



THE
YORKSHIRE COINERS

1767-1783.

AND NOTES ON
OLD AND PREHISTORIC HALIFAX

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WITH NUMEROUS BEAUTIFUL ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS
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AND CHAPTERS
On The Making of Halifax, &c., by JOHN LISTER, M.A.;
and on the Blackheath Prehistoric Circle, by
J. LAWSON RUSSELL, M.B., Edin.

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PREFACE.

YORKSHIRE COINERS.—In arranging the Records of the Yorkshire Coiners I have made use of the following sources of information : the files of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, (merged in the *Yorkshire Post*,) the *Leeds Mercury*, the *Yorkshire Courant*, (merged in the *Yorkshire Herald*,) *Etherington's York Chronicle*, (merged in the *Yorkshire Gazette*,) to the Editors and Proprietors of which, for permitting me to have their files searched, I am much indebted. As may be surmised, much interesting matter has been obtained from these newspapers. I have also searched the Records Office, London, where valuable correspondence relating to the coiners is to be found in the State Papers Domestic of George III; the Domestic Entry Book, George III; Treasury Entry Book (Law Officers Entry Book); Home Office Papers (Law Officers Entry Book,) &c., &c. Various files of newspapers in the British Museum and the York Museum have also been placed under contribution. Mr. Robert Holthy, Deputy Clerk of Assize, York, has kindly searched the records of York Castle for me with satisfactory results. For the loan of Counsels Brief in the Prosecution of the Murderers of Supervisor Deighton I tender my thanks to Mr. E. H. Hill, Coroner for Halifax. I am also indebted to the Rev. T. P. Whittington, Vicar of St. Thomas the Apostle, Heptonstall, for permission to have the registers searched; to Mr. H. P. Kendall of Sowerby Bridge, for especially visiting Cragg Vale to photograph David Hartley's House, and to Mr. John Longbottom for making copies of documents, making searches under my direction, and assisting me in other ways. The various documents, largely original, which were used by the well-known antiquary, the late Mr. F. A. Leyland, when he prepared his lecture on the Cragg Vale Coiners, given in 1866 at the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society's Rooms, have been most kindly presented to me by his son, Mr. John Leyland, editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette*, and have proved of great value. The lecture was reported in the columns of the *Halifax Courier*. The documents consist of the affidavits taken before Mr. Coroner Hyde in 1769 and subsequently, and others taken before Colonel Wickham and Mr. Horton; prisoners statements; Mr. Robert Parker's notes; printed matter, &c., &c., and these supplement the informations obtained at the Record Office, etc. I believe I am in a position to lay before my readers the fullest account of the subject that has yet been published, with a large amount of information which has not been seen in print before.

NOTES ON OLD HALIFAX.—In the preparation of these Notes I am indebted to many friends for their kind assistance. To Mr. John Lister for permission to publish his Lectures, *The Making of Halifax* and *The Halifax Gibbet Law* delivered before the Halifax Antiquarian Society but not published in their papers. These lectures were reported in the *Halifax Guardian* and have been revised by their author for this work. To Mr. J. Whiteley Ward for the loan of Thos. Binns beautiful drawings of Old Halifax, and to Mr. H. R. Oddy for the loan of his vigorous artistic sketches, for reproduction here. To the late Miss Emma Sophia Rawson and also her sister, the late Mrs. Inglis, for the loan of several photographs &c. and many notes. To Mr. Jos. F. Walsh for assistance in describing his XIVth Century House, to Mr. Henry Lonsdale for assisting in searching out various facts and for the loan of many papers and objects, and to Mr. H. P. Kendal for various notes and for the photographs of the Stone Ovens, &c. To Mr. S. H. Hamer for revising my list of Tokens. My Chapters on the Frobishers and on Christopher Rawson appeared originally in the pages of the *Halifax Courier* and *Halifax Guardian* respectively; they are here revised, considerably enlarged and illustrated.

