

The Scottish Mint after the recoinage, 1709–1836

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the history of the Mint from the post-Union recoinage of 1707–9 to its eventual abolition between 1817 and 1836, and looks at abortive proposals for resuming coinage between 1711 and 1761 and its last production, the Revolution Club Medal of 1753. A postscript refers to the attempts to bring the Royal Mint to Scotland, 1963–7.

SURVIVAL OF THE SCOTTISH MINT

On 5 October 1709 a final batch of new coins was delivered to the Bank of Scotland bringing to an end the post-Union recoinage.¹ Though these were the very last to be struck at the Edinburgh Mint, until 1814 it retained a full complement of permanent officials, some of whom remained in post till 1836. How was it that an organization costing well over £1000 a year survived for over a century, while apparently doing nothing to justify its existence?

The first reason is that its survival was written into article 16 of the Treaty of Union. The original proposal of the English commissioners for a common coinage, linked to the adoption of English weights and measures that later became the separate article 17, was put to the Scottish commissioners on 19 June 1706. On 21 June they put forward their own proposal:

and after the Union the Mint at Edinburgh be always continued under the same rules as the Mint in the Tower of London or elsewhere in the United Kingdom.²

On 26 December the Scottish Parliament inserted a further amendment:

and the present Officers of the Mint be continued.³

In its final form the article concluded with a proviso, applying to the Mint and officers alike:

subject to such regulations and alterations as Her Majesty, her heirs or successors, or the Parliament of Great Britain shall think fit.

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Common coinage involved recoinage of existing Scottish silver coins (gold and copper were excluded) on the lines of the previous English 'great recoinage'. In spite of some problems the recoinage was completed without any hint of the fraud and mismanagement that had occurred in England. It was characterized by generally cordial relations between the Scottish Mint officials and Sir Isaac Newton, Master of the Mint in the Tower of London.⁴

For the English recoinage temporary branches of the Royal Mint had been set up in provincial cities. Once the work was completed these 'country mints' closed down. The same fate might have been envisaged for the Edinburgh Mint and, with hindsight, that was exactly what happened. However, the fifty or so years after the recoinage witnessed intermittent attempts to find a role for the Scottish Mint.

That role was partly defined by the second element in article 16 'under the same rules as the mint in England', that is similar to, but not subordinate. Previously the Scottish Mint had operated under an Act of 1686, which laid down standards for weight and fineness and the salaries of the officers.⁵ In the Tower Mint these were set out in the mint indenture, a formal contract between the Master and the Sovereign. As there was no time to draw up a new indenture, the Scottish recoinage was carried out under a royal warrant applying the terms of the current Tower Mint indenture to Scotland. Though a Scottish indenture was not signed until 1712,⁶ its belated appearance can be taken as evidence of an intention to maintain a working mint in Edinburgh. What it did not do was define the relationship between the two mints, particularly in the matter of funding. Under the Coinage Act of 1708 the Master of the Edinburgh Mint was to receive £1200 annually out of the coinage duty, which replaced the bullion duty levied under the 1686 Act. George Allardyce of that ilk, then Master, had been consulted about the provision to be made for it in the 1708 Act. He had stipulated what was necessary to cover salaries, repairs to the buildings and provision of tools, but had not allowed for the actual costs of coining money, previously met from the free balance of the bullion money.⁷

OFFICERS AND PATRONAGE, 1709–25

A schedule to the mint indenture listed the officers and their salaries.⁸ Both were in accordance with the 1686 Act with the exception of the Collector of Bullion, whose post had ceased in 1708, along with the bullion duty, and the Clerk of the Bullion, who continued temporarily in the guise of Assistant to the Weigher and Teller and the Surveyor of the Meltings (offices with only a notional existence). At the head of the permanent officers was the General, normally a member of the peerage, whose duties included supervising the others and presiding over the Mint's court of wardenry. His office had no counterpart in the Tower Mint and was thus a target for criticism, particularly from Newton, who dismissed it as 'useless'.⁹ Nevertheless, the Generals seem to have taken their role more seriously than the post-Union Masters. Though the Master was responsible for the Mint's operations and its financial affairs, in practice most of his duties were delegated to a deputy. The main function of the Warden and Counterwarden was to provide a check on the Master, including certifying expenditure on the buildings. Four lesser officers were concerned with the practical side of the Mint's work: the Assaymaster, Engraver, Smith and Clerk. Salaries ranged from £300 for the General and £200 for the Master down to £30 for the Smith.¹⁰ In addition the officers were entitled to accommodation within the Mint: houses for the General and Master on the west and north sides of the Mint close — off South Gray's Close — and apartments for the others in the oldest building on the south side fronting the Cowgate. These could be let if the officer was non-resident. Although the fabric funds were supposedly limited to essential repairs, in practice considerable sums were expended on internal alterations and decoration.¹¹

The scope that the Mint offered for patronage was both a factor in its survival and a cause of its ultimate decline and dissolution. Its implications were well illustrated when the Mastership fell vacant with the death of George Allardyce on 5 October 1709. Lord Seafield had promised support to have his son, James, appointed as Allardyce's successor. Though James was only sixteen years old, he could act through a deputy, as Allardyce himself had done. William Drummond, the Warden, thought his own claim was strong. He had been very active during the recoinage, with additional unpaid duties as weigher and teller of the meltings. Though his salary as Warden was only £150, he had had to pay well over £600 to his predecessor, Captain Billingham.¹²

By December 1709 a new candidate had appeared. John Philp, Deputy Auditor of the Scottish Exchequer, told Patrick Scott, the Deputy Master and the Allardyce family lawyer:

There is nothing done about the Masters place. Mr Anderson told me that he had the promise of it, wherof I have very great doubts. This Mr James Anderson was a Writer to the Signet here and falling in to write some ancient History of Scotland and to defend its sovereignty against a book writ by an English author about the time of the Union, he deserted his employment, gott some acknowledgment from the Parliament for his pains, and after that fell upon writing a new book and taking notice of the old charters, printing them according to the old character, and some other antiquities. And going up to London gott the assistance of the Bishop[s] of Durham and Carlisle and some other historians. And it seems its by them he proposes to make his interest.

Passing on this information to Lady Allardyce, Scott added: 'But I had writ to Mr Philp that such a story was going here of Mr Anderson and that it was wondered how his interest could prevaill beyond my Lord Seafields and that Mr Anderson was of such an unconstant unsettled humour that nobody thought him capable of such a post but that evry body wondered at it.' Nevertheless he advised her to write to Seafield: 'And I am of opinion your Ladyship may write to him once a week. I shall hope his lordship does not need it but I have known importunity do sometimes good with others, however it always keeps in mind.'¹³

Six months elapsed before the post was filled, clearly for political reasons. The new Master, John Montgomerie of Giffen, was appointed shortly before the 1710 general election when he became MP for Ayrshire.¹⁴ Then, on 10 August 1710, the General, John, Earl of Lauderdale, died suddenly 'of a violent fever'. His son, Charles, Lord Maitland, now 6th Earl, was no more than twenty-two, but hoped to succeed to an office which had been held by three generations of his family for all but ten years of the last half-century. His request for the Earl of Mar's assistance was backed by his mother, who asked Mar's sister-in-law to urge her husband, Lord Grange, to write to Mar 'to let my son succeed his father in the Mint.' Lord Carmichael added his support for 'a very deserving young man'.¹⁵ Nevertheless the office remained vacant until February 1711, when, as part of Mar's schemes for the management of Scottish elections, it was given to Lord Balmerino.¹⁶ In November he was promoted to the new commission of chamberlainry and trade,¹⁷ but a proposed replacement, the Earl of Strathmore, died before his commission could pass the seals, leaving Balmerino in possession until November 1712, when the Earl of Home was appointed.¹⁸ Lauderdale had to wait until Home lost out in the reshuffle after George I's accession,¹⁹ but retained the office thereafter for nearly twenty years. Evidently he heeded the Duke of Roxburgh's advice that it would be better for him to continue in the Mint 'and have such ane additional sallary as would put me upon a level with others of my quality then to have ane other man's post,' and as 'it creats me no enimys I shall certainly have the less hazard of being

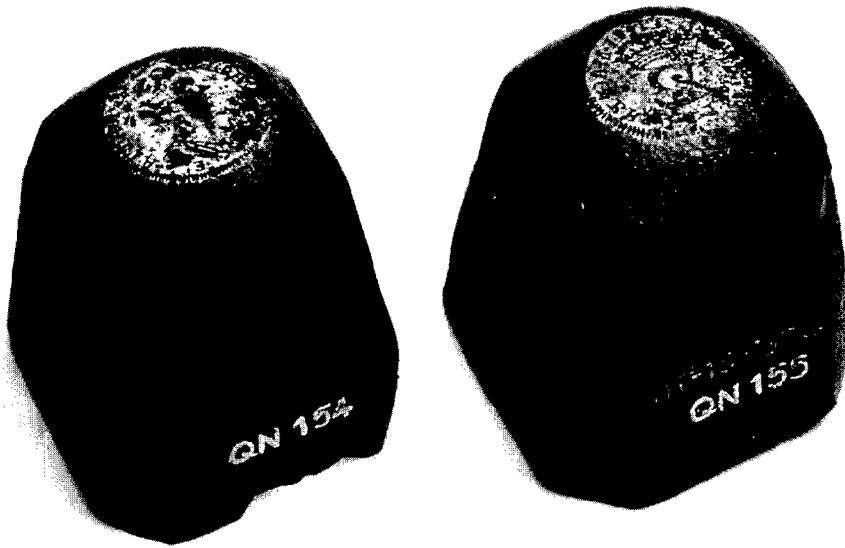
turned out.²⁰ Though additional salary was not forthcoming, in 1717 Lauderdale obtained a lucrative post as one of the Commissioners of Police.²¹

