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The CCNB Newsletter is supported by the British Museum, the Royal Numismatic Society and the British Numismatic Society. The Newsletter appears three times a year, in January, April and September, and is received by those members of the RNS and BNS resident in the United Kingdom, and by others with an interest in numismatics. Under an agreement with the British Numismatic Trade Association, copies are also sent to the BNTA for despatch to its members.

Contributions and information will be gratefully received. Items for the September issue should arrive by 15 July 1996, and should be sent to Philip Attwood or Beverley Fryer, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, Tel. 0171-323 8227, Fax. 0171-323 8171.

Anyone in the UK wishing to be added to the CCNB Newsletter mailing list should send their name and address to Beverley Fryer at the above address.

This issue focuses on the public accessibility of the numismatic collections of four national museums. Future issues will look at local, university and other national museums.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Andrew Burnett

The British Museum's collection of coins, medals and paper money is one of the largest in the world, and certainly the most comprehensive in terms of the depth of its coverage of different cultures and periods.

The Museum was founded in 1753, and enshrined in the British Museum Act of that year is the statement that the Museum should 'be preserved and maintained not only for the Inspection and Entertainment of the learned and curious, but for the use and benefit of the Publick'.

The Museum remains true to this principle, and sets out to promote access to its collections in three main ways. The first way is through exhibitions. Some 2,865 coins, medals and banknotes are on show in 21 galleries throughout the Museum, ranging from archaic Greek coins to modern medals. In addition, in January 1997, the new HSBC Money Gallery will open. This permanent exhibition will use several thousand coins and other objects to illuminate the history of money throughout the world, from the earliest records until the present day. Finally a number of temporary exhibitions are mounted each year, and these are regularly reported in the pages of this Newsletter. Some of the them, such as *Artistic Circles: the medal in Britain 1880-1918* or *Beauty and the Banknote* subsequently tour the UK, being shown at seven or eight other locations.

The second way is through publications, both in the traditional scholarly format of the *British Museum Catalogue*, intended primarily for an academic audience, and through more general books aimed at the general reader. For example, the HSBC Money Gallery will be accompanied by two books, one (*Money: A History*) for the interested adult and the other (*The Story of Money*) aimed at a younger audience, typically 9-11 year olds. We are also thinking about electronic publishing, and in 2-3 years we intend to produce a CD-ROM based on the gallery.

The third way in which access to the collection is promoted is through the department's Students' Room,

where any member of the public can look at any item in the Museum's collection. Students do not have to be students or academic researchers, but may be anyone who just has a desire to look at a particular coin or medal, and all are welcomed. The collection is heavily consulted in this way - usually some 100,000 objects are produced every year in the Students' Room. The only constraints on its use arise from space and security. So, if you want to look at objects in the Students' Room you should make an appointment by telephoning 0171-323 8404, and, when you come, bring some method of identification and a letter of introduction from a person of recognised position based on personal knowledge. It is also a good idea to have a reasonably precise idea of what you want to see; a request to see 'Roman coins', for example, is really too vague and best met by looking round the galleries.

In addition, the Museum runs an information service, identifying material for those who bring it to the department in person or send it by post, and generally giving advice and information on a wide range of numismatic objects. If you want to use this service you can either call in person, telephone (the same number as above) or write to the Duty Curator. This service is



Visitors to the British Museum admire a temporary exhibition of contemporary medals

restricted only by practical considerations, and therefore no more than ten coins will be examined at any one time. It is also free, although we ask postal enquirers to cover the cost of return postage (registered in the case of objects), and, of course, the Museum is always pleased to receive donations in recognition of this service. At present some 10,000 objects and enquiries a year are dealt with for members of the public.

You can also buy photographs of objects in the collection, including black and white prints or colour slides. A price list is available. The Museum is also in the process of establishing a list of 1,000 slides (including 100 from the Department of Coins and Medals) which will be available for purchase at a very reasonable rate (hopefully about £1). This service should become available later this year.

