

## VII.

## COIN HOARDS IN SCOTLAND, 1955.

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No fewer than four hoards of coins were found in 1955 and reported to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, by whom they, and the one surviving container, were claimed for the Crown: that a large proportion of the coins were of copper or base silver emphasises the advantage to numismatic study of Scottish "Treasure Trove" law over English, for there only the silver coins could have been claimed. After being cleaned and studied some of the coins were placed in the National Collection and some in local museums. For these, rewards were paid to the finders, to whom the remainder of the coins were returned. The National Museum is much indebted to the co-operation of finders, police, Procurators Fiscal and Exchequer, which has made possible the full record of these discoveries and ensured that a representative series will be permanently available for any further research.

In hoards in general, English and foreign coins normally outnumber the native Scottish, but this was the case in only one of the 1955 finds, which gives them added importance to us.

### 1. BALLIGMORRIE, BARR, AYRSHIRE (JAMES III-V).

Early in 1955, Mr Hugh Kennedy Sloan, the owner of Balligmorrie Farm, in the parish of Barr (near Girvan), Ayrshire, decided to plough up, for reseeded, a hillside which had never previously been ploughed and had been used only for grazing cattle and sheep. On the 3rd of June, the farmer's nephew, who bears exactly the same name as his uncle, was out with a tractor ploughing the hillside, when he noticed a small spherical object lying on the grass at the foot of the slope across which he had been ploughing for several days. Picking up this object he found that it was a pottery bank or "pirlie-pig," slotted to receive coins.

For these details we are indebted to the police who have described the find-spot by reference to the Ordnance Survey "Popular" edition 1-inch map of Scotland, Sheet 82, on which a spot-height 771 is marked on the top of the hill to the south-east of Balligmorrie Farm. The bank was found about half-way between there and the spot-height 680 shown below it (Grid ref. approx. 25/227895).

The upper part of the bank was found to be broken, presumably by the plough, and part of it was missing; but, thanks to the hole thus made being closed by part of the broken top and by adherent earth, the contents of the bank had not been dispersed. The bank has been repaired, and will be preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities. As shown on p. 460, it is onion-shaped with a flat base. It is of reddish-buff pottery, grey inside. The upper surface is largely coated with irregularly applied yellow-green glaze and there are a few spots of glaze on the base. Part of the lower part, just above the base, has been trimmed with a knife. The height is 3 ins., the base diameter 2.65 ins., and the oblique slit measures 1.35 ins. by no more than 0.1 in.

The contents of the bank were found to be a hoard of 578 small coins. After being cleaned in the Museum they were carefully examined and classified. The hoard was found to be of an unusual kind, consisting entirely of Scottish billon coins (placks and pennies) of James III, James IV and James V. From the composition of the hoard, of which the James IV coins form by far the greatest part, it may be seen that the bank and its contents must have been lost, or buried, fairly early in the reign of James V, probably between A.D. 1515 and 1520.

The following is a summary of the hoard, of which fuller details are given in the *Num. Chron.* (1955), 245-7:—

James III.	Half-plack	.	.	.	.	1
	Pennies	.	.	.	.	3
James IV.	Placks	.	.	.	.	49
	Half-plack	.	.	.	.	1
	Pennies	.	.	.	.	488
James V.	Placks	.	.	.	.	36
						<hr/> 578

Nothing in the hoard suggests the desirability of any serious change in the classification of Scottish placks and pennies set forth by Burns in his standard work on *The Coinage of Scotland*. The correctness of his arrangement of the several successive series of these coins appears to be confirmed by the composition of the hoard. It is interesting also to note that its contents fully attest the progressive deterioration in the quality of the metal of the pennies of James IV which Burns points out.

The Balligmorrie hoard, however, is important in that it has offered a hitherto unequalled opportunity for the detailed study of the pennies of James IV. The 36 pennies of this reign, which formed part of the hoard found at Creggan, in Argyllshire, in 1876, appear to be the largest number of these coins previously recorded as having been found together. It was to be expected then that the 488 James IV pennies found at Balligmorrie

should include some unpublished items, and expectations were fully realised; for close examination revealed no fewer than 126 minor varieties of these coins which had not been recorded by Burns.