All other officers were reappointed in 1714–15 apart from the Counterwarden. Having held the post since 1691, Walter Boswell became involved in the Jacobite Rising, not so far as to attract prosecution but enough to earn dismissal.²² Lauderdale's candidate for the post, Walter Mitchell, was rejected in favour of Captain John Brodie 'of who's deservings I can learn nothing'. Then on 5 May 1716 Lauderdale complained to the Duke of Montrose that Brodie 'thinks himself a-dying and is just now rousing the commission he has not had for a moneth and promises it to the highest bidder.'²³ Lord Torphichen had also come out in support of Mitchell: Brodie should be stopped from selling or, at least, he should sell to Mitchell 'and no body deserves better, but nothing but timeous and hearty application can doe this, for Brodie owns he has already wrytt for liberty to sell to whom he pleases.'²⁴ Brodie's plans were frustrated by his death in early May, but the appointment of Thomas Shiels, an Edinburgh lawyer, proved a fresh setback for Lauderdale. Though Roxburgh advised him to lodge a complaint to be laid before the King, he hesitated: 'I am a litle afraid that if that matter of the Wardens commission be altered according to my desyer it may be reckoned a great favour and perhaps retard something being done for me of more consequence.'²⁵ Shiels' removal from office in March or April 1718 finally opened the way for Mitchell, who promptly assigned his salary and the rent of his house in the Mint to his father, 'his said father being at the whole expense in passing the said gift.'²⁶ Mitchell received a new grant of the office for life in March 1722 but died only three years later.²⁷

THE GENERAL AND SILVER COINAGE, 1711–27

Allardyce's death had brought the recoinage to a premature end. The smallest coin minted had been the sixpence, then the lowest silver denomination produced at the Tower (apart from Maundy money), but a high one for Scotland, given its pre-Union value of six shillings Scots. Following an approach to Newton by the Convention of Royal Burghs, Allardyce had been authorized in May 1709 to prepare punches for coining small silver coins — one penny, twopence, threepence and fourpence²⁸ — but nothing had been done, probably because of his illness and death. At a meeting of the officers on 11 September 1711 Balmerino promised 'to lay befor my lord high Treasurer how necessarie it was that the mint should be opened their being severalls that had been offering bullione to be coyned as also annent other matters relating to the said mint.'²⁹ About this time the Mint engravers produced punches for the small silver coins, probably on the authority of Allardyce's warrant. Dies for groats (fourpence) and half groats (twopence, illus 1), dated 1711, survive but no coins were struck.³⁰

Even if Balmerino did raise the matter with the Treasury, they may have been unwilling to commit further funds until the recoinage accounts had been cleared. The Tower moneyers had still not been paid for their work at Edinburgh and a large sum was owing to Allardyce's family.³¹ There is no doubt, however, that the new funding arrangements worked to the Edinburgh Mint's disadvantage. As Drummond, the Warden, had commented to Newton in 1708 'the truth is the Union has disconcerted our foundation intirely.'³² Unlike the pre-Union bullion duty, the coinage duty was shared with the Tower Mint and guaranteed the salaries of only the permanent officers. There was no funding for the three extra clerks deemed necessary during the recoinage, the Melter and his workmen, the Smith's workmen and those who had been trained by the Tower moneyers.³³ In short, the Mint could not be opened without funds to pay additional personnel and other costs involved in turning bullion into coin of the realm.



ILLUS 1 Dies for twopence coin, 1711. Scale 3:2 (*Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland*)

This need would bring the Edinburgh and Tower mints into direct competition over the coinage duty, to which Scotland made an inadequate contribution. Less broadly based than the old bullion duty, it fell mainly on wine and brandy. These were now liable to such high duties that 'the same hitherto has decreased in the importation in proportion to what was before the Union above one half, particularly as to Brandy, there is hardly any imported, at least entered at all.'³⁴

Shortly after his appointment Lauderdale tried to take advantage of the imminent expiry of the 1708 Coinage Act to ensure that any new legislation would redress the balance:

That for want of such provision for a free coynage this Mint for some tyme has been quite out of condition to carry on any coynage, which has been a very great loss and inconvenience to his Majesty's subjects in Scotland, who for want of having their bullion coyned at the Mint, which has been offerred in considerable quantitys, have been oblidged to export it again to Forreign countryes, and besides the want of a fund for defraying the charge of a free coynage has incapacitate this Mint for accomodating the subjects in Scotland with the small silver coyn of 4 pence and 3 pence peices, which is so necessary and so much wanted in this Country, and for coyning whereof there was a particular warrant set down by Her late Majesty to the Officers of the Mint for coining thereof accordingly.³⁵

According to Lauderdale it was absolutely necessary for a new Act to provide a yearly sum for defraying 'a free coynage of the moneys that may be coyned in the mint at Edinburgh':

And as the officers of this Mint are not insensible of the ill indeavours and insinuations relating to the Mint here, it being commonly represented that the same is altogether useless, or that it ought to be only a branch or dependent on the Mint of the Tower, so they have reason to beleive that in this Act now to be past the Officers of the Mint in the Tower may endeavour to have a clause appoynting the payment of the Officers sallarys and other charges to be made out of the money that may arise yearly out of the coynage dutys in Scotland, which if it shall so happen then this Mint is terminat.

While not identifying the Tower Mint as the enemy, Lauderdale did blame Newton for the suppression of the three additional clerkships 'notwithstanding he knew well that the reason of these Clerks was on account of this Mint's being reduced to the form of theirs, and without such Clerks it's impracticable to work in the Mint'.³⁶ According to a recent biography Newton succeeded 'in keeping the Scottish Mint inactive and even in further restricting its income.'³⁷ This is unfair. His stated aim was to arrange matters 'in such a manner that the two Mints may not interfere and obstruct one another'. He was to warn against any financial arrangement which made the Scottish Mint salaries 'an annuity without account',³⁸ though this was the eventual outcome.

He expressed his views in comments on a memorial, probably from Lauderdale, submitting a proposed clause for the Coinage Bill which would have appropriated a specific sum for maintaining a free coinage at the Scottish Mint.³⁹ This, he objected, would be contrary to the Treaty of Union, as it would put the two mints on a different footing. The same objection applied to the 1708 Act, in that it specified that the £1200 was for salaries, repairs and incidents, whereas there was no such appropriation for the Tower Mint. In any case £1200 would be adequate, if salaries were recalculated at the effective pre-Union exchange rate of 1s 6d sterling to the Scots pound instead of 1s 8d, and other economies were observed. Only one clerk was needed, as 'all the business of the other clerks will not amount to above three or four good days work a year', while the Clerk of the Bullion's salary could be saved by making him Comptroller (Counterwarden). There would be a major saving if the General 'whose office is useless' was not reappointed at the next vacancy. Meanwhile Newton suggested a sum not exceeding £1000 for salaries, the Mint fabric and incidents and up to £400 for coinage 'if you think fit to put a limit to the last allowance.'⁴⁰

Despite his disapproval of the office of General, Newton seems to have been well enough disposed towards Lauderdale himself. In making recommendations to the Treasury in August 1716 for investigating reports of a silver mine in the parish of Alva, Clackmannanshire, he suggested that the experts sent up from London should be supervised by three local commissioners

And that the Earl of Lauderdale, General of the Mint at Edinburgh, be also desired by a letter from your Lordships, to give the two Gentlemen sent down his protection and encouragement, and to send either Mr Drummond, Warden of that Mint, or some other intelligent and credible person to the mine, who may there see the silver ore dug out or the rock and assayed and packed up to be sent to London, and may give his Lordship and the Government an account thereof.⁴¹

Lauderdale, appointed as commissioner along with Drummond, appears to have played an active part in the work. In November Drummond reported that Lauderdale had been involved in the consultations with Justus Brandshagen, one of the experts, and he was to go with Drummond to view the mine. He also seems to have been involved in preparing the final report in January 1717.⁴² In the end, however, the mine produced little but trouble for Newton.⁴³

Had the mine provided a new source of silver in Scotland, the case for Scottish coinage might have been strengthened. Nevertheless the Coinage Act could be seen as justifying the confidence Lauderdale had expressed in a letter of 9 April 1716 to Montrose: 'I did expect it would meet with some opposition from those concerned in the Mint of England but I am convinced all they can say is sufficiently answered by our memorial.'⁴⁴ Under the new Act provision for the Edinburgh Mint remained at £1200 and the General became its treasurer. As the two mints would not be operating under the same rules, Newton considered this a breach of the Act of Union,⁴⁵ but the change was vital given Montgomerie's apparent lack of interest. A proposed exchange of the mastership for a commission in the Foot Guards left him with both,⁴⁶ but in June 1717 he assigned his mint salary to a third party,⁴⁷ having apparently withdrawn from any active involvement. While Newton considered that the General had become Master and Worker, 'tho' he be not called by that name,'⁴⁸ finance remained a problem. Despite provision for topping up the Coinage Duty from other sources to make up to £15,000 available for both mints, it proved difficult to extract anything from the Treasury. The payments, which were made at irregular intervals, required a formal application for an imprest, which the Treasury then referred to the officers of the Tower Mint.⁴⁹ Before the Union the Collector of Bullion had paid salaries quarterly without deductions. Since then the imprests were subject to Treasury and Exchequer fees, heavier than those charged to the Tower Mint. Finally the money was paid out at Westminster, involving the added expense of employing an agent to collect it and remit it to Edinburgh.⁵⁰

