

An Unusual Hoard of 17thC Tokens and Coins

Gary Oddie

In the August 1983 issue of Coin News appeared the short note shown in Figure 1. I had probably not paid much attention to it at the time as my interest in tokens had not yet been sparked.

A few decades later and notice of another hoard combining both tokens and regal copper coins was published.⁽²⁾ This group was from a century and a half later and found at Machynlleth, 18 miles North east of Aberystwyth. The hoard comprised 10 halfpennies from 1806-7 and three tokens: a 1795 halfpenny token of John Stubbs Jorden (D&H Glamorgan 1-3), an 1811 penny token of the Worcester House of Industry (Withers 1240-59) and an 1813 Canadian Provinces Halfpenny token (Breton 965).

These are the only two occasions, that I am aware of, where a purse or small hoard of regal coins and tokens have been found together.

That might have made a very short note for the Blog until, at the November 2022 meeting of the Bedford Numismatic Society, I was handed a small packet of badly corroded coins and tokens, shown in Figures 2 and 3.

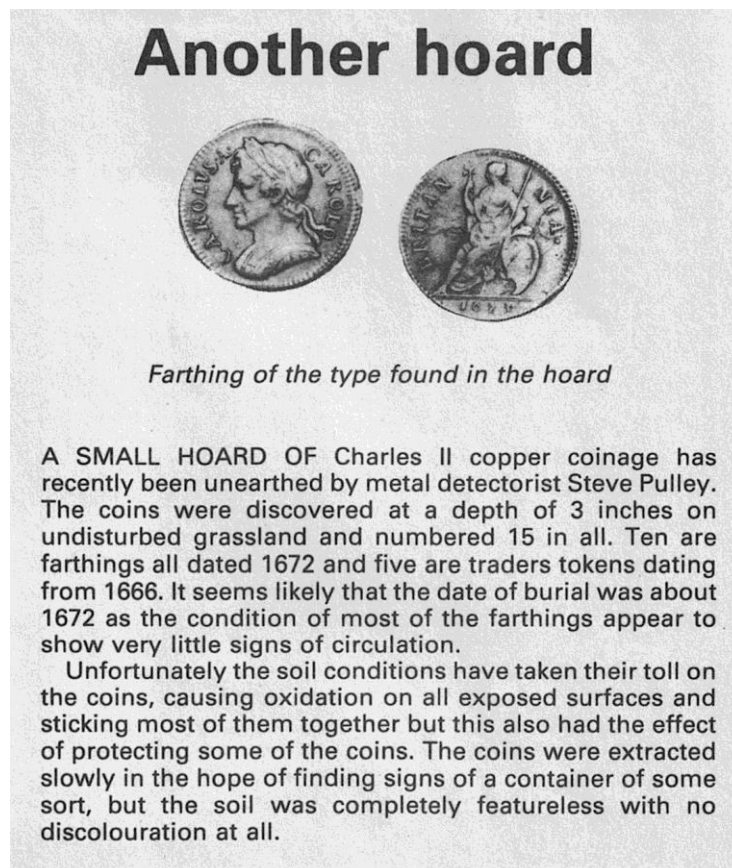


Fig. 1. Original announcement of the hoard.⁽¹⁾



Fig. 2. Group of 17th century tokens from the Bartonthorpe Hoard (shown approximately 150%).

