

## DATASHEET 46

### ‘Crown and Heart’ Buttons and Cufflinks

by

**Dr Michael Lewis**

mlewis@britishmuseum.org

Department of Britain, Europe & Prehistory, British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG

#### Introduction

Found in increasing numbers, thanks to metal-detecting and recording with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), are small silver buttons with ‘crown and heart’ motifs (**Figure 1**). Most of these are found as single finds, but some are joined by links, and were probably used as cufflinks. This datasheet explores these buttons, their construction and date, and offers a typology.

#### Historical background

Cufflinks (sometimes known as sleeve links or sleeve buttons) became fashionable in England during the second half of the seventeenth century, following changes in the style of shirts worn. These changes were influenced by continental tastes, especially those of the Court of Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715). Before this time, openings in sleeve-cuffs – necessary so that sleeved garments could be removed with ease – were fastened with ties, or (perhaps) with hooks and eyes. Increasingly, however, small metal ‘buttons for cuffs’ (*boutons de manchette*) connected by links, or paired elements joined by a bar, were preferred. Most surviving buttons of this period are made of copper alloy or pewter, but an increasing number of silver examples are now being reported under the Treasure Act 1996 via the PAS. Those with ‘crown and heart’ motifs are discussed here.



Figure 1: Crown and Heart Cufflinks (ESS-6BD848)

#### Discovery

To date (as of 31 December 2012) 172 finds of such buttons have been reported as potential Treasure. All have been recovered by metal-detecting, which highlights the important contribution metal-detected finds can make to the archaeological record if reported. Until the advent of the Treasure Act 1996 (which became law on 24 September 1997) there was no legal obligation for finders of such items to report them; this legislation has therefore ensured the reporting of categories of small finds previously little considered.

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The first to be reported (incidentally, first reported to the author in his capacity as Finds Liaison Officer for Kent) was found at Rochester, Kent in 2001 (BM: 2001 MME 364; Gaimster & Thornton 2003, 81), for which the only parallel known at the time was found at Jamestown, Virginia, USA (Hume 1969: fig. 22). It is likely that such buttons had been previously discovered (if found before the introduction of Treasure Act 1996), but only two (BUC-093298 & SWYOR-BD9B07) have subsequently been reported.

It is commonly the case that such buttons are found alone, as single elements (not connected to one another by a silver wire link), though an increasing number of examples (26 to date) are found linked. A further eleven examples have the link still attached, but are missing one element. It is conceivable that some buttons were never intended to be joined together forming a cufflink, but were instead worn as single buttons.

### Construction

Buttons with 'crown and heart' motifs are most commonly made of silver, though examples of pewter (HAMP-6BB2E2 & BM-D961A4) and (silvered) copper alloy (SUSS-2FA786 & NCL-7F47E2) are known. Most buttons are made of sheet metal upon which the chosen design is pressed (from the reverse). A 'mirror-image' impression of the stamped obverse design is therefore seen on the reverse. Occasionally, a 'back-plate' is fixed to the reverse (see SOM-770765), forming a hollow button.

In their simplest construction (Form 1), buttons have a central wire loop soldered to the reverse (**Figure 2a**). A silver wire link is then used to join the two buttons together, creating cufflinks. Alternatively buttons are fixed to another disc (a flat base), which can be of a different size (normally smaller) by means of a tubular bar (Form 2): there are 13 examples of this form (**Figure 2b**). None has been found linked to another, so it is not certain how they were used. It is possible they were used as collar studs, rather than as cufflinks.



Figure 2: Buttons of a) 'Form 1' (IOW-775E17) and b) 'Form 2' (SOM-310F32)

### Makers' marks

Sometimes 'crown and heart' buttons have makers' marks. Buttons of 'Form 1' are only 'marked' on the wire link (**Figure 3a**); a mark on the button itself would stamp through onto the obverse design, thus ruining the button. Neither is marking these buttons at all common practice; of 37 'Form 1' buttons with links, only eight have makers' marks. Such marks are proportionately more common on buttons of 'Form 2', of which seven of 13 examples are so stamped. These are all marked on the secondary disc (**Figure 3b**).