Understandably Lauderdale gave priority to paying outstanding salaries and repair bills, but there was a problem in that the 1712 mint indenture had expired. Eventually a royal warrant of 17 November 1718 authorized him to pay salaries and other charges since 1715. It also allowed the Mint to continue on the basis of the 1712 indenture until a new one could be made.⁵¹ Newton had agreed reluctantly, still regarding the annual payment of £1200 as excessive: 'And that there may be no more complaints of the want of moneys to beare the charge of coinage, the said General may have notice to pay those charges in the first place, and let the deficiency (whenever there shall be any) fall upon the salaries.'⁵² The unfortunate Clerk of the Bullion found that he had been omitted from the warrant 'it not appearing lately that he was alive nor even what was his name' and had to wait until August 1719 for reinstatement.⁵³

In February 1718 Lauderdale had ordered the taking of an inventory of the Mint's furniture and equipment (Appendix 1), probably in anticipation of the authority to strike coins given him by the royal warrant. That none was struck is largely attributable to lack of agreement on how the coinage was to be funded but perhaps partly also to the general shortage of silver bullion which restricted output at the Tower Mint in the first half of the century.⁵⁴ There is no doubt, too, that coins could not have been struck without expert help from London. By 1721, of those officers involved in the recoinage, only James Penman, the Assaymaster, and Robert Miller, the Clerk, remained, the Warden, William Drummond, having surrendered his office in 1720.⁵⁵ Joseph Cave, who had been joint Engraver with his uncle, James Clerk (died 1718), still held office, but his own role in recoinage had been a minor one and he found alternative employment as a brewer.⁵⁶ Nevertheless Lauderdale persisted. In 1722, when the Coinage Act was again due for renewal, he sought to enlist the help of George Baillie of Jerviswood, a Scottish Lord of the Treasury in presenting a new memorial.⁵⁷ In it he pointed out that the nominal £1200 was reduced to £1060 by Treasury fees and other charges and that 'the want of Coinage for now almost fourteen years occasions a scarcity of coin in Scotland and is a great discouragement to importers of bullion there.'⁵⁸ Though the 1722 Coinage Act had restored control of the funds to the Master, another memorial to the Treasury in May 1723 shows Lauderdale still 'conceived himself warranted to cause be coined his Majesties moneys of gold and silver in the said Mint . . . if a

sufficient sum were imprest into his hands for defraying the charges therof.' Reporting to the Treasury on memorials from both General and Master, Newton merely noted that with the new Coinage Act the 1718 warrant was now void and a fresh one would have to be procured for the Master until a new indenture could be made.⁵⁹

A year later Lauderdale sought Newton's help through an intermediary. Salaries and tradesmen's bills had not been paid since Lady Day (25 March) 1721. Though Montgomerie was authorized to receive the money for the service of the Mint, 'he residing the most part in England and neglecting to give in security may further retard the officers' payment.' Could Newton advise whether application might be made in the General's name for money to pay the salaries up to March 1723, as he had been authorized under the former Act?⁶⁰ Newton was only prepared to recommend that the Treasury should give the Master sufficient to pay the salaries and leave £500–£600 in his hands 'for defraying all the charge of coynage till more moneys shall be issued unto him.'⁶¹

Newton's grudging concession appears to have been the last opportunity for striking silver coins at Edinburgh. If so, Lauderdale was no longer able to take advantage of it. Having cleared accounts in 1724 he ceased to play any part in the Mint's financial affairs, without being reimbursed what he had paid in 1723–4 to satisfy outstanding tradesmen's bills.⁶² Montgomerie seems to have been totally uninterested and his personal finances were in some disarray. In 1726 he lodged in exchequer his own accounts for the periods before and after Lauderdale's but the audit was never completed.⁶³ A year later he removed himself from the scene altogether on appointment as Governor of New York, where he remained until his death on 1 July 1731. Finally with Newton's death in 1727 the Tower Mint may have become even less sympathetic to its Scottish sibling. Paradoxically it was about this time that the payments to the Master of the Edinburgh Mint were at last put on a regular annual basis.⁶⁴

COPPER COINAGE AND THE MINT COURT, 1717–64

While Lauderdale had been pursuing silver coinage he had done nothing about minting copper coins. In January 1717 he had complained to Montrose of having 'by a late resolve of the House of Commons lost the benefite of the copper coinage, which was the only considerable profit belonging to the Generall of the Mint.'⁶⁵ Under the 1686 Act new issues had been restricted to sixpence (equivalent to a halfpenny sterling) and twopence or 'Turners' (one-sixth of a penny). According to Thomas Ruddiman the pre-Union copper coinage 'scarcely deserves the name of money, being only calculated to make up fractions of greater sums, or for carrying on of commerce in things of small value, or for supplying the necessities of the poor.' Fraudulent practices by the officers in the 1670s had resulted in the production of 'an immense quantity of coins of this kind', which he estimated to have a face value of £96,000 sterling 'the greater part whereof, one would have imagined, might have lasted to 1738; yet, that then there should remain so few of these coins, the rest having been lost or consumed by time, so that the scarcity of copper money does now occasion frequent complaints; and likewise, an opportunity is given for forging bad money in place of the good.'⁶⁶ In 1722 Lauderdale had warned that 'few or non of the false coiners or others who diminish the coin meet with the punishment their treason deserves because of the wants of a particular fund for prosecuting of them.'⁶⁷

While halfpennies and farthings coined at the Tower Mint between 1717 and 1725 met the demand for small change in England,⁶⁸ few found their way to Scotland. In 1728 an enterprising shoemaker 'in Caldtoun of Edinburgh', petitioned the Duke of Newcastle for a commission to coin 'half pence and farthans of copper . . . on his own charges without either salarie or pension.'⁶⁹

This private initiative seems to have been dismissed out of hand but by 1729 the operation of Gresham's law had made matters desperate. According to Charles Erskine, the Solicitor-General, 'the scarcity of copper coin in this part of the kingdom gave a currancy to any thing that had the least resemblance of a half penny, which encouraged several ill disposed persons to set forward a trade of counterfitting here, and importing from Irland great quantity of half pence of very base stuff, so that no other is to be seen in this place.'⁷⁰ Lord Ilay warned the Duke of Newcastle:

There is a distress coming on very fast upon this country, which if not speedily remedied must have several bad consequences. There is at present almost a total want of copper coin which is supplied only by a remedy worse than the disease, I mean by false coyning which is spread in a manner all over the country, and will of course breed such numbers of rogues of that kind, that I fear that our other species of money will suffer by it, as has already appeared in many instances. All that can be done is either a coynage of halfpence and Turners (the sixth part of a penny) either in our mint here or at London. These pieces called Turners are a species absolutely necessary here for answering many payments according to the laws and customs of the country. As for the halfpence, I believe there is now a coynage going on at the Tower in London, but unless there is some method fallen upon to send them here free of charges to the people, I don't well see how they can be any relief here, for no private person who wants them (and such are almost only the poorer sort) will give more for 12 halfpence than 6 pence. The Turners might be coyned here under the orders and directions of the Mint at London, or if they are coyned in England, they must, as I mention concerning the halfpence, be sent here gratis.⁷¹

Some action does appear to have been contemplated. On Walpole's instructions Ilay had mentioned the matter to Scrope, Secretary of the Treasury, and Conduit, Newton's successor at the Mint. That nothing was done might be attributed to the current state of the Edinburgh Mint, with Montgomerie out of the country and Lauderdale no longer active. Perhaps Walpole was afraid of a repetition of the recent furore over Irish copper coinage.⁷² Ilay had warned that 'when the new coin appears the whole of the loss upon the false money must fall upon the lower sort of people and the poor which will inevitably produce a great clamour.' According to Erskine 'it will be difficult to prevent disorders in regard the loss must fall upon the meaner sort, who are least able to bear it, and aptest to mutiny.'⁷³

Lauderdale was dismissed in April 1734, perhaps for opposing the ministry at the election. His successor, Lord Belhaven, had been in office for less than a month when the death of Montgomerie's successor, James Bruce, opened up a two-year vacancy in the mastership, during which Belhaven was entrusted with the management of the Mint's finances.⁷⁴ In May 1735 he tried to address the problem of copper coinage, with a proposal that the Edinburgh Mint should coin 60–70 tons of copper halfpence and farthings of the same weight and fineness as those coined in London. He should have the same allowance of five pence per pound weight as the Master of the Tower Mint had been given for copper money sent to Ireland and to facilitate the work the copper should be supplied in ready-cut blanks.⁷⁵ The Treasury referred the proposal to the officers of the Tower Mint, who must have reported against it, as it was unsuccessful. As a final snub, when Belhaven's accounts came to be audited the Barons of Exchequer struck out the allowance claimed for applying to the Treasury.⁷⁶