The Students' Room and the Information Service are open on weekdays from 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4.30pm, except on Wednesdays when it is only open between 2pm and 4.30pm. On Saturdays it is open from 10am to 12.30pm. If you have any questions then please write, fax (0171-323 8171) or telephone the department.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND

Nicholas Holmes

The numismatic collections of the National Museums of Scotland comprise those of the former Royal Scottish Museum (RSM) and National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS), which were integrated into one organisation in 1985. For various reasons, chiefly curatorial responsibilities and availability of storage space, the two numismatic collections have so far remained entirely separate, housed in the two museums at the northern and southern extremities of the central area of Edinburgh normally frequented by visitors to the city. Opportunities for display have been few, and lack of space has allowed the provision of only very limited access to the collections, even by scholars. This is particularly regrettable in the case of the old National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland collections, which comprise not only Scottish coins, medals and banknotes - almost certainly the world's foremost collection - but also a wide range of non-Scottish material which circulated in Scotland and/or was recovered from Scottish soil - in particular Roman, English and European coins. The former Royal Scottish Museum collections range much more widely and include large assemblages of classical, European and oriental coins, as well as modern coins of the world and medals. Both collections also include substantial holdings of trade tokens, communion tokens and other par anumismatic items.

In view of the above, it is satisfying to be able to report that a number of developments planned for the next few years will lead to much improved access to the collections by scholars and public alike. The first of these changes, scheduled to be implemented late in 1966, will involve the transfer of both collections to a new coin room to be provided as part of a staff accommodation block now under construction at the Royal Museum of Scotland (formerly Royal Scottish Museum). This will allow physical amalgamation in cases where coins of a particular series are represented in both collections, and



Gold noble of David II, king of Scotland (1329-71), formerly Thomas Coats of Ferguslie collection, now National Museums of Scotland

will greatly facilitate access for curatorial and research purposes. A study area for visiting scholars will be provided, and it is hoped that access will be provided there to the numismatic collections database, now almost complete.

Looking a little further ahead, the displays being planned for the new Museum of Scotland, currently scheduled to open in 1998, will provide an opportunity for selected items from the numismatic collections to be exhibited to the public. The overall concept of the museum does not allow for a concentrated display of coinage, but coins, tokens, banknotes, medals and jetons will be used to help illustrate Scotland's history through themes such as 'Monarchy and Power' and 'Town Life and Trade'. Visitors to the museum will be able to obtain information about items in the collections through access to a database.

The first phase of work has been completed on the preparation of a comprehensive multimedia package on Scottish currency, being developed with the support of Mr Glass of Hong Kong. It is intended that coins, banknotes and tokens from the National Museums of Scotland collections should be used to illustrate the full range of money in Scotland from the medieval period onwards. Work on the main part of the project is expected to commence in the summer of 1996.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES

Edward Besly

The National Museum of Wales was founded by royal charter in 1907 and first opened to the public, after delays caused principally by the Great War, in 1922. Today, under the corporate name 'National Museums and Galleries of Wales', it comprises eight sites, four of which include displays of coins and/or medals.

The numismatic collections include coins, medals, tokens and paper money, which are wide-ranging in scope, though in some areas, small in numbers. There is a strong emphasis on material of Welsh origin or provenance. The early development of the collection resulted from the transfer of items from the former Cardiff Museum (founded in 1882) and through finds from excavations, notably at the important Roman sites of Caerleon and Caerwent. Numismatics was accordingly curated by the Department of Archaeology. Gifts of two collections of campaign medals in the 1920s and the bequest of a collection of Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins in 1932 broadened the scope of the holdings. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable development of the collection by the late George C. Boon between 1957 and 1986 led eventually to the formal incorporation of 'Numismatics' into the Department's title (1981) and, in

1986, to the creation of a numismatic post within it.

The greater part of the collection is housed at the National Museum and Gallery Cardiff (NMGC). A purpose-built Coins and Medals gallery was opened in April 1990, which provides, in a display of around 1,250 specimens, a chronological survey of Greek, Celtic, Roman and British coinage, with emphasis throughout on material of Welsh interest or provenance. Tokens and other monetary expedients find their places within the sequence where relevant. There are also displays on both military and civilian medals (notably for lifesaving in the South Wales collieries), and of Welsh commemorative medals. The collection as a whole at National Museum and Gallery Cardiff comprises around 36,000 specimens. Half of these are Roman, of which the vast majority are site finds and hoard coins. There are small collections of Greek (980, including over 200 of Corinth and its colonies), Celtic (370, of excellent quality) and Byzantine (38) coins; 5,800 British coins - including strong collections of the reign of Stephen (1135-54) and of the English Civil War; and around 4,000 foreign and overseas coins, mainly eighteenth to twentieth century. Tokens, checks etc., amount to 4,500 specimens, mainly Welsh and British. There is also a small collection of Welsh banknotes, of around 100 specimens. There are occasional temporary displays, either in the Coins and Medals gallery, or as part of larger displays. (A group of Celtic coins is included in *Art, Ritual and Death in Prehistory*, at National Museum and Gallery Cardiff until 28 April 1996.)

