

The Recent Finds of Two Late Coins of London from the Long Cross Series in the Name of Henry III.

By Bob Thomas

When Ron Churchill and I wrote our book on the Brussels Hoard and the Long Cross Coinage in the name of Henry III¹ we covered the whole series even though the later coins were struck after the Brussels Hoard was finally sealed and lost to the original owners. We emphasised the rarity of some of the later classes especially those of classes 6 and 7 where metal detector finds have added to the numbers of coins of class 7 in particular which have been noted even though, thus far, they have not added to the styles which are known. No more full coins of class 6 for Renavd of London have been discovered although a collector in the middle west of England has recently acquired a cut half thought to have been found by a detectorist. Interestingly, this is not from the same obverse die as the full coin shown in Figure 58, page 49 of the book and an image of that cut coin appears below by kind permission of the new owner.



It is to all intents and purposes of the same design as the earlier full London coin and the obverse is very similar to that appearing on the coins from the Bury St Edmunds mint which were found in the Colchester Hoard of 1969².

In October 2017 another detectorist found a coin in an Essex field north of Harlow, the images of which appear below.



¹ Churchill & Thomas 2012.

² Archibald & Cook 2001.

This coin has now been acquired by the author of this paper and as you can see it is somewhat dark, and the reverse legend is double struck, but I am confident it reads REN AVD ONL VND. The bust on the other hand is clear and well struck and from the image it is equally clear the eyes have similarities with those from the class 6 coin above, whilst the rest of the obverse design is closer to the London busts of coins from Class 7. I am, therefore, suggesting it should be included in class 7 as an addition to the two basic types so far mentioned³. The coin weighs 1.25 grams, a little light but not unduly so for the time.

The question now arises as to where this coin should be placed in any dating sequence. In his contribution to BM Occasional Paper No. 87⁴ Brand suggested a 1268/78 time slot for the Bury St Edmunds class 6 coins which is without doubt in the light of current knowledge too wide with the earlier years being far too soon. Martin Allen tells me that his forthcoming publication on Medieval European Coinage 1066–1279 will mention a date of 'about' 1275 for classes 5i and 6. Class 6 was probably a very short lived issue as a forerunner of class 7 so it is likely that the full coin shown above was struck no earlier than 1275 and, certainly, no later than 1278.

The coins of Roger le Assur who was appointed at the Canterbury Mint in 1272 to follow John Digge are something of a red herring as the dates during which he struck his coins of class 5h are not known with any certainty. However, his issue was probably both small and short lived, possibly over a shorter period than is suggested by the dates allotted to his tenure. There are, after all, only three surviving examples which have been located to date, all in recent times. He was granted his die for life in 1275 and it is possible he did not start working until after that time as the only known evidence is of only modest activity at the Canterbury Mint between December 1272 and June 1274 until it re-opened again in April 1278 when it is known it was using existing dies to produce 5h coins over a six to eight month period.

There is no doubt that Renavd was a prolific striker of coins in his time, most of which were too late to be included in Brussels which contained just 126 out of a total for 5g of 2,616 coins listed. This was, however, a peaceful time in England and there was no major reason for coins hoarded in this short period not being recovered when they were called in to be replaced by the new coins of Edward I. What we have been seeing in recent years is by courtesy of the detectorists who have been unearthing single finds in droves in sites associated with late 13th century fairs, markets and other active trading sites. Without doubt, however, these later coins from classes 6 and 7 were not around long enough to be hoarded and/or lost in any number which is why they remain so elusive at the present time.

Bibliography.

Archibald MM and Cook BJ. 2001. *British Museum Occasional Paper No. 87. The Colchester Hoard 1969.*
Churchill R and Thomas B 2012. *The Brussels Hoard of 1908: The Long Cross Coinage of Henry III.*



³ Churchill & Thomas 2012. Appendix 7.

⁴ Archibald and Cook 2001. Pages 85 and 87.t