Belhaven had also fallen heir to a dispute over payment for work on the Mint buildings. According to Lauderdale, as soon as Bruce became Master he had 'turned out the old workmen whom we had long employ'd and put these people whom no body knew but himself.' Then he

turned what should have been a simple repair of the gable of the General's house into a major project that 'added to his own the Master's house full more then he did to mine, to witt two large bed chambers, two good closetts and a large cellar below.' Lauderdale claimed to have told Bruce often that 'he was in the wrong to go on with such great projects that were vastly above what our fabrick money could pay', on top of earlier expenditure on the Master's house, 'but he had a notion that because he received the money he was not to be control'd in that matter.' When the tradesmen started to worry about payment Lauderdale 'answered them I thought they run a very great risque because I knew that the barons of exchequer were of opinion that the fabrick money for the year could only be aplyed for work done within that year', and that it would be difficult to meet the requirement that the work should be certified as necessary.⁷⁷

Lauderdale had every reason to feel aggrieved. Not only had he been dismissed, but Bruce had died 'not in good circumstances', in fact insolvent, leaving the tradesmen out of pocket by £470 and looking to him for reimbursement:

After Mr Bruce begun to his new scheme I do not think I was above once or twice all that summer in town having only one room I could lye in, and if I did go through the house, talk of the contrivance and tip them half a crown it is impossible for me to imagine that this cane bring me in to be the employer or that att any rate they cane fix it upon me without absolute perjury.⁷⁸

Their next target was Belhaven, as holding the fabric money for 1733–5. Then they tried to involve the new Master, Archibald Bothwell, as benefiting from the improvements to the property. Finally in February 1742 the Court of Session found that Bothwell could not be held liable and that the tradesmen must seek recompense from the Treasury.⁷⁹

No longer responsible for the Mint's finances, Belhaven seems to have decided that if the Edinburgh Mint was to do nothing in particular it should at least do it well. His chosen instrument was the Court of Wardenry. The Court's origins lay in a charter of David II giving the Warden jurisdiction over the Mint's officers and servants in all pleas and complaints except those relating to the king's 'free tenement and crown'.⁸⁰ By the 17th century that jurisdiction was vested in the General though there is little evidence of it being exercised. Nevertheless it could be held as excluding the 'liberties and privileges' of the Mint from the jurisdiction of other courts, which may be the basis for the belief that the Mint was a sanctuary like Holyroodhouse.⁸¹ In January 1737 the Engraver, Joseph Cave, was arrested at the Mint and taken to the tolbooth prison on a complaint of fraudulent bankruptcy. Belhaven offered to repledge him to be judged in the Court of Wardenry and offered 'caution of culreoch' as prescribed by the Mint's charters. The Court of Session, however, took the view that this was a statutory crime which the General could not judge, far less repledge.⁸² This is the last reference to the General acting in a judicial capacity, though a standing instruction to the porter⁸³ 'not to suffer any messenger, or town-officer to come within the Mint-gate', but 'to receive their message and deliver the same to the persons concern'd', could be evidence of a desire to maintain the 'privileges'.

Though it no longer functioned in a judicial capacity, Belhaven did use the Court of Wardenry as the Mint's governing body, in which he took precedence over the Master. In this he was abetted by the other officers who had long-standing grievances over delays in having their salaries paid and their houses repaired. Thus at the meeting on 26 December 1739 all those present backed his refusal to allow a deputy to sit in place of the Master, 'and the eldest officers . . . do declare that they have been present and sat as members of courts of wardenrie on the affairs of the Mint but never saw a deputy there present or pretend to a seat among them.' The

officers then supported the General's claim to appoint the porter, against the Deputy Master's objections 'for which he offers no proof'.⁸⁴ On 14 January 1740 the Court dealt with the grievances. If any officers needed repairs to their houses, they were to get a certificate from the officers resident in Edinburgh or the Mint tradesmen. Should the Master then fail to carry out the repairs, the Court would apply to the Barons of Exchequer. The Master was to notify the officers as soon as money came into his hands and to pay their salaries without delay. Here, too, failure would trigger an application to the Exchequer.⁸⁵

We may take the absence of further references to these matters as evidence of Belhaven's success. Although he had judged it 'much for intrest and advantage of every person concerned in the Mint that more frequent Courts be held, at least once a year',⁸⁶ meetings were infrequent. Thus on 2 April 1744 the Court decided to approach the Town Council for restoration of the Mint's water supply. Before presenting a formal petition it was agreed that the General should wait on the Lord Provost and that the other officers 'should likewise speak with such of the members of the Town Council as they are acquainted or have interest with'. When the petition seemed likely to be successful the General and officers declared they would meet again to sign it. There was no further meeting until 23 July 1753 when the clerk reported that a petition had been presented 'and that the watter has been sometime ago brought into the cistern in the Mint, where formerly it was, and is now in good order and condition for supplying the inhabitants of the Mint for their necessary uses and purposes.'⁸⁷

At the same meeting the Clerk 'represented' that some weeks earlier the Master had brought to him a petition to the Treasury (Appendix 2) for 'the Society called the Revolution Club', bearing a warrant authorizing medals to be struck for them at the Mint, and had desired him to engross them in the 'Books of the Mint' and return the original to him, which he had done. Belhaven was displeased; the petition and warrant 'ought to have been lodg'd in the hands of the Clerk of the Mint to be kept by him as the warrand of his record.' Nevertheless the Court authorized the Smith to repair one of the presses in the coining house for striking the medals at the Club's expense 'and do what else may be necessary for finishing the said medals.' The key of the coining-house was to lie in the hands of the Warden, 'to whose office it properly belongs to have custody of it.'⁸⁸

According to its petition, the Club had been formed in commemoration of William of Orange's landing in 1688, holding its anniversary meetings on 5 November, 'to commemorate that Glorious event.' Recently, 'upon the second happy deliverance of their country by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland's defeating the Rebels in the year 1746,' its membership had increased to nearly 600, who 'to perpetuate the memory of the aforesaid great deliverances' were desirous to have 'a Badge or Medal to be wore by them at their Anniversary meeting.'

Though the medal, struck from the Club's own die, was of little artistic merit, it shows that the Mint was still capable of being brought back into production. Indeed it seems that a final attempt at copper coinage was instigated by George Mackay, who became Master in July 1756. Sometime thereafter

upon being allowed a copper coinage of two presses for three years [he] agreed to enter into a contract with the Treasury on the same terms as Mr Chetwynd, Master of the Mint in England, the present size, weight and fineness of the copper at the Mint of England to be the rule, and for preventing fraud or complaints of any kind that a certain quantity of the Tower halfpence should be lodged in the Exchequer in Scotland for a standard, and that all those coined here that are not of the outmost exactness the same in dye, figure, size, weight and fineness of copper with the standard should be cutt down and not issued.⁸⁹

The proposal may have been connected with the suspension of the coinage of halfpennies and farthings at the Tower Mint in February 1755, following complaints of excessive quantity in circulation in England,⁹⁰ while Scotland still suffered from its perennial shortage of small change. If so, the matter would have been shelved on the death of George II. Our information comes from a draft return to the Treasury in December 1761 giving ‘The establishment of the Officers of the Mint with their Salaries’. This noted that ‘the allowing a small copper coinage at present would be a useful and popular measure, as that kind of coin is scarce, and what is in the circle [circulation] chiefly run over from Ireland or made by tinkers and in general of base mettals.’ The proposed coinage ‘would put a stop to the inundation of base copper coin that is run in upon this country.’ For whatever reason the coinage did not go ahead. Scotland had to continue to rely on traders’ tokens in lead, tin or pewter and, in the 1780s and 1790s, better-quality copper tokens, until officially produced issues finally met up with the demand.⁹¹

There is no record of the proposal in the Court of Wardenry minutes, despite a resolution in July 1753 that no commission or order should be received or recorded, nor any work carried on ‘untill a Court of Wardenrie be called, and proper directions concerted for carry such orders into execution.’⁹² The minutes continue to record other business, including objections to a proposal to extend the town’s impost on wine ‘to all wines that are brought into the Mint for the private use of the Officers, and others who live within the libertys and privileges of it, tho’ no such duty had ever been formerly exacted, the Mint having always been considered to be in all respects as free as the Abbey, Castle, or any other of the King’s Houses.’ Finally the Town Council agreed that ‘the demand of impost was to be dropt and no further trouble given to the Officers of the Mint on that account’.⁹³ Thereafter most of the business was routine recording of appointments but on 23 June 1762 the Master was asked to write to the Mint’s London agent ‘to call for the money as soon as possibly it could be got, as of late the payment of these sallarys had fallen very far behind.’⁹⁴

At the next meeting on 23 June 1764 the Clerk reported on his enquiries into records which might have been in possession of the late Deputy Master. Robert Gardener, goldsmith, having produced his commission as Assaymaster, ‘The General administer’d to him the Oath de *fideli administratione officii*, and he was admitted and received into his said office, and took his seat.’⁹⁵ This was Belhaven’s final appearance as General. His death just two months later, on 28 August 1764, marked the effective demise of the Court of Wardenry and the end of the Mint as an active corporate body.

