

**ENGLISH, SCOTCH AND IRISH COINS: A
MANUAL FOR COLLECTORS: BEING A
HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE
COINAGE OF GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE
EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME**

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English, Scotch and Irish Coins: A Manual for Collectors: Being a History and Description of the Coinage of Great Britain, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time by Anonymous

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WITH TABLES OF APPROXIMATE VALUES OF GOOD
SPECIMENS.

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

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INTRODUCTION.

FOR more than a hundred years since the bequest of Sir Hans Sloane laid the foundation of our national collection in 1753, the coinage of Britain has been a favourite study, not only with the antiquary, but even with the historian. Historical facts, unnoticed either in manuscripts or in inscriptions, stand recorded upon coins alone, and there are not a few ancient monarchs, once ruling in these islands, of whom scarcely any other memorials remain but the coins they struck.

Therefore, even the unpretending collector, who is satisfied by merely storing away ancient coins in his cabinet, may serve a high purpose by saving perhaps an interesting record of some obscure fact in early English history from destruction or oblivion. No collector need be disheartened by the erroneous idea, that every coin minted in Britain is already known, and that he has no chance of finding something new or undescribed. The plough and the digger's spade constantly turn up single coins, and not unfrequently hoards, including types hitherto unknown. Amongst the principal finds we mention the hoard found in the year 1806, in the parish of Kirkoswald, in Cumberland, which brought to light 543 coins of five chief monarchs, and three archbishops; in 1817, 249 coins of Æthelbert, and about 450 others were discovered in the neighbourhood of Dorking. In 1833 a hoard of 8000 Northumbrian coins was unearthed in digging a grave in Hazham churchyard, Durham. They were contained in a bronze vessel, and were all styms. Another large find was made at Cuerdale in 1840.

Many books have been written on English coins, amongst which the works of E. Hawkins, "The Silver Coins of England," 1841, and H. N. Humphreys "Coins of England," 1855, as well as his "Coinage of the British Empire," 1861, deserve special mention. The most comprehensive work on the subject, however, is Eading's "Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain and its Dependencies," third edition, 3 vols., Hearn, 1840, which contains illustrations of nearly every authenticated coin struck in Great Britain up to the date of issue of the different editions. For more recent discoveries the student must refer to the "Numismatic Chronicle," edited by J. Y. Akerman, 20 vols., 1839-1859; New Series, edited by Vaux, Evans, and

Madden, 1861 to 1872 inclusive, 23 vols. As both publications are very voluminous and expensive, we have in the following pages condensed their principal contents for the use of collectors. Here we may say a few words about the value of coins. It first depends on their preservation and their rarity, then whether a coin belongs to a series, fashionable at the time when it is offered for sale, or to a class temporarily neglected by collectors. For the latter reasons the prices of English coins are ever fluctuating, and the accidental discovery of a great number of a type until then perhaps considered unique, or at least very scarce, will reduce its price to little more than the mere intrinsic value of the metal. As a guide for the prices of English coins, the collector ought to provide himself with a priced catalogue of one of the more important sales, which take place from time to time at Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge's rooms in London. As a rough guide for general use we intend to give tables of approximate values of good specimens. These tables will have no claim to special accuracy for the reasons above given, but read with the circumstances of the time they will, we believe, be of considerable assistance to collectors. Forgeries of valuable coins are of not unfrequent occurrence, but easily detected by an experienced eye. Beginners can find out the difference in appearance of a genuine and a forged coin by comparing specimens of both classes. They soon will acquire that power of discernment which cannot be taught otherwise than by experience.

Of the terms used in numismatic phrase we only mention the principal ones, reserving an explanation of the others for the occasion arising. *Obverse* is the principal side of a coin, generally bearing the head of the monarch who had it struck; *Reverse* the opposite side, with the type on it consisting of emblems, arms, &c. The plain part of a coin, not occupied by the principal figure or type, is called the *field*.

ANCIENT BRITISH COINS.

THE earliest coin, which may be attributed with some probability to any particular British monarch, bears the inscription, "Sego" (Fig. 1) which stands, perhaps, for *Segonax*, a petty Kentish monarch, who lived at the time of Caesar's second invasion of Britain. The probability that this coin is British appears strengthened by the word *Tascio*, which is frequently met with upon the money of Cunobeline, who reigned during the times of Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula, and whose dominions extended from the coasts of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, across the island westward to the banks of the Severn. The types of Cunobeline coins (Fig. 2) of which a con-

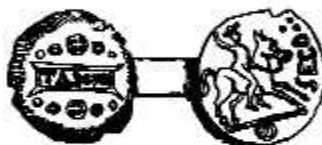


FIG. 1. Segoal.