The placks of both James IV and James V in the hoard also include a number of varieties not described by Burns. Two placks of special interest are mules, with James IV obverses with Old English lettering, and James V reverses with Roman lettering. The existence of such coins was known to Burns only through a fragment from the Creggan hoard. It is very fortunate that the National Museum has now been able to acquire two complete specimens.

The half-placks of James III and IV are uncommon coins, although the degree of rarity which Burns ascribed to those of James III was considerably reduced by the discovery of no fewer than 63 specimens in the Perth hoard in 1920. The James III half-plack in the Balligmorrie hoard is, as might be expected from its relative age, badly worn by circulation; and the James IV specimen is unfortunately broken, with part missing.

Of the coins in the hoard, 204 have been retained for addition to the National Collection. They are either varieties new to the collection, or better specimens than those already in it. They comprise: James III, half-plack 1; James IV, placks 21, half-plack 1, pennies 155; James V, placks 26.

R.K.

## 2. BRAESIDE, GREENOCK, RENFREWSHIRE (JAMES V-VI).

On 19th May 1955 three men engaged in digging a sewer track between Burns Road and Minerva Lane, Braeside, Greenock (map. ref. 26/238753), found a cow-horn some 10 ins. long containing about 60 coins at a depth of 4 ft. below the surface. The horn disintegrated, and a few of the coins were destroyed or given to children and not traced.

The 50 coins forwarded by the Procurator Fiscal were all Scottish. Most were struck between 1543 and 1559 in the reign of Queen Mary. From the condition of the testoons and the presence of coins of James VI it appears that either the hoard was accumulated over a considerable period or the larger coins, and some of the bawbees, circulated very slowly. The rarer (smaller) issues of the period are not represented in the hoard, neither are the low-value placks, hardheads and pennies of Mary's reign. The absence of half- and quarter-merks of later dates (1574-7, 1580) and the absence of 8d. placks (1583-90), suggest a date in the mid '70s for the burial of the hoard.

Among the coins there were, as was to be expected, some new varieties that are noted in the appended table. In the course of comparison with the coins of the Coats of Ferguslie collection, which are the foundation of

Burns's *The Coinage of Scotland*, some points were noticed to which attention may be drawn, including a few uncorrected slips in that standard work.

First, the early bawbees of Mary—Burns, Type I—have a small fleur-de-lis mint-mark on the reverse, as on those of James V, while Types II-VII (and Type I, No. 11) have a large lis. Secondly, it is probable that some value from the systematic point of view may be derived from classifying the various forms given to the letter R, on the bawbees, in addition to the characteristics of A and O specified by Burns. In Type I, for example, the front leg of the R has a double curve on Burns, Nos. 1-3, and on the obverse of some specimens of No. 4, but is straight on Nos. 6-10 and No. 12. One Greenock specimen has the ornamental R on the reverse, but also the barred and lob-topped A of No. 7 onwards. The R of No. 11 is peculiar to itself. In later types there is a serif on the front leg of the R on Nos. 41 (rev.), 42-5, 48 (obv.) and 63 (obv.). And so on; at any rate attention should be paid to the form of the R when deciding whether a coin is one "described by Burns" or a further variety.

Errors in Burns include: there is normally a contraction dot over the V of SCOTORV on Type I (though not later); fig. 824, obverse is not of No. 3, which is from the same die as No. 2; fig. 825 shows reverse of No. 4 and obverse of No. 6; No. 44 has points before and after the obverse legend; No. 64 has decorated A and O.

In the case of the Mary and Francis testoons the lack of final revision in Burns is particularly apparent. Nos. 3-7 in the Coats of Ferguslie collection all in fact read DEI·G· and the entry D·G· under No. 3 at the head of this group is erroneous. No. 5 is dated 1558 and has no point after VIEN. Points should be shown before the obverse legend of No. 1, and before and after all the reverse legends except that on No. 6 the initial point comes after the F—a die-sinker's error (=Richardson, No. 197).

James V. Billon bawbee (6d.), without annulet, Burns, fig. 775 (1539) 1

Mary. Billon bawbees (6d., reduced to 3d. in 1567) (1543-54)—  
some with little wear.