The Museum of Welsh Life (MWL) at St Fagans, near Cardiff, houses collections of Welsh language medals, notably Welsh Society (for example, *Cymreigyddion*) and *Eisteddfod* medals, and those relating to schools and education, as well as small numbers of banknotes. Other commemorative medals, Welsh and British mostly, such as those for royal occasions, are housed at National Museum and Gallery Cardiff. Small numbers of site finds and related Roman coins are displayed at the Roman Legionary Museum, Caerleon (Gwent) and the Segontium Roman Fort Museum, Caernarfon.

Publications relating to the collections include studies of the seventeenth-century Welsh token series (1973), Cardiganshire silver and the Aberystwyth mint of Charles I (1981) and of Welsh medieval hoards (1986), by George C. Boon. Illustrated general publications based on the collection include *Roman coins relating to Britain* (1987), *Coins of the Anarchy, 1135-1154* (1988) and *Coins and medals of the English Civil War* (1990).

An identification service for the public is operated at National Museum and Gallery Cardiff during normal weekday opening hours (Tuesday - Friday). Appointments are not essential, but are advisable. The reserve collections at National Museum and Gallery Cardiff and The Museum of Welsh Life are accessible for study during the same hours, strictly by appointment.

THE ULSTER MUSEUM

Robert Heslip

The origins of the collection go back to 1821 with the foundation of the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society (BNHPS), which opened a purpose-built museum in 1831. A manuscript catalogue of

some of the coins surviving from 1870 unfortunately does not record provenances, but shows that the collection accurately represented coins circulating in the north of Ireland and included material from local hoards, such as the Derrykeighan Anglo-Saxon find. The Benn collection of mainly seventeenth-century Irish tokens, formed over a long period by the brothers George and Edward Benn, was donated in 1882. George Benn was author of the first, and most comprehensive history of Belfast.

In 1890 Belfast Corporation opened a museum and art gallery (BMAG) in the new municipal library. This was considerably enhanced by the gift of the Canon Grainger collection of antiquities in 1891, including over 7,000 numismatic items. Some of these are of considerable interest, such as a small hoard of late Hiberno-Norse coins from the renovations at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, and a group of mid nineteenth-century American tokens apparently collected at time of issue. The collections of the BNHPS were amalgamated with the municipal holdings in 1910. A new building was opened in 1929, but coins were not given a priority until the arrival of the late W.A. Seaby as director in 1953. He immediately set about enhancing the collections with characteristic enthusiasm, in numismatics as well as many other areas. Scant funding did not stop some shrewd purchases being made, sometimes with charitable grant-aid: for example the Pilgrim Trust supported acquisition from the Lockett sales. Voluntary work from the late 1940s by Dr T.S. Agnew contributed considerably to the organisation of the collection.

In 1961 the BMAG became a national museum under the title Ulster Museum. Initially, extra funds were made available, in the hope of increasing the quality of the collections to an appropriate level. An opportunity in 1962 to buy the Irish portion of the Carlyon-Britton collection privately went a long way to realising some of Seaby's ambitions as regards the Irish hammered series. At one stage he envisaged a professional staff of nine and representative coverage of world coinage. By the early 1970s the collection had grown to some 38,000 items. Bill Seaby combined this steady rate of acquisition with research in many areas. He compiled what remains the most comprehensive index of Irish coin hoards and worked on every part of the Irish series. One mammoth task was a die study of the Irish coinages of Henry III, aided by full access to the Irish portion of the Brussels hoard and later the generous gift of 350 coins representing different dies from A.H. Baldwin and Sons. Little of this was published (although the Ulster Museum *Hiberno-Norse Sylloge* gives some idea of his work) but others benefited considerably by his generosity.

