

THE BRITISH  
NUMISMATIC JOURNAL  
2023

INCLUDING THE

*Proceedings of the British Numismatic Society  
for the year 2022*

EDITED BY

MARTIN ALLEN

VOLUME 93

---

2023

# NEW LIGHT ON OLD MONEY: ELEVEN ‘FORGOTTEN FINDS’ OF EDWARDIAN STERLINGS FROM ENGLAND AND WALES

MURRAY ANDREWS<sup>1</sup>

Hoardings of Edwardian sterlings are by far the most common class of medieval coin hoard found in England and Wales, with more than 140 examples dated 1279–1351 registered between 1751 and 2020.<sup>2</sup> While metal-detecting continues to add new examples to the record, close scrutiny of archival sources has the potential to yield information on older sterling finds that are otherwise unknown to archaeological and numismatic scholarship. This article discusses eleven such hoards rediscovered from archival sources, ordered by date of discovery (Figure 1).

## 1. Near Ruthin, Clwyd, 1776

In April 1776 a hoard of silver coins was found near Ruthin in Clwyd. The *Police Gazette* carried a notice of the find, which reads as follows:

A few days ago as a man was cutting down an old hedge, near Ruthin, in Denbighshire, he found upon the surface, in one heap, six hundred pieces of small silver coin, of Edward II, commonly called Edward of Carnarvon; upon the face side the inscription was Edward, Rex Angliæ, et Dominus Hyberniæ. Upon the Reverse, Civitas London.<sup>3</sup>

The ‘six hundred pieces of small silver coin’ are evidently Edwardian sterlings, at least one of which was struck at London. Frustratingly, the expanded obverse legends preclude a more precise classification, supplying only a broad deposition date of 1279–c.1351. However, with an apparent face value of roughly £2 10s. 0d., the find clearly ranks among the larger silver hoards from late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England and Wales, and invites comparison with better-documented sterling hoards from Newminster Abbey, Northumberland (486 AR, deposited c.1305–10), Bootham School, York (908 AR, deposited c.1321–44), and West Rudham, Norfolk (393 AR, deposited c.1321–44).<sup>4</sup>

Quite where this hoard was found remains unclear, and no obvious clues can be gleaned from study of Ruthin’s 1839 tithe map or the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875. However, its proximity to Ruthin closely accords with evidence from other medieval hoards from England and Wales, which occur with disproportionate frequency in the immediate hinterland of contemporary towns.<sup>5</sup> Founded as a marcher borough after its capture by Edward I in 1282, Ruthin was one of the most significant towns of fourteenth-century Wales, boasting a weekly market, three annual fairs, and no fewer than seventy-two taxable English and Welsh burgesses.<sup>6</sup> While the precise circumstances of its deposition are unknown, the hoard might well have belonged to a member of the town’s merchant class.

## 2. Canterbury College, Oxford, Oxfordshire, 1783

In April 1783 a hoard of silver coins was found by workmen digging foundations for a building on the former site of Canterbury College, Oxford. An account of the discovery was presented in the *Reading Mercury*, and reads as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo.

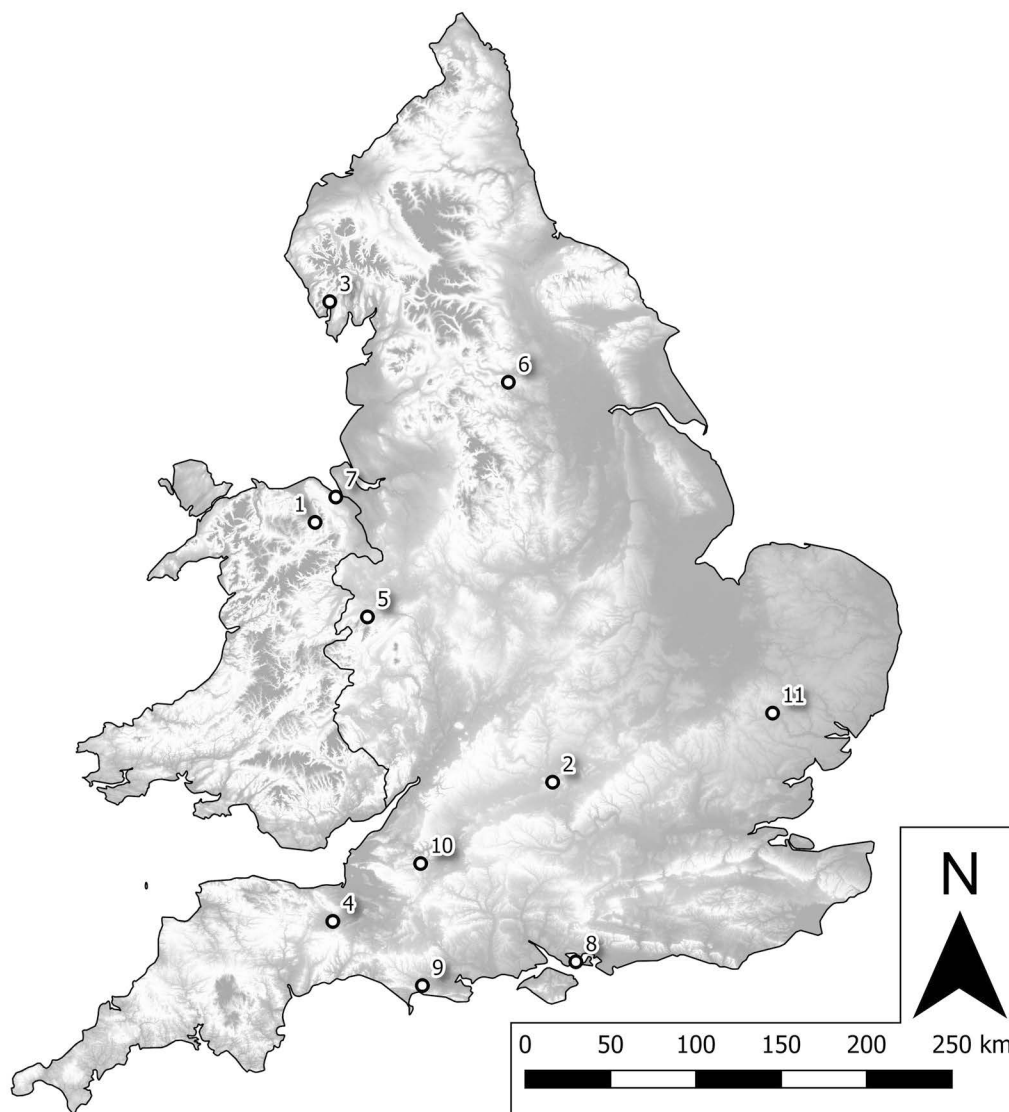
<sup>2</sup> Andrews 2019, 33; Andrews and Ghey 2020, 246–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Police Gazette*, 19 April 1776, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Brooke 1927; Dolley and Stewart 1952–54; Andrews 2019, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Andrews 2019, 48–9.