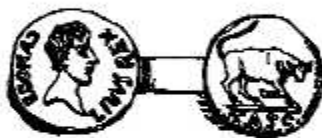


FIG. 2. Cunobelineus.

siderable number in gold and copper has been preserved, are for the greater part formed upon models of Roman money, bearing the united names of CUNOBELINVS and CAMULODUNVM, in various abbreviations, as CVN., CVNO., CVNOBELI., CAMV., and CAMVL. The latter abbreviations stand for Camulodunum (Colchester) the capital of Cunobeline's kingdom.

With the money of this monarch the British coinage closed, for in a very few years after his decease the second subjection of Britain took place, under Claudius; and an edict was issued that all money current should bear the imperial Roman stamp. Whether Roman mints were established in Britain under Carausius and Allectus, the resident emperors, has not been established as a fact, but seems highly probable. That counterfeiters of Roman money carried on their operations in this island is sufficiently proved by the discovery of several hundred moulds for casting Roman coins at Edington in Somersetshire, at Ryton in Shropshire and at Lingival, in Yorkshire. The Romans, having kept possession of Britain for nearly 400 years, totally deserted the island about the middle of the fifth century. Soon after their departure the Britons sought the aid of the Saxons, to protect them against the inroads of their powerful neighbours. Seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were formed at different periods, and until these petty dominions were established Roman money probably continued to circulate in them. But when their respective sovereigns were quietly settled on their thrones they established mints, which appear to have been regulated by laws brought with them from the continent.

COINS OF THE HEPTARCHY.

No gold money was struck by the Anglo-Saxons, and the "manens," the "mark," the "ora," the "shilling," and the "thrimas" were only money of account. As actually minted silver coins must be considered the "sceatta," the "penny," "halfpenny," "farthing," "half-farthing," the "styca," and perhaps the "triens," which divided the penny into three equal parts. The sceatts were the earliest products of the Anglo-Saxon mints, and varied in weight from 7½ grs. to 20 grs. troy. The penny succeeds in point of antiquity, and its legal weight through the whole period of the Saxon government was the 240th part of the Saxon pound of silver, = 24 grs., which weight was gradually decreased to 22½ grs. by the succeeding princes. We describe the coinage of the different kingdoms of the heptarchy separately.

COINS OF THE KINGS OF KENT.

THE coins of the Kentish monarchs are by far the most ancient of the Anglo-Saxon series.

Ethilberht I. (561 to 616).—A sceatta of Ethilberht I. (Fig. 3) is the earliest Saxon coin which has yet been discovered. It bears on the obverse the

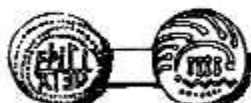


FIG. 3. ETHILBERT I.

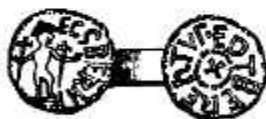


FIG. 4. EOGBERT.

name of the monarch and on the reverse a rude figure, which occurs on many of the sceatts, and which is supposed to be intended to represent a bird. No place of mintage, nor even the moneyer's name, appears upon it, and wanting the symbol of Christianity, its date may be referred to the period between 561 and 600, when Ethilberht was converted to Christianity by St. Augustine.

Egberht (665 to 674).—Sceatts are the only coins of this king which have hitherto been discovered. They are of various types. On some the figure of the king, standing between two crosses, appears on the obverse,

together with his name (Fig. 4), whilst the reverse bears only a small cross, with the name of one of the seven moneyers he employed. On the obverse of others is a figure rudely representing a dragon, with a reverse like the former.

Hlothare (674 to 686); *Eadric* (686 to 688); *Wihtraed* (688 to 740).—No money of these three monarchs has yet been discovered, but in their laws the fines are regulated by shillings and pounds.

Ethilberht II. (740 to 760).—In this reign, or perhaps earlier, though no specimens have yet been found, the money seems to have quitted the *scottæ* form, and with a greater size and a trifling addition of weight, than first commenced that species of silver coins which was afterwards, for so many ages, known by the denomination of the penny. The only coin known



FIG. 5. ETHILBERHT II.



FIG. 6. EADBERHT.

of *Ethilberht II.*, supposed to be the first known silver penny, has on the obverse the head of the king, with his name, and on the reverse *Remnus* and *Bemns*, with the she-wolf, in an irregular oblong compartment, over which is the word "*Ree*" (Fig. 5).

Eadberht (794 to 798).—Of this monarch, likewise called *Ethelbert*, surnamed *Præus* or *Præuus*, pennies have been discovered which have his name and title in three lines on the obverse, and one of his three moneyer's names on the other side (Fig. 6).

Cuthred (798 to 805).—On the coins of this monarch the title of King of



FIG. 7. CUTHRED.



FIG. 8. BELDRED.

Kent first appears, in addition to the name. The reverses have one of the names of seven different moneyers (Fig. 7).

Beldred (805 to 823).—Three different types of his money are known. On one of them is to be found the earliest instance of the insertion of the place of mintage. Its reverse bears within the inner circle an abbreviation of "*Dorovernia Civitas*," and is the earliest specimen which can be authenticated of the Royal Mint of Canterbury (Fig. 8).