

My Phone No. is Biggleswade - Bedford.

(Home)
(Work) Ext. 3400

Bill.

COIN VARIETIES

The die numbers question by David Sealy

Readers must have been struck, as I was, by the simplicity of the solution to the 'die numbers problem', which has bothered students of modern British coins for so long, as elucidated by J. E. Hiscott in the September issue of COINS (p20). It had to be something like this, though I must confess to a slight feeling of anticlimax that the mystery was not deeper! It is a curious fact that my correspondent Peter Gaspar of St Louis, Missouri, and his co-worker James Haxby, have hit quite independently, on the same reference as Mr Hiscott. An article by them is appearing in the US magazine *Numismatic News*, I understand. They also refer to G. F. Ansell's now rare book *The Royal Mint* (3rd edition, 1871, p80), where in one admirably succinct sentence the explanation is given: it is a pity this reference has been so long overlooked.

The numismatic interest of die numbers has not ended, however—it has only just begun. Messrs Gaspar and Haxby are undertaking no less a task than the elucidation of the die number sequence. Did they necessarily start from 1 each year? Another interesting point is that the die number is on the same side of the coin as the date in the case of the silver (*obverse* for the florin, of course) and on the opposite side for the gold. This indicates that possibly the gold and silver may have been numbered on different systems. Does the same reverse die and/or die number occur on gold coins of different dates? Evidence is urgently required on as many date-die number associations as possible, and I would like to ask all collectors to make a note of their holdings and let me know. A number of articles have of course already appeared in the numismatic press giving data of

this kind. Particularly important are instances where the *opposite* die has some individual characteristic by which it may be distinguished, as for instance the 1878 DRITANNIAR: sixpence. Information on gold coins is also particularly required.

Messrs Gaspar and Haxby are also seeking for confirmation of the assertion by Peck and others that obverse dies of shield-type sovereigns were also used for farthings. Has anyone an authentic die-link? Any information sent to me on either of the above points I will gladly pass on to Dr Gaspar.

Guernsey 4 doubles 1864 by Adrian Ritchie

Since the publication of David Sealy's article on the subject¹, it has been widely known that there are no fewer than 11 varieties of the Guernsey 8 doubles of 1864. However, only two varieties of the 4 doubles of the same date are reported in Exley's book, *Guernsey Coinage*. As the 4 doubles was the product of the same mysterious Birmingham firm (Henry Toy and Co?)², it is perhaps not surprising that it should prove to have been struck from almost as many different dies as the 8 doubles. I have discovered five obverse and three reverse dies as follows:

Obverse

- 1 Leaves on shield have three stalks. Centre stalk slightly closer to the right than to the left. Bottom front leg of lowest lion long.
- 2 Three stalks evenly spaced. Bottom front leg of lowest lion short.
- 3 Centre leaf short. Right leaf overlaps centre leaf.
- 4 Centre leaf long. Right leaf has stalk joining centre stalk close to top of shield. Left leaf has no stalk. Small break in right-hand down stroke of N

in GUERNESEY.

- 4* Die 4 in a deteriorated state, most noticeable in the letters of GUERNESEY.
- 5 Small lions; bottom lion well clear of base of shield. Centre leaf short. Left leaf has a stalk.

Reverse

- A The word DOUBLES has a length of about 17.5mm. Top of B slightly higher than top of U. 4 of date struck over 5.
- B DOUBLES about 17mm. Top of U higher than top of B.
- B* Die B in a deteriorated state, particularly DOU of DOUBLES.
- C DOUBLES about 17mm. U tilted slightly left but top almost level with top of B.

The following die pairings exist (no. 1 is possibly the scarcest, whilst no. 4 is possibly the commonest):

Nos.	Exley No.	Dies
1	E10A	1+A
2	E10A	2+A
3	E9	3+A
4	E9	3+B
5	E9	4+B
6	E9	4+B*
7	E9	5+C

I have examined only 50 or so coins, so it is quite possible that the above list is not exhaustive. A fourth reverse die could well exist, but it seems that the existence of Exley's E10 (three stalks obverse; no overdate on reverse) must be considered to be extremely doubtful.

¹BRITISH NUMISMATIC JOURNAL 1964, pages 164-7, p1XII. See also COINS AND MEDALS, July 1968, page 609 and COINS, April 1971, page 22. According to this last reference, David Sealy thought the overdate (reverse A) might have been the last striking made—a theory evidently no longer tenable.

²Sealy's BULLETIN, April 1970, page 127.

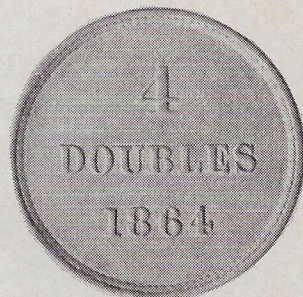
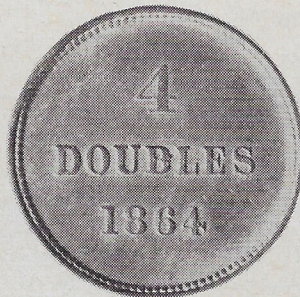
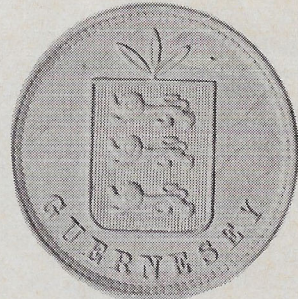
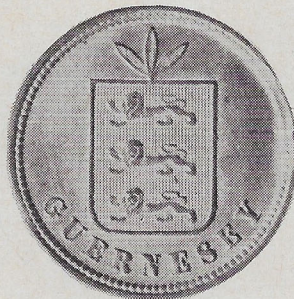
must get



1 + A

2 + A

3 + A



4 + B

4* + B*

5 + C

GUERNSEY 4 DOUBLES 1864

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2. 3 stalks evenly spaced. Bottom front leg of lowest lion short.
3. Centre leaf short. Right leaf overlaps centre leaf.
4. Centre leaf long. Right leaf has stalk joining centre stalk close to top of shield. Left leaf has no stalk. Small break in right-hand down stroke of N in "GUERNSEY".
- 4* Die 4 in a deteriorated state, most noticeable in the letters of "GUERNSEY".
5. Small lions; bottom lion well clear of base of shield. Centre leaf short. Left leaf has a stalk.

REVERSE

- A. "DOUBLES": Top of B slightly higher than top of U.
"DOUBLES" about 17.5 mm
4 of date struck over 5
- B. Top of U higher than top of B.
"DOUBLES" about 17 mm.
- B* Die B in a deteriorated state, particularly DOU of DOUBLES.
- C. U tilted slightly left but top almost level with top of B.
"DOUBLES" about 17 mm.

The following die pairings exist:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Exley No.</u>	<u>Dies</u>	
1	E10A	1 + A	scarcest ?
2	E10A	2 + A	
3	E9	3 + A	
4	E9	3 + B	commonest ?
5	E9	4 + B	
6	E9	4*+B*	
7	E9	5 + C	