<sup>6</sup> Stevens 2012, 149–58.



**Fig. 1.** Distribution of coin hoards discussed in this paper. *Key:* 1) Near Ruthin; 2) Canterbury College, Oxford; 3) Near Broughton-in-Furness; 4) Near Taunton; 5) Near Church Pulverbatch; 6) Tinshill Common; 7) Flint; 8) Kingston; 9) Warmwell Heath; 10) Wellow; 11) Cavendish.

In digging the foundations of the new buildings at Christ Church, on the spot where formerly stood Canterbury College, a skeleton was found, about three feet under the surface, supposed to have lain there upwards of 500 years, as some silver pence of King Edward the First were found close to the thigh bone; no coffin or any other vestige appeared, by which it might be conjectured who was buried there. Something like half-boots were round the bottom of the leg-bones, from which, and other circumstances, it is imagined the corpse was interred in his clothes. These remains were carefully collected, put into a shell, and deposited in the College Chapel.<sup>7</sup>

The description of this hoard – ‘some silver pence of King Edward the First’ – is rather spartan, and leaves little room for numismatic comment. The singular reference to Edwardian pence presumably sets the date of deposition at 1279–c.1351, and the oblique description of ‘some’ coins suggests that the hoard was small in size. Comparable Edwardian ‘small hoards’ are relatively numerous, and include recent metal-detected finds from Oxted, Surrey (8 AR, deposited

<sup>7</sup> *Reading Mercury*, 14 April 1783, 3.

c.1315–20), Pluckley, Kent (4 AR, deposited c.1300–10), and Warkworth, Northumberland (6 AR, deposited 1317–51).<sup>8</sup>

Despite its limited numismatic interest, the report contains significant information relating to the hoard's depositional context. The findspot, on the site of 'new buildings at Christ Church', can be identified with Oxford's Canterbury Quadrangle (NGR SP 5157 0606), a high-end undergraduate residence completed by James Wyatt in 1783.<sup>9</sup> This building occupies the site of the former northern cemetery of St Frideswide's Priory, an Anglo-Saxon minster that was refounded as an Augustinian house in the 1120s and later re-established as the Anglican Christ Church cathedral in 1532–46 – a circumstance that evidently explains the hoard's association with human remains.<sup>10</sup>

The observation that the coins were 'found close to the thigh bone' of a skeleton in the cemetery suggests that they formed the contents of a leather or textile purse or pouch, the outer casing of which had decayed in the soil. This form of deposition invites comparison with the small number of other coin purses found in medieval graves, which include finds from a coffin burial at St Alfege's, Greenwich (174 AR, deposited c.1279–1351), and two inhumations at the East Smithfield Black Death cemetery (181 AR and 8 AR, both deposited c.1349–50).<sup>11</sup> The parallels with the East Smithfield hoards are particularly compelling insofar as they, like the Oxford find, derive from clothed burials, an uncommon late medieval funerary practice that was generally restricted to ecclesiastics or unusually pious layfolk.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the closest English parallels for the 'half-boots ... round the bottom of the leg-bones' of the Oxford skeleton are the knee-length leather boots found in a fifteenth-century pilgrim burial at Worcester Cathedral, which has been tentatively identified as the wealthy dyer Robert Sutton (*d.* 1454), a devotee of the cult of St James.<sup>13</sup>

These signs of piety, however, present an interpretative puzzle, as medieval *exempla* often contained moral tales warning Christians of the dangers of not rejecting their earthly possessions at death – exemplified, in many cases, by stories of divine punishment inflicted on sinners buried with their coins.<sup>14</sup> One prosaic explanation might relate to the circumstances of interment: were there a need for a prompt burial – as a consequence of accelerated putrefaction, for example – the people responsible for dressing and interring the corpse might simply have forgotten to remove the purse from their funerary clothes.<sup>15</sup> Notwithstanding the improbability of overlooking a purseful of jangling coins, this suggestion runs at odds with the wider evidence for medieval English funerary ritual, which seems to have placed a premium on the attentive and respectful engagement with the deceased as part of their transition to the afterlife.<sup>16</sup> An alternative possibility is that the deposition of the coins in a funerary context reflects a deliberate attempt to dispose of 'polluted material' tainted through its associations with the deceased, particularly if their death had arisen from an intensely moralised disease like leprosy, plague, or syphilis. This phenomenon, which is widely attested in the ethnographic literature,<sup>17</sup> was observed by English and Italian commentators at the time of the Black Death (1346–53), when it was noted that the living avoided even the valuable possessions of the deceased out of fear of contagion, and has recently been cited as an explanation for the East Smithfield hoards.<sup>18</sup> However, without any further information relating to the burial, it is difficult to assess whether any of these interpretations might also hold for the Canterbury College hoard.

