

The Conlan Coin Collection

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The author assembled this collection between 1972 and 1990. His selection of Irish coins and tokens had two principles: to cover the period from the beginning of coinage under the Vikings to when it was subsumed into the British coinage in 1826 and preference to be given to coins with a Limerick context. The collection was presented to the University of Limerick in 1991, in memory of the Conlan family,¹ and went on public display in 2004. Fr Conlan here provides a guide to, and a comprehensive historical context for, the collection.

The Origin of Coinage

No human being ever produced all that he or she needed. The basis of living became the supply of needs by sharing. People swapped goods or services: I'll plough your field if you give me a dozen eggs; I have some grain to spare if you can get me firewood from the forest. Barter became the norm. Goods from afar presented problems of transport. It became more convenient to use bits of precious metals as intermediaries. Leaders began attesting the value of these pieces. Coinage facilitated barter by assigning standard values to portions of metal. Since silver was more accessible than gold, it became the basis for coinage. Even today coins, banknotes, cheques and cash cards, even those figures hidden in computer memories, are really only means of facilitating barter.

Crude coins first appeared in the Middle East around 650 BC. Their use rapidly spread into the Mediterranean where the Romans developed the first widely circulated coinage. At this time Celtic tribes were making their way from the steppes into Central Europe. They made rough copies of Greek coins from as early as 300 BC. Continuing their journey westwards, they arrived in Britain and Ireland around 200 BC. While they produced coins in England, the Irish valued things in terms of cattle. Roman and British coins were used in Ireland but there was no indigenous coinage.

Kings or sometimes bishops appointed moneyers. They produced coins by hammering. Two dies were produced by engraving on steel. One, the pile, normally the obverse (head) of the coin, was fixed upright on a block of wood. The other, the punch or trussel, had the reverse (tail, back). Metal of the right size and weight was placed on the pile. The punch was put over it, struck with a hammer and the coin was ready. The process was improved in the early middle ages by using a press rather than a hammer. In turn gave way to rolling them out by passing metal through a mill like a mangle. By the 1650s this was replaced by milled coins produced in large presses. Coins were uniform and had milled edges that prevented the old practice of clipping. The increasing cost of machinery led to the centralisation of production in a few centres under strict government control.

Ring Money

It is believed that the Irish used small metals rings in place of money. These could be of gold or gold

¹ The Conlans were involved in public administration in Limerick for many years. Patrick Conlan Senior worked for Limerick Corporation and was appointed senior sergeant by Mayor John Daly in 1899. He carried the City Sword before the mayor on civic occasions or the wand before justices on circuit. He became steward of the City Hall and the family lived on the top floor until he retired in 1936. His eldest son, William John Conlan, was very active in the trade union movement in Limerick, particularly among the printing unions. Patrick Anthony Conlan died as acting city manager. Elizabeth Brigman (née Conlan) worked for the Limerick Health Authority. Doreen O'Dwyer (née Brigman) was very active in the movement to get a university for Limerick. She was one of the two original secretarial staff on the NIHE and worked there for many years.

plated copper. Both metals were available in various parts of the country. The Collection contains two examples of this ring money. The older is an extremely rare small ring of twisted gold found near Lough Gur, County Limerick, in 1979-80. It has been dated to 1200-1000 BC by the National Museum of Ireland. The Bronze Age inhabitants produced gold ornaments in this style way before the Celts arrived. The other item is a plain gold-plated ring dated to around 600 BC, provenance unknown. It typical of the type used by the Celts in Ireland or Britain and is relatively rare in an Irish context.

Hiberno-Norse

Irish merchants survived without a local coinage for the first millennium of the Christian era. Judging from occasional finds, they used coins from Britain, initially Roman then Anglo-Saxon, in limited quantities. Coins were struck in Britain just before the Roman invasion. This continued when the Angles, Saxons and Jutes replaced the Romans. The Danes continued the process. King Athelstan introduced a single type of coin, a silver penny, in 928. Only a limited amount of coins were issued until the reign of Ethelred II "the Unready", King of England (978-1016).

The Vikings arrived in Ireland just before 800 AD. Their occupation of parts of the island peaked around 900. By 1000 their power was in decline and they had become merchants, trading over a large part of Western Europe. They needed a coinage that would be accepted in other areas. The Viking kingdoms of York and Dublin were interlinked. Sitric Caech of York issued coins with some symbols of Dublin around 921. Later two rulers of Dublin, both named Olaf, issued coins for that part of their territory around York. Around 1000 Viking rulers in Scandinavia issued coins based on contemporary English designs.

Sitric III Silkenbeard, came to the throne in Dublin in 989. Except in 995-6, he ruled until 1036 and died in 1042. As with his contemporaries, he issued silver pennies for his kingdom of Dublin. These were based on contemporary coins of King Ethelred. Sitric struck a deal with moneyers to supply coin for a small profit. The obverse or face showed Sitric looking left with an inscription 'SIHTRIC RE DYFLI' (Sitric, king of Dublin). The reverse or back had either a short cross with the letters C R U X (cross) in each quarter or a long cross with blank quarters. The inscription gave the names of the moneyer and the city (e.g. Nefin, moneyer of Dublin). The coins carry the names of twenty-four moneyers. Lack of care in preparing dies led to many varieties. Some have Ethelred on the face and a Dublin name on the back. Others copy the names of English moneyers.

