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STUART HOME LIFE H9/A

Coins



The coins in the tray show three of the seven Stuart monarchs. Those missing are James I (reigned from 1603 to 1625), Charles I (1625 to 1649) James II (1685 to 1688) and Queen Anne (1702 to 1714). The Stuart coat of arms is shown here on the right.

The small silver coin is a sixpence from the reign of Charles II (1660 to 1685). It was made in 1679, towards the end of his reign. The Latin inscription on the front says 'CAROLUS II DEI GRATIA', which is Latin for Charles II by the grace of God and on the back it reads' MAG BR FRA ET HIB REX', which means King of Great Britain, France and Ireland. The centre is decorated with three 'Cs'. Interestingly, this coin has a small hole pierced through it. Could it have been worn as a pendant on a chain or leather necklace?

The farthing is also from the reign of Charles II. The back of the coin is quite worn, but it is still possible to see the date, which is 1670, and Britannia. 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 on the right.



William III ruled jointly with his wife, Queen Mary, until she died in 1694. The William III half penny on the right of the tray is from the period of joint rule and actually shows the portraits of both monarchs. It has their names written in Latin - 'Gulielmus et Maria'. The other halfpenny is later, because he is shown on his own.



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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. Jugs like this 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. Luckily this jug has survived well and it is easy to see the face on its neck. These jugs are sometimes called 'beardman' or 'greybeard' jugs.

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.

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

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. The stem has been broken.

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Pewter Plate



This plate was found during the restoration of the church at Stewkley, Buckinghamshire and is engraved with two sets of initials - 'WW' and 'CC'. It is made of pewter, which is a metal alloy of tin and copper or lead. Pewter is bright and shiny when polished and was often referred to as 'poor man's silver'. The metal was introduced to Britain by the Romans in the second century AD, but it wasn't until the Middle Ages that it became widely used to make the majority of household items, including candlesticks, mugs, bowls and buttons. Pewter is still used today, but usually only for ornaments, as from the nineteenth century onwards mass-produced goods made of glass and china have taken its place in the kitchen and on our dinner tables.

Handle of a Cooking Pot



This handle once belonged to a cooking pot from a kitchen during the Stuart Period. The yellow glaze is on the inside of the pot, which stopped the contents from seeping into the clay. The pot must have been extremely functional and well made, because the handle hasn't snapped away as a weaker one might - it has taken a huge chunk of the pot with it!

Brown Glazed Pot

This pot is much finer and more delicate than the handle of the cooking pot. It is glazed on the outside as well as the inside, telling us that it was designed to look attractive as well as have a practical use. Unfortunately it has been damaged so it is difficult to say what its exact purpose would have been.



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Newspapers

These replica newspapers are fascinating because they allow us to read at first hand the thoughts and feelings of Stuart Britain.

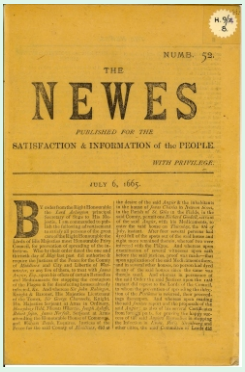
The London Gazette dates from the time of the Great Fire of London, which destroyed huge sections of the city from the 2 - 5 September 1666. The article gives a detailed account of what happened and the plight of the inhabitants of London. One section reads:

> Through this sad accident it is easie to be imagined how many persons were necessitated to remove themselves and goods into open fields, where they were forced to continue for some time, which could not but work compassion in the beholders….

The Newes was published at the time of the Great Plague (1665 to 1666). It gives clear instructions as to how to deal with outbreaks of the disease, for example:

> The master of every house, as soon as anyone in his house complaineth either of blotch or pimple, or swelling in any part of his body, or falleth otherwise dangerously sick, without apparent cause of some other disease, shall give knowledge thereof to the Examiner of Health within two hours after the said sign shall appear.

The Gazette reports the death of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, who was responsible for abolishing the monarchy with the execution of Charles I in 1649. He set up a republican commonwealth, which ended in 1660 when Charles II regained his father's throne. This article talks about Oliver Cromwell's character and achievements.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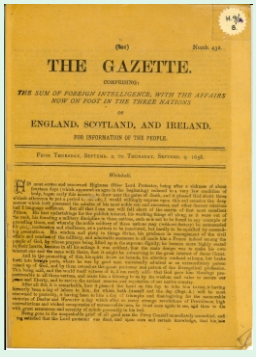
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