

STATES OF JERSEY COPPER COINAGE, 1926

Reference: Royal Mint File 1619/26 | Treasury Reference S.18309/Pt.A
4 January – 20 March 1926

1. Overview

This file documents a single, self-contained coinage transaction: the manufacture and delivery to Jersey of £595 worth of bronze coin (£345 in pennies and £250 in halfpennies) by the Royal Mint in London during the first quarter of 1926. Although the monetary value involved was modest, the procedural machinery required to authorize even this small order was elaborate, reflecting Jersey's constitutional position as a Crown dependency whose coinage rights required formal sanction through the Home Office and HM Treasury.

The collection comprises twenty-three documents in total — formal letters, internal memoranda, a packing list, a financial invoice, and manuscript working calculations — together forming a complete record from initial inquiry to final payment. The earliest document is dated 4 January 1926 and the latest 20 March 1926, a span of just eleven weeks.

2. Constitutional and Legislative Context

Jersey's right to issue its own distinctive coinage rested on a specific act of the Jersey Legislature: the "*Acte pour émettre en circulation de la Monnaie de Bronze à un montant n'excédant pas £3,000 stg.*", passed on 31 October 1922 and confirmed by Order of His Majesty in Council on 29 January 1923. This act authorized the Jersey Finance Committee to issue copper (bronze) coins to a cumulative value not exceeding £3,000 sterling.

The 1926 order represented the balance of that authorization. A previous coinage had already been struck — the 1923 issue — leaving £595 still available within the £3,000 ceiling. The coins were to replicate the same pattern and design as those last issued, as the Finance Committee specifically required, ensuring continuity in the appearance of Jersey's distinctive local coinage.

The constitutional procedure required was unambiguous: Jersey could not approach the Mint directly with a binding order. The Treasurer had to request the Bailiff to ask the Lieutenant Governor to petition the Home Office, which in turn sought Treasury authority, which then instructed the Deputy Master of the Mint to proceed. This five-stage chain of command, for a transaction worth less than £600, is a striking illustration of the administrative complexity governing even minor Crown dependency affairs in the interwar period.

3. Document-by-Document Narrative

3.1 The Initial Inquiry (4 January 1926)

Herbert F. Breault, Treasurer of the States, wrote directly to the Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Royal Mint on 4 January 1926 (Batch 2, Image 5). This letter is notable for its informality

relative to the formal bureaucratic correspondence that followed: Breault was, in effect, making a preliminary inquiry before the formal application moved through official channels. He asked whether it would be possible to mint £595 of Jersey copper similar to that of 1923, noted the existence of a small quantity (roughly £35) of old copper coins that could be remelted, and flagged that formal application would follow through the usual channels if the Mint could accommodate the order.

This direct approach to the Mint, while not the formal authorization route, was pragmatic: it allowed Breault to obtain pricing and feasibility confirmation before committing the Finance Committee to the formal process. The Mint's response set the commercial terms that governed the entire subsequent transaction.

3.2 The Mint's Response and Internal Processing (6–11 January 1926)

The Mint's internal machinery moved quickly. An internal note dated 6 January (Batch 2, Image 4), addressed to the Deputy Master, assessed the order as "quite a small coinage, being about 200,000 pieces if both pence and halfpence are required" and confirmed it could easily be undertaken. The note provided estimated costs broken down between metal and manufacture for both denominations, and endorsed the proposal to remelt the old copper coins with a credit for the metal weight.

The Acting Deputy Master (signing as "W.G.St.") replied formally to the Treasurer on 11 January 1926 (Batch 2, Image 2). This letter, filed under reference 1619/26, confirmed that the Mint would be pleased to undertake the £595 bronze coinage, set out the charges (£1.3.2 per 1,000 pieces for pence; 16s.4d. per 1,000 pieces for halfpence, inclusive of metal and manufacture), and confirmed that the old copper coin could be received, remelted, and the value of the metal credited to Jersey's account.

