

Counterfeit Round Pound Coins (iv) More Unusual Issues

Gary Oddie

In this fourth instalment several more unusual issues are presented⁽¹⁾, essentially a postscript to the second note⁽²⁾. The first three pieces follow on the theme of materials and the final three look at unusual die/mould manufacturing techniques used particularly for brass counterfeits that were not covered in the third note⁽³⁾.

7. Foil coated base metal.



1994	9.824 g
Cu	$38.98 \pm 0.17 \%$
Ni	$29.39 \pm 0.16 \%$
Pb	$20.78 \pm 0.14 \%$
Sn	$10.20 \pm 0.09 \%$
Sb	$0.551 \pm 0.025 \%$
Traces Bi, Nb < 0.07 %	

Fig. 1. Foil coated base metal counterfeit 1994 pound.

On first inspection this appeared to be a foil coated counterfeit. However closer inspection of the damage to the bust and edge reveal that the outer coating comprises at least two layers on top of a lead core. The outermost layer is probably Nickel and below that is an obvious layer of Copper, which looks pink in regions of recent damage.

In some areas, the coating has started to lift off, as if it was a foil. The close-ups show an irregular surface of the layers below, suggesting that this has been created electrolytically. This is likely an electrotype and as such, a spectacularly inefficient way to create counterfeits for circulation.

8. Two bronze pennies glued together and coated with metallic resin.

This is essentially the same as type 1⁽²⁾ but the core is made from two pennies and thus the resulting counterfeit is very light at 7.4 g. The reverse has a Welsh Leek, the edge is unreadable and just one specimen has been seen (EN collection).

9. Lead core with plaster of Paris outer, gold painted.

Just one specimen of this type has been seen. It was in the counterfeit trays of the late Alan Fordham in the Cambridge Coin Shop in mid-1997. It was in terrible condition, looked very fragile and much of the plaster had cracked off. Unfortunately, the opportunity never arose to acquire the piece, but it is likely others exist.

10. “COPY” obverse die 2006-2008.

The first of these pieces was presented previously as type 3 because of its unusual material and manufacture, being copper and false dies⁽²⁾. That piece was dated 2006. The die continued to be used to manufacture brass counterfeits dated 2007 and 2008.