PREHISTORIC HALIFAX. Except locally, nothing is known outside the district of the existence of Early Man in Halifax, and I have therefore gathered together all I could find to elucidate his remains in this neighbourhood. For Chapter II., I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. J. Lawson Russell. It is an enlargement of his lecture delivered before various scientific societies, and has been revised by him for this work.

The Blocks have all been made by the Phœnix Wood Engraving Co. (M. Griffith), 28, Market Street, Manchester, and I have to thank them for the care they have taken in their production.

H. LING ROTH.

BRIARFIELD, SHIBDEN,
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INTRODUCTION.

Although in these pages I have only dealt with such clipping and counterfeiting as existed in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the years 1769-1783, limiting myself to these years for reasons which appear in the sequel, it must not be imagined that neither clipping nor counterfeiting was carried on before the first-mentioned date nor after the last-mentioned one. Illegal coining and wilful depreciation of the currency most probably began with the earliest adoption of a medium of exchange in whatever country that may have been, and England has not escaped suffering under the



Fig. 2.—A clipped Half Crown of Charles I., 1636-8, (Ton Mint Mark), Bankfield Museum.



Fig. 3.—A much clipped shilling of Charles II., 1660-1685. Third Issue. Bankfield Museum.



Fig. 4.—Six Clippings of Silver Coins of the reigns of Elizabeth to the Commonwealth, found at Marsham, Abingdon. Formerly in the collection of Mr. Bernard Roth. Bankfield Museum.



Fig. 5.—Clipping of a Shilling of Elizabeth. For an Account of the Clippings illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, see 'Finds of Clippings of Silver Coins' by Bernard Roth, F.R.C.S., in *British Numismatic Journal*, Vol. I, 1905.

common rule.* It was in the year 1662, in the reign of Charles II., that the coin of the realm was first "milled" to prevent clipping and counterfeiting. In other words

* In an old document Mr. H. P. Kendall has come across the following note:—"William Burnley, 'Flecher,' Dec. 6th, 1499, claimed sanctuary for coining. On Jan, 1st following a John Burnley took sanctuary for a like offence. Both were of Halifax. 15th Jan., 1529-30, Jacobus Watterhous, 'wever,' claimed the liberty of St. John of Beverley 'for that he did knowe one Laurence Haulesworth of Sowerby — tailor, to coyn money falsly contrary the King's Crowne his dignytie and lawes and he did consent and give counsell to the said coining, to whom the said privilege is graunted and he sworne.'"

the coin was made in a mill worked by horses, and not hand-hammered as it had been up to then. By means of the mill it was possible to stamp the coin more exactly, that is to say without leaving an irregular margin which is so characteristic of the coinage previous to this date, a margin which favoured the operations of the clippers. At the same time the improved process, partly by the increased power of the mill over the hand hammer, enabled the Crown Minters to put a sharp raised edge on to the coin. In the opinion that this edge would absolutely prevent clipping, the words *DECUS ET TUTAMEN* i.e. Honour and Protection, were impressed on the edge of the coin, for as soon as such an edge was clipped it became absolutely obvious that the coin had been tampered with. Since then the above words have been

ILLUSTRATIONS OF MILLING AT VARIOUS DATES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.



Fig. 6.
Spanish Dollar, 1749



Fig. 7
Spanish Dollar (?)



Fig. 8.
Spanish Dollar, 1775.



Fig. 9.
Barcelona 20 Pesetas, 1812.



Fig. 10.
Three Kreuzers, Hungary, 1849



Fig. 11
Four Lira, Rep of Genoa, 1796.



Fig. 12.
Piastre, Chas. V., Spain, 1808.



Fig. 13.
Five Grana Joachim-Murat,
Naples, 1810.



Fig. 14.
Piastre, Brazil, 1823.



Fig. 15.
Mexican Dollar, 1863.



Fig. 16.
Half Skilling, 1815.



Fig. 17.
Two Kreuzers (Copper)
Austria, 1848.



Fig. 18
One Kreuzer (Copper)
Austria, 1816.