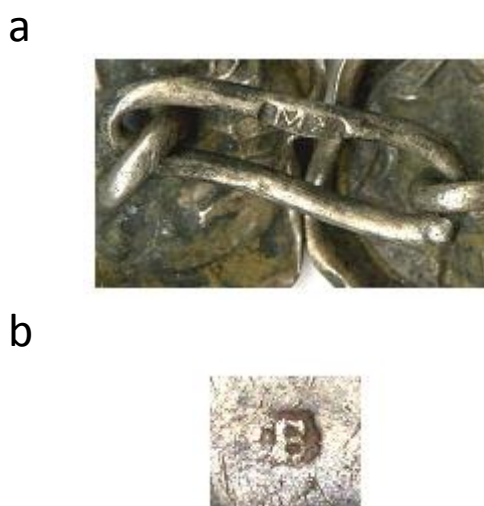


Figure 3: Makers' Marks on Buttons of a) 'Form 1' (BUC-582585) and b) 'Form 2' (SUR-C21661)

Makers' marks on such items are likely to be those of 'small workers' - active in London and elsewhere, as opposed to 'large' and 'plate' workers (e.g. Jackson 1921). Care is therefore needed when trying to identify makers and their marks. An added complication is the fact that the records of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths are incomplete, those before 1666 being destroyed in the Great Fire of London. It is also of note that makers' marks on such buttons are often worn or poorly stamped. This is particularly true of those on links, since invariably the stamps used to make such marks are larger than the diameter of the silver wire of the link itself. To date it has not been possible to definitively associate any makers' marks on a 'crown and heart' button with known silver workers (pers. comm. Tony Dove 2012).

It is generally thought that the 'crown and heart' device on such buttons commemorates the marriage of King Charles II (r. 1660–85) to Catherine of Braganza (1638-1705) in 1662 (Gaimster & Thornton 2003, 81), but little evidence has been offered to support this theory.

It is well known that such devices, of crowned, conjoined and pierced hearts, have a long history. Crowned hearts are found on some medieval pilgrim *ampullae* (e.g. IOW-731D41, LIN-8A5CC7 & SWYOR-92F615; **Figure 4a**), an emblem of the Virgin Mary (Spencer 1998, 159 & fig 176c), and thus likely to be associated with Marian cult centres such as Walsingham. Similarly, the 'sacred heart', representing Christ's divine love for humanity, is found on medieval seal matrices (e.g. BH-E2DE23 & BUC-451987; **Figure 4b**). Also of note for its iconography is a silver locket from Northumberland (NCL-912218), inscribed with a pierced heart and 'IHS' (a monogram for *Jesus*, which was later misinterpreted as 'Jesus Saviour of Mankind'), believed to be of seventeenth-century manufacture. Sometimes the sacred heart is flaming, as seen on a number of post-medieval items recorded as tokens (e.g. BH-370887, BH-EA4371 & SUSS-2916E2; **Figure 4c**), which are perhaps buttons, but without loops.

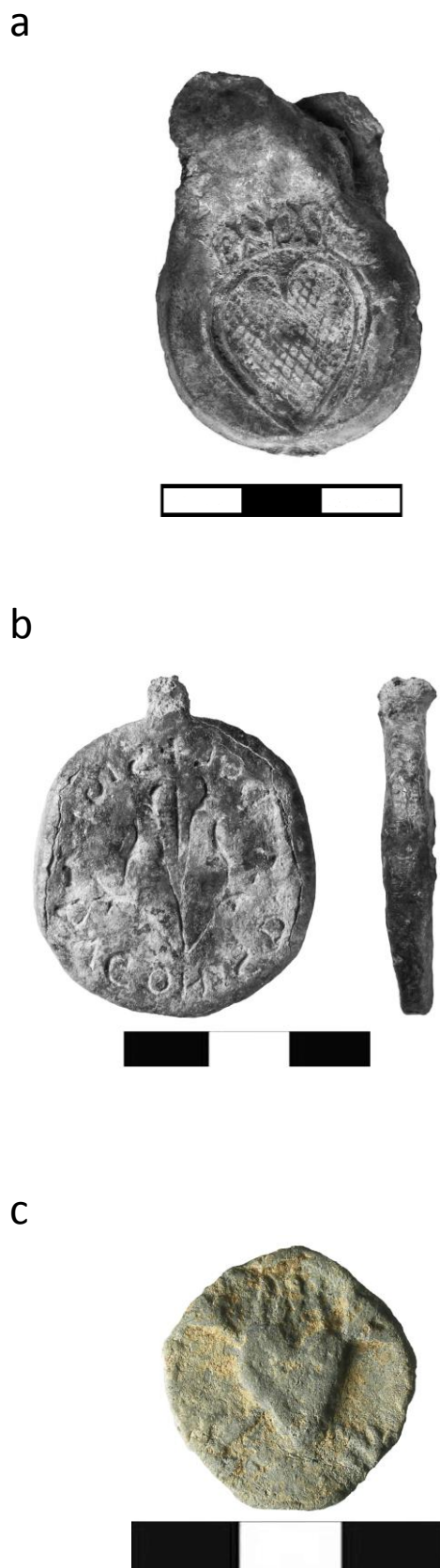


Figure 4: Crown and Heart Devices on a) a Pilgrim's Ampulla (LIN-8A5CC7), b) Seal Matrix (BH-E2DE23) and c) Token (BH-370887)