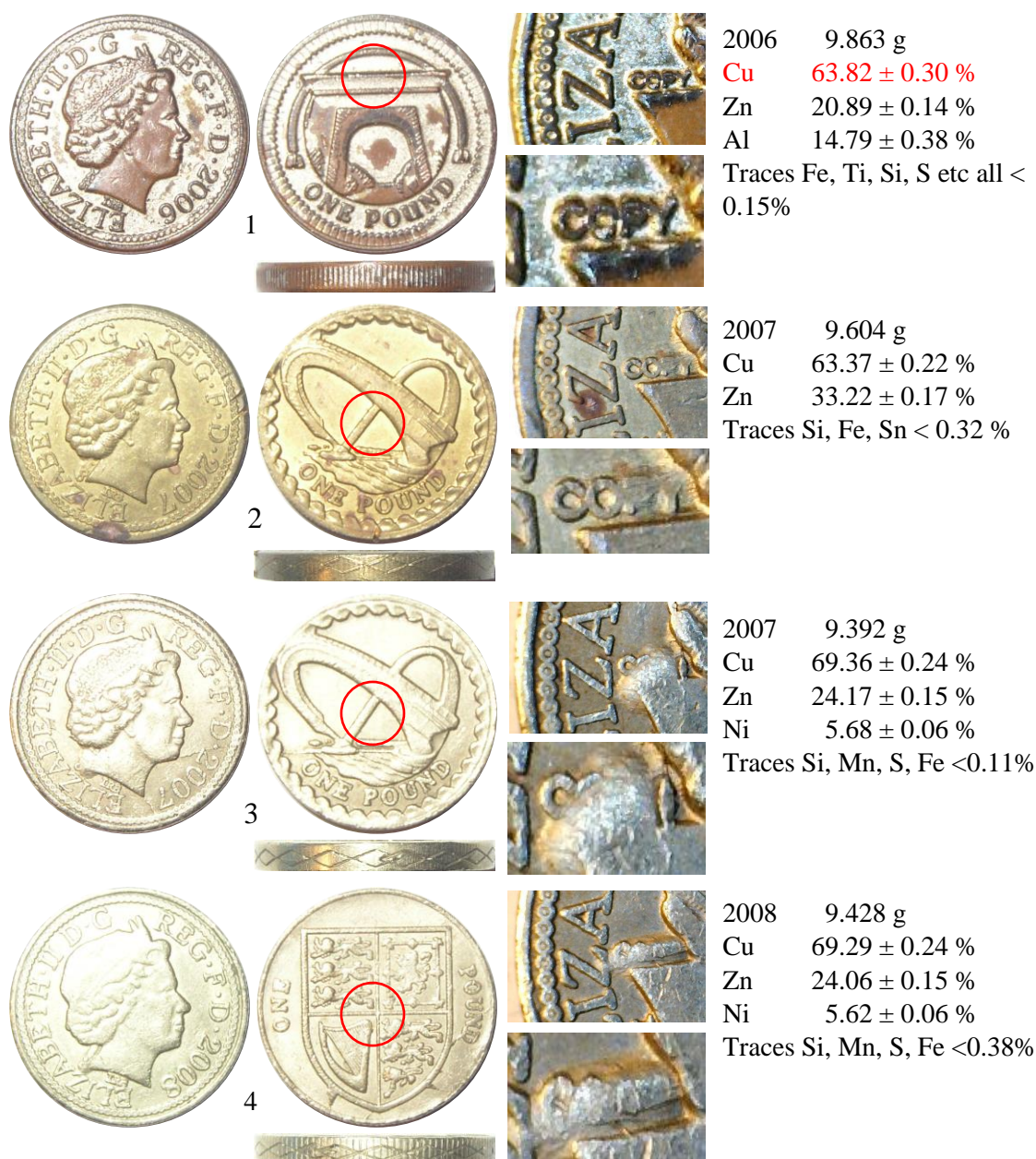


Fig. 2. The “COPY” series of counterfeit pound coins 2006-2008 and close-up of the word “COPY”.

The sequence of production of this series of counterfeits can be determined from the attempts to remove the word COPY from the die. Die 3 also has significant die flaws, not present in the earlier state shown by die 4. It is also interesting to note that the sequence also shows a development in the metals used. Starting with copper that needed plating, then to yellow brass and finally to the familiar Nickel-Brass. In the same way the copper-based version just has edge milling, and the quality (depth and uniformity) of the wavy lines improves in the same sequence 2-4-3.

11. CNC machined dies - 2008.

This group is identified by the “spaghetti-like” hair and distinguished by the initials IRB or ERB below the truncation and the proximity of the diadem to the D.G.