*Plain Saltire.*

Burns, Type I.	No. 2 . . . . .	1
	No. 3 variety, legends as No. 1 . . . . .	1*
	No. 4 . . . . .	2 (1)*
	Obv. R like Nos. 1-3, but A like No. 7, leg. as No. 8 . . . . .	1*
	No. 7 or 8 or similar, some very in- distinct . . . . .	6
Type III.	No. 22 or similar . . . . .	2
	No. 24 . . . . .	1
	No. 25 (?) . . . . .	1
	No. 26 var.—pellets for arms on central cross of rev. crown . . . . .	1*
Type IV.	No. 30/29 . . . . .	1*

*Fluted Saltire.*

Open crown.	No. 41, var. SCOTORVM ∴ . . . . .	1*
	No. 44 . . . . .	1
Type VI.	Uncertain, orn. O and R, probably No. 48 var. . . . .	1*
	No. 48-51 . . . . .	1
	No. 51 var. like Richardson No. 110 . . . . .	1*
	No. 55 or similar . . . . .	4
	Uncertain, plain O . . . . .	2
Type VII.	No. 63 var. without stops at beginning and end . . . . .	1*
	No. 62-64 (?) . . . . .	1
	No. 65 var. like Richardson No. 131 . . . . .	1
Type VIII.	(Large cinquefoils), but with fluted saltire like Richardson No. 148 . . . . .	2
		33

Testoons (5s.). Several with very little wear, some much worn.

*Small Crown.*

Obv. 1556 (=Richardson, No. 13), rev. 1557 (like Richardson, No. 13) . . . . .	1*
1557 =Richardson, additional No. 266 . . . . .	1

*Large Crown.*

1557. Burns, No. 18 var.—stops on obv. . . . .	1*
1558. No. 25 var.—no stop after SCOTOR . . . . .	1*
1558. No. 27 var.—LIBER·AME' . . . . .	1*
	5

Mary and Francis Testoons (5s.)—very little wear.

1559. Burns, No. 5—both same dies . . . . .	2 (1)*
1559. Another, different dies . . . . .	1*
	3

Nonsunts (12d. groats, reduced to 6d. in 1567)—all rather worn.

1558. Burns, No. 1—no stop after VIEN . . . . .	1*
1559. Burns, No. 5 . . . . .	1
1559. Burns, No. 5 var.—FAN . . . . .	1*
1559. Burns, No. 8 (both different dies) . . . . .	2
	5

## James VI. Quarter-merks (3s. 4d.).

1573. Burns, No. 2 . . . . .	1
1573. Obv. = Richardson No. 29, rev. without date	
error . . . . .	1*
(?) . Two pieces, breaks modern . . . . .	1
	<hr/>
	3
Total hoard (plus 10 or more not recovered) . . . . .	<u>50</u>

\* = retained in National Collection; the remainder were placed in the McLean Museum, Greenock.

R. B. K. S.

### 3. ARDMADDY, KILBRANDON, ARGYLL (FERDINAND AND ISABELLA—JAMES VI AND I).

In July 1955, Charles Struthers, the young son of Major J. G. Struthers, F.S.A.Scot., found a coin while he was camping on a rocky knoll called Caistell Ualach, 250 yds. south-east of his father's castle of Ardmaddy. He and his sisters then cleared away the soil from and around a crevice to recover a total of 46 coins. The site is near the top of a low crag overlooking a ravine and waterfall (map ref. 17/786162); the other side of the crag looks out to sea.

Scottish, English, Irish and Spanish coins were represented as detailed below, to the contemporary English value of 12s. 6d., 13s. 10d., 3s. 6d. and 5s. respectively. The James VI and I coins, datable from 1603 onwards, are distinctly less worn than the thistle merk series, not to speak of those of Elizabeth. This, together with the absence of 2nd-issue coins of James VI, make it probable that the hoard was formed, and presumably hidden, between 1605 and 1610. It may represent the savings, or pilferings, of some retainer. MacDougall of Ragray and Ardmaddy was an important family at that time, but sold part of its estates to the Earl of Argyll in 1649: the Campbell building now at Ardmaddy dates from 1671.

