

THE 1955 DOVER TREASURE TROVE

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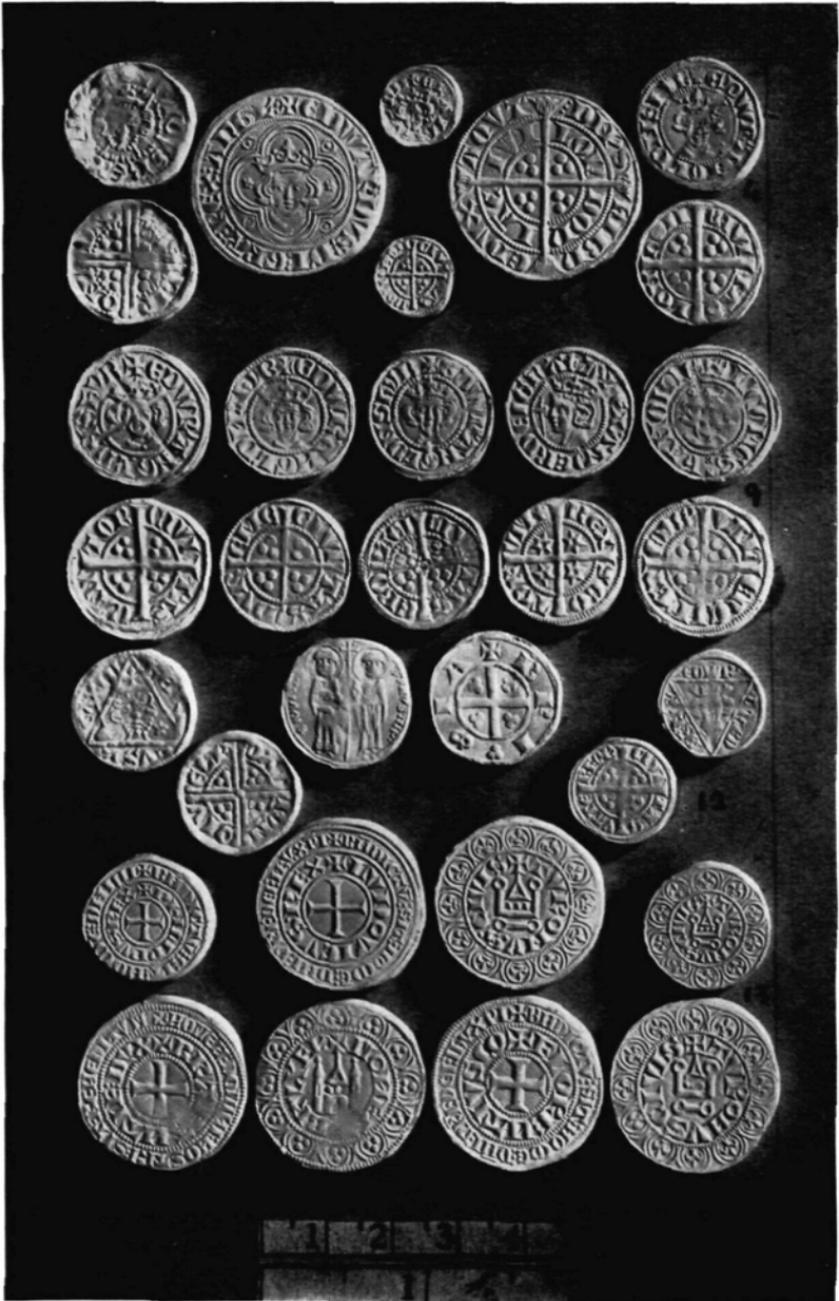
IN May, 1955, workmen laying a gas-main in Market Street, Dover, unearthed a small leaden casket containing a large hoard of silver coins. The form of the casket suggests a money-box, and the depth at which it was found, some two to three feet below the present ground level, is consistent with it having been concealed beneath a medieval floor, but unfortunately the site was not amenable to a full archæological investigation. The workmen reported their find to the local museum with commendable promptitude, and were duly named the finders at the subsequent inquest, where a verdict of treasure trove was recorded. They will, of course, receive the full market value of the coins they surrendered, and the correctness of their conduct is the more to be appreciated because the hoard has a scholarly significance out of all proportion to the commercial value of the coins.