A manuscript note appended to the draft of this letter (Batch 2, Image 3) clarifies that the standard figures were being quoted even though the numbers were smaller than on the last occasion — a professional acknowledgement that economies of scale were not being passed on, with standard tariff rates applying regardless.

3.3 The Old Copper Coins Dispatched (20 January 1926)

On 20 January 1926 (Batch 1, Image 18 / Batch 2, Image 1 — same document appearing in both batches), Breault wrote again to the Deputy Master, forwarding two boxes of old copper coin as previously agreed. He also confirmed that the formal application for permission to coin £595 was proceeding through the usual channels. A manuscript annotation on this letter, dated 9 April 1926, records "Foreign bronze a/c — wt. need = 197 lbs", reflecting a subsequent weighing note added when the bronze weight was formally ascertained.

3.4 The Formal Authorization Chain (29 January – 27 February 1926)

The formal authorization chain unfolded in four steps across the following weeks:

- 29 January 1926 — Breault wrote to the Bailiff of Jersey, Sir William Henry Venables Vernon K.B.E., formally requesting him to ask the Lieutenant Governor to submit an application to the Master of the Mint for coinage of £595 of copper money (£345 pence and £250 halfpence), citing the 1922 Act and specifying the same pattern as before.
- 2 February 1926 — Lieutenant Governor F.R. Bingham (Major General) wrote to the Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, transmitting Breault's letter and requesting

that the usual steps be taken to give effect to the Act and the Finance Committee's requirements.

- 9 February 1926 — The Home Office (Whitehall) wrote to the Secretary, Treasury, forwarding the Lieutenant Governor's letter and requesting the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to communicate authority to the Master of the Mint if they saw no objection.
- 27 February 1926 — Treasury Chambers wrote to the Deputy Master of the Mint, formally conveying the Lords Commissioners' authority to supply £595 in copper coins (£345 in pennies and £250 in halfpennies).

Concurrently, on 18 February, the Royal Mint produced an internal memorandum (under Treasury Reference S.18309/Pt.A) confirming that the coinage could be undertaken and that the States Treasurer had already been in contact with the Deputy Master and informed of the charges. This internal note — which appears to exist in two essentially identical copies in the file — served as the Mint's own record that commercial discussions had already taken place and no further negotiation was needed.

3.5 The Old Bronze Weight Confirmed (Between January and March 1926)

A letter from the Royal Mint's Chief Clerk to the Treasurer (Batch 1, Image 17), though undated in the images, belongs in this period: it informed Jersey that the two boxes of old bronze coin had been received and weighed, with the weight ascertained as 197 pounds, for which an allowance would duly be made in the account for the new coinage. This established the precise credit figure used in the final invoice.

3.6 Manufacture and Internal Mint Processes (March 1926)

Several internal Mint documents illuminate the manufacturing and accounting process. An urgent internal note (Batch 1, Image 7), dated 17 March 1926 and addressed "Mr. Master" from the signatory "G." (likely the Deputy Master's office), asked whether there were any extra charges for the Jersey halfpence, noting the account was going out that day. A reply from Mr. Kenner below it confirmed: "The coinage is so small — no extra charges."

A further internal note (Batch 1, Image 8) addressed to the Chief Clerk confirmed the Southern Railway had been asked to collect the boxes the following day (Wednesday), and a note to Mr. Kenner instructed him to make out the account with an allowance for 197 pounds of bronze.

The manuscript calculation sheet (Batch 1, Image 6) shows the working behind both the physical quantities (number of pieces from the nominal values, weight computations, calculation of the bronze credit) and the final account figures. It reconciles the monetary value (£595) against the number of pieces by denomination, computes the manufacturing charges at the agreed rates, and derives the net sum due.

