

<sup>4</sup> Evelyn, John, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, (Everyman's Library Edition (1945), vol. 1, pp. 396-397.

<sup>5</sup> Payne-Gallwey, Ralph, *The Book of Duck Decoys* (1886) Kessinger Legacy Reprint (2008), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Fils, Nathan, *Francis Barlow – Painter of Birds and Beasts*, (Exhibition catalogue Clendon Park 2011), Hodnett, Edward, *Francis Barlow*, (1978), Sparrow, Walter Shaw, *British Sporting Artists*, Spring Books edition (1965) English born illustrator and painter Francis Barlow (c.1626-1704) worked on the *Fables* with Hollar. Barlow painted the first English representation of a pipe decoy, that at Pyrford nr. Ripley, Surrey c.1670. Owner of the decoy, Denzil Onslow, had four large paintings by Barlow which, until the devastating fire of April 2015, hung at his descendants' country seat of Clendon Park, Guildford. 'The Decoy at Pyrford with waterfowl at sunset startled by a bird of prey' was one of the four. Probably due to the obstructive behaviour of the decoyman Barlow's view was from *outside* of the decoy's boundary fence with only the very apex of a single pipe's netting showing above. The decoyman's hut and the decoy dog, in his shelter, are also shown outside the fence. Barlow is also credited with creating the first English depiction of shooting birds on the wing (1686) and the earliest print of a horse race (1687).

<sup>7</sup> A Martin Hilkis of Peasmarsh, Sussex, signed Articles of Agreement with Harbert Morley of Glinde in the said county on 20 May 1665 to construct a decoy in a field named Bricklamps at Glinde for the sum of fifty pounds. The agreement was for a decoy with three pipes and the materials detailed were very similar to the royal accounts for St James Park. Hilkis died c.1669 evidenced by his widow's remarriage. The building of a decoy and the similarity in names probably indicate a familial relationship between Sidrack Hilkes and Martin Hilkis. East Sussex Record office Ref GLY/1521, 1522.

<sup>8</sup> Sittingbourne Library. Milton Regis Parish Chest. Overseer's Accounts 1671-1792, P253 Reel 930.

<sup>9</sup> Canterbury Cathedral Archives. Sidrach Hilkes' will PRC/16/299/22. Transcription by Margaret McGregor AGRA.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* Bishop's Transcripts Milton Regis DCa/BT/124.

<sup>11</sup> Milton Regis Parish Chest (see note 8).

#### AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GOLD COIN HOARD FROM CHATHAM

In July 1861 a hoard of eighteenth-century gold coins was discovered by labourers engaged in building work at Chatham. No record of this find appears on the Kent Historic Environment Record or in the standard catalogue of British post-medieval coin hoards,<sup>1</sup> but a detailed account of the discovery did circulate in the contemporary English provincial press:

ANCIENT GOLD COINS. – A remarkable scene has been witnessed on some newly appropriated building land in the New-road, Chatham, for several days past, hundreds of persons being occupied in digging and searching for gold coins, a number of which have been discovered among the soil and rubbish near which some houses are being erected. It appears that a great quantity of earth has been carted from one portion of Chatham, on which an old public-house called the Rose and Crown, together with other houses, formerly stood, all of which have recently been pulled down to make way for some improvements which are being carried out. The earth and rubbish on which the premises formerly stood were removed to the buildings in question, when it was accidentally discovered last week that a number of gold coins, some of them of large size, and very ancient, were among the soil. Immediately the discovery was made hundreds of persons flocked to the spot, and during nearly the whole of last week the ground near which the coins were found presented a most singular appearance, the persons engaged being employed in sifting and digging the soil as if in an Australian goldfield. Up to Saturday, it is stated, as many as 50 pieces had been obtained, some of them bearing new 'spade' guineas of George III,

together with gold coins of the reign of Queen Anne, as well as a number of heavy gold coins of a character which has puzzled the numismatists to whom they have been shown to state what they are. How to account for the antique coins being found where they were appears exceedingly difficult. It is, however, stated that the Rose and Crown was the resort of men of war sailors at Chatham during the last century, and it is thought that the coins, however obtained, were hidden in some secluded part of the building, but the depositor never returning again to the house from sea, their existence was unknown until the discovery was made under the circumstances stated. This theory, however, would hardly account for the number of what appear to be exceedingly ancient foreign coins found with the others. Several of the coins have been disposed of by the fortunate finders for considerable sums. The “spade” guineas fetch 24s and 26s each.<sup>2</sup>

That ‘hundreds of persons flocked to the spot ... sifting and digging the soil as if in an Australian goldfield’ comes as no great surprise, for the quoted sale prices of 24s. 0d. and 26s. 0d. per coin were roughly equivalent to eight days’ pay for a building labourer in the 1860s.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, it is equally unsurprising that none of the coins survive in public collections, and it seems almost certain that the hoard was rapidly dispersed on the market before vanishing into private ownership or being melted down for bullion.

