

# Edward III Pennies of York with Saltire-in-Quatrefoil Reverse.

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During the summer of 2020 a metal detectorist found a medieval silver penny in a field in Norfolk (01). Although very poorly struck it was clear that it was an Edward III penny of York, attributed to the Post-Treaty period. The obverse bust featured an annulet on the breast and a saltire could be seen in the obverse legend after EDWARDVS; on the reverse there was a pellet visible after TAS and a saltire before EBO. All of this accorded with the standard publications on the period except for one detail not mentioned by any, which is a saltire in the reverse quatrefoil where, according to the publications, there should have been a pellet. Sources consulted included Lawrence 1933, North 1991, Wren 1995 and Stewartby 2009. It was noted that there are some coins with a pellet in the quatrefoil in which the pellet merges with the ends of the quatrefoil curves and looks like a saltire and other specimens exhibit vestigial cruciform lines from the original layout guides, but neither would seem to apply to the four coins cited here.

I therefore consulted a friend more knowledgeable than I in the series and he swiftly spotted a similar coin offered for sale on a dealer's website (02). Comparing the two coins the reverse is clearly a die duplicate, the obverse possibly so but uncertain due to the poor condition of the first coin. My friend then went on to not only spot a third specimen on another website (03) but located a fourth example in a private collection (04). Comparison with the third specimen confirmed that it was from a different obverse die but shared the same reverse die as the first two, whilst the fourth specimen is struck from different obverse and reverse dies. The fact that we now have two reverse dies rules out a one-off die-sinker's error.

In consequence it was decided to publish these data on the BNS Blog and to invite comment from others. David Greenhalgh, an acknowledged authority on medieval die-cutting, responded with the suggestion that the saltire in quatrefoil was not a deliberately added motif, but the result of a coincidence of alignment of the quatrefoil punches. However it is noted that the arms of the saltires do not project exactly to the apexes of the quatrefoils and the arms are the same size and length of other saltires in the legend, suggesting the same punch. Whatever the true explanation, it was felt that the existence of these apparent saltire-in-quatrefoil specimens should be noted for future reference.

I am most grateful to Roger Barrett whose diligent research led to the discovery of all three other comparable coins, and also to Denis Martin and David Greenhalgh for their input. Image 02 is reproduced by courtesy of Silbury Coins, 04 courtesy of Roger Barrett.

## References

Lawrence, L.A. 1933: The Coinage of Edward III from 1351 *Numismatic Chronicle* 5th Series Vol. 13  
North, J.J.1991: *English Hammered Coinage Vol. 2* London  
Stewartby, Lord 2009: *English Coins 1180-1551* London  
Wren, C.R. 1995: *The English Long-Cross Pennies 1279-1489* Herne Bay



01



02



03



04