After early retirement as director, Seaby worked for a time as numismatic research assistant. He was followed in 1974 by Dr J.D. Bateson, whose main task was the provision, for the first time, of a permanent coin gallery. Although squeezed into a small space, this set new standards and was a marvellous utilisation of the resources available. Visitors today can still see this display, which focuses on Irish coins up until 1825, and British coins generally thereafter.

At the end of 1978 Robert Heslip took over the care of the collection which has now grown to about 50,000 items, including medals, banknotes, tokens and weights as well as coins. There is a heavy concentration on Irish material and the collection is weak in many other areas. There are notable exceptions, however, such as the

sixteenth-century Spanish coins from the wreck of the *Girona*, a galleass from the Spanish Armada, wrecked off the coast at the Giant's Causeway. Efforts have been made to collect paper money and financial instruments, as well as turning some attention away from 'Irish' coins towards those which circulated in the island. Over the past few years most curatorial time has been spent on documentation, with an institutional directive that 70% of time should be allocated to this task. At present about 43,000 numismatic items have been recatalogued on computer.

Numismatics is part of the Department of History, which in turn lies within the Division of Historical Sciences. Work on the collection continues despite the fact that there is only one curator, who has considerable responsibilities in other areas. Although in recent years the opportunity has not arisen for substantial purchases, there is a steady accretion to the cabinet.

In Northern Ireland Treasure Trove is dealt with by the Department of the Environment, Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch. The Ulster Museum, however, provides expert advice and houses retained material. This produces a rather elegant separation between the assessment of rewards and their payment. There is a heavy presumption in favour of the retention of all hoards intact for academic reasons. The number of hoards and small areas covered makes this a practical possibility.

Further information on the collection and its history can be found in the introduction to the two *Sylloges* so far published (nos 10 and 32) and in a small guide written by Dr Bateson.

Telephone numbers:

British Museum: 0171-323 8404

National Museums of Scotland: 0131-225 7534

National Museum of Wales: 01222-397 951

Ulster Museum: 01232-381 251

ALL CHANGE

James Morton

After the initial shock of realising that the silver jubilee of D Day (1971 style) has indeed occurred, visitors to the Bank of England's latest popular exhibition, *All Change - 25th anniversary of decimal currency in Britain*, will find much to entertain them as well as a number of items of real numismatic interest.

Inspired in part by the donation of a private collection of D Day ephemera, featuring anti-decimal tracts, press anecdotes and plenty of the Decimal Currency Board's ubiquitous pamphlets, the exhibition's arrangement of walk-round showcases is designed to appeal to a wide audience, including the young (or not so young) visitor with no personal experience of the £sd system. The first displays, for example, offers a generous assemblage of typical pre-decimal currency supporting items such as specimens of the 1816-20 recoinage, the 1849 florin and, less obviously, a matrix of Coombes' reverse for the Edward VIII/George VI bronze penny. Although allusion is made to Victorian decimalisation initiatives these are not explored and, perhaps more disappointingly, there is no representation of the interesting decimal designs and patterns produced in the early 1960s for the Halsbury committee.

On the other hand the evolution of the 50p, which actually appeared in 1969 as a step on the way to D Day itself, is examined in considerable depth. Trials for the unconventional shape are shown with Christopher Ironside's first pattern featuring the royal arms, while the concurrent development of the Bank of England Series D 10 shilling and 50 new pence banknotes, destined never to see circulation, is demonstrated through original drawings and specimens. The smaller coin denominations are treated in less detail, although Arnold Machin's portrait of the queen, as used for all the decimal obverses from 1968 onwards, is strongly featured. An intriguing selection of coin designs and drawings which were submitted as entries in a 1966 public competition is used to make a rather haphazard montage, worthy of more effective display.

Decimal postage stamps, and the complications caused by a long postal strike, are not forgotten. There is also a video loop of contemporary film clips and news items about D Day, with opportunities to ring a vintage cash register and to guess the number of sixpences in a whisky bottle before proceeding to the museum's impressive permanent displays. These incorporate, for the further interest of more serious students of the coinage of the present reign, a rare set of four 1953 gold coins.

An excellent illustrated booklet accompanies the exhibition and is complimentary. Admission to the exhibition and museum is free.

THE WYONS

Christopher Eimer

As the most prolific dynasty of coin and medal engravers in Britain, it is only fitting, and certainly not before time, that the Wyons should have an exhibition devoted solely to their work.

