

Two 'New' Varieties of Edward III Pre-Treaty Series Pennies.

Duncan Russell

Since L.A. Lawrence's comprehensive study of Edward III's 4th Coinage from 1351, few additional varieties have been added to the Corpus. That this remains true, 70 + years following publication, is a remarkable tribute to Lawrence's diligence and scholarship. Despite Lawrence's own observation, in the concluding section of Part IV, that *'I am well aware of the incompleteness of the lists' 'and that some future student will be able to fill the gaps'*; no additional publication since has challenged the pre-eminence or comprehensive nature of his work.

That Lawrence felt that his study lacked the level of completeness that he would have wished, he attributed to *'The great difficulty in adding to the lists'*, which was due to, *'the impossibility of conducting a satisfactory search in the museums and private collections all over the country'*. A sentiment no doubt still felt by many researchers today. However, the tools available to the modern student provide increasing opportunities to add to the known varieties of this and other series within our common numismatic heritage.

At the very least, over the last 70+ years a number of significant collections have appeared in the Salerooms (e.g. R.C.Lockett - Delme-Radcliffe - R Carlyon-Britton and G.V.Doubleday); in particular the Doubleday Collection of Coins of Edward III most effectively mirrors Lawrence's work on the 4th Coinage. Many of these Collections contain a number of varieties not recorded elsewhere. Interestingly Lawrence himself postulates a number of varieties which ought to exist but were not known in his day. One of the two coins described here falls into this category (Coin 2).

That new varieties turn up should not be too surprising except for the capricious nature of coin survival; matched by the equally chancy nature of retrieval and identification? In Lawrence's day these circumstances were further limited by the likelihood of the coin being available for examination. Although these circumstances still persist the advent of the Internet has considerably increased the volume of material available to examination. In the case of some online auction sites the serious Collector / Student can make some interesting discoveries, particularly amongst the smaller denominations.

The first coin described below, belongs to the very beginning of the Pre-Treaty Series while the second coin occurs at the very end of the Series.

Coin 1.

Edward III Penny Series A - Mint London

Obv: Crowned Bust facing

+EDWARDVS oo (REX) oo AnGLIE (Annulet stops, Lombardic N's, Fishtail Serif on S).

Rev: Long cross quartered by trefoil of pellets; annulet in each quarter.

(CIV)I / TAS xx/ L(On) / DOn - (Saltire stops; waisted O's and Fishtail Serif on S)

Double Annulet above T in TAS - previously unrecorded. Plus double Saltires cut over Annulets after S in TAS - previously unrecorded.

North.....? SCBC? Coin bought on eBay September 2011.



Lawrence records single Annulet above T with double Annulets after S or no Annulet above T associated with double Saltires after TAS.

This coin combines the two elements:-

Annulet(s) above T in TAS with Double Saltire after S. Struck from fresh unworn die it is clear that the Saltires have been over-cut on the die above the earlier Annulets.

This coin probably represents the final version of Series A Pence which was swiftly superseded by the Series C type minted in Late Summer 1351.

The Series A coinage marked a significant change to the previous 3rd "Florin" Coinage and it was intended to comprise of Gold Nobles and its fractions + Silver Pence:

however, the only true Series A coins minted were the Pence. It appears that a reduction in weight of Gold and Silver (due to bullion price instability) led to a rapid redesign as the larger letter punches for Series A could not be accommodated on the the reduced weight coin flans.¹ So the near contemporary Series B Silver consisted exclusively of the new Groat (tariffed at 4 pence) and its' Half (tariffed at 2 pence) respectively.

The striking of the Series A smaller silver denomination, having commenced in June /July 1351, ceased by the end of Summer 1351² or was rapidly curtailed until the introduction of the Series C Penny in late 1351. As a result true coins of Series A are rare, however, mules with Series C are well known and serve to establish the Series sequence.

The second Penny, reported here, comes from the end of the Pre-Treaty Coinage (Series G).

Coin 2.



Edward III Pre-Treaty Penny Series Gb / Gc

Obv: Crowned bust facing

EDWARDVS REX ANGLI -Unbarred N; no stops (Gb?). See LAL Pt III Page 56.

Rev: Long cross quartered with trefoil of pellets.

CIVI / TAS / LON / DON - No stops

Saltire in 'LON' quarter. (Gc) previously unknown.