The above are not to be accepted as strictly correct, being drawn from pieces which are most of them considerably rubbed, but they are substantially accurate. Where lettering is used, mostly in the form of a motto, this appears some times raised as in the words *JUSTITIA ET CLEMENTIA* in the Maria Theresa Dollars of 1780, or in sunk letters as in the Russian Rubel of 1817. It is interesting to trace how one group of countries follows, at times, one form of milling, while another group follows another form, and so on

replaced by other words or by decoration of some sort, but mostly by what is *popularly* known as "milling." This "milling" consists of a series of closely cut parallel vertical indentions stamped on the outer edge at the same time when the whole coin is struck, the coining dies being engraved to give this special form to the edge. An almost identical edge can be given to any metal disc by means of what is known to metal-turners as a milling tool but the result does not equal that of a well-engraved coining die. That the edge of a coin can be milled with a tool

has had much to do with clipping, which has also been aided to some extent by the fact that the edge of a Mint coin was not always raised to the level of the obverse and reverse surfaces, as can be seen by a comparison of a shilling of 1787 of George III. with one of 1906 of Edward VII. In the past, too, the Mint Authorities



Fig. 19 —Milling and End Section of a Shilling of George III., 1787, to shew flat milled edge, which did not prevent the coin being rubbed or wearing away of the two faces.



Fig. 20 —Diagram of the Milling and End Section of a Shilling of Edward VII, 1906, to shew raised milled edge which largely prevents the rubbing or wearing away of the two faces.

were not so continually on the alert to withdraw depreciated coin; hence there was the inducement to reduce by illegal process the new coin to the condition of the old and legitimately worn one. In those times too people's faculties were not so sharp as they are now, so that detection was not so rapid as at present. The quantity of coin in proportion to the population was far less than it is now, so that individuals who rarely handled a coin would not be sufficiently conversant with the look of a good coin to be able to distinguish a bad one when they saw it. At times when the price of bullion silver was so high that a piece of currency was of more value as mere silver than it was as a medium of exchange,* the temptation to "improve" it was great. There can be little doubt that coining and clipping were by the mass of the people not considered a crime, largely due to the antagonism which has always existed against governments which are not elected of the people, and which show little sympathy with the people's troubles. To this day robbing the Government is publicly considered as an offence of no importance, and certainly not as a criminal one. The Rev. James Booth, Minister of the Gospel at Booth [Luddenden] near Halifax, in a sermon preached on the occasion of the unhappy death of James Oldfield, who was executed at Tyburn, near York, Saturday, the 28th day of April, 1770, speaking of counterfeiting says: "It is amazing to think that so many are endeavouring to extenuate this crime, and speak of it as if it was of a trifling nature, and commit it in so daring a manner."† The people who coined and clipped were naturally rude, for they lived in inaccessible places, and were

* *Leeds Intelligencer*, 6th March, 1759:—"There is little doubt but the scarcity of Silver Coin is owing to the high price that bullion bears. The temptation of melting down Coined Silver is too strong to be resisted: the prodigious advantage of melting down a Lima Shilling, for instance, is incredible to those who have not considered the matter well. Suppose one of them weighs (which many of them do) 3 dwts. 18 grs., at 5/6 per oz, the piece is worth twopence more than its currency; but at the present advanced price of Silver 'tis worth more. Can it then be supposed that the working Silversmith will give his Refiner 5/9 per ounce when, by melting coin, he can have it at about 5/- . Quere (*Query*), Notwithstanding the lightness of the old Sixpences, whether the Government would lose anything by calling in all the Silver Coin of the Kingdom." A Lima Shilling, &c., was so called from being made out of the silver obtained by Lord Anson on his celebrated filibustering expedition in the Pacific, 1740-1744, Lima being the capital of Peru.

† The title of the Sermon is "God's indignation against sin.. Printed by E. Jacobs for the Author, MDCCCLXX." A copy can be seen in the Public Library Halifax.