Hiberno-Norse coins fall into seven phases. Phase I (995-1010) had coins of the correct weight and clear inscriptions. The short cross coins appeared first. The long cross appeared after 1000. The quality of the silver declined during Phase II (1015-35), making them less acceptable. This may reflect the declining economic power of the Dublin Vikings. The dies were not as good as before. Inscriptions were often blundered and difficult to read. The Collection has two coins from Phase II. Both have the king looking left on the front and a long cross on the back. One carries the name of the moneyer Nefin of Dublin.

The quality of the coinage declined further during Phase III (1035-60). Legends were often reduced to a series of strokes. Fingers of a hand appeared in the quarters of the long cross on the back. Phase IV (1060-65) was characterised by modified reverse dies made by scratching the original. The figure on the front sometimes looked right rather than left. Some showed a full face with helmet and moustache. The back had the normal long cross but with variations on hands, pellets or crude crosses. Many of these coins come from a hoard found in Limerick. The Collection has two rare Phase IV coins typical of those from the hoard. One has the right face on the front with crude hands by the long cross on the back. The other has an attractive full face on the front with a hand and a crude cross with the long cross on the back.

In Phases V and VI (1065-1110) efforts to keep to the head of Sitric III on the front were abandoned. Crude copies of British Viking, English early Norman or even Scandinavian coins were

made. They are best described as cheap and cheerful. The Collection has one example from Phase V. The face is a very crude copy of a Sitric original, while the back has a Celtic variant of the long cross.

The last Hiberno-Norse coins, Phase VII (1110-50), were semi-bracteates or bracteates. There is little evidence to substantiate theories that these were produced by Irish kings. The piece of silver was thinner and wider than previously. Semi-bracteates were struck on both sides with the design showing through the thin coin. Bracteates have the design on one side only. These were probably struck with the blank lying on leather or wood. The designs were variants of earlier coins. These coins are extremely rare because of their fragility. The Collection has one of each type. The semi-bracteate has a crude Sitric head on front and a simple long cross with a quatrefoil on the back. The bracteate has a blank front and a long cross with pellets on the back.

John

The Normans arrived in Ireland in 1169 and Henry II came in 1171 to sort out his nobles. Having consolidated his position, Henry named his nine-year-old son John as Lord of Ireland in 1177. John visited in 1185 to take over his lordship. He succeeded Richard the Lionhearted as king in 1199 and died in 1216. Henry did not produce Irish coins. Those of John fall into three classes: those minted by John de Courcy, those of John as Lord of Ireland and those of him as king.

The first coins probably appeared in 1185, nearly forty years after the last of the Hiberno-Norse coinage. The new issues were halfpennies showing a king facing right with the inscription 'Joannes'. The back had a small cross with the name of the moneyer. Some think that John refers to John de Courcy, who had invaded the north in 1177 and set himself up as Lord of Ulster (modern Antrim and Down). He issued a series of halfpennies and farthings between 1185 and 1204. These were minted at Downpatrick and are known as St Patrick coinage because they show the image of the saint. The face of the halfpenny shows a crosier while that of the farthing has a processional cross. Other farthings carry the name of the Carrickfergus mint on the back. The Collection has a rare anonymous farthing of John de Courcy with crosses on front and back.

Prince John arranged the minting of his own coins, initially in Dublin then in Waterford, Limerick and Kilkenny. Finally some were minted in Downpatrick and Carrickfergus. These halfpennies and farthings carry the title DOM (Lord) after the name of John and were produced between 1190 and 1199. The front showed the prince in full face and the back had a small cross. Siward minted all the Limerick coins. Small and crude farthings with a masle design but without reference to John were also minted in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick. The Collection has two examples of DOM coinage. A rare farthing of Dublin has a masle on the front and the name of Norm around a cross on the back. A relatively rare halfpenny of Limerick has a round face on front with a short cross and the name of Siward on the back.

Caught up in a series of wars in France, King John did not issue Irish coins until 1205 and continued until 1211. These pennies, halfpennies and farthings carried the title REX (king) with designs based on triangles, probably to easily distinguish them from his English coins. The king's head was enclosed by a triangle on the front. The back contained sun, moon and stars within a triangle. John began centralising coin production under his agents in Dublin castle. The names William and Wace on Limerick coins probably refer to William Wace who was Bishop of Waterford 1223-25. Finally John began recalling his DOM coins to melt them down and re-issue them as REX. This marked the end of minting in Ireland for forty years. The Collection has four REX coins, starting with a Dublin penny by Roberd. The other three, a Limerick penny and two Limerick halfpennies, are rare examples by William Wace. All have John carrying a sceptre in a triangle on the front and a variation of the sun, moon and stars in a triangle on the back.

