

A glossary of coin terms used to describe English coins

Reference works for coins are generally presented as lists of descriptions of individual coin types, sometimes with a few illustrations. The terms used in the descriptions can be unfamiliar and confusing. This is a short guide to the basic terms used to describe English coins. It is divided into two sections, crosses and other elements. It deals predominantly with the symbols and designs of English hammered coins. Roman coins and Anglo-Saxon sceats have a different style and terminology in describing them.

Many of the terms used to describe these coins originate in heraldry and use language with French roots. A dictionary of heraldic terms would be a good place to start for any term not covered here.

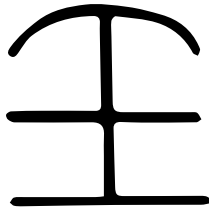


Cross

A cross typically consists of four arms spaced at 90 degrees and extending from a central point, though some have additional arms on one or more of the primary arms.

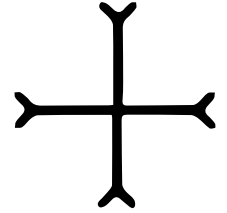
Cross Ancrée

A cross shaped like an anchor. Ancrée is French for anchor.



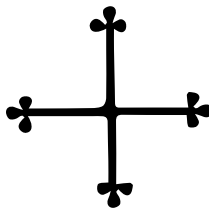
Cross Fourchée

A forked cross. Each arm of the cross is forked.



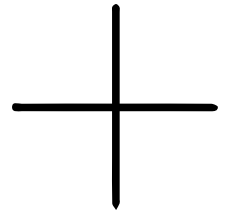
Cross Botonnée

A cross with arms terminating in a trifoil.



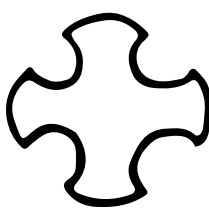
Cross Greek

A simple cross where the arms are of equal length.



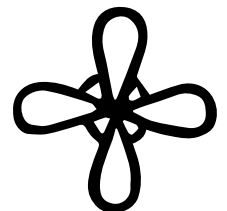
Cross Celtic

A cross with a superimposed circle, or where the ends of the arms extend such that the cross looks to be cut from a circle.



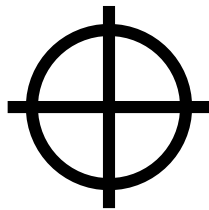
Cross Jewelled

A lobed cross with a small jewel at the intersection of the arms.



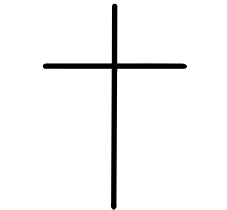
Cross Celtic

Another form of celtic cross.



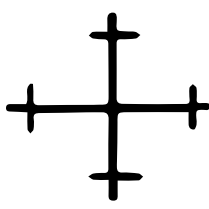
Cross Latin

Cross with a longer descending arm. Also called a cruciform cross.



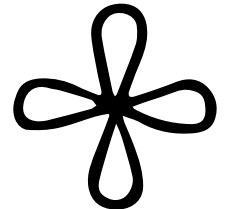
Cross Crosslet

A cross with each arm formed into another cross.



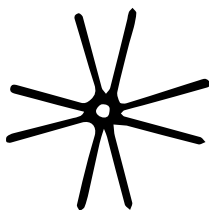
Cross Lobes

A cross with rounded arms.



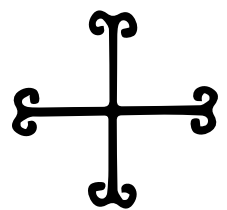
Cross Expanding

A cross where the arms expand as they extend from the centre.



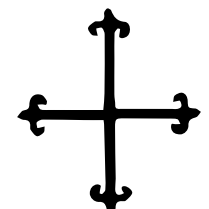
Cross Moline

A cross where the ends of each arm split. The splits may curve to varying degrees.



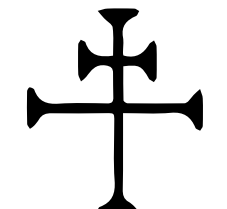
Cross Fleury

A cross where each arm ends in a Fleur-de-lis.



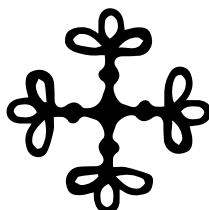
Cross Patriarchal

A variant of the Christian cross, the religious symbol of Christianity. Similar to the familiar Latin cross, the Patriarchal cross possesses a smaller crossbar placed above the main one, so that both crossbars are near the top.



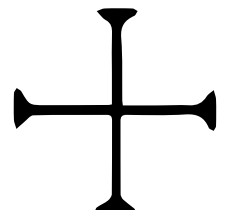
Cross Fleury

Another more ornate example.



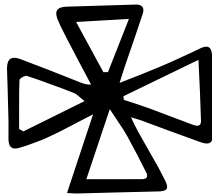
Cross Pattée

A cross where the arms end in triangles.