Members of the family were active in Birmingham and in London, and in this British Museum exhibition a revised genealogy is given for the first generation of the family, which now separates Thomas senior and Peter as half-brothers to George and John. The exhibition follows a chronological sequence and provides examples of the output of every working family member, although it is William and Leonard Charles, son and grandson of Peter, who take centre-stage.

Along with the British Museum's own collection, material has been drawn from several sources and presents an all-embracing view of the Wyons and their output. It includes, for example, Leonard Charles's pencil profile sketch of 'Father' Theobald Mathew, which forms the basis of a portrait medal. A lighter and somewhat amusing touch is provided by a turn-of-the-century photograph of the elderly and bearded Edward Wyon at a Chinese mint, surrounded by a group of native workers.

Among the stars of the show are vigorously modelled and previously-unseen plaster portraits of William and Leonard Charles. The work of Wilhelm Kullrich, the Prussian medallist who was employed by William Wyon in the 1850s, they have been loaned by one of two descendants of the Wyon family who have provided material.

From the Fitzwilliam Museum is a beautiful and delicately modelled wax for the reverse of William

Wyon's 'Una and the Lion' 1839 five-pound piece, while from the Royal Mint comes the collar enabling this coin to receive its lettered edge. The ongoing dispute between William Wyon and Benedetto Pistrucci, with regard to work from the Mint and the position of Chief Engraver, is recalled by their respective medals of Queen Victoria and cuttings from various newspapers, which give examples of the heated correspondence.

That William was very much his own man is demonstrated by his balanced and highly individual treatment of St George and the Dragon, to be found here on the reverse of Prince Albert's portrait medal of 1845 and on the Royal Mint's recently acquired large-size electrotype of that design. Not only does this represent a superb piece of draughtsmanship, but also there is absolutely no resemblance to Pistrucci's celebrated version of the same subject executed some thirty years earlier.

The preparation for this exhibition by its organiser, Philip Attwood, has been facilitated by his work on Leonard Charles Wyon's manuscript diary, which has suggested, for example, the attribution of a decimal pattern coinage. The exhibition is well designed and sits most comfortably in the gallery of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum.

NEWS

THE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE HOARD

In April 1995, Mr William Darley was searching with a metal detector on a friend's farm. He discovered seven coins which he thought might be gold and showed them to Bonham's who were holding a valuation day at Woodstock. Mr Matthew Smith of Bonham's suggested that he go back and look for more which he did, discovering a broken pot containing a further 119 gold coins. Bonham's then advised him that the coins were potentially Treasure Trove and that the Coroner should be notified and they should be delivered to the British Museum. After studying them the Museum then sent a report to the Coroner who held a Treasure inquest on 8 December where they were declared Treasure Trove. This meant that a museum had the right to acquire the coins providing it paid Mr Darley a reward equivalent to the full market value. An independent committee, the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee, valued the hoard at £141,850 at its meeting in January and the British Museum, which wishes to acquire the hoard, now has three months in which to raise the money. If the museum is successful the hoard will be prominently on display in its new Money Gallery which will be opening in January 1997.

The latest coin dates to the penultimate year of Antoninus Pius's reign, AD 159-60, and the hoard was probably buried in the early 160s. This is the most important find of gold *aurei* from Britain since a hoard of 160 aurei was excavated at Corbridge in Northumberland in 1911 and, coincidentally, the new find belongs to almost exactly the same date as the Corbridge hoard. Although many hoards of silver coins of this period are known, hoards of gold coins of this period are much rarer, only three others being known from the whole of the second century AD and of these only the Corbridge hoard has been adequately recorded.

The coins were made over a period of just under a hundred years, the earliest pieces being made under the



The South Oxfordshire hoard of Roman gold coins

emperor Nero. Thirteen different rulers and members of the imperial family are represented in the hoard. A full catalogue of the hoard will be published in *Coin Hoards from Roman Britain X* (British Museum, forthcoming).

The British Museum would like to congratulate Mr Darley for his prompt reporting of his find and to thank Bonham's for their help in passing the coins on to the British Museum.

Roger Bland

MEDIEVAL COINS ON COMPUTER

In the last *CCNB Newsletter* Ute Wartenberg mentioned the computerisation of the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*.

