

CROMFORD DERBYSHIRE COUNTERMARKS

The Order and Method of Over-punching

Eric C. Hodge

Richard Arkwright's cotton-spinning mill in Derbyshire issued countermarked dollars to the value of 5 shillings (5s) and 4 shillings and 9 pence (4/9) as detailed in Manville¹. Some of the 5s marks are certainly over the previous 4/9 mark. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1. 5s mark over 4/9.
Private collection.



Fig. 2. 4/9 mark showing different
lettering to the 5s mark in Fig. 1.
Private collection.

It is also obvious that the second (5s) countermark includes the name and the value. The previous value (4/9) is clearly visible, but also seen are some of the previous lettering from the 4/9 mark. The first O of Cromford is over and slightly below a previous O. It is then possible to read the top of the letters C, R and M from Cromford.

Figs. 2, 3 and 4 highlight the different lettering and spacing used in the 4/9 mark compared to the 5s mark. (Interestingly Fig. 2 also shows the remains of a possible Bank of England octagonal stamp indicating the 4/9 mark was made in or after 1804.) Again in Fig. 3 can be seen the tops of lettering from the previous mark. From 12 o'clock to about 2 o'clock can be read FORD slightly above and to the left of the new letters.

What Fig. 3 apparently shows is that it was possible to place the new 5s mark over a previous 4/9 mark without the 4/9 value being

¹ Manville, H.E., 2001. Tokens of the Industrial Revolution. Foreign Silver Coins Countermarked for Use in Great Britain, c.1787–1828, BNS Special Publication 3 (London), pages 203-7.

visible. (It is not possible to prove the earlier mark was for 4/9, but anything else seems unlikely.)

At a recent auction² an interesting countermarked coin was placed on the block. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 3. Clearly showing the closeness of the FO in Cromford compared to the position in Figs. 2 & 4.
Private collection.



Fig. 4. Cromford Derbyshire 4/9. Countermark with an apparent attempt to erase the 4/9 value.
Private collection.

This coin is listed and photographed in Manville.³ Manville notes '4/9 flattened, apparently on the punch.' However in a recent sale catalogue⁴ it was noted that 'Countermark tooled on value (not from punch as Manville suspects)... an interesting piece with a long provenance.' In a subsequent auction⁵ it was noted that 'countermark with value obliterated though lettering very fine.' From Fig. 4 it is clear that the value has not been obliterated, though there has been an attempt to erase it. It is not too clear from this photograph but the 4/9 has been flattened except for a small portion of the down stroke of the 9 at 3 o'clock just in from the D of Derbyshire where there remains a lump of metal. Marks can be seen around the base of some lettering that would tend to indicate the attempted erasure was on the host coin rather than the punch.

The question is, was this an attempt to flatten the 4/9 prior to applying the 5s mark?



² Baldwin's of St. James's 26, 22 November 2018, lot 485.

³ Manville page 206 (1798 FM b) and Plate 47 number 7.

⁴ Baldwin's 2016 Summer Fixed Price List, lot SC069.

⁵ Baldwin's of St. James's 9, 2 September 2017, lot 1371.