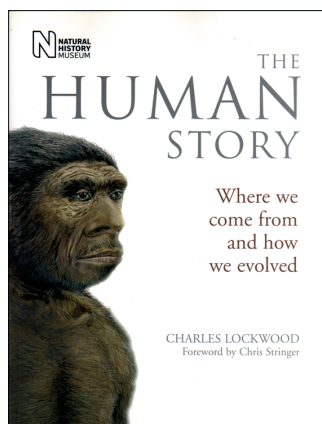
forgeries, is still to come; when it does so, the Norweb Collection should replace George Williamson's 'Trade Tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century' as the standard reference work.

Volume 59 is a handsomely produced piece of work with a high quality photograph of each token and an accompanying description on the preceding or following page as space allows; the sylloge also includes more types than Williamson, although his chapter on London included both the city and other outlying areas (now reassigned to other volumes in the series). The tokens' description is organised in a standardised manner that conforms to the sylloge's aim of making the information the tokens convey available for study, although this unfortunately does not include a straightforward reproduction of the text appearing on each token – 'William Rixon at the red cow in Milke Street, his half penny token' for instance, is presented in the text as 'Milk Street, Red Cow (at the) Rixon, William ½d token' making a simple reading of the token difficult. Translating directly from the photographed token is not always possible, meaning the more worn examples require an understanding of the sylloge's format. Any numismatist hoping to translate a partially readable token may find Williamson's simple text descriptions more helpful.

Thompson and Dickinson's work however provides far more detail than Williamson, with metal type, weight and die axis being provided as well as a very useful concordance with Williamson's volume, and notes on the issuer's trade(s) and date of death when the token is undated. This is where the sylloge is particularly successful. Catalogues of this type are by their very nature dry reading, but much work has gone into providing further references to traders where possible, and the evocative lists of street names, people and places make one curious as to the fates of the individuals – did their businesses flourish?, did the traders move up in the world? (How many of the tradesmen issuing tokens before the fire of London were still in business after it I wonder?). As a record of the myriad varieties of tokens and the traders keen to promote their wares via this medium in the years of the seventeenth century, this work is a great success, and provides new routes into further study of this world.

## The Human Story

### Where we come from and how we evolved



Charles Lockwood

2007

Natural History Museum

111 pages, numerous colour  
illustrations, further information  
section, index

Reviewed by Becky Wallower

It's not easy to pack six or seven million years of human evolution into 111 pages, but Charles Lockwood has succeeded brilliantly. As an introduction to the current thinking (well, nearly current – it precedes the latest reports on Neanderthals) on hominid species from Sahelanthropus tchadensis to Homo sapiens it covers an enormous amount of ground without either dumbing down the subject or relying on dry summaries.

Excellent photographs, maps and drawings are used to highlight skeletal features, help visualise the species and their habitats, and show excavation sites. The artists' reconstructions of physiques of various species are especially good.

Written in a readable, informal style, The Human Story nevertheless tackles some thorny questions. "Who wins the prize as the oldest specimen of Homo?" asks Lockwood, before outlining the candidates and the problems in determining the 'winner'. Likewise, plenty of background is provided for big unresolved questions such as how did Homo sapiens replace other species. This would be perfect for young students – or, indeed, for the busy archaeologist who confesses to needing a bit of an easy-to-digest update on human evolution.