PATRONAGE, SINECURES AND THE END OF THE MINT, 1764–1836

From 1764 the history of the Mint is concerned largely with patronage, often obscure in its working, though there is some evidence to show the reasons behind appointments. Belhaven’s successor was an elderly judge, Lord Strichen, who was made General as a form of retirement pension on quitting the justiciary bench.⁹⁶ The Master, George Mackay of Skibo, had been Member of Parliament from 1747 to 1761; his appointment in 1756 coincided with termination of the secret service pension of £300 he had enjoyed as a government supporter.⁹⁷ James Hay, the Warden, had been appointed in 1744. Contrary to usual practice the appointment had been made, not through the Treasury, but through his cousin, Lord Tweeddale, then Secretary of State for Scotland.⁹⁸ His successor in 1779 was William Dundas, almost certainly Henry Dundas’ half-brother.⁹⁹ After George II’s death, the Counterwarden, John Macfarlane, ‘bargained for the sale of that office with a young man of the name of Gartshore, and when the commissions for the

Officers of the Mint were renewed by his present Majesty, Gartshore it seems had interest at the Treasury to get the commission out in his name in place of Macfarlane's.¹⁰⁰

Though patronage must also have applied to the minor offices, their holders had some qualification for their posts. Thus the Assaymaster was a goldsmith and the Smith a blacksmith. Of the Clerks, John Flockhart (1775) had been clerk to Lord Chancellor Loughborough's father; William Bell (1789) was Henry Dundas' secretary and later business agent; and Thomas Weir (1804) clerk to the Lord Advocate, Robert Dundas.¹⁰¹

On 15 February 1775, the General, Lord Strichen, died at the age of 75. He had not been active but at least, like his predecessors, he had lived in or near Edinburgh, unlike most of the Masters. His successor, John Elliot, had been briefly MP for the English borough of Cockermonth but owed his appointment to family connections. His father, Lord Minto, had been Lord Justice Clerk; his brother, Sir Gilbert, was Treasurer of the Navy. His own naval career was to take him out of the country for long periods, not to mention a term as Governor of Newfoundland.¹⁰² Thus the General ceased to be an active presence in the Mint. He did not even appoint a deputy but used a factor to do what little was required of him. In May 1778 the factor appointed a new porter and tried unsuccessfully to contact the Clerk to deliver the commission: 'I have been these two or three days past looking for you at the Cross.' In the end he sent it to the Clerk with instructions for recording it. The Clerk merely tucked it between the pages of the Mint register.¹⁰³ This marked the end of the Mint as a record-keeping body.

Thereafter the information available relates mainly to the buildings. Long before 1761, the Master had ceased to account in the Scottish Exchequer for the Mint revenues, but was allowed to retain the surplus 'for upholding the fabrick and repairing the whole houses of the officers which the Master is obliged to whatever the expence may be, which is pretty considerable as the buildings are very old, and as he has the superplus when the expence is under the forsaide allowance, so he has no claim when it exceeds it.'¹⁰⁴ While Belhaven lived the Master seems to have been kept up to scratch. At the Court of Wardenry on 18 July 1757 Belhaven remarked that there had been problems in getting repairs done 'by reason of Mr McKays being obliged to attend the service of his country in Parliament.' He suggested that Mackay should empower some 'proper person' to 'take notice of any necessary reparations that may be wanted from time to time, and give directions for their being timeously made, and likewise that a meeting of the Officers should be called at least once or twice a year, to take cognizance of the state and condition of the whole fabrick within the privileges of the Mint.' Mackay intimated that he had already given a deputation to Ronald Crawford, clerk to the signet, 'and that all concern'd may accordingly apply to Mr Crawford for anything necessary to be done in his absence.'¹⁰⁵

Although the officers had ceased to live there, the Mint was still regarded as a desirable residence, 'inhabited by persons of station, and even rank.' Mackay was said to have spent £500 on it. In 1783 his successor, Robert Smith, wrote to his agent 'informing him that he had no doubt the houses wanted much repair, and that he wished these repairs were set about before they became more ruinous.' But by the early 1800s the Mint was suffering from the movement of population from the Old Town. One house 'which was, within the memory of persons living, at one period the abode of a Countess, who used to set out from it in her own Chair, and which afterwards within the remembrance of still more persons living, was occupied by a most eminent physician, has become the residence of a woman who sells feathers.'¹⁰⁶

Deterioration of the fabric had evidently worsened after Robert Hepburn succeeded Smith as Master in January 1792. Though the houses belonging to the General and Master seem to have been kept 'in tolerable order', the tenement block fronting the Cowgate, appropriated to the other officers, was now decayed. Laurence Craige, appointed Warden in 1795, soon learned that 'the

commodious habitations' to which his commission entitled him in the tenement block fronting the Cowgate 'were in a state of the most wretched disrepair; the roofs rotten and wasted; the chimneys requiring to be taken down; the floors, joisting, and the stair and stair-case, as well as the timber partitions also ruinous, and requiring to be renewed.' The state of the building, of course, affected Craigie's income from letting the property.¹⁰⁷

Craigie may have concluded that nothing could be done. Then he obtained a copy of Hepburn's return to the Committee on Public Finance, 1798, which showed the Master receiving nearly £200 a year for keeping the buildings in repair.¹⁰⁸ He claimed that the Master did not have any privilege or precedence over the other officers and that he should be accountable to them for any surplus. Hepburn refused his proposal of arbitration: 'I fulfil the engagements which I come under by my warrant as Master of the Mint, in keeping the houses in repair; but if any extraordinary repairs are wanted to make the houses let to advantage, Mr Craigie must go somewhere else than me for that purpose.'¹⁰⁹

Craigie next commissioned a survey of the buildings which found that the staircase leading to his lodging was in ruins, the floors and joisting altogether rotten, the outer walls needed to be roughcast or harled and the roof completely renewed at a total cost of £953. His agent sent Hepburn a copy of the estimate.¹¹⁰ After short deliberation Hepburn referred the matter to the Government: 'It is to them only I feel accountable for the expenditure, and from them only do I wish to be told of any misapplication of money entrusted to my care.' He did, however, commission his own report, which concluded that any attempt to repair the buildings would be impracticable; all that could be done was to patch them up to keep the houses 'as dry as their state will admit of.'¹¹¹ In February 1805 Craigie raised an action in the Court of Session, as Hepburn's counsel later alleged, 'under the expectation of its having the effect to force the respondent into a count and reckoning, for the sum annually impressed into his hands under the Treasury warrant'. He persisted in the action despite successive interlocutors finding that it was incompetent and that the Court had no jurisdiction.¹¹² Though Hepburn relinquished the mastership in May 1805 on appointment as Distributor of Stamps, Craigie not only refused to give up but raised a supplementary action against the new Master, Henry Scott Alves.¹¹³ He persisted even in the face of a royal warrant of 28 December 1808 discharging all those who had held the office of Master, in effect writing off any sums that might be due.¹¹⁴ Finally on 11 December 1812 the Court rejected Craigie's latest petition, adhered to the Lord Ordinary's last interlocutor and found him liable in expenses.¹¹⁵

Looking again at patronage, Craigie's patron had been Robert Dundas, Lord Advocate and later Chief Baron of Exchequer.¹¹⁶ Alves was to admit that he owed the mastership to having been Henry Dundas' secretary; 'a situation necessarily confidential, and I may say laborious from the combined offices which he held.' Pitt had been induced to confer the office at Dundas' request, 'expressly as a remuneration for such services as I had been able to render in the course of this employment. This was the sole origin of the appointment, as I had no other claim to their consideration.'¹¹⁷ In 1806 Admiral John Elliot resigned the office of General in favour of his nephew, George, a junior naval officer, allegedly rejecting an offer of £1000 a year for surrendering it, because 'he did not require the additional pension and that he felt a pride in holding the office from the manner in which it had been given to him.'¹¹⁸ When the office of Counterwarden fell vacant in 1809, Walter Lockhart, who expected to get the post, was surprised to learn from his London agents:

On enquiry at the Treasury we were informed that in the year 1775, on supposition that Mr Gartshore was dead, a warrant was granted appointing his successor, and this person, whose name

we could not learn, has we understand come up to London to claim the office. We afterwards saw Mr Dundas who told us it was settled that you were to get the office. He was much surprised however to hear what we had learnt at the Treasury.¹¹⁹

Lockhart might have felt confident that he could see off his rival, James Ludovic Grant, who had obtained the abortive warrant in May 1774. Lord Chief Baron Dundas wrote to his kinsman, Henry Dundas MP (Henry's son), to urge that Grant's warrant was invalid. Before leaving for Ireland, Henry spoke to Spencer Perceval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who 'means to confirm your appointment but no official directions are yet given.' Nevertheless on 21 August 1809 the agents had to report that Grant had been successful: 'We do not know what has passed upon this subject since Mr Dundas left Town; but we are informed by the person in whose department the business is at the Treasury, that this appointment has been a good deal considered.'¹²⁰

Grant's was to be the last appointment to the Edinburgh Mint and already there were signs of its approaching end. In January 1807 Hepburn's counsel had pointed to the fallacy underlying Craigie's action. Even if the Treasury were to make Hepburn account for the balance he had been allowed to retain, the Mint buildings 'are now totally useless to the public, there being no coinage in Scotland. It is not therefore probable, that the Lords of the Treasury would order such a sum of money to be laid out in rebuilding a tenement, in order that the petitioner might get a better rent for it.'¹²¹ Craigie's submission to the Committee on Public Offices in 1809 rehearsed the usual complaints against the Master's failure to keep the buildings in repair and delays in paying salaries but concluded:

It may not be thought improper further to remark, that from the state of the houses in the Mint, and the improbability of their being employed for the purposes of coinage, it would be of advantage to the public, and also to the Officers of the Mint in general, if the houses and ground attached, which occupy a considerable space in the middle of the Town of Edinburgh, were to be disposed of and a suitable compensation given to the different officers, or the unapplied surplusses in the Master's hands might be divided among them in such a manner as should be thought proper.¹²²

