

# Of the Proceedings in Parliament about the Coin in the Winter Session 1697/8

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## Of the Proceedings in Parliament about the Coin in the Winter Session.

169<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>

On the 18th December 1697 It was orderd, That leave be given to bring a Bill, that no tender of any hammerd silver Coin of this kingdom be a lawfull tender of mony in any payment whatever. on the 21<sup>st</sup>. according to that order a Bill to prevent the Currency of any hammerd silver coin of this kingdom, was presented and read the 1.<sup>st</sup> time, and 2<sup>d</sup>. time the next day. On the 30 Petitioners from the Citty of Bristoll and Exter were read desireing the Mints might be continued there for some time, to Coin the great quantitys of Hammerd Mony and Plate in those Places & the parts adjacent, and a clause was orderd to be inserted in the Bill aforesaid for continuing the Mints in the Country for some time. On the 14.<sup>th</sup> Ianuary the King passd the Bill to prevent the further currency of any hammerd silver coin of this Kingdom and for recoyning what remaind.

Whereby it was enacted, That after the 10<sup>th</sup>. Ian. 169<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> no Hammerd mony pass in any payment or be accounted lawfull mony of England; provided however that any person may carry it to any of the 6 Mints before the <90v> first March to be recoyned there, and payd back to the Proprietors before the 25 March-98.

This was the last Bill passd for the Reform of the silver mony which reduced the hammerd mony to the state of Bullion, & it was receivd at the Mints and paid as such. But to secure the new milld mony from the like abuses by which the hammerd mony had been excessively adulterated and diminish'd a Bill was brought in by order of the House, on the 2<sup>d</sup>. February for the better preventing the counterfeiting, clipping or other diminishing the Coin of this Kingdom, which did not pass the House 'til the 27 April following and had not the Royall assent 'til the 16 May. The Contents of which Act are as follows, That whereas the preventing the currency of clipt, counterfeit and unlawfully diminish'd mony, is a more effectual means to preserve the Coins pure and entire, than most rigourous Laws, and the Tellers at the Exchequer being obliged to take an accompt of the weight as well as the Tale of the monys they receive; 'Tis provided therefore and enacted, That any person to whom mony is tenderd which he shall suspect to be counterfeit or unlawfully diminishd, may cutt, breake and deface <91r> the same; and he that tenders it shall bear the loss, if it be found counterfeit or unlawfully diminishd in the weight: but otherwise such mony is to be accepted for what it was coynd, and the Tellers of the Exchequer and their Agents and the Receivers Generall of every branch of the Kings Revenue and their Deputys & Clerks are required to doe the like, and to examine by weight any pieces they shall suspect. And lastly the Act pass'd the last session, with the like title, is continued by this 'til the end of the next session of Parliament after the 25 March 1701.

Whilst the house was making this necessary Provision to secure the Coin, a notorious offender one William Chaloner whose Crimes had cost him his life by this time, but for his artifice with the publick & pretended discovery to the House whereby he <sup>x[1]</sup> himself the favour of some Gentlemen who entertaind too good an opinion of him. He had formerly counterfeited great summs in Guynas, Lewis d'or's, and silver English monys; but afterwards applied himself to some Members of the House of Commons offering to shew 'em how easy it was to counterfeit the milld mony wee had been coyning and proposing a new method to prevent it; he made severall tryalls of his skill before the Members, who were well <91v> satisfied that he was expert enough at the trade. To prevent the mony from being counterfeited he propos'd it should be coynd with presses wrought by Horses or water to raise the Impression high and to edge it with a groove or hollow wherein the Letters should be plac'd, which was what he would undertake provided he might be made a supervisor of the Mint. This Proposall he afterwards publish'd and made severe Reflexions in it upon the officers, and others employd in the Mint.

M<sup>r</sup>. Newton then Warden of the Mint represented to the Committee on the other hand, that this way of Chaloners would be slow, chargeable, and to be short impracticable: for the thin pieces would not bear a deep impression without cracking themselves or the Dyes, and the Blancs that were thicker would be lyable to scooping or hollowing and plateing. And further that false mony might be cast with a high impression and smoothed with a hammer: That oen Man with a Hammer and wedgepress might raise the Impression of counterfeit mony to any height; that the Counterfeiters might easily turn the pieces to make a groove, and letter 'em afterwards: and that he knew such who would undertake to cast mony with a groove; so that upon the whole Chaloner's <92r> project would be no security to the Coin, as he pretended. However he boasted to his accomplices, that he had funn'd the Bank, and the King of 1000£. and would funn the Parliament too before he had done with 'em, and promis'd one of 'em [Thomas Holloway] that he would supply him with tools out of the Tower, when he was supervisor of the Mint; and teach him what he should do with them.