<sup>8</sup> Cook 2015, 171–2.

<sup>9</sup> Dale 1936, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Blair 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Andrews 2019, 195; 2020a, 220.

<sup>12</sup> Gilchrist and Sloane 2005, 87.

<sup>13</sup> Lack 2005, 116–21.

<sup>14</sup> Travaini 2004, 177.

<sup>15</sup> This interpretation has been previously cited in relation to the East Smithfield hoards: Gilchrist and Sloane 2005, 102; Cook 2015, 169.

<sup>16</sup> Gilchrist 2012, 190–215.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas 1966.

<sup>18</sup> Andrews 2019, 195.

### 3. Near Broughton-in-Furness, Cumbria, 1785

In 1785 a hoard of silver coins was found by a workman digging in a slate quarry at Broughton, Lancashire. The discovery was reported in *Saunders's News-Letter* in the following manner:

Last week, one Jenkinson, a labouring man, who was employed in a slate quarry, near Broughton, in Lancashire, found upwards of a hundred pieces of silver coins, most of them of Edward the First and Alexander King of Scotland.<sup>19</sup>

The reference to ‘upwards of a hundred ... silver coins’ of Edward I and Alexander III of Scotland clearly dates this hoard to the period *c.* 1279–1351, a window that could possibly be narrowed to *c.* 1280–1314 in view of the scarcity of Scottish coins in English hoards buried after this date.<sup>20</sup> If we assume that all the coins were sterling pence, the nominal value of the hoard would be upwards of 8s. 4d., on par with better-recorded sterling hoards from Llysdinam, Powys (105 AR, deposited *c.* 1344–51), and Pepper Street, Chester (100 AR, deposited *c.* 1344–51) and equivalent to two months’ wages for a building labourer in 1290.<sup>21</sup>

Three places in Lancashire shared the place name Broughton in the eighteenth century: Broughton-in-Furness in the Lake District, Broughton-in-Amounderness near Preston, and Broughton near Salford. Of these, only Broughton-in-Furness – which was transferred to Cumbria in 1974 – had a tradition of mineral extraction, and the findspot must therefore have lain somewhere in the fells between Broughton-in-Furness and Coniston, an upland landscape that was heavily quarried for building slate throughout the Industrial Revolution.<sup>22</sup> During the medieval period the Furness Fells formed an extensive tract of upland pasture farmed as a sheep ranch by the monks of Furness, the proceeds of which positioned the abbey as the second richest Cistercian house in England at the time of its dissolution in 1537.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that the hoard had some association with this activity, perhaps representing part of the proceeds of wool or livestock sales originating on the monastic demesne.

### 4. Near Taunton, Somerset, 1798

In February 1798 a hoard of silver coins was found by a workmen digging on the Wellington Road, Somerset. An account of the discovery in the *Bath Chronicle* reads as follows:

One day last week some labourers, at work on the Wellington Road, dug up an earthen vessel, containing about 2000 small silver coins of the size of sixpences, of the reign of Edward the First, in high preservation.<sup>24</sup>

The reference to ‘small silver coins of the size of sixpences, of the reign of Edward the First’ suggests that the hoard consisted exclusively of Edwardian sterling pence, which were similar in diameter (*c.* 19–20mm) to Georgian sixpences (21 mm), and furnishes a deposition date of *c.* 1279–1351. With a total of *c.* 2,000 coins, the hoard was evidently rather large, and its nominal value of *c.* £8 6s. 8d. would rank among the most significant hoards of the Edwardian period, inviting comparison with the finds from Boyton, Wiltshire (4,155 AR, deposited *c.* 1321), and Knaresborough Priory, North Yorkshire (*c.* 1,600+ AR, deposited *c.* 1321–44).<sup>25</sup> The presence of a ceramic container is in keeping with its reported size, and points towards an attempt to secure a valuable deposit prior to its intended recovery.

While the exact findspot of the hoard is unclear, the ‘Wellington Road’ in question is almost certainly the 9.5 km route between Taunton and Wellington, which operated as a turnpike road in the later eighteenth century and now forms a stretch of the A38 trunk road. The hoard’s apparent proximity to Taunton, Somerset’s principal medieval borough and the site of an important monastic centre,<sup>26</sup> invites comparison with the contemporary hoard from near Ruthin (see above), and

<sup>19</sup> *Saunders's News-Letter*, 7 March 1785, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Allen 2012, 354–5.

<sup>21</sup> Dolley, Elmore Jones, and Webster 1952–54; Besly 1997; Andrews 2019; Broadberry *et al.* 2015, 311.

<sup>22</sup> Bolton 1869, 67–8.

<sup>23</sup> Emery 1996, 206; White 2012, 34.

<sup>24</sup> *Bath Chronicle*, 15 February 1798, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Allen and Dunning 1936; Dolley and Pagan 1963.

<sup>26</sup> Leach 1984.

it is possible that both finds represent cash accumulations formed in relation to these local market centres.