Following their listing by the Select Committee on Sinecure Offices, 1810–11, the Mint offices were included in a Bill passed by the House of Commons on 5 April 1813. They were to remain, but their salaries were to be discontinued 'until the duties formerly annexed thereto be revived.' The Bill failed to pass its final stages and in March 1817 the Select Committee on Finance reported in favour of abolishing the offices and selling the Mint buildings.¹²³ On 17 July Parliament passed an Act for regulating the two mints. The Edinburgh buildings were to be sold on expiry of the interests of those entitled to them, but, perhaps in a gesture to the Treaty of Union the offices were not suppressed altogether. As each fell vacant it was to be vested in the corresponding officer of the Tower Mint without additional salary, with two exceptions. The office of Warden was abolished in both mints but that of Governor of the Mint in Scotland (replacing the General) was to be held by the Master of the Tower Mint.¹²⁴ Although Alves agreed to the immediate sale of the buildings, they failed to reach a price that would cover compensation payments to the officers. Finally sold in 1830,¹²⁵ they survived for more than forty years until swept away in 1877 to make way for a school.¹²⁶

Even by 1817 the number of officers had been reduced by death. Craigie, the Warden, died in May 1817, predeceased by the Engraver and Clerk, both in 1814 or thereabouts. Alexander Boog, the Smith, survived until about 1828. John Swinton Simpson, the Assaymaster, died in January 1830, bringing to an end a very public dispute with the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh over his alleged right to conduct their trial of the pyx.¹²⁷ With the doubtful exception of the Counterwarden,¹²⁸ only the General (Captain Elliot), and the Master (H S Alves) survived to receive new commissions from William IV,¹²⁹ but the Whig administration and reformed Parliament took a harder line. In 1834 the Select Committee on Sinecure Office included their offices among those to be abolished forthwith.¹³⁰ On 27 May 1836 their commissions were revoked, their salaries being replaced by a reduced, though still generous, compensation allowance.

Alves accepted the inevitable but George Elliot decided to fight with an account of his appointment that seems so far-fetched as likely to be true.¹³¹ His uncle had been given the office 'for naval services of a distinguished kind'. In 1805 or 1806 he had refused a pension of £1000, asking instead to be allowed to transfer the office to his nephew 'as his representative in the Navy'. On his death he left his estate to George's father, a legacy to George's younger brother, but nothing to George, having provided for him 'at a sacrifice of one thousand pounds per annum during the latter years of his life which caused a saving to Government of more than the value of an annuity to me.'¹³² Not surprisingly the Admiralty could find no record of any such offer. Elliot's compensation was not settled until 1840, but we may take leave of him as an Admiral of the Fleet, still enjoying compensation for his sinecure office until his death in June 1863.

POSTSCRIPT, 1867–1971

The 1817 Act had disposed of the Mint's officers and buildings, without removing its statutory basis in the Act of Union. This was accomplished by the Statute Law Revision Act of 1867, which seems to have passed almost unnoticed.¹³³ In 1893 Alpheus Morton, Liberal MP for Peterborough, tabled a parliamentary question asking the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention had been called to the fact that article 16 of the Treaty of Union provided for the Scottish Mint to be continued 'And if, as the Scottish mint no longer exists, he can say whether the Government intend to carry out and maintain Article 16 of the aforesaid Treaty?' The answer referred him to the 1867 repeal.¹³⁴ Yet, curiously, the Scottish Mint did retain a notional existence. Under the Coinage Act of 1870 the Chancellor of the Exchequer was designated Governor of the Mint in Scotland as well as Master, Worker and Warden of Her Majesty's Royal Mint in England.¹³⁵

Though the Treaty of Union continued to be invoked, there was no real prospect of a Mint in Scotland until the 1960s, when two new factors emerged: first the proposed introduction of decimal currency, second the new policy of dispersing government departments from London. Realizing that the first would involve a major recoinage, J M A Smith, a Scottish member of the Committee on Decimalization, asked the Deputy Master of the Mint early in 1963 whether some of the new coinage might not be produced in Scotland. In September 1963 the matter was taken up by the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) with the Scottish Development Department.¹³⁶ As both decimalization and dispersal became the subject of public discussion, Scotland's claims were urged both outside and inside Parliament. At question time on 5 May 1964 the Member for Kilmarnock, William Ross, reminded the Secretary to the Treasury of the office of Governor of the Mint in Scotland, adding:

If there has got to be a resiting of the Royal Mint, would it not be only a matter of historical accuracy, and of past continuity, and of justice to transfer the titles the other way, so that in future the Governor of the Scottish Mint is also the Master of the London Mint?¹³⁷

The general election of October 1964 brought to power a Labour government, in which Ross was Secretary of State for Scotland, and a Welsh MP, James Callaghan, Chancellor of the Exchequer. By March 1966, when the decision was made to go ahead with decimalization, the Treasury had concluded that a temporary mint would not make sense, but that the establishment of additional capacity in a development area as a first step in the dispersal of the Royal Mint had its attractions. Cumbernauld was identified as the most attractive Scottish location, though W G Pottinger of the Scottish Office warned: 'We also know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is personally strongly in favour of moving the Mint to Cardiff and, if this possibility were made public, a Scottish outcry seems highly probable.'¹³⁸

At a meeting of the Official Dispersal Committee on 21 October 1966 it was announced that Mint officials and the Treasury had agreed that Cumbernauld would be the best site. Pottinger noted that, while 'the Welsh Office are fairly vocal in their disappointment,' the decision was likely to be made public by a Treasury minister 'very shortly'. His confidence proved premature. Within a week the Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked if officials could carry out quickly a further study of possible locations. At a meeting at the Treasury on 2 November it was agreed that, while the Ministry of Works preferred Cumbernauld, some form of re-examination would have to be undertaken and that it was essential for the decimalization plant to be operative by mid 1968. The Board of Trade was to assess possible English sites, the Welsh Office those in Wales. On 6 December the Scottish Office was still confident of meeting any Welsh Office case for Bridgend or Llantrisant but the Chancellor's backing no doubt proved crucial and on 18 April 1967 Llantrisant was announced as the Royal Mint's new home.¹³⁹ With the Coinage Act of 1971 the empty title of 'Governor of the Mint of Scotland' finally disappeared and with it the last shadow of the Scottish Mint.

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NOTES

1 For the recoinage see Murray 1997.

2 *APS*, xi, app. 181.

3 *APS*, xi, 376.

4 Murray 1997, 932, 934.

5 1686 c38, *APS*, viii, 603.

- 6 NAS C3/16 no 11, abstract in *CTB* 26, 259–61; *Newton Corr.* 5, 58.
- 7 PRO Mint 19/3, 23.
- 8 C3/16 no 12; abstract in *CTB* 26, 261.
- 9 *Newton Corr* 6, 263.
- 10 A complete list of Mint officials, 1660–1836, with sources, is available in the Scottish Record Office library. For engravers see also Murray 1999.
- 11 The Mint accounts and vouchers in SRO (E411) and other sources provide a wealth of information about the buildings, which fall outside the scope of the present study.
- 12 *Newton Corr* 4, 541. According to Drummond Queen Anne knew of this payment, which was intended to provide for Billingham's wife and children (Mint 19/3, 116).
- 13 NAS GD49/501.
- 14 *CTB* 24, 343; *Hist Parl 1715–54* 2, 270. *Newton Corr* 5, 212 n2 wrongly identifies the Master as John Montgomery of Girvan.
- 15 NAS GD124/993/1–2, 998/1.
- 16 Riley 1964, 154–5.
- 17 *CTB* 25, 172; Riley 1964, 178, 235.
- 18 *CTB* 26, 111, 519. Home was both impecunious and possessed of electoral interests in Berwickshire. Lord Glencairn appears to have been considered after Strathmore died (Riley 1964, 155, 172, 235).
- 19 *CTB* 29, 166.
- 20 NAS GD220/5/715.
- 21 For the Commission of Police see Riley 1964, 185–7.
- 22 *CTB* 30, 133; see Boswell's memorial to Lauderdale [1718], LMP 69/25/2. In February 1716 the Treasury was seeking information about Boswell from the Barons of Exchequer, who consulted the Lord Advocate (E305/1, 197).
- 23 *CTB* 30, 132–33; GD220/5/650/1,3,4.
- 24 PRO SP54/11, 661 no 246, 30 April 1716, addressed 'DB'. Torphichen had been informed that Brigadier Grant had got Brodie the post 'by interest of Mr Smith', perhaps John Smith, Lord Chief Baron of the Scottish Court of Exchequer.
- 25 *CTB* 30, 46, 571; GD220/5/715.
- 26 *CTB* 32, 34, 309; NAS CC8/8/90, 133v.
- 27 E105/2, 16–17; E411/3.
- 28 *CTB* 23, 165; *Newton Corr* 5, 314–15; Murray 1997, 931.
- 29 E105/1, 33.
- 30 The dies are held by the National Museums of Scotland. A petition by the engravers, referred to the Tower Mint in January 1712, shows that punches for 1d, 2d, 3d and 4d had been made since the 1707–9 recoinage (Hocking 1915, 330–1; Murray 1999, 29). About 1869 a pattern groat in copper, apparently discovered in Glasgow, was sent for exhibition before the Numismatic Society of London (Wingate 1869, 215); the private Richardson collection included an impression of the groat reverse in silver (Burns 1887 2, 535). Neither can now be traced.
- 31 Murray 1997, 933–4.
- 32 *Newton Corr* 4, 523.
- 33 It appears that the clerks continued to be employed for varying periods up to 1715 (E305/1, 79, 106, 131, 135; E411/3–4).
- 34 Thirlestane Castle, Lauderdale mint papers (LMP) 69/25/13.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid. In 1710, however, Lauderdale's father seems to have agreed that the clerks were not needed (*CTP* 1708–14, 169).
- 37 Westfall 1980, 840; Craig 1946, 74–5, takes a similar line.
- 38 PRO Mint 19/3, 217 (Oct. 1721).
- 39 *CTP* 1714–19, 50; copy in Mint 19/3, 23, copy of proposed clause at fo. 26.
- 40 *Newton Corr* 6, 263–5.