North 1207 Obv only; SCBC 1590 Obv only; LAL(PT III) Obv Gb? / -

See LAL Page 56 Mules (Gb? Obv with 'No Stops') and Page 59 where Saltire in quarter under LON postulated but otherwise unknown.

Note Series G Letterforms = Broken E + unbarred N's

Series G ran for the longest period in the Pre-Treaty Series, from AD 1356 to 1361: as such it is very extensive and complex in its' sub-groupings with frequent muling. Lawrence divided it into eight sections labelled Ga to Gh. These divisions are distinguished by variations in letter forms, use of stops, either Annulets or Saltires in the obverse or reverse or no stops at all. The use of Quartermarks, again either Annulets or Saltires amongst the trefoil of pellets in one of the angles of the reverse are a feature of this Series.

Lawrence postulated the existence of the Gc Penny with Saltire Quartermark in the LON quarter (Saltire Quartermarks were already known for Gc Pence in the CIVI and TAS Quarters). The existence of Saltire Quartermarks in all quarters of the Gc Groat sequence made it reasonable to conclude that a similar pattern would be exhibited by the Gc Pence. See 'The Coinage of Edward III from 1351' Part III pp 58 / 9 Series Gc Pence. On pages 56/57 Lawrence describes an anomalous Gb(?) penny with the Obverse muled with a Gc reverse but, unlike the current example (above), with Saltire Quartermark within the pellets under TAS. The current example has the Saltire QM under LON.

Gc Half Groats only occur as reverses, muled with either Ga or Gb Half Groat Obverses. For these muled reverses only the Annulet Quartermark are known in each of the Quarters (CIVI - TAS - LON and DON). So the Saltire Quartermark pattern skipped a denomination between the Groat and the Penny.

This use of the Saltire / Annulet Quartermark pattern gives further credence to the concept that these 'Privy' or sequence marks would be used to attribute specific production runs / individual work teams when the coinage was subject to assaying through the 'Pyx' Trial process.

This new Gb / Gc Mule Penny with the Saltire Quartermark in the LON quarter validates Lawrence's speculative inclusion of this reverse type in Part III page 59; where he also describes the possibility of a further variety with the Saltire QM in the DON Quarter. This currently remains 'unknown' today as it did in Lawrence's - however, diligent observation may yet bring this remaining unknown to the light of day.

Footnotes:

1. Lord Stewartby, *English Coins 1180 to 1551* (Spink) - page 213.
2. Lord Stewartby, *English Coins 1180 to 1551* (Spink) - page 210.

Bibliography.

L.A.Lawrence. Numismatic Chronicle Vol's VI 1926 & XII 1932 *The Coinage of Edward III from 1351* Parts I & III.

Glendining *Catalogue of the Gordon V Doubleday Collection of Coins (1327 to 1377)* 7th / 8th June 1972. See Lot 527

J.J.North.*English Hammered Coinage Volume 2 Edward I to Charles II 1272 to 1662* - Published Spink

Standard Catalogue of British Coins (SCBC) - Published Spink.”

A further example of the Saltire Quartermark below LON in the Third Quarter was acquired via eBay in November 2017 and is reported below.

Edward III 4th Coinage Pre-Treaty Mule Penny Series Ga / Gc

Weight = 1.03 gms)



Obv: Crowned Bust facing - Annulet on breast

+EDWARDVS o REX o ANGLI o Z - Annulet Stops (Ga) and reverse barred N.

See LAL Part III Page 54, Ga 5

Rev: Long Cross quartered by trefoil of pellets.

CIVI / TAS / LON / DOII - Unbarred N in DON

Saltire in LON quarter (Gc (4a)) - previously unknown but postulated by Lawrence.

This Gc (Saltire / LON Quarter) reverse die is different to the Die previously reported in the earlier Numismatic Circular - the side truncated (i.e. Sliced) Letter T in TAS is clearly from a different letter punch compared to the previous example. Also the positioning and style of the C in CIVI is demonstrably different. So it is clear that at least two reverse dies with the Saltire in the third quarter were employed. Given time no doubt further examples may come to light, with the potential for the other “Unknown” Gc (Saltire / DON) Penny may also appear. Readers of this Blog may hold the key to the finding of this currently ‘Unknown’ Series G Penny, if it exists. Comments and images of any further examples would be appreciated.