### 5. Near Church Pulverbatch, Shropshire, 1812

In November 1812 a hoard of silver coins was found near Church Pulverbatch, Shropshire. The notice of the find in the *Taunton Courier* reads as follows:

A few days since, as a labourer was digging on the Long-mynd, near Pulverbatch, Salop, his spade struck into an earthen vessel, in which were deposited upwards of 80 silver coins, chiefly of the mintage of Edward I, and most of them in excellent preservation.<sup>27</sup>

The reference to ‘upwards of 80 silver coins, chiefly of the mintage of Edward I’ dates this hoard to the period *c.* 1279–1351, and suggests that its contents included coins of other issuers, presumably Scottish and Irish pence and/or continental sterling imitations. With a minimum face value of 6s. 8d., the hoard is of above-average size, comparable to the finds from Abbey Town, Cumbria (81 AR, deposited *c.* 1312–14), Neath Abbey I, West Glamorgan (100 AR, deposited *c.* 1326–27) and Pepper Street, Chester (100 AR, deposited *c.* 1344–51), and equivalent to nearly two months’ wages for a building labourer in 1290.<sup>28</sup> Like the near Taunton find, the presence of a ceramic container is consistent with the hoard’s reported size, and suggests that it had been concealed for safekeeping with the intent of future recovery.

The findspot of the hoard is imprecisely recorded as the Long Mynd, a prominent ridge of the Shropshire Hills located 19 km south-west of Shrewsbury and 21 km north-west of Ludlow. Throughout the middle ages the Long Mynd formed an area of upland common used as sheep pasture by the tenants of Church Pulverbatch, Church Stretton, and Woolstaston,<sup>29</sup> and it is possible that the hoard might consist of income derived from commercial sheep-farming in this district. From an archaeological perspective, it is significant to note that the northern stretch of the Long Mynd near Church Pulverbatch contains a remarkably dense cluster of prominent Bronze Age barrows, including the paired round barrows of Robin Hood’s Butts and several isolated tumuli between Callow Hollow and Henley Nap.<sup>30</sup> While it is impossible to be certain, it is entirely plausible that the hoard was buried in the immediate vicinity of one or more of these mounds, a phenomenon otherwise attested by nine coin hoards buried in England and Wales in *c.* 973–1544.<sup>31</sup> If this were indeed the case, the barrow(s) may have served a mnemonic function for the hoarder, providing a landscape marker reminding them of the burial location. Alternatively, the siting could even reflect an attempt to exploit medieval folkloric associations between barrows and the supernatural, using widespread fears of resident demons, fairies, and goblins to ward away would-be treasure hunters.<sup>32</sup>

### 6. Tinshill Common, West Yorkshire, 1820

In November 1820 a hoard of silver coins was found at Tinshill Common, West Yorkshire. A report of the find in the *Leeds Intelligencer* reads as follows:

A few days ago, a large quantity of old silver coin, (several hundreds,) in fine preservation, was dug up by some labourers employed by Richard Wormald, Esq. on Tinsil Common, near this town. We believe they are principally Edwards. Several we hear, have been purchased by a silversmith in this town.<sup>33</sup>

The numismatic content of this report is minimal, but the observation that the coins were ‘principally Edwards’ suggests a deposition date of *c.* 1279–1351, and could point towards the presence of Scottish and Irish pence and/or continental sterling imitations. If the reference to

<sup>27</sup> *Taunton Courier*, 3 December 1812, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Dolley, Elmore Jones, and Webster 1952–54; North 1975; Boon 1986, 114–17; Broadberry *et al.* 2015, 311.

<sup>29</sup> Baggs *et al.* 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson 2017, 84–94.

<sup>31</sup> Andrews 2019, 195–7.

<sup>32</sup> Grinsell 1976, 64; Dillinger 2012, 65.

<sup>33</sup> *Leeds Intelligencer*, 13 November 1820, 3.

‘several hundreds’ of coins is accurate, the hoard would likely have had a face value of upwards of *c.* £2 0*s.* 0*d.*, ranking among the larger sterling finds of the period. Some possible analogies are provided by the hoards from Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (700 AR, deposited *c.* 1305–51), Ickfield/Wingham, Kent (532 AR, deposited *c.* 1290–5), and Newminster Abbey, Northumberland (486 AR, deposited *c.* 1305–10).<sup>34</sup>

Until its late twentieth-century development as a suburb of Leeds, Tinshill Common was an area of moorland in Addle-cum-Eccup, a rural township in the south of the medieval parish of Adel.<sup>35</sup> The north-eastern edge of the common formerly bordered Cookridge Hall, a Grade II listed seventeenth- and eighteenth-century country house and landscaped park acquired in 1820 by the Leeds wool merchant Richard Wormald (1774–1823).<sup>36</sup> Wormald is known to have undertaken extensive alterations to the property, including the construction of a coach house, gate-house, icehouse, and stable block, and it seems likely that the discovery of the hoard was occasioned by these or related works in the southern grounds (NGR SE 256 404). The association with Cookridge Hall is of considerable archaeological interest, as the post-medieval mansion is generally thought to occupy the site of a cattle grange belonging to Kirkstall Abbey, which acquired the manor of Cookridge during the tenure of Abbot Alexander in 1147–82 and held it until the dissolution in 1540.<sup>37</sup> Like the hoard from near Broughton-in-Furness (see above), the hoard from Tinshill Common might therefore derive all or in part from the sale of livestock, hides, or dairy products produced on the monastic demesne.

## 7. Flint, Clwyd, 1837

In May 1837 a hoard of silver coins was found at Flint, Clwyd. An account in the *Leamington Spa Courier* reads as follows:

In taking down the old Town-hall of Flint, for the purpose of building a new market-place and Town-hall, the workmen discovered, under one of the corner-stones, a considerable quantity of silver coins of the reign of Edward II.<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 2. Randolph Caldecott's sketch of Flint's 'old Town-hall' (Taylor 1883, 179)

<sup>34</sup> Anon. 1859, 358–60; Brooke 1927; Andrews 2019, 34.