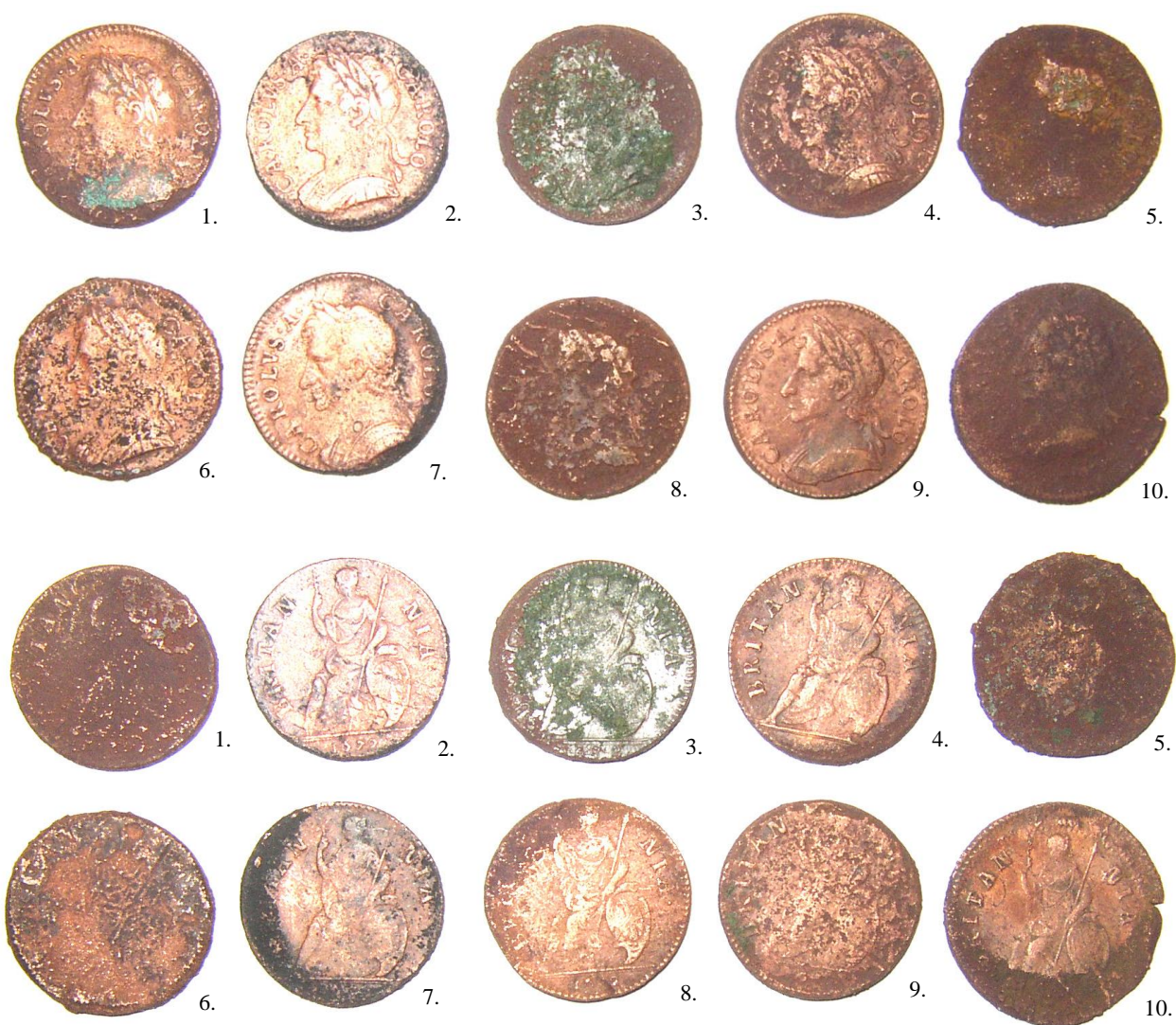


Fig. 2. Group of 10 Charles II farthings from the Bartonthorpe hoard (shown approximately 125%).

All of the pieces have a provenance back to the finder, Steve Pulley, and the small area called Bartonthorpe, just south-east of the village of Earls Barton and 8 miles east of Northampton (SP867629).

Ignoring the corrosion, these coins must have been at least VF condition when lost and it is clear from the shadows in the corrosion patterns (especially the obverses of 4 and 7 and reverses of 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10) that they were together in the ground until found as a group. Farthing 10 appears to be on a larger flan, but it is double struck and noticeably thinner than the others. The weights are as follows: 1. 5.62g, 2. 5.72g, 3. 6.21g, 4. 5.84g, 5. 4.99g, 6. 5.20g, 7. 5.72g, 8. 5.53g, 9. 6.30g and 10. 5.33g. This makes the piece with the larger flan actually the third lightest.

As the hoard had been found in Northamptonshire, the author of the most recent book on Northamptonshire 17thC tokens, Peter Waddell, was contacted. He has known the finder, Steve Pulley, for many years, and a short note in his book refers to this hoard.⁽³⁾ The book also lists the contents of the hoard when it was viewed in 1985 and the 17thC tokens were noted as follows:

John Bletsoe of Harrold (Beds W/D 50), Thomas Newman of St Neots (Hunts W/D 61), Thomas Bebee of Rothwell (Northants W/D 143), Edmund Chandler of (Kings) Sutton (Northants W/D 151), William Bell of Towcester (Northants W/D 157).

It would thus appear that sometime between 1985 and 2022 two of the original hoard pieces have been replaced by two other local metal detector finds and the integrity of the original hoard has been compromised.

At the time of finding, there had been suspicions that the coins might have been counterfeits and they were sent to the Royal Mint for analysis and comment in 1987. Details of the dies and XRF analysis and comparison with Scandinavian copper ingots of the period confirmed the coins to be genuine.⁽⁴⁾

That five of the farthings have a readable date of 1672 and the other 5 are too corroded to read suggests that this is the likely date of deposition. Any later, and pieces dated 1673 might have been expected.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) Anon. Another Hoard. *Coin News*, August 1983, p41 col.2.
- (2) M. Andrews. The Machynlleth (1909) find of 18th and 19th century copper coins and tokens. *Token Corresponding Society Bulletin*, v.13 n.11 pp534-6.
- (3) P.D.S. Waddell. *Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough Tokens and Checks*. Galata, 2012, p7.
- (4) G.P. Dyer. Correspondence from the Royal Mint to P.D.S. Waddell, 30 June 1987 (3/099/3/12).

Thanks to Simon Rowley for lending me the group of tokens and coins and also to Peter Waddell for completing the history of the hoard.