- 41 *Newton Corr* 6, 367–8.
- 42 *Newton Corr* 6, 372–3, 397. The third commissioner was John Haldane of Gleneagles. Lauderdale's papers relating to the mine are in LMP 69/26.
- 43 For the Alva mine see also *CTB* 30, 442; *Newton Corr* 6, 317, 378–9, 395–7; 7, 247, 281–2; Westfall 1980, 840–1; Craig 1946, 103–4. Its probable location was the upper end of Silver Glen (NS 892 985) see Sir J Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, 17 (1796), 141.
- 44 GD220/5/650/2.
- 45 Mint 19/3, 217.
- 46 On 18 August 1715 Montgomerie wrote that the King 'has been pleased in place of the employment I hold in the Mint to make me a Lieut. Colonel in the third Regiment of Foot Guards' (GD3/5/915); in the event he only obtained a company, only to lose it in 1717 for opposing the Ministry (*Hist Parl* 1715–54, 270). Sir Robert Montgomerie [of Skelmorlie] was referred to as the new Master as late as May 1716 (SP54/12, 39 no 12).
- 47 Thomas Paterson, of the parish of St James, Westminster (E411/8/1/2).
- 48 Mint 19/3, 217.
- 49 *Newton Corr* 7, 170–1, 174–5 (Oct. 1721).
- 50 *CTP* 1708–4, 528; *CTP* 1714–19, 315; *Newton Corr* 7, 263–4, Lauderdale to Newton 27 February 1724; LMP 69/25/4.
- 51 *CTB* 32, 627–8; copy in E105/2, 36.
- 52 *Newton Corr* 7, 6–7, Newton to Treasury, 14 October 1718.
- 53 *Newton Corr* 6, 226 (date should be 1719); E105/2, 14.
- 54 Challis 1992, 399, 431–4. The shortage was caused by the price of silver exceeding the coinage price.
- 55 E105/2, 60.
- 56 Murray 1997, 934, 936 notes 36, 48. For Cave's career as a brewer see Murray 1999, 31–2.
- 57 LMP 69/25/6.
- 58 LMP 69/25/5.
- 59 LMP 69/25/7; *Newton Corr* 7, 245–6 refers to Lauderdale's memorial to the Treasury (*CTP* 1720–8, 205).
- 60 LMP 69/25/11.
- 61 *Newton Corr* 7, 246 (*CTP* 1720–8, 220), report to Treasury on memorials from Lauderdale and Montgomerie; drafts in Mint 19/3, 145, 198.
- 62 LMP 69/23/8–10; *CTP* 1720–8, 263; *Newton Corr* 7, 263–4. On 26 January 1725 the Barons of Exchequer considered an application for Lauderdale and the other officers for payment of their salaries (E305/2, 474).
- 63 E305/3, 145, 215; 4, 57; E411/3, E411/11/1.
- 64 *CTBP* 1, 150, 282; 2, 311, 345, 506.
- 65 GD220/5/715. Copper coinage was not covered by the mint indentures (Craig 1953, 250).
- 66 Ruddiman 1782, 232. For copper coinage in 18th-century Scotland see Holmes 1998, 74–81.
- 67 LMP 69/25/5; MS has 'friend' in place of 'fund', clearly a scribal error. Under English law counterfeiting gold or silver was a statutory treason, but until 1742 coining copper only ranked as a misdemeanour (Craig 1953, 252–3).
- 68 Craig 1953, 221.
- 69 SP36/5/1, 110.
- 70 SP54/19, 323, no 90.
- 71 SP54/19, 329, no 92.
- 72 Craig 1953, 370–1.
- 73 SP54/19, 324, 329, nos 90, 92.
- 74 *CTPB* 3, 136.
- 75 *CTBP* 3, 24. The Mastership was vacant from the death of James Bruce, 28 May 1734, to the appointment of Archibald Bothwell, 28 June 1736 (*CTPB* 3, 286).
- 76 E305/4, 230, 246–7; E411/13/4.

- 77 LMP 69/23/11. Bruce had been appointed on 22 December 1731 (*CTBP* 2, 207).
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 A draft petition to the Treasury by Thomas Mylne, mason in Edinburgh, 1763, provides a useful summary of the case (GD1/51/85) and there are copies of some of the papers in the Signet Library, Session Papers 4 nos 46 and 48. The case is reported in Morison's *Dictionary*, 7337.
- 80 Webster 1982, 206–7 (translation); Latin text in LMP 69/1/1.
- 81 Mackenzie Stuart 1971, 194.
- 82 E411/5; Elchies' *Decisions*, Bankruptcy no 8. Culreoch or Culrach was security for the appearance of a person whose case was removed from one court to another. For Cave's bankruptcy see Murray 1999, 31.
- 83 E105/1, 45, Instructions to the porter, 26 December 1738.
- 84 E105/1, 37v–39r.
- 85 E105/1, 39v–40v.
- 86 E105/1, 38.
- 87 E105/1, 41v–42r.
- 88 E105/1, 42.
- 89 NLS MS 17558, 179. Copper coinage in England had stopped in February 1755 following complaints of over-supply (Craig 1953, 251). No reference to a Scottish coinage has been found in the Treasury minutes (PRO T29).
- 90 Craig 1953, 251; Challis 1992, 436.
- 91 Holmes 1998, 76–81, 191–2.
- 92 E105/1, 42v.
- 93 E105/1, 43–4, 12 January and 18 July 1757, including copy of memorial to Lord Provost and Council.
- 94 E105/1, 46.
- 95 E105/1, 46.
- 96 *Home Office Papers 1760–5*, 474.
- 97 *Hist Parl 1754–90* 2, 397.
- 98 *CTBP* 4, 463, 646; *Scots Peerage* 8, 461.
- 99 PRO 30/8/154, 212–13.
- 100 NLS MS 17558, 177.
- 101 Ramsay 1888 1, 440; Thompson 1927, 144, 249; NLS MS 8, 115.
- 102 *Hist Parl 1754–90* 2, 397.
- 103 E105/2, 38–9.
- 104 NLS MS 17558, 179.
- 105 E105/1, 44v–45.
- 106 Session Papers 472 no 1, 14–15. The eminent physician, William Cullen (1710–90), had lived in the Master's house (Doig 1993, 66–7).
- 107 Session Papers 472 no 1, 2, 27. In 1812 the Warden's apartments were let to a smith, a shoemaker and a tailor for a total of £14 5s a year (Session Papers 482 no 48, 3).
- 108 E/105/66/1.
- 109 Session Papers 472 no 1, 6.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 7–8. Original estimate NAS CS231/C7/11 no 52.
- 111 Session Papers 472 no 2, appendix, report by William Sibbald, architect (original CS231/C7/11 no 5).
- 112 The court process relating to this case is CS231/C7/11; Session Papers include prints of Petition for Laurence Craigie, 4 September 1805 (472 no 1); Answers for Robert Hepburne 22 January 1807 (472 no 2) and Answers for Robert Hepburne and Henry Scott Alves 10 September 1812 (482 no 48). The case is reported in *Decisions of the Court of Session 1808–10*, 477, 22 December 1809.
- 113 Session Papers 472 no 1, 6–7; 482 no 48, 8–11.
- 114 Session Papers 482 no 48, 11, 18–19; CS231/C7/11 no 55, appendix 4; T17/28, 13 December 1808.
- 115 CS237/C7/11 no 55, interlocutor 11 December 1812.
- 116 CS237/C7/11 no 3, 32.

- 117 T1/3998, letter from H S Alves, 30 November 1837.
 118 T1/3998, letter from Rear Adm George Elliot, 18 December 1837.
 119 Copied in letter from Lockhart to Sir Ilay Campbell, 4 August 1809 (Glasgow City Archives TD219/6/415).
 120 Copied in letter from Lockhart to Campbell, 24 August 1809 (TD219/6/416).
 121 Session Papers 472 no 2, 13.
 122 E105/66/2–3 (copies).
 123 *PP 1810* 2, 592, *1810–11* 3, 246, *1817* 4, 23.
 124 57 Geo 3 c 67; Craig 1953, 278–9.
 125 E307/22, 333,335; 28, 382–3; 29, 273, 398; 30, 115,118–21; original documents relating to the sale, including plan, in T1/3998.
 126 Grant 1882 1, 268–70.
 127 GD1/482/11, 97–107.
 128 The *Edinburgh Almanack* continued to show this post as held by J L Grant until 1837 but this is not confirmed by any other source and in view of his probable age (given his original appointment in 1774) seems unlikely.
 129 Printed in *PP 1833* 23, 435.
 130 *PP 1834* 6, 339.
 131 T1/3998 deals with compensation to Alves and Elliot.
 132 T1/3998, 28 March 1836; a letter of 18 December 1837 makes a similar point.
 133 30 & 31 Vict. c 59. This, however, only affected the English Act of Union. The equivalent parts of the Scottish Act (1706 c 7) remained on the Statute Book until the SLR (Scotland) Act of 1906 (6 Edw 7 c 38).
 134 NAS HH1/714. Sir Alpheus Cleophas Morton (d 1923), was a London architect and surveyor; though later MP for Sutherland 1906–18, he seems to have had no obvious Scottish connections in 1893 (*Who was Who 1916–1928*).
 135 33 & 34 Vict. c.10 s.14.
 136 The proposed relocation of the Royal Mint to Scotland is fully documented up to January 1967 by Scottish Office file NAS SEP4/2982, which includes extracts from *Hansard*. For the background and discussion of alternative sites, which included Livingston New Town, see Challis 1992, 611–22.
 137 *Hansard (House of Commons)*, 5 May 1964, 1096.
 138 SEP4/2982, letter to J H Gibson, Crown Office, 21 July 1966.
 139 Scottish Office file SEP4/2983, 1967–70, is closed until 2001. For Llantrisant see Challis 1992, 623–42.