<sup>35</sup> The National Archives (TNA), IR 29/43/4.

<sup>36</sup> Cook 1986, 23–30.

<sup>37</sup> Thoresby 1715, 157–8.

<sup>38</sup> *Leamington Spa Courier*, 3 June 1837, 4.

While this description clearly relates to a find of pence deposited *c.* 1279–1351, the early date of discovery – roughly seventy-five years before the Fox brothers disentangled the Edwardian silver coinage – means that the specific attribution of the coins to Edward II should be treated with some scepticism. The observation that the hoard consisted of ‘a considerable quantity of silver coins’ suggests an above-average size, but exactly how large it was cannot be determined from the available source material.

Founded in July 1277, Flint is one of several ‘new towns’ established under royal authority during the Edwardian conquest of Wales, and was laid out on a distinctive *bastide* plan inspired by the fortified towns of Gascony and Occitania.<sup>39</sup> Like other European *bastides*, Flint’s central square (NGR SJ 2445 7315) contained both the town hall and marketplace, providing a well-monitored site for regulated market activity and the exercise of local administration. A nineteenth-century sketch by Randolph Caldecott (Figure 2) depicts the ‘old Town-hall’ as a timber-framed building formed around a square-panelled box frame, and suggests that the structure demolished in 1837 was in fact a Tudor civic building.<sup>40</sup> If this were indeed the case, it is highly likely that the ‘corner-stones’ that overlay the hoard were in fact the buried remains of the stone walls from the earlier medieval town hall. Unfortunately, the description in the *Leamington Spa Courier* provides insufficient detail to establish whether the coins were concealed within a hidden wall cavity, akin to the hoards from Wallington, London (37 AR, deposited *c.* 1300–10), and West Whelpington, Northumberland (5 AR, deposited *c.* 1310–51), or were instead deposited beneath the walls as a foundation deposit, as was the case with the hoard from Salisbury Cathedral Chapter House, Wiltshire (uncertain no. AR, deposited *c.* 1279–1351).<sup>41</sup> While it may be tempting to associate the burial of the hoard with the razing of Flint during the Welsh revolt of 1294, the imprecise dating precludes any specific historical interpretation.<sup>42</sup>

## 8. Kingston, Hampshire, 1843

In July 1843 a hoard of medieval coins was found at Kingston, Hampshire. The report of the discovery in the *Hampshire Advertiser* reads as follows:

KINGSTON CHURCH. – It is expected that the foundation stone of the new edifice will be laid by the Lord Bishop of the diocese, in a week or ten days. In pulling down the ancient building, several coins of Edward the Third were discovered by the workmen, together with a square piece of lead, with an inscription and date thereon, probably a funereal memorial. Unfortunately, the workman who discovered it, being ignorant of the value attached to such relics of the olden time, cut it into small pieces. some of which have been lost.<sup>43</sup>

The newspaper description is frustratingly vague: the materials and denominations of the coins are left unstated, and it is unclear whether the ‘several coins of Edward the Third’ were indeed of Edward III rather than Edward I–II. It seems most probable that the hoard, like the others discussed in this paper, was deposited in the period *c.* 1279–1351, although a more cautious dating of *c.* 1279–1380 would give due allowance for chronological uncertainty. The reference to ‘several coins’ suggests that the hoard was relatively small, and was perhaps analogous to finds from Rendham, Suffolk (8 AR, deposited *c.* 1290), and South Northamptonshire (12 AR, deposited *c.* 1337–43).<sup>44</sup>

The ‘ancient building’ demolished in 1843 was the church of Old St Mary’s (NGR SU 6519 0085) in Kingston, a settlement in the large parish of Portsea 2.5 km north-east of Portsmouth. An early watercolour (Figure 3) depicts the church as a complex multi-phase structure, whose key architectural features included thirteenth-century lancet windows in the nave, a robust Perpendicular tower of *c.* 1500, post-medieval circular and dormer windows, and an eighteenth-century tower door. Given the structural phasing, it seems most likely that the coins were found within the nave or chancel, inviting comparison with the find of two Edwardian farthings

<sup>39</sup> Schofield and Vince 2003, 40–1.

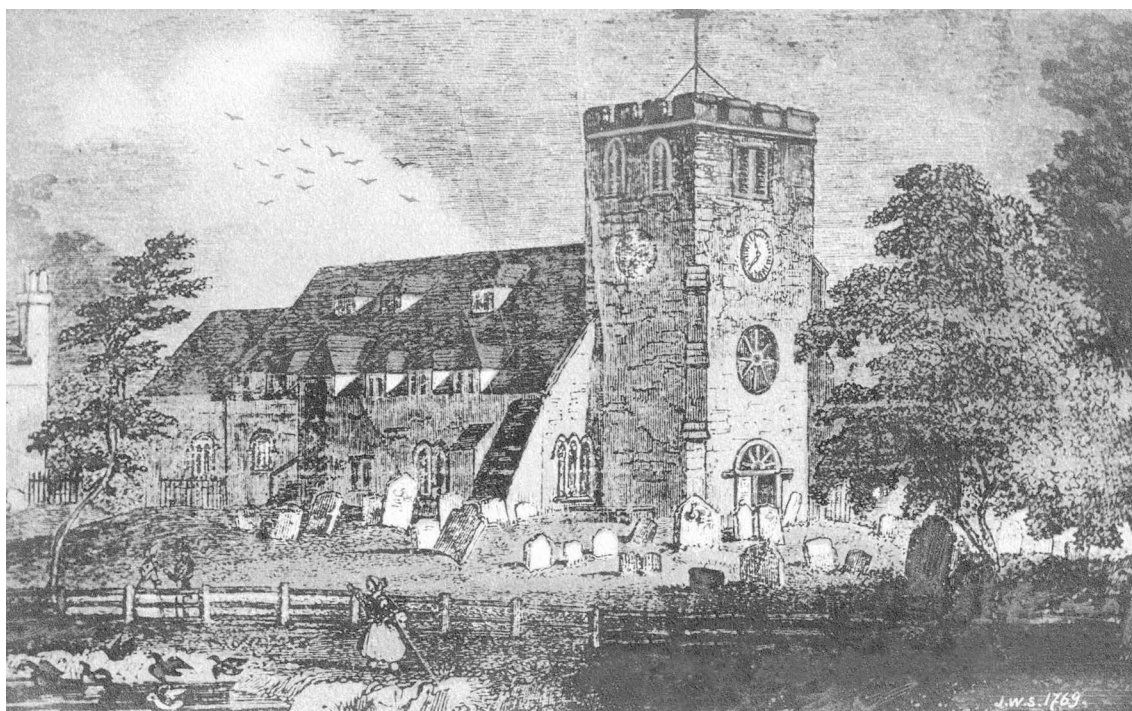
<sup>40</sup> Box-frame construction was rarely used in Wales before the sixteenth century: see Smith 1988, 78–9.