It is clear that there was a shift in the use of crown and heart motifs from a device which was essentially religious (in the medieval period) to one that represented love between two individuals (by the Reformation). For example, crowned hearts appear on a number of fifteenth century finger-rings, some of *fede* type (e.g. NMGW-A8C737, SOMDOR-20FAC4 & WILT-0C6065; **Figure 5a**).

By the seventeenth century, motifs found on ‘crown and heart’ buttons also appear on a number of other objects, including a series of seal matrices, showing a crowned heart pierced by arrows (see SOM-46A145, SUSS-82D416 & SWYOR-6F43F2; **Figure 5b**); sometimes the hearts are shown bleeding (e.g. LEIC-964413). Also of note is a silver thimble from the Isle of Wight (IOW-7E8237; **Figure 5c**). This dates to the seventeenth century, and depicts cherubs supporting two conjoined hearts.



**c**



*Figure 5: Crown and Heart Motifs on a) a Finger-ring (WILT-0C6065) and b) Seal Matrix (SWYOR-6F43F2) and c) Thimble (IOW-7E8237)*

Of particular interest - given the possible association of ‘crown and heart’ motifs with the wedding of Charles II to Catherine in 1662 - is a type of jetton, issued in the name of Louis XIII of France (r. 1610-43) and Anne of Austria (1601-66), which was struck in Nuremberg on the occasion of their marriage on 24 November 1615. These have upon their reverse a crown within a wreath, above a banner inscribed *CARITAS SPES FIDES* (charity, hope, faith), and flanked by two hearts (see LIN-1176F6).

It is apparent that the ‘crown and heart’ device had royalist and/or Catholic connotations. This is particularly evident upon a silver pendant found in Essex (ESS-259730; **Figure 6a**) which features a pierced heart with the inscription ‘*prepared be to follow me C R / I live and dy in loyalte*’: clearly made for a supporter of Charles I.

Although it seems doubtful that such motifs were fashionable during the Commonwealth (1649-60) (Bailey 2004, 30), the design on a 1653 copper-alloy trade token issued at Gravesend, Kent (LON-5E0926; **Figure 6b**)

shows that some were prepared to brave the possible repercussions of voicing dissent. Even in Protestant homelands, crown and heart motifs (though stylised) found their way onto German stoneware (Bartmann or Bellarmine) vessels produced in significant numbers at Frechen and elsewhere nearby (Wright 2009, 27; Gaimster 1997, 110). That said, it seems even less likely that such devices remained in use after the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688, apart from (perhaps) amongst recusants.

a



b



Figure 6: a) pierced heart on a pendant (ESS-259730) and b) Trader’s Token (LON-5E0926)

Buttons of similar construction, but without ‘crown and heart’ motifs, depict the busts of several monarchs, helping to date (in general terms) the series. Represented are: Charles II (r. 1660-85); William III and Mary II (joint r. 1688-94; **Figure 7**); and Anne (r. 1702-14). It is notable that the series is incomplete between 1686 and 1697. On this basis, and the fact that such motifs do not seem to continue in metalworking tradition beyond the early

eighteenth century, it seems likely that the manufacture of buttons with ‘crown and heart’ motifs also ceased at about this time.



Figure 7: Button of William III and Mary II (SUR-528D55)

### Typology

Although the designs on ‘crown and heart’ buttons vary in detail, as they are handmade items, they can be broadly divided into six main types:

**Type A: Crown above two hearts** (87 examples; **Figure 8**). The form of the crown varies considerably, but most buttons show an arched and jewelled crown with central cross. Sometimes two pellets are shown below the hearts (e.g. SF-EA3EC6), or on either side of the crown, and below the hearts (e.g. LON-131065).



Figure 8: Type ‘A’ (LANCUM-9E82B6)

**Type B: Flaming heart cut by two arrows** (50 examples; **Figure 9**). Sometimes the design also shows two (e.g. SOM-8F84C7) or four (e.g. ESS-33CD73) tear-shaped pellets below.