The contents of the hoard may be summarized as follows:

	<i>Groats</i>	$\frac{1}{2}$ <i>Groats</i>	<i>Pence</i>	<i>Halfpence</i>	<i>Farthings</i>	
England ..	2	—	56	—	3	61
Ireland ..	—	—	224	2	—	226
Scotland ..	—	—	344	—	—	344
France ..	36	13	—	—	—	49
Brabant ..	1	—	—	—	—	1
Hainault ..	—	—	2	—	—	2
Holland ..	1	—	—	—	—	1
Brescia ..	1	—	—	—	—	1
	41	13	626	2	3	685

Also one copper disc.

The peculiar importance of the hoard lies in the fact that the English groats are both of Edward I. Hitherto no English find has been recorded which contained Edward I groats, and it has even been suggested that the coins were never current, although quite rightly the suggestion has not found favour with numismatists. Even so, it was a little disturbing that the only reported occurrence of the Edward I groat was in an Irish find, of which the inadequate record scarcely inspires confidence.



SOME SILVER COINS FROM THE DOVER TREASURE TROVE

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A full account of the new hoard from Dover will appear in the *British Numismatic Journal*, where a number of purely numismatic problems will have to be discussed at some length, and in particular the highly controversial question of the attribution of the French *gros tournois* and *maillles tierces* with the name of Philip. It is to be hoped, however, that the summary that follows will suffice to give an accurate impression of the hoard, and in particular of the predominance of Scots and Irish coins, the former accounting for almost exactly half of the whole hoard and the latter for a third. A selection of the coins is illustrated on the accompanying Plate, and it will be seen that virtually all are in mint condition, one of the outstanding characteristics of the whole find. If one piece should be singled out for special mention, it is perhaps the *grosso* of Brescia. In itself a rare coin, its occurrence in this hoard was quite unexpected, and the figures of Saints Jovita and Faustinus are in striking contrast with the formalized patterns of the French *gros tournois* and *maillles tierces*.

ENGLAND

EDWARD I (1272-1307)

MINT OF LONDON

GROATS

Fox, Class III (1280-81)	2
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PENCE

Long-cross issue with the name of Henry III, Lawrence	
Class VII (c. 1275-78)	1
Fox, Class Ic (1279)	3
Id (1279)	1
II (1280)	8
IIIb (1280-81)	1
IIIc (1280-81)	3
IIIg (1280-81)	2
IVa (1282-83)	2
IVb (1282-83)	2
IVe (1282-83)	1
IVe/c? (1282-83)	1
V (1284-?)	6
VIb (c. 1290?)	1
VIII (1294-1300)	1

FARTHINGS

Fox, Class II (1280)	1
III (1280-81)	1
VIII (1294-1300)	1

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MINT OF BRISTOL

PENNY

Fox, Class II (1280) 1

MINT OF CANTERBURY

PENCE

Fox, Class IIIb (1280-81) 1

IIIg (1280-81) 1

IVb (1282-83) 2

IVd (1282-83) 1

V (1284-?) 6

MINT OF DURHAM

PENCE

Fox, Class II (1280) 1

IIIg (1280-81) 1

MINT OF LINCOLN

PENCE

Fox, Class IIIc (1280-81) 2

MINT OF NEWCASTLE

PENCE

Fox, Class IIIId (BNJ) (1280-81) 3

MINT OF YORK

(a) *Royal*

PENCE

Fox, Class IIIId (BNJ) (1280-81) 3

(b) *Archiepiscopal*

PENNY

Fox, Class IIIId (BNJ) (1280-81) 1

IRELAND

HENRY III (1216-72) (posthumous?)

EDWARD I (1272-1307)

MINT OF DUBLIN

PENCE

Moneyer Davi 1

MINT OF DUBLIN (coinage of 1279-?)

PENCE

Allen, Class B 6

C 19

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D (including one mule)	58
E (including three mules)	10
F (including nineteen mules)	35
From irregular (but official?) dies	10
From barbarous dies	1
HALFPENNY	
Allen, Class E?	1

MINT OF WATERFORD (coinage of c. 1280)

PENCE	
Allen, Class C	5
D	79
HALFPENNY	
Allen, Class D	1

SCOTLAND

ALEXANDER III (1249-86)

Coinage of c. 1280-85

STERLINGS

Long single-cross sterlings	344
(Since the Burns varieties present no obvious chronological or geographical pattern they are not here distinguished.)	