<sup>41</sup> Andrews 2019, 194; 2020b, 320.

<sup>42</sup> Taylor 1982.

<sup>43</sup> *Hampshire Advertiser*, 29 July 1843, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Andrews 2019, 34.



**Fig. 3.** South-east facing watercolour of Old St Mary's, Kingston (early twentieth-century postcard; author's collection)

deposited in the grave of a young adult interred beneath the floor of the nave at Hatch, Hampshire (2 AR, deposited 1279–1351).<sup>45</sup>

The potential similarities between the Kingston and Hatch finds are of particular interest given the former's association with 'a square piece of lead, with an inscription and date thereon'. While the identification of this object is uncertain, the description gives a reasonably good match for the lid of a heart-case, a form of miniature lead coffin used for the separate burial of human entrails.<sup>46</sup> Heart burial was a distinctive aristocratic funerary rite used in England between the twelfth and early fourteenth centuries, and was intended to secure a presence for the deceased in a site favoured during their lifetime, whether as a consequence of individual patronage, familial ties, or lordly association. Examples of heart burials in parish churches are not uncommon in England, and typically relate to minor local aristocrats like Paulin Peyvre of Toddington (*d.* 1251) and Ralph de Stopham of Bryanston (*d.* 1272), both of whom had their hearts interred in their local parish church as a mark of their elevated social status.<sup>47</sup> As such, if the lead object was indeed part of a heart case, the interred entrails would most likely have belonged to Richard of Portsea (*d.* 1318), who held the manor by familial descent from the late thirteenth century onwards.<sup>48</sup> The possibility that the Kingston coins were deposited in association with a heart burial is of exceptional archaeological interest, and would represent a unique contribution to the corpus of coin hoards found in later medieval graves.

### 9. Warmwell Heath, Dorset, 1844

In November or December 1844 a hoard of silver coins was found on Warmwell Heath, Dorset. A description of the find was published in the *Sherborne Mercury*, and reads as follows:

<sup>45</sup> Archibald, Cook and Bland 1995.

<sup>46</sup> Twelfth- and thirteenth-century rectangular and square lead heart cases are known from Merriott, Somerset, and the tomb of Richard I at Roehampton cathedral, the latter of which has an inscribed lid. Norris 1871; Charlier *et al.* 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Westerhof 2008, 86.

<sup>48</sup> Page 1908.

As a man was digging potatoes on Warmwell Heath one day last week, under one of the roots, he dug up upwards of 80 old silver coins, which appeared to be of the reign of one of the Edwards. On his making it known, the lord of the manor, Capt. Foster, claimed them, and has them now in his possession.<sup>49</sup>

The landowner, Augustus Foster (1787–1879), had served as Captain of the 14th Light Dragoons during the Peninsular War, and acquired the estate at Warmwell in July 1823 through his marriage to Judith Letitia Billet (1778–1858). While the coins seized by Captain Foster can no longer be traced, the newspaper evidence suggests that they were probably Edwardian sterlings, and were most likely deposited in the period *c.* 1279–1351. Assuming that the ‘80 old silver coins’ were all sterling pence, the face value of the hoard can be set at 6s. 8d., a mid-sized deposit akin to the find from Near Church Pulverbatch (see above) and equivalent to two month’s wages for a farm labourer in 1290.<sup>50</sup> Located 7 km south-east of Dorchester, Warmwell Heath (NGR SY 752 869) is an area of unenclosed heathland formerly used as common pasture by the tenants of the medieval manor of Warmwell.<sup>51</sup> The precise findspot of the hoard on the heath can no longer be determined, and there is limited scope for further inference concerning its archaeological context.

## 10. Wellow, Somerset, 1845

In 1845 a hoard of medieval coins was found at Wellow, Somerset. The discovery was reported in the *Bath Chronicle* as follows:

RE-OPENING OF WELLOW CHURCH. – This interesting edifice was re-opened for Divine service on Tuesday morning, after having been closed for some time for the purpose of being renovated ... The North and South windows have been judiciously retained, with every other available characteristic of the date of the original building, which was precisely marked by the discovery, at the base of a remarkable old piscina (which has been preserved), of some coins of the reign of Edward II.<sup>52</sup>

While the newspaper report clearly describes a hoard of Edwardian sterlings deposited in *c.* 1279–1351, the attribution of the coins to Edward II should be taken with a pinch of salt (see discussion of the Flint hoard above). The exact number of coins present in the hoard is unstated, but the reference to ‘some coins’ could indicate a fairly small deposit, perhaps similar in scale to the finds from Brackenfield, Derbyshire (4 AR, deposited 1279–1351) and Coppergate, York (5 AR, deposited 1321–51).<sup>53</sup>