Henry III and Edward I

Henry III was a pious king whose attention was distracted by bad relations with the nobility and his wars in France. He consolidated his administration in Dublin Castle. Irish merchants used either old Irish or contemporary English coins. Henry financed his wars by borrowing money from his brother, Richard, earl of Cornwall. In return Richard was granted authority to issue a coinage. The result was the minting of a large quantity of pennies in Dublin between 1251 and 1254. The dies were prepared in London and distribution centres set up in Limerick and Carrickfergus. As with the Irish coins of King John, the front showed the king's head with a sceptre in a triangle with the title of 'King Henry III'. The back was a return to the long cross style with pellets in the quadrants and the moneyers Richard or David of Dublin. Despite the fairly good quality of the dies, minor differences exist. The Collection contains three of these Dublin pennies, two by Richard and a slightly rarer one by David. One of the pennies is a relatively rare version with a sexfoil (six leafed petal) to the right of the king's beard and an extra pellet beside it. The crown is missing on another.

Henry's coinage sufficed for another twenty years. Its condition declined as it became clipped and worn. People clipped a little metal off the coin to gain silver for their own uses. Coins were cut in half or quarter to produce halfpennies or farthings. Edward I, king since 1272, produced an Irish coinage in 1276-79. Possibly in an effort not to confuse people, the front of the new coins was an imitation of those of Henry III, carrying his title and face, albeit in a slightly modified form. The back was the same long cross design with the same name for the moneyer although it was a different Richard. These pennies are extremely rare since they were soon collected up and melted down for re-issue.

Edward decided to issue a proper Irish coinage. Between 1279 and 1302 new pennies, halfpennies and farthings were minted in six different issues. Most of the work was done in Dublin but mints also existed for short periods in Cork and Waterford. The coins were of such good quality that continental copies were made. This can be distinguished from the Irish issues by the quality of the design. Today these coins are fairly common. The front showed the king's head in an inverted triangle with the title of 'King Edward'. The back showed a standard long cross but with the city of issue only. Names of moneyers were omitted from now on. The Collection contains a fairly rare farthing of Waterford belonging to the period 1281-82 as well as an early (1279-84) penny and a late (1297-1302) halfpenny of Dublin.

It was just as well that Edward I did such a good job because no Irish coins were issued for a century and a half. Edward III did issue coins in Dublin in 1339, as did Henry VI in 1425-26. Both issues were so small as to be irrelevant. In practice Irish merchants used an amazing selection of British and Continental coins. The Collection has an English groat (four pennies) of the pre-treaty coinage (1351-61) of Edward III as an example of what was used in Ireland. The treaty is the Peace of Bretigny in 1360 by which Edward gained large territories in France.

Edward IV

The War of the Roses effectively ended at the Battle of Towton in 1460. Edward IV came to the throne while his opponent, Henry VI, languished in Scotland. Meeting at Drogheda in 1460 in the presence of Richard, duke of York and heir to the throne, the Irish parliament obtained power to issue new coins in Ireland and a mint was set up in Dublin by 1461. It issued high quality groats as well as a few pennies. Perhaps because of the unsure political situation, the front carried a simple crown without a title and is called the anonymous coinage. The back carried a long cross with pellets in the quadrants and the title of the City of Dublin. There are very rare pennies of Waterford. Copper farthings with a small amount of silver (billon) and copper half-farthings were issued instead of silver coins. In the meantime King Edward had made arrangements for a mint in Ireland. The result was an issue of groats, half-groats (two pence) and pennies in Dublin and Waterford in 1463-65. The front had the same crown as before but with the title of 'Edward by the grace of God lord of Ireland'. The back had

a long cross and pellets with the name of the mint. The legend on the groats and half-groats proclaimed that he had made God his helper. Copper farthings were also issued in 1463. Saint Patrick was on the front with a long cross and the title of Saviour on the back. The Collection features a Dublin groat of the anonymous coinage with nine arcs on the front (minted 1461) and a copper Patricius Salvator farthing.

King Edward decided to standardise the quality of silver in the coins that would circulate in all his territories in England, Ireland and France. The Irish parliament approved the issue of a third coinage of Edward in 1464. The design was the same as in England with silver of the same quality. Thus known as the heavy coinage, the king's head and titles were on the front. The back was the same as before. Being of good quality, Irish coins rapidly migrated abroad. The resulting shortage of coin led to a new (fourth) coinage in 1467-70 in which the silver was debased by 50%. The new double groat (eight pence) contained the same amount of silver as the old groat and similarly for the new groats and half-groats. The front showed the face and title of Edward as before while the back featured the rays of a sun emerging from a rose with the title of the mint. A copper farthing was also issued. Coins from the third and especially the fourth issues are rare.

Events in Ireland were complicated by an invasion of England by Henry VI in 1470. Edward fled to Burgundy, reorganised and returned in the spring of 1471. He defeated Henry and arranged his murder. The Irish parliament met in November 1470 and approved a new coinage with better quality of silver. They shrewdly decided to remain faithful to King Edward. The fifth coinage, known as the heavy cross and pellets because of its weight and return to the old long cross design on the back, was issued in 1470-73. Several mints and Irish moneyers were involved. Some gave in to the temptation of using a lower quality of silver. An old maxim says that if you can't beat them, join them. Thus the king and the Irish parliament agreed to a new issue using lighter silver. This is known as the sixth light issue. The groats, half-groats and pennies come from a large variety of mints with a proliferation of features. The basic design was as before. The king's head and title were on the front and a long cross with city and mint on the back. The Collection contains four coins from the sixth light coinage issue. There are two groats from Limerick, a groat from Waterford and a rare penny from Drogheda.