FRANCE

LOUIS IX (1226-70)

GROS TOURNOIS

Normal type (coinage of 1266-70) Lafaurie 188	4
PHILIP III (1270-85) or PHILIP IV (1285-1314)	

GROS TOURNOIS

Round O Lafaurie 204	1
Round O Lafaurie 217	19
Oval O Lafaurie 218	12

MAILLES TIERCES

Round O Lafaurie 223	13
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BRABANT

JEAN I (1261-94) or JEAN II (1294-1312)

MINT OF BRUSSELS

GROS

Normal type	1
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HAINAULT

JEAN D'AVESNES (1280-1304)

MINT OF VALENCIENNES

STERLINGS

Variants of Chautard 23-27

2

HOLLAND

FLORIS V (1256-96)

MINT OF DORDRECHT

GROS

Normal type

1

BRESCIA

ANONYMOUS COINAGE OF LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

GROSSO

Cf. CNI, 14-16

1

To establish the date of the hoard as a whole is not so easy. As far as the English coins are concerned, an absolute *terminus ante quem* seems afforded by the total absence of coins of the prolific Fox Classes IX and X, while the presence of only one penny and one farthing of Class VIII may suggest a date nearer 1295 than 1300. The absence of coins of the Berwick mint which only opened in 1296 might seem to bear this out, but this particular piece of evidence is vitiated by the absence of any Scots pieces of Baliol. Were it not for the solitary penny and farthing of Class VIII, the English coins would have argued for a date ten years earlier, and it is indeed remarkable that a date *c.* 1285 should also be suggested both by the Scots and by the Irish pence in the hoard. The 344 coins from Scotland are all of Alexander III's second coinage, and are presumably to be dated to the quinquennium 1280-85, though there is the possibility, indeed probability, that some are posthumous. What is remarkable is that a hoard allegedly deposited after 1306—if we follow the accepted chronology of the French coins—should contain not a single penny of Baliol, nor an Irish coin apparently later in date than *c.* 1290, that is unless we are prepared to reject Allen's convincing equation of his Class G, totally lacking in this hoard, with Fox Class VII in England.

On balance we are probably justified in accepting that the English, Scots and Irish coins indicate a date not substantially later than 1295. It is here that the question of the date of the Continental coins becomes all-decisive. On the basis of traditional attributions we are confronted with groats of Louis IX, Philip III and Philip IV, and a run of third-groats dated to the very end of the year 1306. In other words, the

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French third-groats are ten years later than anything else in the hoard, for even the long O groats of Philip IV are not dated much after 1295. At this stage it would be rash to prophesy the outcome of the thorough investigation that is needed into the chronology of the French series, but it would seem that the third-groats attributed to the reform of 1306 belong to the pre-debasement coinage of 1270 to 1295. Whether they will be dated more narrowly seems unlikely unless more finds occur, but the present writer feels that their natural position is somewhere within the decade 1280-90. The other Continental pieces are not sufficiently numerous greatly to affect the issue. The Brabant groat is usually placed after 1294, but the Diest find does suggest, to put it no more strongly, that it should be put before 1285. The Holland groat cannot well be after 1296 and could be much earlier. The two Hainault sterlings have been dated convincingly to the quinquennium 1280-85, while the anonymous grosso from Brescia cannot be dated by Italian numismatists more narrowly than *c.* 1254-*c.* 1337!

Of course, many of the inconsistencies of the find are readily explained if we accept that the container was, in fact, a species of money-box where addition was easy and subtraction virtually impossible. The writer of this provisional note feels that in the light of our present knowledge the most likely explanation of the hoard is that it was put together over a period of roughly a decade, and hastily concealed at a date shortly after 1295. It was a period when repeated efforts were being made to control the importation into England of foreign money, and Dover was, of course, one of the focal points of entry, so much so that in 1299 a special control-barrier was set up in order to relieve foreign merchants firmly but politely of their continental money. Even before that, however, travellers were subjected to a close scrutiny, and it is not impossible that we are to associate the hoard with the outbreak of the French war in 1296.

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KEY TO PLATE

1. London penny of Edward I with the name of Henry III.
2. Edward I, London groat, 1280-81.
3. Edward I, London farthing, c. 1295.
4. Edward I, London penny, c. 1295.
5. Edward I, Canterbury penny, 1282-83.
6. Edward I, Durham penny, 1280-81.
7. Edward I, York penny, 1280-81.
8. Alexander III, sterling, c. 1280-85.
9. Hainault sterling, c. 1280-85.
10. Dublin penny with the name of Henry III.
11. Grosso of Brescia—late thirteenth century.
12. Waterford halfpenny, c. 1280.
13. Maille tierce of Philip III or IV.
14. Gros tournois of Louis IX.
15. Brabant gros of Jean I or Jean II.
16. Holland gros of Floris V.

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