Founded before 1133, the parish church of St Julian in Wellow (NGR ST 7419 5840) was a medieval possession of Cirencester Abbey, who held it until the dissolution in 1539.<sup>54</sup> The present building dates mainly to the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but has been subject to three phases of restoration in 1845, 1889–90, and 1952.<sup>55</sup> Most of this later work was concentrated in the chancel area, the site of the ‘remarkable old piscina’ whose base lay beside the coin hoard. This findspot is of no little interest in light of medieval custom and Canon Law, which dictated that access to church chancels should be restricted to members of the clergy, a physical separation formalised by the erection of a wooden rood screen.<sup>56</sup> On this basis it seems probable that the Wellow hoard, like similar finds from church chancels at Sandwich, Kent (40 AR, deposited *c.* 1215) and Steppingley, Bedfordshire (531 AR, deposited *c.* 1270), represents a sum of money accumulated by a local clergymen that was hidden for temporary safekeeping.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Sherbourne Mercury*, 7 December 1844, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Broadberry *et al.* 2015, 311.

<sup>51</sup> RCHME 1970, 327–9.

<sup>52</sup> *Bath Chronicle*, 25 December 1845, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Pirie 1986; Andrews 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Lucas 2014, 161.

<sup>55</sup> Pevsner 1958, 276–7.

<sup>56</sup> Orme 2021, 138.

<sup>57</sup> Lawrence and Brooke 1914; Wanostrocht 1992.

## 11. Cavendish, Suffolk, c.1848

In September 1848 the *Bury and Norwich Post* carried a report of an excursion by the Bury and West Suffolk Archaeological Institute to Clare, Suffolk.<sup>58</sup> During their visit members of the Institute stopped for refreshments at the Half Moon Inn, where they were presented with a selection of images, rubbings, and antiquities held in local private collections. One of the more notable displays was by the wealthy farmer Walter Walford (1800–83), who exhibited ‘two silver coins of Edward I and III, taken from a coffin in Cavendish churchyard’. While these two coins are no longer traceable, the description suggests that both pieces formed all or part of an Edwardian coin hoard buried in c.1279–1351 and rediscovered in or before 1848. Exactly how or why Walford came to acquire the coins is unclear: the findspot in the churchyard at St Mary the Virgin, Cavendish (NGR TL 8051 4653), a pre-Conquest church rebuilt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,<sup>59</sup> lies some 7 km north-east of his residence at Stoke-by-Clare. In any case, the observation that the coins were ‘taken from a coffin’ supplies a funerary context for the hoard, and invites comparison with other finds from coffin burials at St Alfege’s, Greenwich (174 AR, deposited c.1279–1351), Halsall, Lancashire (13+ AV, deposited c.1430–65), and St Mary Merton, Surrey (2 AR, deposited c.1471–6).<sup>60</sup> Since the position of the coins within the coffin is unknown, it is impossible to determine the specific nature of this deposit.<sup>61</sup> The coins may represent the contents of a purse affixed to the burial costume, like the Edwardian hoard from Canterbury College, Oxford (see above), or might instead be a ‘placed’ deposit with an amuletic or apotropaic function, similar to the pairs of coins placed on the shoulders and around the heads of corpses at St James’ Priory, Bristol (2 AR, deposited c.1200–47), and Hatch, Hampshire (2 AR, deposited 1279–1351).<sup>62</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, D.F., and Dunning, G.C., 1936. ‘The Boyton find of coins of Edward I and II’, *NC* 5th ser. 16, 115–55.
- Andrews, M., 2019. *Coin Hoarding in Medieval England and Wales, c.973–1544. Behaviours, Motivations, and Mentalités*, BAR British Series 651 (Oxford).
- Andrews, M., 2020a. ‘Three late medieval and Tudor coin hoards from Greater London’, *BNJ* 90, 218–24.
- Andrews, M., 2020b. ‘Safe as houses? Coin hoards from settlements in Britain and Ireland, c.1250–1550’, *Journal of Archaeological Numismatics* 10, 303–43.
- Andrews, M., and Ghey, E., 2020. ‘Coin hoards from England, Scotland and Wales 2020’, *BNJ* 90, 231–54.
- Anon., 1859. ‘Extracts from the proceedings of the committee’, *Norfolk Archaeology* 5, 357–65.
- Archibald, M., Cook, B., and Bland, R., 1995. ‘Coins’, in P. Fasham and G. Keevill (eds), *Brighton Hill South (Hatch Warren): an Iron Age Farmstead and Deserted Medieval Village in Hampshire* (Salisbury), 108.
- Baggs, A.P., Baugh, G.C., Cox, D.C., McFall, J., and Stamper, P.A., 1998. ‘Church Stretton’, in G.C. Baugh (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Shropshire. Volume 10: Munslow Hundred (part), the Liberty and Borough of Wenlock* (London), 72–120.
- Besly, E., 1997. ‘A mid-fourteenth-century hoard from Llysdinam, Powys’, *BNJ* 67, 104–5.
- Blair, J., 1988. ‘St Frideswide’s monastery: problems and possibilities’, *Oxoniensia* 53, 221–58.
- Bolton, J., 1869. *Geological Fragments Collected Principally from Rambles among the Rocks of Furness and Cartmel* (Ulverston).
- Boon, G.C., 1986. *Welsh hoards 1979–1981* (Cardiff).
- Broadberry, S., Campbell, B.M.S., Klein, A., Overton, M., and van Leeuwen, B., 2015. *British Economic Growth, 1270–1870* (Cambridge).
- Brooke, G.C., 1927. ‘Recently discovered English hoards’, *NC* 5th ser. 7, 277–86.
- Cautley, H.M., 1975. *Suffolk Churches and their Treasures*, 4th ed. (Ipswich).
- Charlier, P., Poupon, J., Jeannel, G-F., Favier, D., Popescu, S-M., Weil, R., Moulherat, C., Huynh-Charlier, I., Dorion-Peyronnet, C., Lazar, A-M., Hervé, C., and de la Grandmaison, G.L., 2013. ‘The embalmed heart of Richard the Lionheart (1199 AD): a biological and anthropological analysis’, *Scientific Reports* 3:1296, 1–6.
- Clarke, R., 2006. ‘The coins and tokens’, in R. Jackson *et al.* (eds), *Excavations at St James’s Priory, Bristol* (Oxford), 133–5.