APPENDIX 1

Inventory of the Mint, 1718 (Lauderdale mint papers 69/25/3)

A partial inventory probably drawn up in anticipation of resumption of silver coinage

Inventar of what is in the counting roome in his Majesties Mint in Edinburgh taken up by order of the Right Honourable Charles Earle of Lauderdale General of said Mint upon the 18 of Febrewar 1718 years

Imprimus the large counting table with severall shutles

Item the troning table with another litle table

It. one double and two single letrons for the clarks

It. 4 rownd timber stooles

It. 2 large bullzion chests

It. one large balk & scales hings above the counting table

Item a box containing the balk and scales bought from the Comissioners of the Ekwivalent with a small pile of wights containing 128 ownces

Item another box with three pair of scales for weighting a pownd weight



Illus 2 Revolution Club Medal, 1753; diameter 35.5 mm (*Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland*)

It. of Troy weights cast like bells one 30 pound weight two twenty pound weights one 15 pound weight two 10 pounds two five pounds one 4 pound two three pound weights two 2 pound weights and five single pounds all Troy weight

Item one new pile of weights containing 512 ounces

Item one made use befor the union conta[in]ing 512 ounces

Item one ditto wanting the Crown drope 512 ounces

Item three 20 pound Troy weights made of the old weights that was formerly in the Mint

Item a ston weight half a stone weight a four pound weight a two pound weight and one pound haverdepoise formerly used in the Mint

Item 9 balks & scales for justing

It. 2 balks & scales for troning

It. 4 boxes containing 12 dozen new float files

Item about 10 dozen of old worn float files

It. 5 brass patrons for the Crown peices 4 for half Crown four for shillings and four for six pences

Item ane iron chimney with tongues & fir shovell

Item ane large press for the use of the Clark

Item another litle press

Item a fine balk and scale given to Wm. Browne to cleane

Inventar of what is in the Miln Roome

Imp[rimis] 3 justing tables one large table with 3 drawers

Item one large chest for the money

It. one large balk & scales

It. 5 cutters fixed and one down, a p[ai]r shires fixed & flatner

It. one large & two less copper kettles for blenching

It. two drainers one large pan with one hand for drying

It. a long copper trough for cappeing what may be spilt at powring the potts

It. a brass mortar with ane irron pistole
 It. seven standarts with scales for justing & 4 standard without scales
 It. brought up from the silver melting house two pair of large tongues for lifting the potts out of the furnace
 It. five pair less tongues: a powring pott & two rings to lift the great potts with: the chain for the swey
 It. two tastes: two still potts three pookers
 It. 5 irron scarches

In the silver melting house
 Imp[rimis] 70 pair single moulds & 35 pair screws and fourtie eight broads
 Item two old large irron potts: and the bottom of one of the coper furnaces of irone
 It. ane old chest for sand
 Item there is three built furnaces for melting

[Endorsed] This is the Inventar of what is in the Counting Roome, Milln roome and Silver melting house in his Majesties Mint Edinr. 18 Febr. 1718

APPENDIX 2

The Revolution Club medal, 1753

A petition was presented to the Lord of the Treasury by George Drummond, late Lord Provost of Edinburgh 'for himself as praeses, and in name of a Society of Gentlemen at Edinburgh, commonly called the Revolution-Club' (copy in E105/2, 24–5), showing:

That immediately after the Happy Deliverance this Kingdom met with from Oppression, Tyranny and Slavery, on the Accession of King William the 3d of Glorious and Immortal Memory to the Crown of this Realm, a Sett of Gentlemen at Edinburgh form'd themselves into a Society and took upon them the Name of The Revolution-Club; and from that happy Aera to the Time of the late wicked and unnatural Rebellion in the Year 1745 continued to keep their anniversary Meeting upon the Fifth Day of November, being the day of His Majesty's Landing in Brittain, in order to commemorate that Glorious Event.

That upon the second happy deliverance of their country by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland's defeating the Rebels in the year 1746, great numbers of Gentlemen became Members of the said Society or Club, and the same amounts now to near Six Hundred, who out of a just sense they have of the many Advantages every good subject enjoys under the present Administration, and in order to perpetuate the Memory of the aforesaid Great Deliverances, and to distinguish them to Members of the said Society or Revolution-Club, are desirous to have a Badge or Medal to be wore by them at their Anniversary meeting, Representing their Deliverance from Rebellion, Oppression, Tyranny, and Arbitrary Power; for which purpose they have caus'd prepare a Dye to strike off said Medals, But there being no Press at Edinburgh where they can be Struck, but in his Majesty's Mint, and to which they cannot have Recourse without your Lordships Authority

May it therefor please your Lordships to authorise and empower your Petitioners, to have their said Medals struck in His Majesty's Mint at Edinburgh from time to time, as they may have occasion for the same, at the sight of His Majesty's Officers of the said Mint for that Effect.

On 23 May 1753 the Treasury granted warrant to John, Lord Belhaven, and the rest of the principal officers of the Mint, 'to cause such medals to be struck from time to time, in His Majesty's Mint in Edinburgh, at the Charge of the Petitioners, as shall be desired by them, for the Purposes set furth in the said Petition; taking care that the Crown be put to no Expence in respect thereof.'

On 23 July 1753 the General and Officers authorized the Master Smith 'to repair one of the presses in the Coining-House of the Mint, for strikeing off the medals for the use of the Revolution-Club agreeable to the order of Treasury, at their own proper charges and expences,

and to what else may be necessary for finishing the said medals; and appoint the key of the said Coining-House to ly in the hands of the Warden, to whose office it properly belongs to have the custody of it.' (E105/1, 42)

Illustration 2 shows an example of the medal in the Royal Museum of Scotland (H.M57), actual diameter 35.5 mm. The obverse shows William III, dressed as a Roman Emperor and crowned with laurel, presenting a scroll inscribed M. CHA. (Magna Charta) to seated figures of Religion (with book) and Justice (with sword and scales, while Tyranny (?Medusa chained and wielding an axe) and Popery (note falling papal tiara) flee. The inscription MEMINISSE IUVABIT — 'It will delight [us] to remember' — probably alludes to Virgil *Aeneid*, I, 203, *Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*. Inscription on reverse: THE EDINBURGH REVOLUTION CLUB IN COMEMORATION OF THE RECOVERY OF THEIR RELIGION AND LIBERTY BY K WILLIAM & Q MARY AN 1688 ORDERED THIS MEDAL TO BE STRUCK. ANNO 1753

Descriptions of the medal will be found in R W Cochran-Patrick, *Catalogue of the Medals of Scotland*, 135, pl XXX.1, and E Hawkins, *Medallic Illustrations of the History of Great Britain*, 2, 672.

On 7 January 1766 the General of the Mint wrote to the clerk (E105/65):

Lord Strichen gives his compliments to Mr Grant and as he has had a message from the provost about the Revolution Medal, he wants to see the petition to the Treasury and warrant thereupon which Mr Grant will send over with a proper hand.

Nothing further is known about this request, though it might have related to a proposed striking of another batch of medals.

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UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

City of Glasgow Archives

TD219 Campbell of Succoth papers.

National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh (NAS formerly SRO)

- C3 Great Seal, paper register
- CC8/8 Commissariat of Edinburgh, register of testaments
- CS231 Court of Session, unextracted processes
- E105 Mint registers and papers
- E305 Exchequer, Barons' minutes
- E307 Exchequer, Treasury reports
- E411 Mint imprest accounts and vouchers
- GD1/51 Mylne papers
- GD1/482 Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh records
- GD3 Eglinton muniments
- GD49 Barclay-Allardice muniments
- GD123 Mar and Kellie muniments
- GD220 Montrose muniments
- HH1 Scottish Office. Home Department miscellaneous files.
- SEP4 Scottish Office. Regional industrial promotion and development files.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (NLS)

- MS8 Melville papers
- MS17558 Saltoun papers

Public Record Office, Kew (PRO)

- Mint 19 Mint, Newton papers (Microfilm in NAS, RH4/165)
- PRO30/8 Chatham papers
- SP36 State Papers Domestic George II
- SP54 State Papers Scotland, 2 ser (Photocopies in NAS, RH2/4/300 etc)

T1 Treasury Board papers

T17 Treasury out-letters, North Britain (Photocopies in NAS, RH2/4/415 etc)

Signet Library, Edinburgh

Session Papers

Thirlestane Castle, Lauder (Thirlestane Castle Trust)

LMP Lauderdale mint papers (Microfilm in NAS, RH4/69).