While the disappearance of the coins is deeply regrettable, information presented in the contemporary newspaper report enables us to reconstruct aspects of this otherwise forgotten eighteenth-century coin hoard. In the first instance, the description confirms that the hoard consisted of up c.50 gold coins of Anne (1702-1707) and George III (1760-1820), the latter specifically described as “‘spade’ guineas”, as well as a ‘number of heavy gold coins of a character which has puzzled the numismatists to whom they are shown’. Named for the distinctive shape of their reverse shield (Fig. 1), ‘spade’ guineas of George III were issued exclusively



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Fig. 1 Gold guineas of Anne (1702-1707) and George III (1760-1820), and a *joe* (4-escudos) and *moidore* (4000-réis) of John V of Portugal (1706-1750).

in the period 1787-1799, and supply a *terminus post quem* (TPQ) of 1787 for the hoard as a whole. While the gold coins of Anne are not described in detail, comparison with the hoards from East Harsley (North Yorkshire, TPQ 1714), Moss Pitt (Staffordshire, TPQ 1727), and Old Ellerby (East Riding of Yorkshire, TPQ 1727) suggest that these are also highly likely to have been guineas.<sup>4</sup> Quite how the ‘heavy gold coins of a character which has puzzled the numismatists’ should be identified is less clear, but must presumably be read in conjunction with the reference to ‘ancient foreign coins’. On this basis, the most plausible candidates are Portuguese 4-escudos and/or 4000-réis pieces, known in England as *joes* and *moidores*. Weighing 14.32g and 10.76g respectively, these coins were heavier than eighteenth-century English guineas (c.8.4g), and would have been alien to the collecting tastes of nineteenth-century Kentish numismatists. They were, however, rather more familiar sights in the preceding century. Finds of eighteenth-century coin weights designed for use with *joes*, *moidores*, and their fractions have been recorded in Broadstairs, Sandwich, Shepherdswell and Stone-cum-Ebony,<sup>5</sup> and references to the coins themselves frequently appear in contemporary documentary sources: in February 1756, for instance, one John Saffery was accosted by thieves in Canterbury and robbed of a *moidore* and several English gold and silver coins, while in March 1761 a Miss Meredith had ‘a moidore, crown piece, and some silver’ stolen from her purse by a highwayman on the road heading south-east from Bromley.<sup>6</sup> Similar combinations of English guineas and Portuguese *joes* and *moidores* have been recorded in coin hoards from Pillaton Hall (Staffordshire, TPQ 1724), Trembraze (Cornwall, TPQ 1727), and Cradley (Herefordshire, TPQ 1760), so are not an entirely anomalous presence in the Chatham find.<sup>7</sup> The proportions of denominations are not stated, but a hoard containing c.50 guineas (21s. 0d.), *moidores* (27s. 0d.), and/or *joes* (36s. 0d.) would have had a minimum eighteenth-century face value of £53 2s. 0d., a highly significant sum of cash equivalent to nearly three years’ wages for a craftsman in the 1780s.<sup>8</sup>

While the hoard was first found on land in New Road, a late Georgian residential suburb in south Chatham, the newspaper evidence suggests that it had actually originated in redeposited ‘soil and rubbish’ recently removed from the site of the *Rose and Crown* at 6 Fort Pitt Street, Ordnance Place (NGR TQ 754 675). Located c.360m south of Chatham High Street, the main eighteenth-century thoroughfare between London and Canterbury,<sup>9</sup> the *Rose and Crown* was still run as an inn by its landlord, Frederick R. Boys (b.1809), as of late April 1861,<sup>10</sup> and the ‘improvements’ that led to its demolition involved the construction of a new block of terraced housing first shown on Ordnance Survey maps dated 1864-1866.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the newspaper report does not state whether the coins were found among building rubble or loose soil, and it is consequently impossible to determine whether they had been originally concealed in a structural context, such as a wall cavity or between floorboards, or instead within a pit dug into the inn’s garden soil. In any case, the deposition of a coin hoard on the site of an inn or public house is not unprecedented in the post-medieval period, and similar finds have been recorded from inns at Sproatley (East Riding of Yorkshire, TPQ 1694) and Luddington (Lincolnshire, TPQ 1787).<sup>12</sup> While it is possible to interpret the hoard in romantic terms, perhaps representing the profits of local smugglers or the belongings of ‘men of war sailors...[who] never returned again to the house from



Fig. 2 Distribution of Georgian coin hoards found in Kent.

sea', it is more likely to have a prosaic explanation as the personal savings of an eighteenth-century pub landlord or resident. Its non-recovery could have resulted from a range of different personal misfortunes, whether occasioned by the owner's death, relocation, or simple forgetfulness.

The hoard found at Chatham in 1861 is one of only eight Georgian coin hoards known from historic Kent, most of which have been found in the north of the county close to the turnpike routes between London and the English Channel (**Fig. 2**). More than half of these hoards consist of gold coins and, like the Chatham find, must represent high-value cash accumulations hidden for safekeeping: notable parallels include a hoard of 17 gold coins found hidden beneath the floorboards at *Boys Hall*, Willesborough (*TPQ* 1720), as well as a hoard of 31 guineas, half-guineas and paper banknotes found in a sixteenth-century farmhouse at Deerton Street (*TPQ* 1800).<sup>13</sup> By contrast, finds of silver and copper coins from Eltham (*TPQ* 1807), and Grove Park, Lewisham (*TPQ* 1727), seem to reflect the petty cash reserves or lost purses of the poorer sections of Georgian society, and are perhaps more typical of the everyday currency that circulated in the towns and villages of Kent during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Despite the county's vulnerable coastal location in a century of frequent wars with France, there is no evidence to suggest that any of Kent's Georgian coin hoards were hidden in response to invasion scares, and it is likely that most are straightforward cash accumulations concealed for safekeeping before the introduction of modern savings banks.<sup>14</sup>

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THE TRACTION ENGINE EXPLOSION BY ALL SAINTS, MAIDSTONE:  
DEVASTATION OF MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS IN CHURCHYARD

Newspaper reporting of the time provides ample details of the tragic incident. *The Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald* published the following item on the 11 December 1880:

Terrible Boiler explosion in Maidstone. Loss of life.

About three o'clock on Friday morning a frightful explosion occurred by the bursting of a boiler of a traction engine, in Mill-street, near All Saints' Church. The shock was felt all over the town, it being so severe that it shook some of the people living near out of their beds. The engine and boiler are blown to atoms, pieces lying about a considerable distance away. About twenty yards of the churchyard wall, with massive pieces of iron, headstones, trees, etc., have been blown all over the