

Jersey Copper Coinage Correspondence, 1857–1858

Overview

These ten documents form a coherent administrative file relating to the authorization and execution of a copper coinage for the **States of Jersey** in 1857–1858. They trace the process from the original Jersey States Act through to the practical arrangements at the Royal Mint in London, including a late reduction in the coinage amount. Together they offer a remarkably complete picture of how a small island dependency negotiated currency production through the machinery of the Victorian British state.

Document-by-Document Analysis

The Foundational Acts, (October–November 1857)

This is the **Act of the States of Jersey**, dated **15 October 1857**, written in French — as was standard for Jersey's official legislation at the time. It records the States' decision to issue additional copper coinage not exceeding **two thousand pounds sterling**, divided into two denominations: two-thirds in pieces representing **1/13th of a shilling** (pennies, "treize au shelling") and one-third in pieces representing **1/26th of a shilling** (halfpennies, "vingt-six au shelling"). The Act references precedent Acts of **13 July 1840** and **13 December 1850**, establishing continuity with earlier coinages. A committee is named to carry the Act into effect, comprising **Philippe de Ste Croix**, the Rector of St Saviour William Corbet Le Breton, the Constable of St Helier, and **Clément Hémerly**, a Deputy of St Helier. The Treasurer of the States is authorised to advance the necessary funds.

This also contains the **Order in Council**, issued at Windsor on **16 November 1857**, sanctioning the States' Act. The Council included an exceptionally distinguished attendance: the Queen herself, Prince Albert as Prince Consort, and ministers including Viscount Palmerston (Prime Minister), the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Wellington, the Marquess of Lansdowne, Lord Stanley of Alderley, Mr Labouchère, Sir George Grey, Sir

Charles Wood, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Order directed that the Act be entered upon the Register of Jersey and observed accordingly, signed by **C. C. Greville** (the Clerk of the Privy Council). A certified true copy was made by **Ernest A. de Ste Croix**, *Commis au Greffe* — possibly a relative of Philip de Ste Croix, suggesting a family deeply embedded in Jersey's administration.

Philip de Ste Croix to Thomas Graham, 15 December 1857

This is the opening letter of the operational correspondence. **Philip de Ste Croix**, Jurat of the Royal Court of Jersey and President of the coinage committee, writes to **Thomas Graham**, Master of the Mint, from Jersey on **15 December 1857**. The letter is annotated "not entered in full" with a file reference (RB 13/679), suggesting it was summarized rather than transcribed in full into the Mint's registers.

De Ste Croix requests that Graham advise what sum needs to be remitted by the Jersey Treasurer to fund **half the coinage** — approximately £1,000 nominal value — that amount being deemed sufficient for Jersey's immediate commercial needs. He specifies the proportions: **three tons in pence** (13 to the shilling) and the remainder in **halfpence** (26 to the shilling). He asks whether funds should again be remitted to the Bank of England to the Master of the Mint's account, as on previous occasions.

Importantly, the letter notes that the **seignorage** on copper coinage struck at the Royal Mint for Jersey in **1841, 1844, and 1851** had been conceded to the States, and the Committee trusts the same benefit will apply again. It also requests that the **dies used on the three previous occasions** be made available again, with only the date altered — a standard and economical practice.

The letter mentions that **Robert Pipon Marett**, a Member of the States and of the coinage committee, is currently in London and will call at the Mint with the relevant documents and provide any further information required.

Treasury to Master of the Mint / Philip de Ste Croix to Treasury, 8 February 1858

By 8 February 1858, the matter had passed to the **Treasury**. This contains two documents:

First, a Treasury letter (reference K.1440) from **C. E. Trevelyan** (Assistant Secretary to the Treasury — the same Sir Charles Trevelyan of Irish Famine fame) to the Master of the Mint, transmitting a copy of the letter from the President of the Committee of the States of Jersey requesting a further copper coinage to the amount of **£2,000**, and authorizing the Master to execute the coinage at the expense of the States.

Second, the letter from **Philip de Ste Croix** to the Secretary to the Treasury at Whitehall, dated **Jersey, 26th January 1858**, which Trevelyan is forwarding. This repeats the substance of the December 1857 letter but is addressed through the Treasury rather than directly to the Mint. De Ste Croix refers to the States Act of **16 October** [sic — actually 15 October] and the Order in Council of **16 November 1857**, and requests that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury instruct the Master of the Mint to execute the coinage "as on three previous occasions."