The internal routing note addressed to Mr. Cole (Batch 1, Image 2) records the sale of bronze to Jersey, cross-checking that the 197 pounds supplied was to be treated as an ordinary purchase of bullion and taken on charge in the Imperial Bronze Account, with the full amount (£3,225 pieces-equivalent value) charged to Colmore, though only £3,028 would be charged to Jersey.

3.7 Dispatch and Final Documentation (16–17 March 1926)

The coins were packed and dispatched on 16–17 March 1926. The packing memorandum (Batch 1, Image 5), Form 34B, records 30 boxes containing £595 in Jersey bronze coin packed at the Royal Mint for shipment to the Treasurer of the States of Jersey, 5 Library Place, Jersey, via the

Southern Railway Company. The boxes, marked G.A.R. and numbered 1–30, contained coins marked as £20 pence denominations (boxes 1–17) and a mix of halfpence denominations from box 18 onwards, with individual gross weights recorded for each box.

The invoice (Batch 1, Image 4), addressed to the States of Jersey "To the Master of the Mint", itemized the account as follows:

Date	Item	Amount (£.s.d)
17 Mar 1926	82,800 pence @ £1.3.2 per 1,000	£95.18.3
17 Mar 1926	120,000 halfpennies @ 16s.4d per 2,000	£98.0.0
	Subtotal	£193.18.3
	Less: credit 197 pounds bronze @ £72.6s per ton	–£6.7.2
	NET AMOUNT DUE	£187.11.1

Accompanying the invoice was a formal letter from the Mint's Chief Clerk (Batch 1, Image 3), dated 17 March 1926, advising that the pence and halfpence had been dispatched per the Southern Railway Company, that a memorandum of the packing was enclosed, and requesting that the sum of £187.11.1 be placed to the credit of the Mint Cash Account at the Bank of England.

3.8 Acknowledgement and Payment (20 March 1926)

The Treasurer's final letter (Batch 1, Image 1), dated 20 March 1926, closed the file. Breault confirmed receipt of all 30 boxes of copper coins, and reported that he had sent a cheque for £187.11.1 ("one hundred and eighty-seven pounds, eleven shillings and one penny") to the Governor of the Bank of England to be placed to the credit of the Mint Cash Account. This letter, addressed to the Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, London E.1, was endorsed on arrival with an annotation acknowledging receipt.

4. Key Persons Identified

Name	Role	Significance in file
Herbert F. Breault	Treasurer of the States of Jersey	Initiates and closes the transaction; signs the inquiry, formal application, and final payment letters
Sir William Henry Venables Vernon, K.B.E.	Bailiff of Jersey	Recipient of the States Treasurer's formal application letter of 29 January 1926
F.R. Bingham, Major General	Lieutenant Governor of Jersey	Transmits the application to the Home Office (2 February 1926)
N.M. Martin-Jones (sgd.)	Home Office	Signs the Home Office letter to Treasury of 9 February 1926

Acting Deputy Master (sig. W.G.St.)	Royal Mint	Sets commercial terms in the 11 January reply; issues dispatch instructions
Mr. Kenner	Royal Mint clerk	Handles account preparation; confirms no extra charges for small order
Mr. Cole	Royal Mint clerk	Handles the bronze accounting and cross-charges to Imperial Bronze Account

5. Financial Analysis

The coinage transaction involved two nominal values within a total face value of £595:

- Pennies: £345 nominal value = 82,800 pieces
- Halfpennies: £250 nominal value = 120,000 pieces
- Total pieces: approximately 202,800

The Mint charged inclusive rates covering both metal and manufacture. For pennies the rate was £1.3.2 per 1,000 pieces; for halfpennies 16s.4d. per 1,000 pieces (stated as per 2,000 in the invoice). These were standard tariff figures as confirmed by the internal manuscript note — the rates were not adjusted downward for the small size of the order.

The old bronze submitted by Jersey weighed 197 pounds and was valued at £72.6s. per ton, yielding a credit of £6.7.2. This credit was processed through the Imperial Bronze Account as a conventional metal purchase rather than a direct rebate, as the internal routing note to Mr. Cole makes clear.