<sup>58</sup> *The Bury and Norwich Post*, 20 September 1848, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Cautley 1975, 251–2.

<sup>60</sup> Brooke 1927; Miller and Saxby 2007, 233; Andrews 2020a, 219–20.

<sup>61</sup> Andrews 2019, 193–5.

<sup>62</sup> Archibald, Cook and Bland 1995; Clarke 2006.

- Cole, D., 1986. *Rectors, Squires, Stewards in a Yorkshire Parish. Their Homes and Lives through Three Centuries in Adel and Cookridge* (Leeds).
- Cook, B., 2015. 'England's silver age: new and old hoards from England under the three Edwards (c.1279–1351)', in J. Naylor and R. Bland (eds), *Hoarding and the Deposition of Metalwork from the Bronze Age to the 20th Century: a British Perspective* (Oxford), 167–79.
- Dale, A., 1936. *James Wyatt, Architect, 1746–1813* (Oxford).
- Dillinger, J., 2012. *Magical Treasure Hunting in Europe and North America: a History* (Basingstoke).
- Dolley, R.H.M., Elmore Jones, F., and Webster, G., 1952–54. 'A find of Edward pence at Chester', *BNJ* 27, 91–2.
- Dolley, R.H.M., and Pagan, H.E., 1963. 'An early nineteenth-century discovery of Edward pennies at Knaresborough Priory', *BNJ* 32, 117–26.
- Dolley, R.H.M., and Stewart, I.H., 1952–54. 'The 1953 Bootham Treasure Trove', *BNJ* 27, 281–93.
- Douglas, M., 1966. *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London).
- Emery, A., 1996. *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300–1500. Volume I: Northern England* (Cambridge).
- Gilchrist, R., 2012. *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge).
- Gilchrist, R., and Sloane, B., 2005. *Requiem. The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain* (London).
- Grinsell, L., 1976. *Folklore of Prehistoric Sites in Britain* (Newton Abbot).
- Johnson, N., 2017. *Early Bronze Age Round Barrows of the Anglo-Welsh Border* (Oxford).
- Lack, K., 2005. 'A dyer on the road to Saint James: an identity for 'the Worcester Pilgrim'?', *Midland History* 30, 112–28.
- Lawrence, L.A., and Brooke, G.C., 1914. 'The Steppingly find of English coins', *NC* 4th ser. 14, 60–76.
- Leach, P., 1984. *The Archaeology of Taunton: Excavations and Fieldwork to 1980* (Bristol).
- Lucas, A., 2014. *Ecclesiastical Lordship, Seigneurial Power and the Commercialisation of Milling in Medieval England* (Abingdon).
- Miller, P., and Saxby, D., 2007. *The Augustinian Priory of St Mary Merton, Surrey. Excavations 1976–90* (London).
- Norris, H., 1871. 'Notice of the discovery of a leaden heart-case during the restoration of Merriott church, AD 1862', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 17, 74–6.
- North, J.J., 1975. 'An unpublished fourteenth century hoard', *NCirc* 83, 332–3.
- Orme, N., 2021. *Going to Church in Medieval England* (New Haven).
- Page, W., 1908. 'The liberty of Portsmouth and Portsea Island: manors, churches and charities', in W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Hampshire. Volume 3.* (London), 192–202.
- Pevsner, N., 1958. *The Buildings of England. North Somerset and Bristol* (London).
- Pirie, E.J.E., 1986. *Post-Roman coins from York excavations, 1971–81* (London).
- RCHME, 1970. *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset. Volume 2: South East* (London).
- Schofield, J., and Vince, A., 2003. *Medieval Towns: the Archaeology of British Towns in their European Setting*, 2nd ed. (London).
- Smith, P., 1988. *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, 2nd ed. (London).
- Stevens, M.F., 2012. 'Anglo-Welsh towns of the early fourteenth century: a survey of urban origins, property-holding and ethnicity', in H. Fulton (ed.), *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff), 137–62.
- Taylor, A.J., 1982. 'Scorched earth at Flint in 1294', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 30, 89–105.
- Taylor, H., 1883. *Historic Notices, with Topographical and other Gleanings, Descriptive of the Borough and County Town of Flint* (London).
- Thoresby, R., 1715. *Ducatus Leodiensis; or, the Topography of the Ancient and Populous Town and Parish of Leedes, and Parts adjacent in the West-Riding of the County of York* (London).
- Travaini, L., 2004. 'Saints and sinners: coins in medieval Italian graves', *NC* 164, 159–81.
- Wanostrucht, C.A., 1992. 'Discovery of a thirteenth-century hoard of silver coins in the chapel of St Bartholomew's Hospital, Sandwich', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 110, 153–9.
- Westerhof, D., 2008. *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge).
- White, G.J., 2012. *The Medieval English landscape, 1000–1540* (London).