This was not the end of Edward's Irish coinage. Problems with the circulation of light Irish coins led to a decision to mint new ones. A new design was necessary to readily distinguish it from previous coins. The king's face returned to the front with a sun and rose on either side of his neck in this seventh issue (1478-83) of groats and pennies. The back had the usual legend and mint with a long cross and a rose at its centre. There are coins with a small cross within a large rose on the front. The back had the rays of the sun (fewer rays than in the fourth issue) and a rose. Some make this the third issue and date it to 1465-67. The most recent author places it in 1478 as a short-lived one between the sixth light and seventh rose on cross issues. Both issues are extremely rare. The Collection contains a groat and a penny from Dublin, both with the king's head on the front and the small rose over a long cross on the back.

Richard III came to the throne in 1483. The Drogheda mint was preparing to continue the coins of Edward IV. The workers recut the front dies, trying to turn EDW into RIC, and used the old dies of a long cross and rose for the back. Drogheda minted groats and pennies. Pennies were produced in Dublin and Waterford but with long cross and pellet dies. King Richard ordered a proper coinage, issued in 1484-85. The front of Dublin coins carried the royal arms of England over a long cross and an inscription of Richard, king of England and France. The back carried three crowns in ascending order over a long cross and the title of 'Lord of Ireland'. Coins from the Waterford mint carried a proper title on the front 'Richard by the grace of God king' with the city named on the back. The Collection has a rare three crowns groat of Dublin.

Henry VII

The first Tudor, Henry VII, became king when Richard was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. As happened two years before, the Dublin mint did a rush job. They issued groats, half-groats, pennies and halfpennies without the name of King Henry. The front had the royal arms and long cross with the title of king of England and France. The back had the three crowns and long cross with the title of 'Lord of Ireland'. The Waterford mint managed to get Henry's name on the front and name of the city on the reverse. These coins were minted until 1487. The coronation of the pretender, Lambert Simnel, in Dublin as Edward VI caused further confusion. The Dublin mint rushed out three crowns groats with the new king's name. A few may have been produced in Waterford. All are extremely rare. The earl of Kildare had backed the wrong horse and rushed out new coins when Simnel was defeated. These Geraldine groats and half-groats had the royal arms on the front with the title of king of England and France. Small examples of the Fitzgerald arms were on either side of the royal arms. The back had the standard three crowns. Many coins carried a small h for Henry. A few may have been minted in Waterford. A final issue of the three crowns took place in Dublin in 1488-90. For the first time, Henry's proper title 'king of England' appeared on the front, with 'lord of Ireland' on the back. A variety exists with the name of Dublin on the back. The Collection contains a groat of Waterford with an h for Henry and a half-groat of Dublin belonging to the early three crown series. There is also an extremely rare Geraldine groat of Dublin.

Henry removed the power of the lord deputy to issue coins. A new coinage was minted in Dublin in the period 1496-1505. The king's face appears for the first time on this, the late portrait issue. The front carried the title 'Henry by the grace of God lord of Ireland'. The reverse returned to the long cross with pellets in each quarter with the outer legend that he placed his trust in God and an inner legend carrying the name of the mint of Dublin. Small pennies had only room for a crown and h on the front and traces of the name of Dublin on the back. They are extremely rare. A slightly lighter variety was issued in 1497. A final issue took place around 1505 with the crown on the king's head flatter than previously. The light and debased coins were useless to merchants who rapidly turned to English coinage. The Dublin mint was closed in 1506 and did not re-open for thirty years. The Collection contains a rare late portrait groat of Dublin.

Henry VIII

The Tudors line was firmly in place when Henry VIII became king in 1509. In the aftermath of the costly suppression of the Silken Thomas rebellion, he decided to get some money back by issuing a slightly debased Irish coinage that became known as coins of the harp (1534-36). They would be called harps and half-harps rather than groats and half-groats. The coins were minted in London and featured a crowned shield over a cross on the front with a harp under a crown on the back. The inscription started on the front with Henry VIII (sometimes 8) 'by the grace of God king of England' and ended on the back with 'France and lord of Ireland'. A crowned H for Henry was on one side of the harp with A for Anne (Boleyn) on the other. Although the harp had been in use as a heraldic device for two hundred years, this was the first time that it appeared on Irish coins. It is said that the three crowns on previous coins were changed because it looked too much like a papal tiara, out of favour since the break with Rome. As Henry changed wives, so his coins changed initials: I for Jane Seymour and K for Katherine Howard. After 1540 the queens were left out and the second letter became R for king. The back of the coins included the title of king of Ireland from 1542. Henry continued debasing the quality of his Irish and later English coins. Various issues were distinguished by different mintmarks. The fifth issue of 1544-45 was so debased that the groat was devalued to six Irish pence! The title on the back included the regnal year of 37, the first time an actual year appeared on an Irish coin. The sixth and final harp issue (regnal year 38) was minted in Bristol in 1546-47. Some exist with the year left blank because word of the king's death had reached the mint. Earlier harp issues still had

a silver look, but later ones where so poor that they seemed white and were porous. The Collection has a groat from the first harp issue (1534-40) with A for Anne Boleyn. A groat from the second issue (1540-42) has the R for Rex (King). There is an almost white sixpenny groat from the sixth issue (1546-47).

