

An Unrecorded George II Shilling Overdate – 1747/6

Gary Oddie

Introduction

The silver coinage of George II has received very little study in terms of die varieties beyond the occasional discoveries of overdates that have been catalogued in the familiar ESC⁽¹⁾ and Bull⁽²⁾ with some of the making it into the standard catalogues⁽³⁾. It was the acquisition of a 1736/5 shilling in about 1978, in exchange for almost all of the rest of my schoolboy's coin collection, that resulted in a specialisation that still persists!

When searching for die varieties, distinct features in the design are very useful in separating the dies, especially the fine details that are entered by hand after the main design has been hubbed into the die. Counting harp strings is one measure and for the Hanoverian coinage the number and location of hearts in the Lüneburg arms can also be used. The first publication to cover these was in 1971⁽⁴⁾ and some of these varieties are noted in the latest ESC by Bull⁽²⁾.

The known overdates on George II shillings are as follows: 1736/5, 1739/7, 1741/39, 1743/1, 1745/3, 1746/5, 1750/6 and 1750 with a 5/4 and the wider 0 possibly covering a 6. It is interesting that the 1746 dies were being reused in 1750, and it is then no surprise that a 1747/6 die has now been found. Looking at their frequency, it is likely that the variety has just been overlooked for many decades.

A 1747/6 Shilling

The illustration below shows a recently seen 1747 shilling that was described as a “Possible 2nd 7/5 Or 7/3 unlisted error”. Closer inspection reveals a 7/6.



Fig. 1. 1747/6 shilling with close-ups. Overdate in red, a die scratch/flaw in blue.

The 1746 die that was overstruck with a 7 is different from the reverse dies of all the 1746 LIMA shillings seen so far, and very different from the proof 1746 reverse die, though all have 7 hearts and 7 neat harp strings.

In the usual way, a search was made of online auction archives (Noonans, Noble Numismatics Australia, London Coins), eBay and the internet for good images. Thanks also to members of the Shilling Appreciation Society Facebook group for providing images. A total of 65 different pieces have been found dated 1747, all with roses in the angles, and the reverse dies are presented below. The die identifier is in blue text, the main features in black and the source of the image in green.

The obverses are much more challenging, with possibly 10 different dies identified so far, and much more work is needed before publication.

Die Study of 1747 Shilling Reverse Dies

Reverse 1

- 6 Hearts – lowest touches border
- 7 Harp strings – 1st very long
- 7 double entered at bottom



R1



Noonans 13-3-2018 lot 279



Reverse 2

- 6 Hearts – lower two away from border
- 7 Harp strings – 6th double entered
- 7 double entered at top



R2



www – MA-Shops



Reverse 3

- 6 Hearts – lower left in corner
- 7 Harp strings – 1st shorter than 2nd
- 7 neatly entered



R3



Noonans 12-3-2013 lot 172



Reverse 4

- 6 Hearts – lower two away from border
- 8 Harp strings
- 7 double entered



R4



Private Collection



Reverse 5

7 Hearts
7 neat harp strings
7 over 6 – lions double entered in Hanoverian shield

Private Collection



Reverse 6

7 Hearts – upper left and lower left double entered: middle right very small
8 Harp strings
7 away from 4 – small die flaw develops parallel to top of 7

Britannia Coins



Summary and Conclusions

The above can be summarised in the following table.

Date	Type	Hearts	Harp Strings	Variety	Die	Number Found
1747	Roses	6	7	7 double entered at bottom	R1	21
				7 double entered at top	R2	9
				7 neatly entered	R3	12
		7	8	7 double entered	R4	5
			7	7 over 6	R5	11
			8	7 away from 4	R6	7

Table 1. Summary of 1747 shilling reverse dies.

With the 65 specimens found from just 6 dies, the statistics are good and the usual analysis gives a coverage of 1.0 and there might be just one more reverse die to find. Whilst counting hearts and harp strings is good for identifying dies, it is not infallible, as the table above shows for dies with 6 hearts and 7 harp strings, where there are three distinct dies.

References

- (1) P.A. Rayner. *English Silver Coinage since 1649*. Seaby, 5th Edition, 1992. It is interesting to see the varieties appear as the editions progress
- (2) M. Bull. *English Silver Coinage since 1649 – 6th Fully Revised Edition*. Spink, 2015.
- (3) G. Edmund (Ed.). *Standard Catalogue of British Coins – Coins of England and The United Kingdom*. Spink, 57th Edition, 2022.
- (4) R.B. Smith. Hearts and Harp Strings – British Coinage Die Varieties 1714-1837. *Coins*, August 1971, pp14-17.

