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STUART HOME LIFE H9

Coins

The coins in the tray show four of the seven Stuart monarchs. Those missing are James I (reigned from 1603 to 1625), James II (1685 to 1688) and Queen Anne (1702 to 1714).



The Charles I half crown has a portrait of Charles I on the front and the Stuart coat of arms on the back. The coin is quite worn and it is difficult to see the images. The picture on the right shows a clearer picture of the Stuart coat of arms. This half crown was a day's pay for a cavalryman in the Civil War - a war which temporarily dethroned the Stuart monarchy from 1649 when Charles I was executed until 1660 when his son Charles II regained the throne.

The large silver coin in the centre is a crown from the reign of Charles II. It is extremely worn and so difficult to identify. If you look very closely it is possible to see the King's name written above his head. It is easier to see the name of Charles II written on the halfpenny. It says 'Carolus II', which is Latin for Charles II.

William III ruled jointly with his wife, Queen Mary, until she died in 1694. The William and Mary half penny is from the period of joint rule and the other halfpenny is later, because he is shown on his own. Their names are written in Latin - 'Gulielmus et Maria'.

Some of these coins have Britannia on the back and the date they were made. Britannia was a Roman goddess and was also the Latin name given to the British Isles. That is where we get the name Britain. Britannia is usually depicted sitting on a rock holding a trident, spear or shield - depending on the year of the coin. She has become a national symbol, especially in times of war. Today you can find her on the 50 pence coin, shown below.





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Bellarmine Jug



Bellarmine jugs were used for drinking ale. The jugs were named after Cardinal Bellarmine, who became very unpopular in Protestant countries across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because of his strong Catholic views. The jugs were produced in Protestant countries such as Germany, Holland and England to make fun of the cardinal and they were decorated with a funny picture of his head and his long grey beard. These jugs are sometimes called 'beardman' or 'greybeard' jugs. This jug was found in Friar Street, Reading. It is easy to see the face on the neck of the jug as it has survived well.

Delft Ointment Pot







Delft is the name of a type of pottery made in England and Holland from the late sixteenth century onwards. It is made from a sandy coloured clay and fired with a white glaze. Sometimes the glaze was used as a background for elaborate and beautiful decoration, such as those in the pictures on the right. However, this one is plain, which is most common of the mid-seventeenth century. Surprisingly, it is rare to find plain white pots today because they were considered to be worthless and just thrown away.

The pot was used to contain an ointment - perhaps with healing benefits or simply a beauty product.

Horn Drinking Cup



This cup is made from the horn of an ox. The owner has scratched their initials into the bottom and used a sharp tool to write their initials in dots on the side. Many things were made of horn before other materials such as glass and plastic became widely used. The picture on the right shows a portrait of Charles I made from horn.



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Beechwood Trencher Plate



A trencher was originally a piece of stale bread that was used like a plate. A hole was carved in the centre of the bread for the food and at the end of the meal the trencher could be eaten with left over gravy or sauce. The word trencher comes from the French *tranchier*, which means 'to cut'. By the seventeenth century bread trenchers had been replaced by square and wooden circular plates, like the one in this box. There is an example of a square trencher in the picture on the right.



The wooden trencher plate dates from the eighteenth century and is made from beechwood. The beech tree can be recognised by its grey bark and jagged shiny leaves, seen in the picture on the right.

Beechwood is tough and durable making it the ideal material for floorboards, boat parts and household items. This plate has managed to survive the last 300 years and is still in good condition. Notice the cut marks in the centre - think about all the people who might have used it.



Pipkin



This cooking pot, called a pipkin, probably dates from the late Stuart Period. It would have been used to hold liquid as it has a lip on the rim for pouring and is glazed inside, which helped to stop the contents from seeping into the clay.

Pipkins were designed for cooking directly over a fire. Notice the black marks on the outside caused by the flames. Interestingly, the side where the handle would have been is less burnt than the other side. This is because the handle needed to be facing away from the fire so that it could be picked up!

The handle, which unfortunately is broken, would have been long and sturdy, like the replica pipkin pictured on the right. This pot is very useful as long as you are right-handed, but imagine trying to pour boiling liquid from it if you were left-handed. Not so easy!



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Clay Pipe



Nobody knows exactly when clay pipes were first used for smoking tobacco, but the idea was probably introduced in the sixteenth century when the plant was first brought to Britain. There have been many changes to the shape, size and design, but the basic structure and function has remained the same. A pipe consists of a long, thin stem with a round bowl on one end. The tobacco is packed into the bowl and lit with a match. The smoke draws up the stem towards the mouth. The pointed part that sticks out at the bottom is called the heel, and is designed to give the smoker a more secure grip.

This seventeenth century pipe is quite plain compared to pipes of later dates. It has a simple ring around the mouth of the bowl and no other decoration.

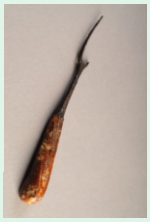
Pot



This small pot has a green glaze inside and dates from the seventeenth century. It could have been used for many different purposes in a Stuart household. Unfortunately it has been damaged.

Knife and Fork





The knife handle is made of bone or possibly antler. There are two nails in the end of the handle, which might have held a decorative ending in place. The handle of the fork is probably made of ivory. Both are very worn and chipped and have been repaired several times. Knives were an essential tool as far back as prehistoric times, however the fork was not widely used in this country until the seventeenth century. It had been introduced to other European countries before this, but was considered fancy and too delicate by the English. This fork was made with two prongs, although one is now missing, so it was probably only used to hold onto meat and lift it up, rather than scoop into the mouth. The knife blade is quite damaged and much thinner than it would have been originally.