Edward VI

The young Edward VI and his protector were aware of the problems caused by the debased Irish coinage, particularly when soldiers refused payment with such coins. It was decided to mint a provisional issue at the debased level (1548-50). The head of the deceased king was used to facilitate later reform, thus the title of posthumous coinage. The Dublin mint was reopened to issue sixpenny groats, three penny half-groats, pennies valued at a penny and a half, and finally halfpennies worth three farthings! All had the head of Henry VIII on the front with his title as 'Henry 8 by the grace of God king of England, France and Ireland'. The royal arms on a shield over a long cross were on the back with the name of the city of Dublin. A second debased coinage was issued in 1552. It consisted entirely of shillings, the first time this value was used for Irish coins. Another first was the inclusion of the year MDLII on the back. The front had the young king looking right with the title of 'Edward VI by the grace of God king of England, France and Ireland'. The back had the royal arms in an oval shield with the letters E R (Edward King) on either side. The legend read that the fear of the Lord is the fountain of life. The underlying copper quickly showed through after a little use. This encouraged counterfeiters to make brass or copper copies with dipped silver them over. Edward died in 1553. The Collection has a posthumous old head sixpence and a debased young crowned head shilling.

Mary

On her accession Queen Mary began restoring the quality of the coinage in England and Ireland. The Dublin mint was closed and all Irish coins were struck in London. She ordered the production of a series of coins – shillings, groats, half-groats and pennies. The quality of the silver was doubled over the later Tudor coins. The front had the queen looking left with the inscription of 'Mary by the grace of God queen of England, France and Ireland'. The back had the crowned harp with M R (Mary Queen) with the date (1553 or 1554) and the phrase that 'truth is the daughter of time'. Mary married Philip, king of Naples and Jerusalem, in 1554 and got papal approval of the title of king and queen of Ireland. A new coinage appeared in 1555. Military and economic affairs prevented the restoration of the silver content. The quality of these coins was so poor that even uncirculated ones seemed worn. Shillings showed the king and queen facing each other under a crown with the date in Arabic rather than Roman numerals. The inscription reads 'Philip and Mary by the grace of God king and queen of England'. The back has the crowned harp with P M (Philip Mary). The legend returns to the older one that we have made God our helper. Groats had to the same design except that the year was on either side of the crown on the front. Philip became king of Spain in 1556 and left England to take over his kingdom. Mary died in 1558. The Collection contains a rare pre-marriage shilling of 1553. There is a debased shilling of 1555 in which the poor quality of the metal is obvious and a groat of 1557.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth I restored the value of the English coinage but left the Irish issue of 1558-59 at the previous debased level. Except for the face of the queen and her name on the front, as well as E R (Elizabeth Queen) on the back, these shillings and groats were the same as those of Mary. Better quality shillings and groats were issued in 1561. The front was the same as in the previous issue while the back contained a new design based on three small harps on a shield with the date on either side. A forty-year gap now emerged during which Irish needs were met by whatever coins were available from England and Spain. The shortage led Irish merchants to produce their own tokens for the first time.

Elizabeth issued another debased Irish coinage in 1601 as an economic attack against the Ulster Earls. Shillings, half-shillings (sixpence) and quarter-shillings (three-pence) were produced in debased silver in London. Copper pennies and halfpennies were also minted. This established a difference between copper and silver that lasted for four centuries. Modern lower value coins are still copper. The legends were the same as before. The front returned to the old design of the royal arms on a shield, while the back had the old crowned harp. The coppers were dated (1601-02). Even the queen's soldiers rejected the new silver coinage. The coppers were accepted as necessary for change. The Collection contains a debased shilling and a debased groat from the first issue of 1558. There is a shilling from the fine issue of 1561. An English shilling of 1595-98 as used in Ireland is included for contrast. Finally there is a debased Dublin shilling of 1601-02 as well as a copper penny from the same issue.

THE EARLY STUARTS:

James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth in 1603. He immediately issued new coins with good quality silver, a shilling and a sixpence. The front of this issue of 1603-04 had the king with his title as 'James by grace of God king of England, Scotland, France and Ireland'. The back had the crowned harp but with a griffin's head on a corner. The legend called on God to guard the united. The same coins appeared in a second issue (1604-07). Again the front had the king but with a different title 'James by the grace of God king of Great Britain, France and Ireland'. The back had the same crowned harp as the first but the legend now read 'Henry the Roses James the Kingdoms' (Henry VII brought together the two Roses, James united the two kingdoms). James did not issue more Irish silver coins but authorised the circulation of English silver in Ireland. Copper farthings were produced in two sizes in 1614. The Collection has two shillings and a sixpence from the second coinage. The bust of the king is slightly different in all three.

Charles I came to the throne in 1625 and continued the previous policy of using English silver in Ireland. Copper farthings were produced on a number of occasions. Charles decided to mint Irish silver in 1641. It never came to be because the Great Rebellion began within five months. The Collection has an English shilling as used in Ireland between 1625 and 1645.

