

## IMITATION SPADE GUINEAS (ISGs)

Imitation guineas and their fractions (e.g. half and third guineas) can be found as gaming counters, commemorative medalets and give-away advertising pieces. They usually bear the head of Queen Anne or George III and are in base metal, but occasionally are gilt or silvered.

The Queen Anne counters mostly omit, on the reverse, the crossed sceptres of the gold guinea and half guinea coinage and as such are imitations of the silver coinage. They are dated both within and without the dates of her reign; the commonest dates being 1711 and 1761. A few of the early George III imitations have the same reverse as the Queen Anne counters but the majority have the ornate crowned shield of the contemporary gold coinage. Most are dated between 1761 and 1788.



The first regal 'spade' guineas were introduced in 1787; the reverse containing a pointed shield which resembled the shape of the garden spade then in use. The spade imitations were issued between 1788 and 1802 and an increasing number of manufacturers became involved in their production, often adding their name or initials to the piece, usually below the bust.

1788 saw the introduction of a series of commemorative medalets, again based on the new gold coinage but often with scalloped edges. They include the commemoration of George III's visits to Cheltenham and Worcester and of his recovery from one of his recurring bouts of illness. *Note* - these commemorative medalets are also listed in Dalton & Hamer. However, the seminal work on imitation guineas<sup>1</sup> includes several pieces not in Dalton & Hamer<sup>1</sup>.



Following the replacement of the guinea by the sovereign in 1817, the demand for gaming counters was increasingly met by imitations based on the sovereign. The most prolific series were the To Hanover sovereigns and the Prince of Wales Model half sovereigns<sup>2</sup> (see separate entry on this series). However, the Counterfeit Medal Act of 1883 effectively put an end to the sale of counters and medalets resembling current coin and this led to the re-appearance of the spade guinea series of counters. These were then an obsolete design and so their manufacture was less likely to lead to prosecution. Unlike the earlier group, few of these new imitations were exact copies of the originals but had legends such as *In Memory Of The Good Old Days*, or were advertisements with either obvious or subtle inclusion in the legend of the maker or issuer's name. They continued to be produced until the first decades of the twentieth century, with only a few varieties thereafter.



Martin R Warburton

November 2019

### **IMITATION SOVEREIGNS & HALF SOVEREIGNS**

**TO HANOVER** counters satirize the Duke of Cumberland's 'departure' to Hanover. Although British monarchs from George I were also rulers of Hanover, Queen Victoria was barred under Salic law from succeeding to the Kingdom of Hanover, so the succession went to the nearest male heir, the unpopular Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland.

The counters depict the Duke riding past a dragon (parodying St. George and the dragon) with the legend *To Hanover*. The Duke's sword is usually upright against his shoulder, although sometimes it is sheathed. The dragon usually has three heads but occasionally one or two.

The obverse usually depicts a young head portrait of Queen Victoria facing left with legends such as *Victoria Queen of Great Britain*, *H.M.G.M. Queen Victoria*, *Victoria Regina* etc. In a few cases the manufacturer's initials appear on the truncation. The counters are usually dated from 1837 to 1869 with only a few dated after that. Most of those dated after 1840 probably indicate the actual date of issue. A significant number have a fictitious date of 1830 and many of these, including those with the mis-spelling *Quen*, were made by the Nuremberg firm L C Lauer. In addition, some unusual and advertising pieces exist.

The vast majority are sovereign size with only about ten per cent half sovereign size. The half sovereign denomination was served by another popular series of counters at the time, the Prince of Wales Model Half Sovereigns (see below). About 350 varieties of To Hanover counters are known, with about 150 varieties of the Prince of Wales counters. Both are included in a checklist published in 2014<sup>2</sup>.

However, To Hanover counters bore some similarity to gold sovereigns, especially after the reintroduction of the George and dragon reverse in 1871. This led to many prosecutions both in respect of their manufacture and for passing them as gold coins to unsuspecting victims. It was not, however, illegal to sell them (for an innocent purpose) until the Counterfeit Medal Act of 1883. This prevented the sale of "Medals" resembling current coin and led to the re-appearance of the spade guinea series of counters<sup>1</sup> (see separate entry on this series).



**PRINCE OF WALES MODEL SOVEREIGN & HALF SOVEREIGN** counters were first issued shortly after Edward, first son of Queen Victoria, became Prince of Wales in late 1842, a month after his christening. He held the title of Prince of Wales for 59 years before ascending the throne as Edward VII in 1901.