The Medieval British Coins Database at St. Andrews grew out of the plan to compile a total cumulative index volume to the *Sylloge* series, to be published on the eventual completion of *SCBI 60*, by which time it is hoped that a major sample of the coinage of medieval Britain will have been catalogued. As the British Academy has encouraged the Sylloge Committee to make more use of new technology, the computerisation was extended from being an indexing tool into a database which is now available to JANET and the Internet.

Essentially the Database provides the same textual information as the printed volumes, although as yet it has not been considered feasible to store the photographic record in this way. Being on computer, however, the information can be selected and sorted in many different ways according to the needs of the enquirer, and it is hoped that not just numismatists but scholars in many branches of history and language may make use of it.

The Database is stored on the Sun mainframe computer at St. Andrews University in a series of interrelated tables on the Ingres program. The main numismatic joint table (Joindef) tabulates the coins in SCBI which conform to the same classification of type, place (i.e. mint if stated) and moneyer's name as it appears on the coin. For each individual specimen, fields are provided for volume and coin number, weight, die-axis, mint-signature and find-spot. So far all the published volumes have been analysed for the classification table, most of the find-spot data have been entered and the entering of mint-signatures has been started. Information in any of these fields can be retrieved separately or in combination.

A further table relates the name-forms to their dictionary head-form, using the linguistic conventions in the Index volumes, whilst yet another, still in its early stages, is planned to store bibliographic information. Access to the Database depends on the user's own

networking setup; you need a computer that can run a version of Telnet or some sort of PAD software. Leaflets and information are available from Veronica Smart, St. John's House, and Julian Crowe, Computing Laboratory, both University of St. Andrews (vjs@st-andrews.ac.uk; jfec@st-andrews.ac.uk). Veronica Smart

VIDEO LECTURES

The British Association of Numismatic Societies has videos of six lectures. These are 'Philip I (England), Philip II (Spain)' and 'A new look at the Parthians' by David Sellwood, 'Elizabethan gold coinage' by Chris Comber, 'Travelling accounts of Bishop Wolfger' by Marcus Phillips, 'Medallic record of African explorations' by Laurence Brown, and 'Romano-British imitations of the Roman imperial coinage' by Alan Cherry. Anyone interested should contact BANS at the address on page 7.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR COLLECTION

At the London Coin Fair on 3 February, Lorna Lee and Celestine Enderly of the British Museum Conservation Department gave a talk on suitable materials for the storage of coins.

Housing a coin collection in a cabinet or in envelopes is generally undertaken to protect the coins from damage, and should allow for categorisation of similar types of coins to allow for ease of access. However, some materials used for storage systems can outgas to produce harmful volatiles and the coins may inadvertently be put at risk.

The most commonly encountered pollutant gases produced by storage materials are: organic acids from timber and timber products such as plywood and medium density fibreboard (MDF); formaldehyde from timber, timber products and some adhesives; sulphide gases from woollen fabrics, rubber and certain glues; and chlorides. The latter are often due to degradation of chlorine-containing plastics, particularly polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and problems generally arise when metals are in direct contact with the plastic, a situation which would arise, for example, with a coin in a PVC envelope.

Silver will tarnish if stored with materials which can produce sulphide gases. Such gases will cause darkening of a polished silver surface, but can also cause changes to a silver patina. Chlorides will also cause corrosion of silver. Copper will darken in an environment containing sulphide gases, should not be stored with chlorine containing plastics, and may corrode if exposed to organic acids and formaldehyde. Although patinas on copper and its alloys are protective, they may corrode if pollutants are sufficiently high. Lead and zinc are particularly sensitive to organic acids and should not be stored in wooden cabinets or trays. Products emitting formaldehyde should also be avoided. High levels of organic acids will also accelerate the corrosion of iron and aluminium; materials containing chlorides should not be used.

The effects discussed above can be minimised by keeping a store for coins reasonably dry (below 50% relative humidity) and clean. In summary, generally avoid using chloride-containing plastics such as PVC. Suitable plastics, for envelopes and holders, are polypropylene and polyester (Melinex). Rigid plastic coin trays made of polythene can be used instead of wood, for lead and zinc. If coins or medals are lying loose in a tray

or drawer, they may suffer from physical damage, and lining the trays and drawers with polythene foam is recommended. Paper and boards used for envelopes labels and boxes may also be a source of problems, as they may become acidic over time causing corrosion of metals in direct contact. Archival papers, boards and plastics should be available from numismatic suppliers. Further information may be obtained from The Conservation Research Group at the British Museum.