*Figure 9: Type 'B' (NMS-761DE7)*

**Type D: Clasped hands, raised above two flaming hearts** (2 examples; **Figure 11**). This type is closely related to Type C. Of note are the variable ways in which the hands grip one another.



*Figure 11: Type 'D' (IOW-F1FB17)*

**Type C: Crown above clasped hands, and two flaming hearts beneath** (30 examples; **Figure 10**). A variant of this design has just a single heart motif (e.g. KENT-E2E596) or no hearts (e.g. NMS-0A8DD4). Sometimes the sleeves of garments are also shown (e.g. BH-D24317).



*Figure 10: Type 'C' (BH-060552)*

**Type E: Two cherubs supporting a crown over a flaming heart** (3 examples; **Figure 12**). This is probably the most sophisticated of the designs found on such buttons.



*Figure 12: Type 'E' (BUC-84BF11)*

**Type F: Quatrefoil of four loops, with a heart between each arm (2 examples; Figure 13).** This design is reminiscent of (but not identical with) those on fourpence pieces in the name of Charles II, dated 1670 to 1684, which show four interlinked ‘C’ motifs, with an emblem between each (Spink 3384).



Figure 13: Type ‘F’ (WILT-7D0B06)

Other, broadly contemporary, buttons of interest are those of a similar form that depict Stuart (and House of Orange) monarchs. Those found in silver depict: Charles II (r.1660-85), facing (4 examples) and with Catherine of Braganza (1 example); William III (r. 1689-1702) with Mary II (r. 1689-94) (2 examples); Anne (1702-14) (3 examples).

**Distribution**

The occurrence and distribution of ‘crown and heart’ buttons reported through the Treasure process are of interest (Figure 14). Most numerous are buttons of Types A and B (87 and 50 respectively), followed by Type C (30), and Types E, D and F (3, 2 and 2 respectively). Buttons are most common in the East (75), followed by the South East (38), the North (25), the Midlands (24) and the South West (12). None has been found in Wales. The East and South East account for the widest range of button types. It is perhaps of interest that Type B is relatively common in the South West, and Type C is found more often than Type B buttons in the North and Midlands, thus suggesting Type B is a ‘southern type’ while Type C was more popular further north.

It is important to note that the data is skewed in favour of the East by the large number of ‘crown and heart’ buttons being found in Essex: 42 (24% of the total). It is nonetheless interesting to note that only the most common types (A-C) have been found there.

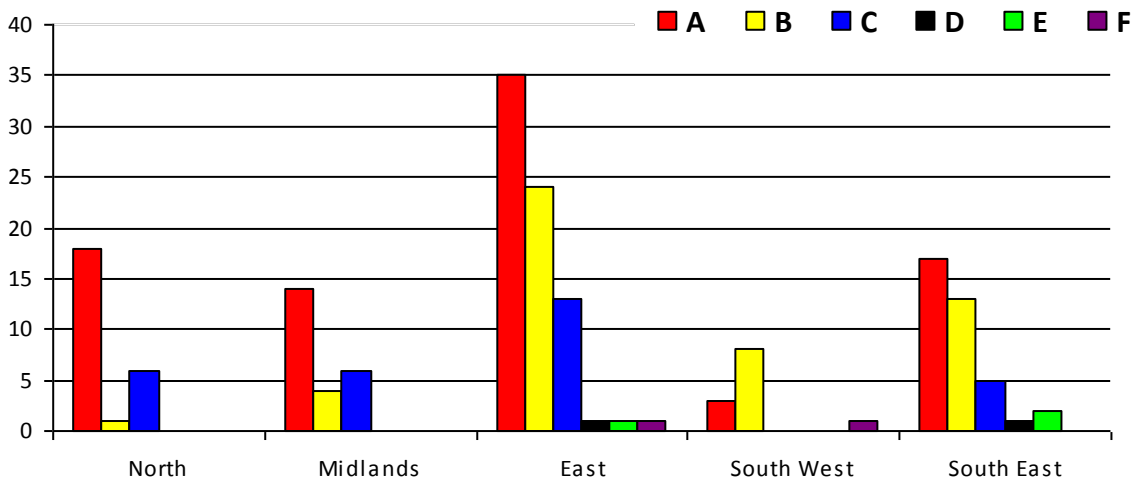


Figure 14: Regional distribution of Silver Type A to F ‘Crown and Heart’ buttons

### **Acknowledgements**

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