The counters were extremely popular and continued to be issued by various manufacturers until the 1870's. The majority were half sovereign size, complementing the mainly sovereign size To Hanover counters (see above).

The normal obverse is a young head portrait of Queen Victoria with legends such as *Victoria Regina* or variations of *Victoria Queen of Great Britain*.

There are three main reverse types -

1. The Prince of Wales emblem of three plumes and a coronet enclosed by a garter inscribed *Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense* with no outer legend.



2. Three plumes and a coronet with a ribbon on either side inscribed *Ich and Dien*, enclosed by a crowned circular frame. The circular frame is usually made up of two or three concentric circles with seven or eight ornaments or blocks. The outer legend is *The Prince Of Wales Model (Half) Sov<sup>RN</sup>*.



3. The Prince of Wales on horseback enclosed by a crowned garter inscribed *ICH DIEN*, with outer legend of *The Prince Of Wales Model (Half) Sov<sup>RN</sup>*.



The Counterfeit Medal Act of 1883 effectively put an end to the sale of Prince of Wales counters.

Martin R Warburton

November 2019

## SENTIMENTAL MAGAZINE MEDALS

These medals (as the Sentimental Magazine referred to them) or medalets were included with each monthly issue of the Magazine from the first issue in March 1773 until March 1774 when they were discontinued. However, the Magazine itself continued in production until December 1777.

Each monthly medal depicted a famous person (see the table below). They were available in copper if 6d was paid for the Magazine, or in silvered copper if 9d was paid. The availability of silvered medals was only made known through newspaper advertisements almost three months after the Magazine's first edition, but silvered medals for the first two issues were available in retrospect.

The copper medals are relatively common considering they were issued almost 250 years ago, but the silvered medals are less common. A significant amount of wear seen on some of the copper medals suggest they were used as regal coinage at a time of particular shortage. Apart from two varieties of a copper medal inscribed GB instead of Kirk, there are 13 different copper medals made, and inscribed, by Kirk. However, 17 different varieties are known for Kirk's copper issues (see the table below). Not all the varieties of the silvered medals corresponding to each of Kirk's copper varieties have yet been seen.

Medal	Month	Die Axis	Variety
GEORGE III	Mar 1773	180 180	obv 1 obv 2
CHARLOTTE	Apr 1773	180	
D <sup>E</sup> GLOCESTER	May 1773	90 180	axis 1 axis 2
GARRICK	Jun 1773	180	
BECKFORD	Jul 1773	180	
GEORGE II	Aug 1773	180	
WILKES	Sep 1773	0 180	rev 1 rev 2
CROMWELL	Oct 1773	0	
CHATHAM	Nov 1773	0	
CAMDEN	Dec 1773	0	
GRANBY	Jan 1774	180	
D <sup>S</sup> CUMBERLAND	(Feb 1774)	90 180	axis 1 axis 2
D <sup>S</sup> GLOCESTER	(Mar 1774)	180	
GRANBY (G.B.)		0 0	var 1 var 2



Prizes of silver medals were awarded by the Magazine each month and apparently these could be engraved with the winners' names. However, none has yet been positively identified.

The medals were produced by Kirk of St Paul's Churchyard. Silver medals (not engraved) and medals in other finishes exist from the same dies as the copper and silvered medals. This suggests that these could be purchased separately from Kirk.

The foregoing summarises some of the results of recently published research which has been carried out based on copies of the Sentimental Magazine itself<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Full information is available in a published checklist of Imitation Guineas and their Fractions – 'A THOUSAND GUINEAS PLUS' by W Bryce Neilson & Martin R Warburton – available from Galata Print Ltd. This 2013 publication lists over 1250 varieties with many photographs and a guide to rarity/value.*

<sup>2</sup> *Full information is available in a published checklist of Imitation Sovereigns and their Fractions - 'TO HANOVER & PRINCE OF WALES COUNTERS' by Martin R Warburton & W Bryce Neilson – available from Galata Print Ltd. This 2014 publication lists over 500 varieties with many photographs and a guide to rarity/value.*

<sup>3</sup> *'SENTIMENTAL MAGAZINE MEDALS' by Martin R Warburton, 2018; available from the author; contact - [martin@richardmills.net](mailto:martin@richardmills.net)*

*Pictures for 1 & 2 by Paul Withers taken from these publications*

Martin R Warburton

November 2019