A Guide to the 1887 reverses of the Proof £5 Series

Including no B.P. and Sydney Proofs

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1 Reverses

1.1 Reverse A

Reverse A can be identified by the characteristic lower “raised lip” flaw to the 7 in 1887. We can further consider the 1, it features the four incuse flaws present on all proof issues and ∼ 60% of circulation issues - which, at the time of writing this, is believed to have stemmed from a flawed piece-punch, which is why the same flaw can be found upon the 1 in some crowns of the same year. The first 8 in the date features a slight divet in shape, on the center right of the lower loop, it also features a flaw on the upper loop of similiar nature, near the maximum point. Likewise, the second 8 features two flaws of similar style, on the right hand side of the lower loop.



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 - A



(b) Two Flaws on 8 - A



(c) Two Flaws on 8 - A



(d) Raised Lip Flaw on 7 - A

Figure 1: Points of interest on Reverse A

1.2 Reverse B

Reverse B is seemingly the most frequent variety in my sample. It can be identified by a characteristic indent flaw to the upper section of the 7 in the date. As described priorly, the 1 in the date features four incuse flaws - however this is also some doubling to the 1, which can best be seen on the left side just below the upper serif. It [the 1] is also slightly bent backwards, as though made of two separate sections.



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1, Doubling and Bending - B



(b) Indented Flaw on 7 - B

Figure 2: Points of interest on Reverse B

1.3 Reverse C

Reverse C is the cleanest of the designs in terms of flaws. It features the four incuse flaws on the 1, with no doubling. Both of the 8's exhibit no clear flaws. The 7 features no major flaws - however there is a slight raised band along the upper section of the 7. I would be inclined to speculate this to be a property of the piece-punch, though less confidently than the 1, as a flaw like this may have come from casting a digit in steel for tooling or alternatively from issue in electrotyping prior to reduction punch, though I am unfamiliar with the processes used to create piece punches.



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 - C



(b) Raised Line along S, lower point is coin damage - C

Figure 3: Points of interest on Reverse C

1.4 No B.P. Pattern

There is a more in-depth paper on this topic coming.
After some conversation with both David Iverson and Andrew Thorburn, the consensus for the No B.P. pattern can be linked to the similiar process involving how the no B.P. two pound patterns were derived from master tools in the 1820s, which explains the lack of B.P. Due to the similiarity between the no B.P. Five Pound & the proofs/circulation issues, it is likely that all the tooling for the five pound series was derived, either directly or indirectly, from the 1820 master tools. To lift directly from my communication with Iverson:

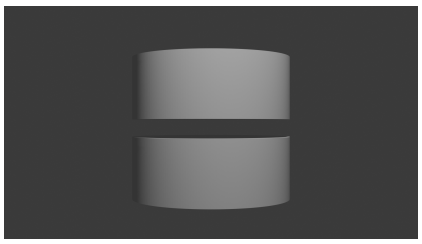
> Two main similarities from the 1820 Pattern Proof and the 1887 no B.P. Proof are the low hanging tail thread (third from the right) and the break in the strand at the top of the tail as it starts to curve down. What seems to be different with the 1887 £5 pieces from the £2 pieces is that the same features continue with the B.P. Proofs and some of the Currency pieces, *so it would seem the original Master Die was used to produce dies for various different issues.*

The main objection to this theory would be that on all specimens with no B.P. there is a weakness to the left most border, which was brought to my attention by Iverson. There are, of course, two possible reasons for this weakness, which do not contradict the current theory:

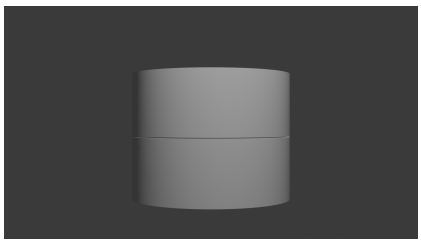
1. **The weakness is due to die detioration - £5 dies had the shortest lifetime.**