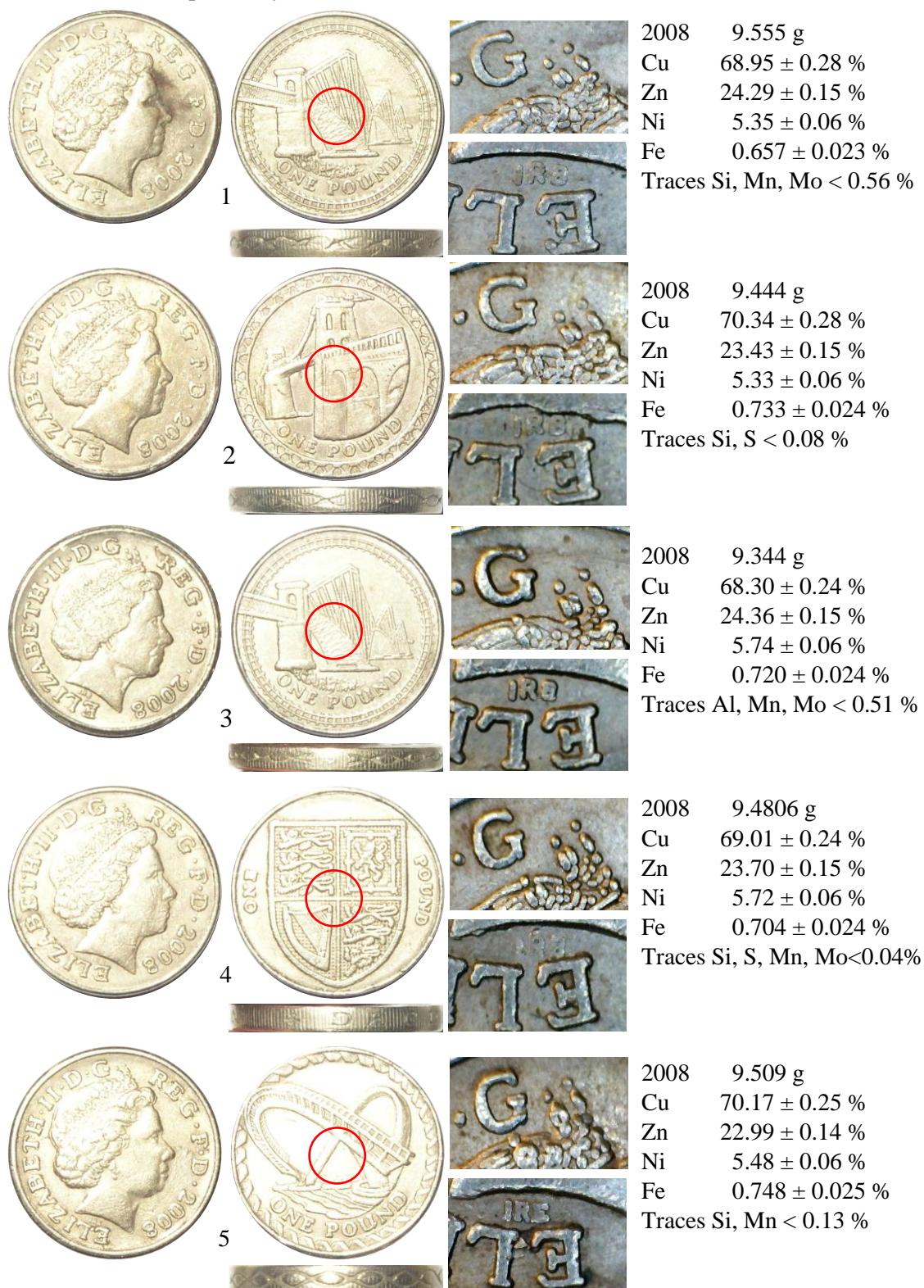


Fig. 3. Dies manufactured by the same machine, but all different obverses.

12. CNC machined dies – 1997.

The following pieces have very similar obverse dies where all of the lettering has rounded serifs as if created by a miniature milling machine.