#### *English.*

Elizabeth Tudor.	Shillings: Bell, 1582-4, two; Escallop, 1584-87; Ton, 1592-95 . . . . .	4
	Sixpences: Pheon, 1561, two; 15 (?) two, 1564, 1565; Coronet, 1568, 1569; Ermine, 1572; Acorn, 1573; Sword, 1582; <b>⌘</b> , 158 (?), 1584; Ton, 1593; Woolpack, 159(5 or 6) . . . . .	15
	Fourpence: Crosslet, 1558-61 . . . . .	1
		<hr/>
		20

James I.	Shillings: 1st issue Thistle, 1603-4—head rubbed away, rev. background hatched with scratches . . . . .	1
	Sixpence: 2nd issue, Rose, 1605 . . . . .	1
		—
		2
<i>Irish.</i>		
James I.	Shilling: 1st issue, Bell, 1603-5 . . . . .	3 (1)*
	Sixpence: 1st issue, Bell, 1603-5 . . . . .	1
		—
		4
<i>Scottish.</i>		
James VI.	Thistle merks (13s. 4d.), 1601 . . . . .	1
	1602 . . . . .	2
	Half thistle merks, 1602 . . . . .	2
	Quarter thistle merks, 1602 . . . . .	9 (1)*
	One-eighth thistle merk, 1602 . . . . .	1
	Thirty shillings, 1st issue, 1605-10	
	D'.G'. etc. . . . .	2 (1)*
	D.G. etc. . . . .	1*
		—
		18
<i>Spanish.</i>		
Ferdinand and Isabella.	Real (Segovia mint), 1474-1516 . . . . .	1
(?)	Dollar, 17th century . . . . .	1
		—
		2

Those marked \* were retained for the National Collection. The reward, which would have been paid out of the Museum's purchase fund, was generously waived.

R. B. K. S. and R. K.

#### 4. POW, STROMNESS, ORKNEY (CHARLES I).

In May 1955, while Mr Robert Allan and his sons were pulling down part of the south gable wall of an old house<sup>1</sup> at the small farm of Pow, Innertown, Stromness (map. ref. N30/236091), they discovered in a hole, in the inside of the chimney, a hoard solely consisting of small copper pieces. With it were fragments of a cloth bag that have not been preserved. Largely through the action of Dr Hugh Marwick most of the hoard was

<sup>1</sup> Mr J. Dunbar, F.S.A.Scot., kindly reports that the old croft, now used as hen-house having been replaced by a more modern dwelling, looks a typical Orkney croft. But for the coin hoard it might be thought much more recent than the first half of the 17th century. Stone-built with mud-mortar, it may have had two main divisions internally. The roof is coupled (not built on crucks) and was originally thatched.

secured and identified as comprising 124 turners (2d. Scots) of Charles I second issue, 3 contemporary forgeries of the same, and 4 of the corresponding English farthing tokens, genuine and false. The Scottish coins ceased to be minted in 1639 and were demonetised in 1643,<sup>1</sup> which clearly gives a *terminus* for the hoard; the latest "Maltravers" English farthings were minted in 1634-6.

The turners of this issue, which began in 1632, were closely linked in the minds of contemporaries with one of the remarkable figures of the early 17th century, because the profits from them were granted for 9 years to Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, Viscount and later Earl of Stirling, in repayment of royal debts amounting to £16,000 sterling, including compensation for losses when his colony of Nova Scotia was surrendered to the French in 1631.<sup>2</sup> These turners had some share in setting Scottish opinion against the government of Charles I. Before they were withdrawn owing to public complaint, some 40 million of them were put into circulation,<sup>3</sup> not to speak of large numbers of forgeries. Comparatively few, however, seem to have survived in the good condition which is a feature of the Pow hoard: they are very small and corrode easily, and were hardly worth hoarding. As a result, even the main types into which they can be divided have hitherto passed unrecognised, and the numerous documents published by R. W. Cochrane-Patrick<sup>4</sup> have not been made to tell a continuous story. Burns's treatment is over brief. The chapter in T. H. McGrail's biography of Alexander is concerned chiefly with the personal and political aspects of the issue.<sup>5</sup>

A summary is now given of the results obtained from a study of the dies and punches represented in the Pow hoard, pending more detailed publication in a numismatic journal. The value of the hoard lies not only in its condition but in its apparently covering the whole of the issue, with few main varieties known unrepresented.

