

A large pile of various coins from different countries, including Germany, France, and the Soviet Union, scattered on a white background. The coins are of various denominations and designs, some featuring national symbols and others featuring portraits of historical figures. The pile is dense and overlapping, with coins from different eras and countries mixed together.

From Lira to Euro>

On January 1st 2002 twelve countries in the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and also The Vatican City introduced the new coins and bank notes that will replace their old separate currencies with just one - the European Currency Unit (ECU).

It proved to be the biggest logistical task in our History since World War II with each country introducing the new unfamiliar Euro but also trading with their own currency however the smoothness of it's implementation surprised everyone across the world as they watched what would happen with great interest.

Austria (Schilling), Belgium (Franc), Germany (Deutsche Mark), Spain (Peseta), Finland (Markka), France (Franc), Greece (Drachma), Ireland (Pound), Italy (Lira),



The Evolution of British Coinage from Roman Coins to Euro ?

In Roman times - from AD 43 until the early fifth century - Britain was part of a vast Empire, which stretched from Spain to Syria and south from the Rhine to Sudan. Roman coins circulated in Britain as a pan-European currency, and many of these coins, mostly made of brass or bronze, were minted here.

When the Romans left, British coinage deteriorated, and for most of the Anglo Saxon and Norman periods - until the 12th century - only silver pennies circulated. The coinage portraits of famed kings such as Alfred The Great, Canute and William I ('The Conqueror') were crude representations. All coins were 'hammered' by hand.



Alfred The Great Penny
Circa 880 AD

Gold coins did not circulate freely until the 14th century and until 1489 there had been no pound coin, but in this year a superb large gold sovereign or pound piece (showing the king enthroned) was produced. Alongside this was the first appearance of the shilling or 'testoon' - a coin which survived for nearly 500 years. For the first time in centuries this Renaissance coin exhibited a realistic profile of the king, which was also featured on the groat (four pence) and halfgroat.

Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary continued the innovations of Henry VII. The silver crown arrived in 1551, and coinage portraits became more lifelike. The coins of Elizabeth I were notable for the large range of different denominations. Gold sovereigns, pounds, half pounds, ryls, crowns, halfcrowns, angels, half angels and quarter angels were minted alongside silver crowns, halfcrowns, shillings, sixpences, groats, halfpennies and even threefarthings!



Henry VII Shilling
Circa 1495 AD

The obverse effigy of
HM Queen Elizabeth II
in the year of her Golden Jubilee
has been sculpted by Donald R. Golder



Kynance Rocks, Cornwall, by W. Pasley
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