Royalist, Parliamentary and Confederate coinage was issued during the 1640s mirroring the main political and military factions in the country during that complicated era. The Catholic Confederates in Kilkenny were first, with copper halfpennies and farthings in 1642-43. They also struck a silver half-crown, known as the Blacksmith issue. It shows the king on horseback on the front with the title 'Charles by the grace of God king of Great Britain, France and Ireland'. The royal coat of arms was on the back with the legend that he reigned under the auspices of Christ. The lord justices in Dublin gathered whatever pieces of silver they could and cut them into lumps. At first the pieces were stamped with one of six standard weights on both sides. These corresponded with values of a crown, half-crown, shilling, ninepence, sixpence and fourpence. A second set appeared with the weight on one side and a number of annulets corresponding to the value on the other. A final set of two coins known as Dublin money also appeared in 1643. The value in shillings and pence were stamped on one side: V s for the crown and II s VI d for the half-crown. Independent of this, Charles ordered the production of coins with his initials under a crown on one side and the value in shillings and pence on the other. The Earl of Ormonde signed the order in Dublin in 1643 and the coinage is thus known as Ormonde Money. Roughly round blanks were used. The Confederates issued similar crowns and half-crowns, called Rebel Money, by substituting a cross for the royal symbol.

Parliamentary forces controlled various Munster towns. The issue of coins for the Southern Cities of Refuge was authorised. As far as is known only a farthing was issued for Youghal in 1646 and a shilling and a sixpence for Cork in 1647. Ormonde in Dublin issued gold pistoles in 1646. Ormonde in Dublin issued the last coinage of the Great Rebellion in 1649 in the name of the next king, Charles II. It consisted of crowns and half-crowns with a crown on the front and the value on the back. With

the coming of the Commonwealth it was believed that English money would be sufficient in Ireland. The inverse was the case and the shortage of small coins led to corporations or firms circulating tokens again. The Collection has an excellent selection of these coins, most of which are rare. There is a Blacksmith or Kilkenny half-crown of 1642-43 and a Dublin crown of 1643. There is nearly a complete set of Ormonde Money (1643-44): crown, half-crown, shilling, sixpence and groat. Finally there is an extremely rare 1647 sixpence of Cork.

THE LATER STUARTS:

Aware of the shortage of coin in Ireland at the restoration, Charles II authorised Sir Thomas Armstrong to produce copper farthings in 1660-61. The Armstrong coins were the first Irish coins produced by the milling process. They had a crown and two sceptres on the front with the title of 'Charles II by the grace of God, [king] of Great Britain'. The back had a crowned cross and continued the title of king of France and Ireland. The Collection has a farthing from the Dublin Armstrong coinage,

Efforts to prohibit tokens and issue a silver coinage failed. In the midst of this, new coins appeared bearing the image of Saint Patrick. These large copper halfpennies and farthings were undated. Unlike tokens, did not have the name of a merchant or town. The front shows a kneeling king playing a harp, possibly a reference to the biblical king David, with the title of 'may the king flourish'. The back has Saint Patrick preaching as a bishop, possibly holding a shamrock. The halfpenny invites us to behold the flock while the farthing hopes that the people will be at rest. The Saint Patrick money is regarded as a regular coinage. The Collection has a halfpenny and a farthing from the Saint Patrick coinage.

The authorities finally issued a new patent in 1680 to Thomas Armstrong and George Legge for copper halfpennies. The front showed the king not unlike a Roman emperor with the title of 'Charles II by the grace of God'; the back had a crowned harp on which the earlier griffin had become a full nymph. The title 'king of Great Britain, France and Ireland' completed that on the front. The Armstrong Legge coinage continued with numerous varieties between 1680 and 1684. The Collection has a halfpenny of 1682 from the Armstrong Legge coinage.

When James II came to the throne in 1685 John Knox, who had bought out the previous patent, got a new one for halfpennies. Except for the change in the name of the king and a new head looking left rather than right, the design was the same as that of Charles II. The coins bear dates between 1685 and 1688. There is a halfpenny of 1686 in the Collection.

When William of Orange invaded England in 1688 Ireland remained loyal to the Catholic James. He arranged for the seizure of the existing minting presses and set up a mint in Dublin. Since silver was not available, he authorised the issue of copper coins as a temporary measure. The front was the same as the previous halfpennies. The back had a crown and crossed sceptres with the usual inscription. Unusually it also had both the year and month of issue. This also led to a temporal conundrum. Because Great Britain still followed the Julian calendar with New Year's Day on March 25, the coins dated January and February 1689 were actually minted after those for December 1689 while those of March 1689 were minted in the same month as those of March 1690. The production of sixpences began in June 1689, shillings in July and half-crowns in the same month. Contemporaries called these coins brass money but the name of gun-money became common later. This was because any available copper, including some guns, was melted down for coining. As the war progressed, James became more desperate. Pennies and halfpennies were minted in pewter in 1689 and 1690. The front retained the left head but the back returned to the crowned harp without the month of issue. A pewter groat appeared in 1690 and a crown a little later. The Irish did not like these coins, calling them soft copper, in Irish *uim-bog*, which became humbug in English. Older coins were recalled. In particular old half-crowns were overstruck in Dublin as crowns. The front showed James on horseback while the back carried the shields of England, Scotland, France and Ireland in a cross around a crown. The mint now moved to Limerick where further small half-crowns and shillings were produced. By

now William's army had arrived in Ireland and James was on the run. The last coins, sometimes called siege money, were produced in Limerick. Old shillings and sixpences were overstruck to produce halfpennies and farthings. The front had the usual face of the king. The back had the figure of Hibernia seated with a cross in her raised hand and a harp under her other arm with the year of 1691. The Collection has a Gunmoney half-crown of May 1690, probably minted in Limerick. There is a shilling of June 1690, again minted in Limerick. A sixpence of June 1689 was minted in Dublin as was a very rare silver proof shilling of February 1689 (*recte* 1690 – see above). Finally there is a Limerick siege halfpenny and a farthing of 1691.

