

## Coins of Harrold-Odell Country Park

by Elizabeth Dowsett

**Among the coins donated to the Friends of Harrold-Odell County Park via the car park donation boxes were coins originating from many countries around the globe. Let's use them to take a tour...**

The first stop on this circumnavigation of the Earth is north west from the United Kingdom to Iceland where a one-krona piece originated. Other krona coins came from one of the other Scandinavian states; Sweden was represented by three 1-krona coins. From Sweden it is a pleasant drive across one of the famous bridges of the world to Denmark where a Dane contributed a ten-krona piece.

The next is Germany, with two pfennig coins of different denominations and years. After quickly passing through Germany we step across the border into the Netherlands from where a 5-cent coin was generously gifted to HOCP. From this Low Country to France, where we get a double whammy with both modern Euros and older francs. Travelling on south to Spain with pesos and ptas representing the old and new currency. After Española, it is a short hop across the border to the British Dependency of Gibraltar for a ten pence piece.

A short dash across the straits to Tunisia gives us our first quick glimpse of non-European currency. However, our journey takes us back to Europe via Malta to gather a Maltese cent coin and over to Italy to be given a 20-lira piece. We travel over the Alps to Switzerland to pick up some Swiss Francs (and the chocolate is always nice) before detouring to the Czech Republic.

The journey through Europe continues through Poland up to Estonia and back down south to Hungary and Croatia, picking up zlotys, lipas and forints on the way. From Croatia it is a short hop skip and jump traversing through Bulgaria and Serbia to Cyprus. This divided island is the source of the largest number of coins from a single location with many coins of different low denominations.

Carrying on our odyssey, we sail across the sea to Turkey before catching a flight to the Arabian Peninsula dropping in at Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for a halala and fil coins. We drift across the sea around India to the Gulf of Mannar and Sri Lanka for a rupee or two. Other currents drive us towards Thailand before jumping over some of the Malaysian islands to Singapore.

To get to the next destination will require a long hike. First across the Indian Ocean navigating around numerous islands to New Zealand where we miss out on our first set of dollars, having only cents donated. The accolade for being the first to donate dollars is Australia where we get both Australian cents and a dollar coin.

After visiting Australia, we are blown back across the Indian Ocean to the small island group of Mauritius to find another version of the Sri Lankan Rupee. Another long hop over the entirety of Africa and most of the Atlantic Ocean to the other British dependency, the Falkland Islands where we find the second set of non-native penny coins (the first being Gibraltar).

From the far south we now use Atlantic Ocean currents to guide us northwards to the East Caribbean states, which are a cooperative of a number of islands including, but not limited to, Anguilla, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Crossing the Caribbean Sea we enter the United States of America from where a quarter and a one-cent coin were bequeathed to the County Park. Rapidly moving north and quickly visiting several states on the way, we make it into the vast lands of Canada for the Canadian version of the dollar.

We are now on the final stretch of our circumnavigation of the globe crossing the Atlantic to Ireland, our next door neighbours from whence older pounds and pence and newer cents were donated. But before we re-join the UK mainland, we dip down to the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey for several different types of coins, with the 20-pence piece being the most prevalent.

The Park Rangers at Harrold Odell Country Park sorted out these foreign coins from the standard pounds and pennies. They included coins from the time before decimalisation including an old six pence piece and the 'hapney' (or half penny). Other coins in this little selection included the 5, 10 and 50 new pence pieces, some of which were much larger than the coins we know today.

In total, 88 foreign coins were placed in the donation boxes at HOCP, from thirty-four different countries. One of these coins could not give us a numerical value or an indication of origin. Finding out how many coins there were and where exactly they came from was entrusted to Elizabeth Dowsett, the daughter of Park Ranger Richard Dowsett.

Finding out the origin of all 88 coins was a joy for Elizabeth but the donations from the car park boxes are used for the upkeep and maintenance of the Country Park. So however lovely it is to see the origins of the people who visit the Park, the Friends of HOCP cannot use these coins to improve the Park.