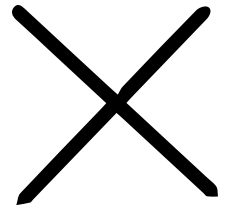
Cross Pattée

Another example where the arms are so short the triangles extend directly from the centre.



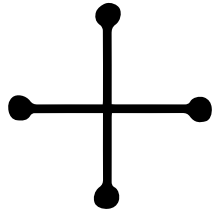
Cross Saltire

An X-shaped cross where the arms are at 45 degrees to the vertical and horizontal.



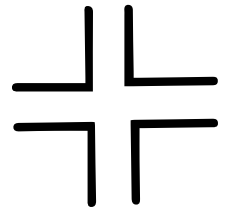
Cross Pommée

A cross with a round knob at the end of each arm. Pommée is French for head.



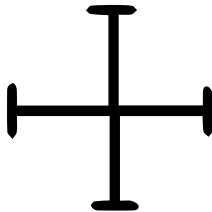
Cross Voided

The arms of the cross have a void at their centre, so the cross is drawn as an outline. Often the ends of each arm are open.



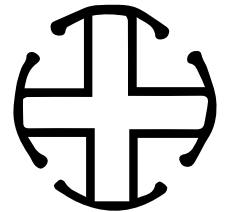
Cross Potent

A form of heraldic cross with crossbars or "crutches" at the four ends.



Cross Voided With Hammer Ends

A variant of the voided cross.

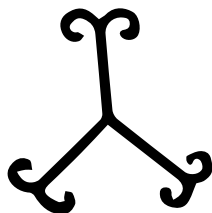


Tribach

A tribach consists of three arms spaced at 120 degrees and extending from a central point. The forms found on English coins are shown but any of the cross forms could also apply to a tribach.

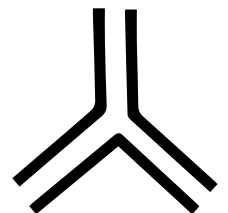
Tribach Moline

A three armed cross where the ends of each arm split. The splits may curve to varying degrees.



Tribach Voided

A three armed cross where the arms have a void at their centre, so the cross is drawn as an outline. Often the ends of each arm are open.

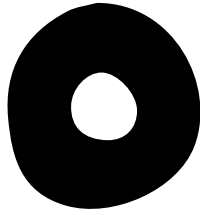


Other elements

These are the other basic elements which can appear on coins. Not included are the vast range of privy or mint marks which appear on coins of some periods.

Annulet

A ring or raised circle.



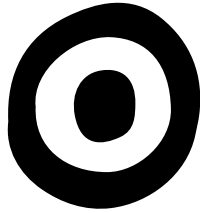
Mullet

A five pointed star.



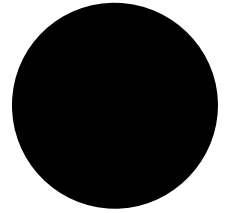
Annulet And Pellet

An annulet with a pellet in its centre.



Pellet

A raised dot.



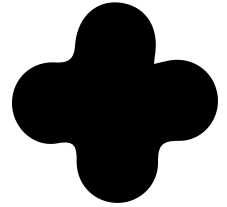
Broken Annulet

An incomplete ring.



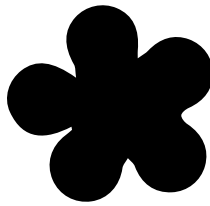
Quatrefoil

A four leaved clover.



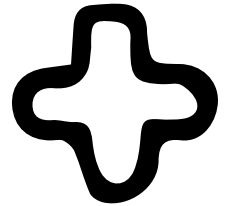
Cinquefoil

A five leaved clover.



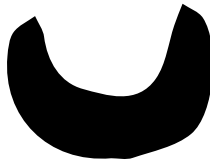
Quatrefoil (Voided)

Another example of a quatrefoil. This one is voided, meaning it is an outline rather than a solid shape.



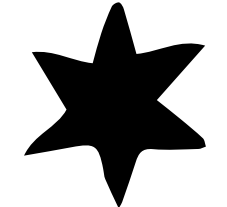
Crescent

A segment of a ring tapering to points at the ends. Orientation may vary.



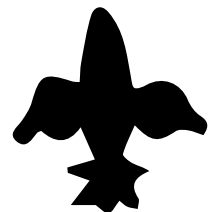
Star

A mullet with more than five points.



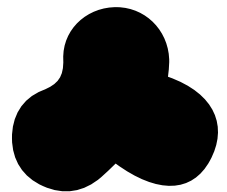
Lis or Fleur-de-lis

A stylised three leaved flower. Fleur is French for flower and Lis is French for Lily so translates simply as Lily flower. May vary wildly in form but always formed of three leaves with the outer leaves folded over to some degree.



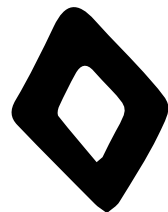
Trifoil

A three leaved clover.



Mascle

A voided or pierced lozenge.



Trifoil

Another example of a trifoil but where the three pellets have not overlapped.