William and Mary

The Irish coinage was in a mess after the victory of William III and Mary II. The need for silver money was met by circulating foreign coins. New copper halfpennies were issued with William and Mary on the front and with the crowned harp, with the now standard nymph, on the back. The title read 'William and Mary by the grace of God' (front) 'king and queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland' (back). They were minted in the period 1692-94. Following the death of Mary, halfpennies with William alone on the front and an altered title were issued in 1696. There were two versions, one with William's neck draped, the other with the neck bare. It is believed that these were the last coins minted in Ireland until the twentieth century. The Collection has halfpennies of William and Mary of 1693 and William alone of 1696.

George I

There were no Irish issues under Queen Anne. William Woods got a contract under George I to supply copper coins for Ireland and the American colonies. He soon set up mints in London and later in Bristol. Both halfpennies and farthings had the king on the front and the figure of Hibernia on the back. In the first coins in 1722, she has the harp in front of her, in later ones in 1722 and continuing to 1724 the harp is under her elbow. The title has 'George by the grace of God king' on the front with Hibernia and the date on the back. The Irish parliament objected because the patent had been granted without consulting them. Wood gave up his patent and was granted a pension for life. His coinage was not well received and another rash of tokens appeared. The Collection has a Wood's farthing of 1723.

George II

George II came to the throne in 1727 but no moves were made to produce Irish coins until 1736. The new halfpennies and farthings were minted in the Tower of London. The design was simple, with the king looking left on the front (George II had looked right) and a crowned harp on the back. The title on front now read just 'George II, King', with Hibernia and the date on the back. With some breaks, the halfpennies were issued from 1736 to 1755. The farthings appeared only in 1737, 1738 and 1744. There were minor changes in the lettering over the years. A new design with an older face of the king was approved for 1760 but the king died a month later and the coins did not appear in Ireland until 1762. The Collection has a young head halfpenny of George II of 1741.

George III

A gap emerged before the first Irish coinage of George III and tokens appeared based on the current Hibernia designs. Copper halfpennies of George III were issued in 1766 with the same basic design as before. The front had the king looking right (George II looked left) and the back had the usual Hibernia design. The front was inscribed 'King George III' with Hibernia and the date on the back. A second issue in 1769 had two versions of the king's head. A series with longer hair appeared between 1774 and 1782. After that it was a matter of tokens again, this time including some silver coins.

The Act of Union came into effect in 1801. A House of Commons committee found in 1804 that

the Irish coinage was in an appalling condition. It was decided to withdraw all Irish silver and authorise the Bank of Ireland to issue a new coinage. The first contract went to the Soho mint in Birmingham for six-shilling pieces. This unusual value was chosen because the English crown (five shillings) was worth five shillings and five pence Irish. A few pence were added on to reduce the value below the English five shillings and make sure that the coin remained in Ireland. The design had the king looking right on the front and Hibernia with a harp on the back. The inscription on the front was 'George III, king by the grace of God'. The back gave the value, date and proclaimed it a 'Bank of Ireland token'. The six-shilling piece appeared in 1804. A similar thirty pence coin appeared in 1808, with the back inscribed 'bank token, thirty shillings Irish'. The Bank of Ireland authorised the Royal Mint to produce smaller coins valued at ten and five pence. The front was similar to the other coins. The back was filled with the inscription 'bank token, ten or five pence Irish' with the dates of 1805 and 1806. A slightly different ten pence was produced in 1813. With the silver now looked after, attention moved to the copper. The Birmingham mint produced pennies, halfpennies (both 1805) and farthings (1806). The front was the same as the silver coins with the crowned harp on the back, inscribed 'Hibernia' and the date. The silver coins were withdrawn in or after 1817, as British coins became more available in Ireland. A slight shortage of copper led to more tokens. The Collection has a George III 1775 halfpenny of the London mint. There are Bank of Ireland tokens of six shillings (1804), ten pence (the somewhat rarer 1813 version) and five pence (1806). There is a rare 1806 'Soho' farthing in the Collection.

George IV

George IV came to the throne in 1820. The last Irish coinage under the Union was approved in 1822. Pennies and halfpennies were minted in London. The design was the same as that of George III. The king looked left on the front (George III had looked right) with a crowned harp on the back. The pennies and halfpennies were issued in 1822 and 1823. Only proofs appeared of the farthing. The Irish coinage was formally withdrawn in 1826 and the British coinage became valid for the country. There is a standard 1822 penny and a halfpenny of George IV in the Collection.