Archival materials are also supplied by Preservation Equipment Ltd, Shelfanger, Diss, Norfolk, IP2 2DG, tel. 01379 651527 and Atlantis European Ltd, 146 Brick Lane, London E1 6RU, tel. 0171 377 8855.

TREASURE BILL

This Bill to reform the law of Treasure Trove has been introduced by Sir Anthony Grant, MP, who gained a place in the ballot for Private Members' Bills. It has the support of the Government and the opposition parties and it received an unopposed 2nd Reading in the House of Commons on 8 March. It is now likely to become law later this year.

The Bill has three main aims: (1) it will change the definition of Treasure, (a) by removing the need to prove that objects must have been intentionally buried, (b) by making it clear exactly how much gold or silver objects must contain in order to be Treasure, and (c) by including objects found in association with finds of Treasure; (2) it will streamline the system of administration by making it much simpler to determine what is Treasure; (3) it will make the law enforceable by providing a new offence for the non-declaration of Treasure.

So far as coins are concerned, all coins that are more than 300 years old that are found in hoards will be treasure. If the coins contain a precious metal content of more than 5% then a minimum of two coins will be eligible, provided they were originally together; if their precious metal content is below 5% then the minimum number of coins is ten. Single coins will not be treasure.

NEW PROPOSALS FOR RECORDING COIN FINDS

On 26 February the Department of National Heritage published *Portable Antiquities: a Discussion Document*. This Paper invites comments from all interested organisations on proposals to draw up a voluntary Code of Practice for the recording of archaeological objects (including coin finds). The Paper notes that a recent survey has suggested that perhaps as many as 400,000 objects of archaeological interest are discovered every year in England and Wales and that at present only a few of these are recorded. It states that the Government believes that there is an urgent need for action to improve the arrangements for the recording of such objects and it discusses the relative merits of voluntary and compulsory schemes. The Paper concludes by stating that the Government's provisional view is that a voluntary Code of Practice, combined with limited reform of the law of Treasure Trove along the lines of the Treasure Bill introduced by Sir Anthony Grant, represents the best and most practicable way forward.

Over 3,000 copies have been sent to organisations with an interest in this area, but if you would like a copy please write to Iain Newton, Heritage Division, Department of National Heritage, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5DH (or telephone 0171-211 6363). Comments are invited by 28 June 1996.

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Congress
Chester College of Higher Education, Chester
Contact: Jonathan Morris, c/o Swetenhams, 9-11 Market Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2EW
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Medal Study Day and AGM
British Museum and Museum of London
- 23 BNS
Roger Bland
Late Roman precious metal coin hoards from Britain: new light on some old problems
- 23 Circle of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology
Helen Wang
Stein's 'Recording Angel' Miss Lorimer
School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HP

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Peter Gaspar
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Jonathan Williams/Andy Meadows/Andrew Burnett
The Impact of the Social War
31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY
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Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address
Michael Metcalf
Viking Age Numismatics 2. Merovingian and Carolingian coinage in western Scandinavia
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Silver Bitts and Black Doggs: coinage in the Caribbean

July

- 6 Devon and Exeter Numismatic Society in association with Exeter Festival
South West Numismatic Convention
Speaker: Graham Pollard
Mint Church Hall, Fore Street, Exeter
Contact: John Shepherd, tel. 01392 434812

6 BNS

Money in the Marches: minting and coin use in the West Midlands

A special one day meeting at Soho House, Handsworth, Birmingham

Speakers include: Edward Besly, Richard Doty, Christopher Dyer, Stewart Lyon and Andrew Burnett.

Contact: Thomas Curtis, tel. 0171-930 6879

September

6 BANS

1996 Lecture Weekend

Ashburne Hall, Manchester University

Speakers include: D. Shotton, D. Symons, R de L Holmes, W. Kennett, D. Martin and R. Lyall

Contact: Keith Sugden, Department of Numismatics, Manchester Museum, tel. 0161-745 5949

20/22 BAMS

Annual Weekend Conference

St. Ives, Cornwall

24 BNS

Luke Syson

Kings, Romans, Countrymen: the Dassiers' medallic series

Contacts:

British Art Medal Society (BAMS)

Mr P. Attwood, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 0171-323 8260. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Cutlers' Hall, Warwick Lane, London EC4.