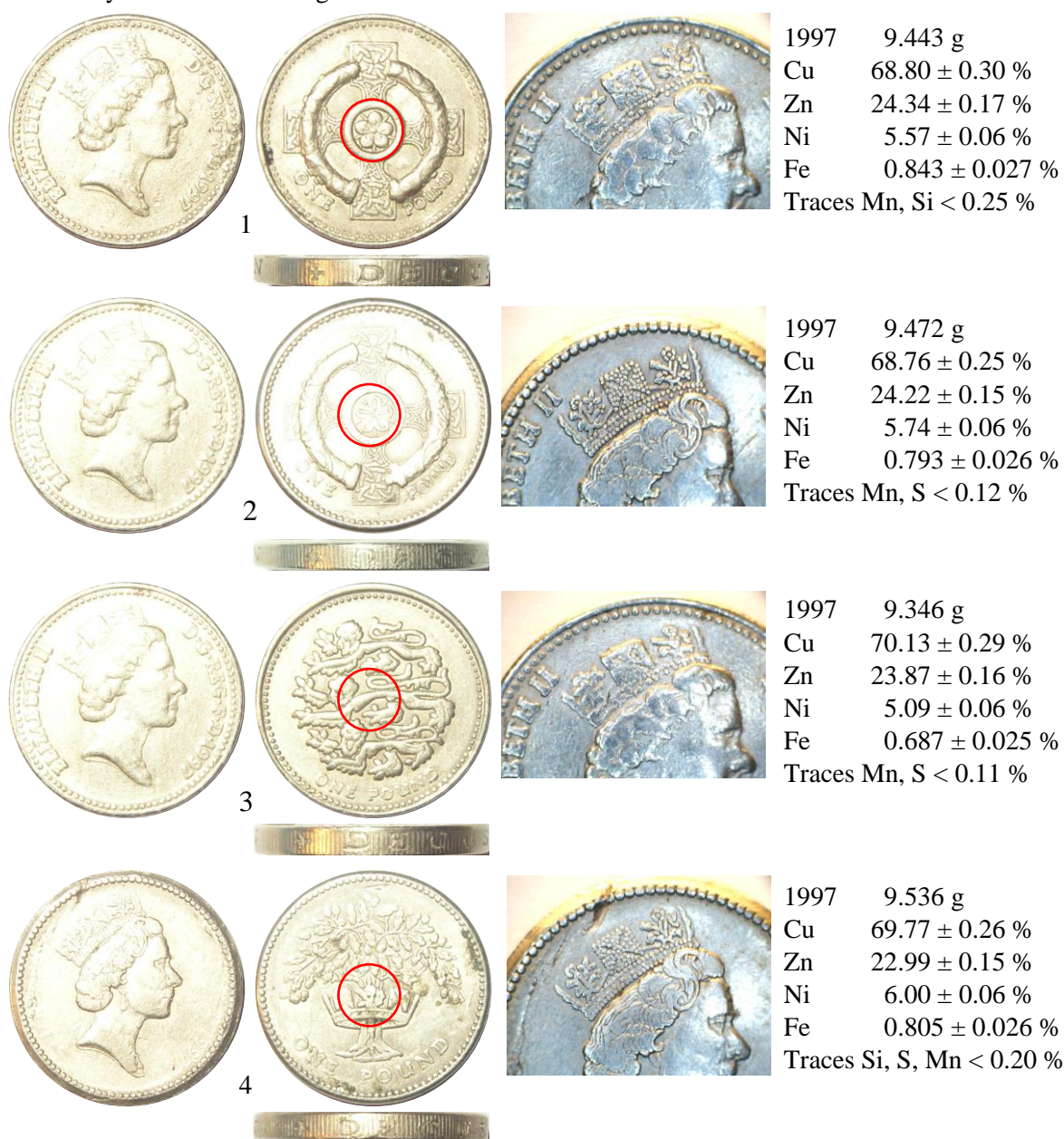


Fig. 4. Five examples of counterfeits made using machine cut dies, dated 1997.

The first four pieces are from the same manufacturer and display the same edge. 1 and 3 are from the same die but the latter die has more die wear. 2 and 4 have much more detail to the crown and the hair is very “spaghetti-like”. The orientation of the legend is different – note the alignment of the H II to the outer beads.

These pieces were likely made by the same counterfeiters or at least using the same type of machinery as those shown in type 11.

Conclusions

The broad range of ingenuity and skill of the counterfeiters has been demonstrated in the above sections and previous three notes. Manufactured in sufficient numbers to cause a complete recoinage of the denomination, they were once commonplace, with maybe 3% of the circulating pounds being false. Apart from a few spurious and small issues (resin coated, electrotypes etc) the numbers manufactured must have generated sufficient profit to counter the perceived risks.

Ultimately the cost of the counterfeits is borne by the organizations or people who remove them from circulation. The Banks, Royal Mint, Post Office etc. carried most of the cost. Collectors and numismatists all paid £1 for each of these pieces making this possibly the cheapest numismatic subject.

Now that the round pounds are no longer circulating they will become increasingly rare, though not necessarily desirable!

References

- (1) G. Oddie. Jan-2021, Counterfeit Round Pound Coins (i) Lead Alloy Issues, British Numismatic Society Research Blog, accessed 30 Jan 2021, <<https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/132-counterfeit-pounds-gary-oddie-001.pdf>>.
- (2) G. Oddie. Jan-2021, Counterfeit Round Pound Coins (ii) Unusual Issues, British Numismatic Society Research Blog, accessed 30 Jan 2021, <<https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/133-counterfeit-pounds-gary-oddie-002.pdf>>.
- (3) G. Oddie. Jan-2021, Counterfeit Round Pound Coins (iii) Brass Issues, British Numismatic Society Research Blog, accessed 30 Jan 2021, <<https://britnumsoc.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/134-counterfeit-pounds-gary-oddie-003.pdf>>.