Free State and Republic

A Coinage Act was passed in 1926 and a committee set up to recommend new designs. A complete set of coins was produced by the Royal Mint and issued in 1928: halfcrown, florin, shilling, sixpence, threepence, penny, halfpenny and farthing. The front showed an animal associated with Ireland together with the value: horse, salmon, bull, greyhound, hare, hen, pig and kingfisher respectively. The back had a harp with the date and the name of the Irish Free State, 'Saorstát Éireann'. The harp had been on Irish coins since the time of Henry VIII and had a nymph on the front since the time of Charles II. It was decided to clean up the harp by using the Brian Boru example from Trinity College, Dublin. The name of the country was changed to 'Éire' in 1939. A ten-shilling commemorative piece with Pádraig Pearse on the front and Cúchulainn on the back was issued in 1966 but did not prove popular.

In 1971, it was decided that Ireland would follow the British example and adopt a decimal system based on the pound. The animals were retained for the silver coins but the copper coins had a Celtic interlace design. The harp remained on the back. The ten pence (old florin) retaining the salmon and five pence (shilling) with the bull were introduced in 1969. A new fifty pence piece (old ten shillings) with the kingfisher came in 1970 and was joined by the two pence, penny and halfpenny in 1971. The Bank of Ireland established its own mint in 1976, taking over from the Royal Mint. The Dublin Millennium was commemorated by a special fifty pence piece in 1988. A twenty pence coin with the horse (nearest in value to the old half-crown) was added to the series in 1986 and a pound with a new design of a red deer in 1990. Smaller versions of the ten and five pence with the animals facing the opposite direction were introduced in 1993 and 1992 respectively.

Further plans to reduce the size of the currency were put on hold as the government turned towards membership of the European Monetary Union. This was achieved in 1998. The euro became the official currency of Ireland on 1 January 1999. The harp was retained as the national symbol. The Central Bank began producing the new euro coins in 1999. The old currency gave a last kick with a special Millennium pound in 2000. No Irish coins were minted after that. Irish coinage came to an end when the euro entered circulation on 1 January 2002. The Collection does not have the coinage of the Free State or the Republic on display since it was felt at the time when the collection was put together that it was too recent.

Irish Tokens

Tokens are coins issued by private individuals or groups to fill gaps in the supply of regular coinage. Elizabeth I did not issue Irish coins between 1561 and 1601. There is a unique token issued by Adam Dulan of Kilkenny in 1578. Copper coins were in short supply under the Commonwealth and Charles II. Tokens appeared after 1653 and continued until the Armstrong Legge coinage of 1680. The Collection has four tokens from this period. Two were issued in 1658. One is from Cork City, with P. M. (Philip Matthews) as mayor. The other is from Limerick City, with the city arms on the front and marked 'Change & Charity' with the date on the back. The other two tokens are extremely rare 1679 halfpennies from Limerick. One was issued by the Limerick Butchers and carries the paschal lamb. The other was issued by Tho. Lynch and carries a harp.

Tokens appeared again in 1728-31 after the breakdown of the Woods coinage. More appeared, almost exclusively in Ulster, in 1734-41 after the death of George I. Another group appeared after the death of George II in 1760. Imitations of official halfpennies appeared about the same time and lasted until the end of the century. All such tokens were not of great quality but good copper penny and halfpenny tokens were issued through mining companies in 1789-1804. Many came from genuine companies; others belonged to fictitious organisations. Some were anonymous. The Collection has four of these tokens. There is a genuine token with the head of Saint Patrick on the front titled Cronebane halfpenny and a mine winch and arms on the back inscribed the 'Associated Irish Mine Company 1789'. Another genuine token halfpenny has a castle on the front inscribed 'payable at the bank of R. W. (Richard Woodcock), Enniscorthy'. The back has a shield hanging from a tree and the date of 1800. A fictitious company, H. S. & Co., issued a halfpenny payable at Dublin, Cork or Limerick. There is an excellent anonymous undated halfpenny. It is an imitation of the Cronebane issue, with a king's head on the front with the title of 'Bryen Boiromhe, king of Munster'. The back has a wheatsheaf, two doves and peace and plenty as well as the date, 1795.

A number of silver tokens were issued around 1804, soon followed by large copper ones. Finally many companies issued farthing tokens between about 1830 and 1856. Some were issued without denominations. The Collection has two of these farthings, one from John Egan of Limerick in 1832, the other from Todd Burns and Company, Dublin, Cork or Limerick, 1834. There are also two without denominations, one from Talty Murphy and Company, Henry Street, Dublin, the other from I. Fortune and Company, Galway. A twopence halfpenny token of P. Kavanagh and Son, Limerick, may belong to the large copper tokens from this period.

Some of the tokens issued in 1813-15 featured the Duke of Wellington. The Collection has a good example. Wellington is in uniform on the front with the title 'Hispaniam et Lusitaniam Restituit Wellington' (Wellington restored Spain and Portugal). The back has the places and dates of his battles there: Vimiera (sic) August 21 1808; Talavera July 28 1809; Almerida May 5 1811; Ciudad Rodrigo January 19 1812; Badajoz April 6 1812; Salamanca July 22 1812; Madrid August 12 1812.

Many companies issued tokens for limited internal use. This could entitle the employee to goods in lieu of wages, or pay a supplier through produce. The Collection has two sets of such tokens. Two belong to the Monasterevin Distillery of John Cassidy. The other set also belong to a distillery, this

time that of Stein Brown and Company, Thomondgate, Limerick. They entitle the holder, presumably a supplier, to one or two tubs of mash (the waste product of distilling) used locally to feed pigs.

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