British Association of Numismatic Societies (BANS)

Mr P H Mernick, c/o Bush, Boake, Allen Ltd, Blackhorse Lane, London, E17 5QP, tel. 0181-523 6531.

British Numismatic Society (BNS)

Dr D Bateson, Hunterian Museum, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12 8QQ, tel. 0141-330 4289. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 6.00pm, Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1.

Oriental Numismatic Society (ONS)

Mr J Cribb, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 0171-323 8585.

Royal Numismatic Society (RNS)

Ms V Hewitt, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 0171-323 8228. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London WC1.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

20 January - 14 April 1996 Glasgow

Beauty and the Banknote: images of women on paper money

Hunterian Museum

15 February - 16 September London

All Change: 25th anniversary of decimal currency in Britain

A Bank of England/Royal Mint exhibition

Bank of England Museum, Bartholomew Lane, EC2

20 February - 24 May 1996 Cambridge
Coinage in Ireland
 Cripps Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum

7 March - 8 September 1996 London
Commemorating the 19th century: coins and medals by the Wyon family
 Gallery 69a, British Museum

20 April - 29 June 1996 Blackburn
Beauty and the Banknote: images of women on paper money
 Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

25 June - 25 October 1996 Cambridge
The development of portraiture on Greek coinage
 Cripps Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum

AUCTIONS AND FAIRS

April

- 12/13 *Coinex Wales*
 City Hall, Cardiff
 Contact: BNTA Secretary, Mrs Carol Carter, tel. 0181-398 4290
- 14 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160
- 16 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
 Contact: Linda/Graeme Monk, tel. 0181-656 4583
- 24 Banknotes
 Auction: Spink in association with Christie's
- 25/26 Russian and other coins
 Auction: Sotheby's

May

- 1 Ancient, British and World coins, medals, tokens, banknotes and numismatic books
 Auction: A.H. Baldwin & Sons, Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, tel. 0171-930 6879
- 12 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160
- 21 Renaissance and Baroque Medals
 Spink in association with Christie's
- 21 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
 Contact: Linda/Graeme Monk, tel. 0181-656 4583
- 23 Renaissance plaquettes
 Auction: Bonhams
- 30 Coins and Medals
 Auction: Bonhams
- 30 Portuguese and other coins
 Auction: Sotheby's

June

- 8 *The London Coin Fair*
 Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London W1
 Contact: Frances Simmons, tel. 0181 989 8097
 (Accompanied by a special meeting for Oriental Numismatic Society members at 2pm).

- 9 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160

- 26 Ancient, English and world coins
 Auction: Glendining's

July

- 2 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
 Contact: Linda/Graeme Monk, tel. 0181-656 4583
- 8 Ancient coins
 Auction: Sotheby's
- 9 Ancient, English and Foreign Coins and Commemorative Medals
 Spink in association with Christie's
- 14 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160
- 16/17 Coins and Medals
 Auction: Bonhams

August

- 11 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160

September

- 8 *Midland Stamp & Coin Fairs*
 National Motor-Cycle Museum, Bickenhill, Birmingham
 Contact: 01203 716160
- 10 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
 Contact: Linda/Graeme Monk, tel. 0181-656 4583
- 14 *The London Coin Fair*
 Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London W1
 Contact: Frances Simmons, tel. 0181 989 8097
- 24 Coins and Medals
 Auction: Bonhams

October

- 2 Ancient, English and world coins
 Auction: Glendining's
- 3 Banknotes
 Spink in association with Christie's
- 3/4 Coins and Medals
 Auction: Sotheby's
- 7/8 Coins and Medals
 Auction: A.H. Baldwin & Sons, Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, tel. 0171-930 6879
- 11/12 *Coinex*
 London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London W1
 Contact: BNTA Secretary, Mrs Carol Carter, tel. 0181-398 4290

Unless otherwise stated all auctions held at addresses listed.
 Dates may be subject to alteration.

Bonhams: Montpelier Street, Knightsbridge, London, SW7 1HH.
 Glendining's: 101 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9LG.
 Christie's/Spink & Son: 5-7 King Street, London, SW1Y 6QS.
 Sotheby's: 34 New Bond Street, London, W1A 2AA.