The net manufacturing cost to Jersey (£187.11.1) represented a charge of approximately 31.6% above the nominal face value of the coins produced — a substantial premium reflecting the cost of metal, minting, boxing, and transport, partly offset by the bronze credit.

6. The Coins Themselves

The file specifies that the coins were to be of the same pattern and design as those issued previously — a reference to the 1923 Jersey bronze coinage struck by the Royal Mint. Jersey's distinctive coinage of this period typically bore the portrait of the reigning monarch (George V) on the obverse and a Jersey-specific reverse design incorporating the island's arms and the denomination in both sterling and the traditional Jersey currency denominations (sous/deniers). The phrase "copper coins" used throughout the correspondence is a common-parlance simplification; the actual metal was bronze (copper alloyed with tin and zinc), as the invoice explicitly states.

The 1926 issue was a relatively minor addition to Jersey's coinage stock: 202,800 pieces across two denominations. The physical weight of the consignment — 30 boxes, each approaching one hundredweight — gives a sense of the practical logistics involved in moving bulk coinage by rail in the pre-airfreight era.

7. Historical Observations

7.1 Administrative Procedures

The file illustrates the layered constitutional accountability governing Crown dependency affairs in the 1920s. Notwithstanding that Jersey is not part of the United Kingdom, the coinage of even a small quantity of bronze coin required the explicit endorsement of the Home Office and the authority of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury. The contrast between the commercial informality of Breault's initial letter to the Mint (essentially a phone-call equivalent in letter form) and the elaborate bureaucratic chain that followed is striking.

Equally striking is the speed of execution once authority was granted. From the Treasury's authorization on 27 February to the dispatch of coins on 17 March was less than three weeks — suggesting that the Mint had been ready to proceed throughout the formal application period and began manufacturing preparations in anticipation of the expected authority.

7.2 The Old Copper Question

The handling of the 197 pounds of returned bronze coins is a small but telling procedural detail. Rather than a simple credit note, the metal had to be absorbed into the Mint's Imperial Bronze Account as a formal purchase of bullion, then re-credited against Jersey's account. This ensured proper accounting within the Mint's internal ledgers and prevented any suggestion of irregular barter. The decision to treat it this way, documented in the internal note to Mr. Cole, reflects careful civil-service bookkeeping.

7.3 Document Survival and File Structure

The file is unusually complete. It preserves not only the formal outward-facing correspondence but also the internal Mint memoranda, working calculations, and routing slips that typically did not survive in external archives. The presence of two near-identical copies of the 18 February internal Mint memorandum (Batch 1, Images 11 and 12) suggests these were copies made for different recipients or filing systems within the Mint. The manuscript calculation sheet (Batch 1, Image 6) is particularly valuable as a primary working document showing how the final invoice figures were derived.

The file reference numbers are consistent throughout: Royal Mint file 1619/26 is cited on the Mint's own correspondence; Treasury Reference S.18309/Pt.A appears on the Treasury and Home Office documents. Jersey's own reference number 10/26 appears on the Lieutenant Governor's letters.

8. Summary

The twenty-three documents in this file record a complete and successful coinage transaction conducted with exemplary administrative precision. Jersey's Finance Committee, acting under the authority of an Act of 1922, procured £595 in bronze coin from the Royal Mint through the constitutionally required chain of authorization, paid a net manufacturing charge of £187.11.1 after a credit for returned bronze metal, and received 30 boxes of coins by the Southern Railway in March 1926.

The file is a model of early twentieth-century British governmental record-keeping: clear, complete, cross-referenced, and containing every stage of the process from preliminary inquiry to final receipt. For the historian of Jersey's financial administration, Crown dependency

constitutional practice, or Royal Mint operations in the interwar period, it represents an unusually well-preserved and self-contained source.