Soon after this the Parliament was prorogued, and not long after M<sup>r</sup>. Newton was sent for by one of the secretaries of state to examine a person about a new method of coyning, who after some Questions own'd that Chaloner with one Iohn Pierce, and Thomas and John Holloway had layd a design to coyn after a new manner invented by Chaloner at a house Thomas Holloway had hir'd for that purpose.

Thomas Holloway being apprehended confess'd the whole matter upon oath, and produced some of the Tools, they intended to use; and he further charged Challoner with a design to counterfeit Exchequer Bills, and with severall other Crimes. Vpon this Information Chaloner was apprehended committed to Newgate: where he soon after prevaild with Thomas Holloway to leave the Kingdom, who accordingly <92v> went into Scotland, and was there hang'd for coyning. Chaloner had likewise corrupted the 2 other Evidences against himself, intending to use 'em as witnesses against M<sup>r</sup>. Newton: and being afterwards sett at Liberty, He complaind in a Petition to the House of Commons, and accus'd M<sup>r</sup>. Newton as if he had labourd to draw him in to coyn. Vpon a full hearing before a Committee, it was prov'd that Chaloner was legally committed; that he corrupted Holloway to withdraw into Scotland, and endeavour'd to suborn one Hanwell to make him a witness against M<sup>r</sup>. Newton.

**After** this session Chaloner to hasten his own fate, must be meddling in another design to counterfeit Mault Ticketts, for which purpose he had grav'd a plate, with which he printed off some ticketts, and at the same time coynd some mill'd shillings. Most of the Counterfeit Mault Ticketts were brought by the discoverer to the secretary of state; and Chaloner himself, being afterwards convicted for coyning, before his Execution, deliverd the Plate and some more Counterfeit Ticketts to M<sup>r</sup>. Newton.

In his last hearing at the Committee he behaved himself with an unusuall confidence & affirm'd many <93r> bold and dareing things; but his Partisans disagreeing among themselves upon their Examination, and confronting him with his boasts, that he had tricked the Bank and the King etC<sup>a</sup>. His friends at the Committee could no longer countenance him; it plainly appearing he had form'd a design to stifle his own crimes, and oppress his Prosecutor. The countenance this Chaloner had from Gentlemen at the Committee, lookd a little odly, when the Nation had sufferd so much from Clippers and Counterfeiters; and at the very time too when a Bill was on foot in the House against clypping, counterfeiting, and the like Crimes.

**But** it did not discourage M<sup>r</sup>. Newton from discharging the Duty of his place afterwards; who as he was the first Warden of the Mint since the Restauration that effectually prosecuted Clippers and Counterfeiters; so he was the first, it maybe, that ever had been accus'd of diligence & integrity in the Execution of his office. For that in truth was the sence of the Accusation.

My Reader will excuse this Digression, which was a piece of Iustice owing to the Reputation of a Gentleman of the first Rank amongst the Learned and good Men of the present Age: and according to my Method in the two foregoing Chapters, I will subjoin,

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**An Accompt  
of the new milld mony paid to the Importers of Hammer'd Mony or Bullion at the 5 CountryMints  
pursuant to this last Act for recoyning all the hammerd mony; &c<sup>a</sup>.**

Mints	Standard weight.				Tale.		
	£wt.	oz <sup>s</sup> .	d. <sup>wt</sup>	grs	£	s	d
Bristoll...	12328.	07.	01	0	38412.	18.	00
Chester...	6745..	11	03.	23	20978.	05.	00
Exeter..	12,728.	03.	15	5	39600.	10.	00
Norwich..	.1449	00.	06	08	.4515.	16.	00
York...	.1785.	06.	06	03	.5564.	17.	09
Tot. of the 5 Country Mints}	35,037.	04.	03.	01	... £.109,072.	06.	09.

[1] <sub>x</sub>

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