2. **The weakness is due to a slight angled punch when sinking the die**

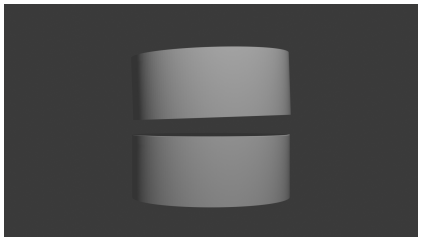
The latter possibility seems more likely – there were only an incredibly small number of No. B.P. patterns struck, it would be incredibly surprising to have seen such significant die detioration even though the dies used were unhardened. Though, it is not implausible to suggest that both reasons are in play, an angled punch caused the initial weakness and through various strikes it progressively grew weaker - hence explaining why the weakness is more noticeable on some specimens. We can see a 3D modelling of the angled punch and it's effects below:



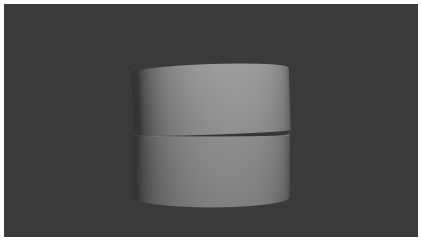
(a) Punch and Die Aligned



(b) During Die Sinking Design Full



(c) Angled Punch and Die



(d) During Die Sinking Weakness Forms

Figure 4: Demonstration of Die Sinking for No B.P. Patterns



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 - No B.P.



(b) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 - Proof Crown

Figure 5: Demonstration of Flawed Piece-Punch

1.5 Sydney Issue A

The Sydney five pound issue of 1887 are incredibly scarce, there is only 3 specimen currently known, with only two being in private collections. Sydney Issue A refers to the only insitutionalized example, which is held at the Museums Victoria in Australia, NU 4645. This specimen is especially interesting. Based on communication with Steve Hill of Sovereign Rarities, it is likely that this piece is a later restrike, hence the

doubling which can be seen may have been caused by re-entering the date on the die. The 1 in the date exhibits our expected incuse flaws, however, every single digit seems to have dramatic doubling. There is also, very faintly, two sections below the dragon which appear to have been trials for the location of the mint mark. One, to the left of the main mint mark, and one incredibly faintly to the right.



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 & Doubling - SA



(b) Doubling on 8 - S Type A

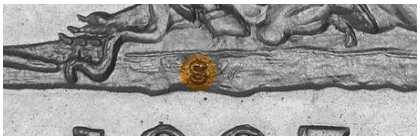


(c) Doubling on 8 - S Type A

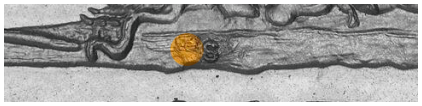


(d) Doubling on 7 - S Type A

Figure 6: Points of interest on Sydney Issue A



(a) Main Mint Mark - S Type A



(b) Faint Left Mint Mark - S Type A



(c) Very Faint Right Mint Mark - S Type A

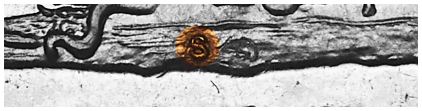
Figure 7: All Sydney Mint Mark Locations on Issue A

1.6 Sydney Issue B

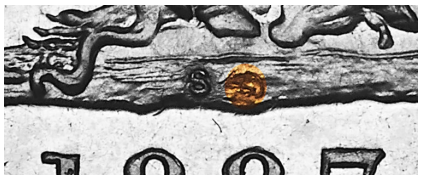
This specimen, most recently sold in 2021, has the expected flaws to the one – but distinguishes itself from the prior by having absolutely no doubling on any digits. In a similiar interest, the left mint mark is completely absent on this issue, whilst the right most is much more visible.



(a) Four Incuse Flaws on 1 - S Type B



(b) Main Mint Mark - S Type B



(c) Faint Mint Mark - S Type B

Figure 8: Points of interest on Sydney Issue B

2 Comparisons



(a) Reverse A



(b) Reverse B



(c) Reverse C



(d) No B.P.



(e) Sydney Issue A



(f) Sydney Issue B

Figure 9: Proof Reverses of the £5 Series

3 Contact

For those interested in this topic, or perhaps with additional infomation to present, you can contact me at ashleywickensrumble@gmail.com

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