1631. The story starts with a proposal to issue in Scotland token farthings (3d. Scots) of the same weight and price as the English, which had been issued since 1613. A silver pattern, by Nicholas Briot,<sup>6</sup> of the authorised design—on the obverse a crown above two Cs linked back to back, on the reverse a thistle—is in the National Museum, but though the King sent Briot to Edinburgh for the work no such coins were issued because of opposition by the burghs.

<sup>1</sup> The turners of 1642 which replaced them were almost three times as heavy.

<sup>2</sup> The account of the coinage in C. Rogers, *Memorials of the Earl of Stirling* (1877), is quite inaccurate but gives interesting contemporary quotations: his *Earl of Stirling's Register of Royal Letters* (1885) usefully supplements Cochrane-Patrick (*infra*).

<sup>3</sup> Assuming 4,000 stone of copper minted at 9 million coins per thousand.

<sup>4</sup> *Records of the Coinage of Scotland* (1876).

<sup>5</sup> *Sir William Alexander, First Earl of Stirling* (1940), 146-52.

<sup>6</sup> Medallist to the King and chief engraver at the London Mint. Miss Helen Farquhar gave an account of his career in *B.N.J.*, v (1908), 170-206.

1632-3. Instead, coins twice as heavy but worth 2d., instead of 3d., Scots, were ordered in January 1632,<sup>1</sup> and Briot executed a new design for them: a crowned CR on the obverse with II for twopence in the centre. They were no doubt minted under Briot's supervision in the annexe to the Edinburgh mint that had been prepared for him. There the machinery for "milling" or mechanically striking coins, the first to be used in Scotland, had been set up by his own workmen, some of whom, at least, stayed on after he himself returned south, all to the disgust of the native staff. The first coins may now be recognised by their crown, which has a central cross flanked by fleurs-de-lis ("English" crown); there is also a little dot or lozenge flanking the CR that hardly outlasts this form of crown. One such coin from the Pow hoard has on the reverse the same thistle as was used for the 1631 pattern, on which the obverse crown, while also "English," was quite different.



Fig. 1. The four types of crown on "Stirling" Turners.

Considerable numbers of turners with the First Crown were evidently minted (23 in Pow hoard), having a rosette mint-mark on the reverse, but latterly a lozenge or rarely a rose. These two mint-marks are more common with the Second Crown, which simply has the lis and cross-patées transposed ("Scottish" crown); a small star is also found with it (in all 14 in Pow-hoard). It would seem, however, that before long a simpler version of the Scottish crown was temporarily substituted. With this Third Crown the obverse mint-mark, hitherto invariably a lozenge, is normally an "anemone," while that on the reverse is either an anemone, or a rose, star or lozenge when a die of the previous group has been reused. It is clear that the Third Crown was meant to be distinctive. And so must the anemone mark have been. It was used on Briot's Tower of London coins of mid-1632.

An explanation may perhaps be found in the seizure by the Edinburgh mint officials of the stock of turners (30 stones weight) in December 1632, on the excuse that they varied too much in weight. From about November 1632 to June 1633 Briot seems to have been in Edinburgh, occupied partly in giving financial advice to the Privy Council and partly in minting medals for the Coronation, but the seized coins were not returned to him till the end of May, when their deficiencies were officially ascribed to the workmen. Viscount Stirling, as Principal Secretary (resident in London) fourth official of the kingdom, is unlikely to have been tolerant of such a long interruption of "his" turners, so Briot may have undertaken personally the issue during

<sup>1</sup> In addition, fourpennies had been considered but dropped, while pennies were included in the order but as none are known they were probably not minted.

the first half of 1633 of coins distinguishable from those impounded by the Third Crown and anemone mark, whose use would cease when he left again. There are 15 of them in the Pow hoard.

At any rate the Second Crown was resumed, with lozenge mint mark on the obverse, the first new distinguishing marks on the reverse being generally some variety of cinquefoil (17 of this phase in Pow hoard).

