

# The Hands in Art: Hands on 50 Pence British Coins

Ahmadreza Afshar, MD\*



**FIGURE 1:** The design on the reverse side of the British 50 pence coin minted in 1973. Coin type: commemorative coin. Occasion: United Kingdom's accession to the European Economic Community. Mint date: 1973. Weight: 13.5 g; diameter: 30 mm; thickness: 2.4 mm.

The 50 pence British coins were minted from 1969 onward. With a composition of cupronickel, the coins are heptagon (7 sided). Their observe sides show a profile of Queen Elizabeth II.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the standard design, some British 50 pence coins have been used to commemorate several special events by a new reverse design. On the reverse side of some variants of the British 50 pence coins, the hand is a prominent feature.<sup>1</sup>

*From the \*Department of Orthopedics, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Urmia, Iran.*

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**Corresponding author:** Ahmadreza Afshar, MD, Department of Orthopedics, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Imam Khomeini Hospital, Modaress Street, Ershad Boulevard, Urmia, 57157 81351, Iran; e-mail: [afshar\\_ah@yahoo.com](mailto:afshar_ah@yahoo.com).

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**FIGURE 2:** The design on the reverse side of the British 50 pence coin minted in 1998. Coin type: commemorative coin. Occasion: 50th Anniversary of the National Health Service. Mint date: 1998. Weight: 8 g; diameter: 27.3 mm; thickness: 1.78 mm.



**FIGURE 3:** The design on the reverse side of the British 50 pence coin minted in 2011. Coin type: commemorative coin. Occasion: London 2012 Paralympic Games, Archery. Mint date: 2011. Weight: 8 g; diameter: 27.3 mm; thickness: 1.78 mm.

The design on the reverse side of the first commemorative British 50 pence coin minted in 1973 (Fig. 1) shows 9 hands, symbolizing the 9 members of the European Economic Community. The coin was issued to commemorate the United Kingdom's accession to the European Economic Community. The hands clasping each other are a symbol of trust, friendship, and assistance.<sup>2</sup>

The design on the reverse side of the British 50 pence coin minted in 1998 (Fig. 2) demonstrates a pair of hands encompassing a pattern of 5 radiating rays with the words "FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY." The coin was issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Health Service (NHS). The initials "NHS" are inscribed 5 times on the periphery of the coin.<sup>2</sup>

For the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Royal Mint issued a series of 50 pence coins sports collection. The design on the reverse side of one of the coins was devoted to archery (Fig. 3) and demonstrates a bow string being drawn by a hand. The London 2012 Paralympic logo is seen at the top of the coin.<sup>1</sup>

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# The Hands in Art: Hands on 2 Pound British Coins

Ahmadreza Afshar, MD\*

The British 2 pound coins have been minted since 1997. With a diameter of 28.4 mm, a thickness of 2.5 mm, and a weight of 12 g, the coins have bimetallic compositions. The outer rim is composed of nickel and brass, whereas the center is composed of cupronickel alloy. Their obverse sides demonstrate a profile of Queen Elizabeth II.<sup>1,2</sup>

In addition to the standard design, some British 2 pound coins were minted to commemorate several important events. On the reverse side of some variants of the British 2 pound coins, the hand is a prominent feature.<sup>1,2</sup>

The design on the reverse side of the coin minted in 2008 (Fig. 1) demonstrates a handover of a flag from a hand on the left to a hand on the right. The flag shows the 5 Olympic rings. The peripheral inscriptions are "BEIJING 2008" on the left and "LONDON 2012" on the right of the image. The London 2012 Olympic logo is demonstrated at the bottom of the coin overlapped on both parts of the coin.<sup>2</sup>



**FIGURE 1:** The reverse side of the British 2 pound coin minted in 2008. Coin type: commemorative coin. Occasion: Olympic Handover Ceremony. Edge inscription: I call upon the youth of the world.

From the \*Department of Orthopedics, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Urmia, Iran.

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**Corresponding author:** Ahmadreza Afshar, MD, Department of Orthopedics, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Imam Khomeini Hospital, Modares Street, Ershad Boulevard, Urmia, 57157 81351, Iran; e-mail: [afshar\\_ah@yahoo.com](mailto:afshar_ah@yahoo.com).

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The design on the reverse side of the coin minted in 2010 (Fig. 2) demonstrates a pulse being taken by the hands. The background symbolizes the rays of light dispersed from the lantern that Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was reputed for holding during her rounds to care of the wounded soldiers in the Crimean War. The peripheral inscriptions are "1820 - FLORENCE