It continues this letter, noting that attested copies of the States Act and the Order in Council had already been transmitted to the Master of the Mint. It is signed by **Philip de St Croix, Jurat of the Royal Court of Jersey**.

Endorsement, 12 February 1858 (K.1456)

A brief **endorsement** or covering note, dated **12 February 1858**, reference K.1456, addressed to **Mr P. de St Croix, Jurat of the Royal Court, Jersey**. It records that the **coinage of £2,000 in copper will be immediately commenced**, and requests that an **advance of about £1,100** be made for the purchase of the metal. This is the Mint's practical response to having received Treasury authorization.

Endorsement, 16 July 1858 (K.1455)

This brief but significant **endorsement**, dated **16 July 1858**, reference K.1455, records a communication from **Mr Philip de St Croix, Jersey, reducing the amount of copper to be coined for the States of Jersey to £1,000**, in consideration of **the high price of copper**. This is a material change to the original commission: the coinage is halved from £2,000 to £1,000. The timing — mid-1858 — suggests that by the time metal purchasing was underway, the market price of copper had risen sufficiently to cause the States to reconsider the scale of the operation. This kind of real-world constraint on coinage decisions is rarely so explicitly documented.

States of Jersey Coin: Dies Record (1858)

This is a **die register or tally sheet** headed "*Males of Jersey Coins*", recording the matrices, punches, and dies (distinguished as H. = Hub? and R. = Reverse?) used for both **Penny** and **Halfpenny** denominations. Entries reference **1858** dates (March, with die numbers 23, 25, 27 for the penny and 29, 30 for the halfpenny), noting quantities placed out for destruction and those remaining. The penny section records a total of **17 dies** (14 + 3 remaining after 12+8 destroyed), and the halfpenny **31 dies** (with 10 destroyed, 17+5 remaining). Notes reference posting dates (January 9) and initials (W.H.S. / W.S.B.), likely Mint officials.

This document is exceptional as a record of the **mechanical infrastructure** of coinage production: it shows how many working dies were sunk from the master punches, a critical factor in mint production capacity and in the numismatic rarity of different die varieties.

Broader Significance

Constitutional and Administrative

The file illustrates the **layered sovereignty** of a Crown Dependency in the mid-nineteenth century. Jersey's States legislated independently, but required an **Order in Council** for sanction. The coinage was then

commissioned through the **Treasury**, not directly, and executed by the **Royal Mint**. The seignorage question — who profits from the difference between the face value and the cost of production — was a live negotiating point, with the States successfully claiming it on previous occasions and expecting to do so again.

Monetary History

The denominations — 1/13th and 1/26th of a shilling — reflect Jersey's distinctive pre-decimal coinage system, which was not aligned with sterling but was instead based on a **livre tournois** tradition adapted into a shilling-fraction system. The penny at 1/13th shilling and halfpenny at 1/26th shilling are the coins familiar to collectors of **Victorian Jersey copper**, struck with the draped bust of Queen Victoria (using dies from the earlier coinages) and the Jersey shield reverse.

The Copper Price Issue

The reduction from £2,000 to £1,000 in July 1858 due to high copper prices is historically interesting. The late 1850s saw significant commodity price volatility, and the fact that Jersey's coinage committee was sensitive enough to the metal market to halve their order mid-process speaks to careful fiscal management — or alternatively to the relatively small scale of the operation making the cost differential meaningful.

Personnel

- **Philip de Ste Croix** appears as the central Jersey figure — Jurat, committee president, and active correspondent. The de Ste Croix family was prominent in Jersey's legal and administrative life.
- **C. E. Trevelyan** as the transmitting Treasury official connects this minor coinage episode to one of the most consequential Victorian civil servants.
- **Thomas Graham** as Master of the Mint (1855–1869) was a distinguished chemist, and his tenure saw significant modernization.

- **Robert Pipon Marett** as the committee's London representative reflects the common practice of using Jersey members with London connections as informal agents.
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Conclusion

This file is a model of Victorian administrative efficiency: a clear chain from local legislative decision, through Privy Council sanction, Treasury authorization, and Mint execution, with practical correspondence at each stage. The reduction in scope due to copper prices adds a note of commercial reality. For numismatists, the die register provides directly useful data about production quantities. For historians, the file illuminates how the constitutional relationship between a Crown Dependency and the metropolitan state functioned in practice in the 1850s.