*1634-6.* By February 1634 the 1500 stone weight of turners originally authorised had all been issued, and another 1500 stone was authorised by the King; the initiative always came from London, the Privy Council acting on the royal letters. It may be that the resumption of a lozenge mint mark on the reverse, which follows the cinquefoil series, marks the beginning of this next 1500 stone, but it may well have begun with the cinquefoils. After many of the lozenge group had been issued (22 in Pow hoard) a change was made by the introduction of a beaded instead of a continuous ring on the reverse,<sup>1</sup> then on both sides and then on reverse only (10 in Pow hoard). It is possible that the change was influenced by the beaded inner ring that was introduced on the English token farthings in mid-1634 to distinguish the Maltravers issue; if so, an approximate date is indicated. But beaded inner rings were normal on other Scottish coins before 1637.

A return was made to turners with continuous inner rings on both sides. Shortly before that a saltire with a dot above it replaced the reverse lozenge. Later it was placed on both sides. With the saltire a new and inferior version of the thistle came in, and there seems to be a falling off in weight. (In Pow hoard 9 saltires with continuous rings, 2 with beaded.)

In January 1635 the ordinary "officers of the Cunyiehouis" were "discharged of all melling with the coynage of the said copper coyne" to which they had been a hindrance. A further move for more efficient coinage in Scotland led the King to decide, that summer, to make Briot Master of the Edinburgh mint in addition to being chief engraver in London. But this took exactly two years to become effective. There was, however, a substantial issue of hammered silver in 1636 as well as the preparation of patterns for milled silver. The second 1500 stone of turners were probably completed that year.

*1637-9.* In June 1637, a third quantity of copper was "readie and prepared for the printing" and an issue of 1800 stone was authorised, in sharp contrast to the figure of 6000 stone which had been rashly and prematurely promised to Lord Stirling in 1634: the production of the second quantity was distinctly slower than of the first, instead of quicker as may have been expected. With the issue of Briot's fine milled silver of 1637 and its continuation by his son-in-law, Sir John Falconer, the objections to the wretched turners were redoubled, and their issue may well have become

<sup>1</sup> About this time some turners were minted with continuous inner rings but with three trefoils instead of three lozenges under the C II R (Burns No. 3, not in Pow hoard).

slower than ever. Work on them was temporarily stopped by the Privy Council in October 1637. With the Bishops' War and the coming to power of the Covenanters, Lord Stirling's profits presumably ceased entirely.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that all, or even nearly all, the 1800 stone had in fact been "printed" before an Act of Parliament (23rd October 1639) ended the issue by the decree that "all coyning of turnouris heirefter be dischargit except at the intrinsik vawle with deductione of the coynage." An attempt by the Privy Council in November 1639 to devalue them to one penny, leaving the earlier heavier turners at twopence, was abandoned almost immediately on a protest from the city of Edinburgh.

To this period may be ascribed at least the turners that seem to follow the saltire-and-dot group. In them the saltire appears without a dot; but more distinctive are the appearance of the Fourth Crown, a poor form of "Scottish" crown, and a further version of the thistle, nearer the earlier than the latest in the placing of the leaves. The letters are also redesigned, and errors in punctuation and spelling are more frequent: they had been on the increase before. Some coins with the Fourth Crown have a lozenge mint-mark on the obverse and a rosette on the reverse. They may be presumed to be the latest. There are 13 Fourth Crown coins in the Pow hoard, all in unworn condition.

*Other coins.* The collector of the Pow hoard seems to have been relatively successful in avoiding the forgeries against which the Privy Council kept issuing proclamations, and which form about half the specimens in modern collections. Importation of counterfeit turners and even of English farthings was prohibited on pain of death. Of 3 false turners examined from the hoard one seems to imitate the Fourth Crown. Such forgeries are best recognised by the ill-drawn thistles. Of the 4 English farthings two are false; one is a genuine and one a false "Maltravers" coin.

The greater part of the hoard has been retained for the National Museum, but 4 have been given to Stromness Museum, and 3 die-duplicates to the British Museum.

R. B. K. S.

<sup>1</sup> He died in London in February 1640, insolvent. Rogers cites Robert Baillie as writing at that time that he had been "extremely hated of all the countrey for his alleged briberie, urging of the Psalmes [his own metrical version] and the [Service] Books . . . , overwhelming us with his Black money," and tells the story of the wit who altered the motto *Per Mare Per Terras* into *Per Metre Per Turners*.