

Coordinating Committee for Numismatics in Britain

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Contributions and information will be gratefully received. Items for the January 1999 issue should arrive by November 13th, 1998, and should be sent to Gareth Williams or Amanda Gregory, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC 1B 3DG, tel. 0171 - 323 8322, 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 Amanda Gregory at the above address.

FOCUS: REPRODUCTIONS

COIN COPYING: FORGERY OR REPRODUCTION

Andrew Burnett

When is a copy of a coin not a forgery? When it is a reproduction. However, both a good forgery and a good reproduction will be close copies of the original, and so theoretically it is impossible to tell, just by looking at an object, which category it falls into. The difference lies in the intention of the maker or subsequent owner. Is the intention to deceive a potential collector, or is it rather to allow him to enjoy an original he cannot afford for himself?

Today's reproductions are made for three main purposes. First are promotional gimmicks, for example the reproductions made by Robinson's Fruit Drinks and Nicholas Laboratories to promote sales of drinks and medicines in the 1970s. The second group includes objects made for collectors or people interested in the past who are unable to acquire a real coin either because it is too rare or too expensive. Go to Arras public library and see the famous gold medallion of the emperor Constantius celebrating the recapture of Britain from Carausius and Allectus, and you can buy a nice reproduction for £3. This example overlaps with the final category, which we might characterise as educational. The coins people can make when they visit the Jorvik centre at York are part of the "visitor experience", and also remind the visitor of his visit and the things he has seen. Dave Greenhalgh's work (see below) is an extension of this, whereby he travels around the country making such demonstrations and creating that intimate contact with history that coins can provide.

In these cases we know we are dealing with reproductions and not forgeries. But matters are usually harder to decide. Copies of Roman coins began to be made as soon as coin collecting began during the Renaissance, and some are of excellent quality, in the

sense that they look very like original pieces. The products of Giovanni da Cavino, a die-sinker who lived in Padua during the 16th century, are some of the best: one or two, for example, appear in Mattingly's great British Museum Catalogue. But the problem of their status is far from clear, and there are different opinions about whether they were excellent "imitations" for lovers of ancient art, or forgeries intended to deceive them and make their maker a lot of money. Since we can't decide simply by looking at the objects, we need some written evidence that gives us some insight into the minds of the makers and sellers of such pieces.

As we don't often have such clear evidence, the same question persists today, and is well explored across a whole range of fields in the catalogue of the *Fake?* exhibition held at the BM some ten years ago and in the accompanying volume *Why Fakes Matter*, both edited by Mark Jones. These books illustrate the different levels of ambiguity that can co-exist, and bring out well the complicated relationship between object, maker, dealer, owner and subsequent owners and sellers, all of whose attitude can affect the status of the same single object. Is an object originally made as a reproduction still only a reproduction when it is later sold as a genuine piece, or is it then a forgery? We soon get into the world of morality: is it right for respectable people or organisations to



Real or reproduction: which is a coin of the Roman emperor Caligula (AD 37-41) and which the 16th century reproduction? Answer at the end of the article.

support the production of pieces which might subsequently be sold as forgeries? Or be lost and inadvertently deceive a later finder, perhaps even being recorded as an "archaeological find"? If so, are the manufacturers morally obliged to do something to minimise the risk, such as marking the objects clearly or depositing copies somewhere like the BM where they can be consulted as a reference?

Answer: The coin on the left is a reproduction, the coin on the right is the genuine article.

REPRODUCTIONS: A MANUFACTURER'S VIEWPOINT

David Greenhalgh

As a numismatist of many years' standing I am frequently asked why I not only condone reproductions but actually produce them. This brief note is to try and put down in print some of my more important reasons.

Most people reading this will remember that during the 1970s there was a great upsurge in collecting coins as a hobby, mainly due to decimalisation. This led to a great number of collectors joining local and national numismatic societies. Since then, numbers have steadily declined to the point that local societies have either ceased to exist or combined with other societies, e.g. metal detecting clubs, or continued with a "hard core" of serious enthusiasts. There have been few or no new young members taking up the hobby. Collecting as a hobby has to compete against the tremendous growth of computer games and instant gratification afforded by the press of a button. The modern person seems to no longer want the trouble of finding things out for himself or herself, but, due to great leaps in information technology, requires information at the touch of a button. This trend greatly affects museums, the old-style museum now being superseded by the new-style interactive museum incorporating computers, public participation, history workshops and historical interpreters all helping to bring the past alive.

The Jorvik Viking Centre in York is to be congratulated on their innovative "Time Train" taking visitors around a recreation of Viking York, and in giving them a chance to strike their own coins. I visited Jorvik in the mid-eighties and was greatly impressed by the interest shown in the coin-striking process, especially by the young children. Unfortunately, at that time there was little or no back-up information available from the "Moneyer" or at the information desk. This has since been rectified. In the early nineties I was approached by my local museum to put on a display of coins as part of their "Peoples' Collections" event, and a chance remark by the curator regarding Jorvik led me to produce a very crude set of dies to strike an Alfredian-style penny. This led to my producing sets of dies for West Stow Saxon Village in Suffolk and meeting up with some professional "re-enactors", and then on to joining a number of societies recreating historical events. Throughout this period I worked at developing the skills of die-sinking and coin-striking to enable me to put on an entertaining yet informative display of a medieval mint. The point of this was, and still is, to try and raise the awareness of the public about our heritage and about coins, their history and production.

At first, the societies recreating the events had few

available authentic-style coins to use on their displays, the majority of pieces used being crude casts of the originals which looked and felt totally wrong, which was a shame considering the large amount of time, effort, research and money that had gone into the production of equipment and costumes. The production of correct-sized authentically struck "coins" that looked and felt right, and that were produced as part of the overall display, meant that these "new-style hammered coins" very quickly drove out the old-style casts - an inversion of Gresham's Law perhaps?

The coins that I struck were almost exclusively produced in lead-free pewter, but examples have been struck in copper, brass, sterling silver and 9- and 22-carat gold. Whilst it would have been obvious that those struck in pewter were not genuine, how could it be ensured that those struck in silver could not be "aged" and fraudulently passed off as originals? After consultation with Miss Marion Archibald (now retired from the British Museum), and Mr Graham Dyer of the Royal Mint, I elected to produce the coins with the moneyer's name "GRVNAL" and incorporating fictional mints (usually the name of the castle or site where the event was taking place). Occasionally the site was a mint site, for example Winchester, and so I would incorporate the last two digits of the year into the reverse legend thus: +GRVNAL MO PINC96. Not a perfect solution, but one that seemed to strike a compromise between the museums, myself and the clients who were organising the events. To further assist the museums in keeping track of my production, an example struck from every die produced is donated to the British Museum.

The interest from the public in the display far exceeded my original expectations, and invitations came from other groups, including numismatic societies, to put on a display or host an interactive evening. Also, a growing number of museums expressed interest in having my travelling mint put on a display to help bring in the public and also to promote their own collections. This spurred me on to branch out from producing "pure-style" coins to producing special coins for such occasions as weddings, anniversaries and museum displays. Recently I started holding competitions at museums aimed at youngsters to design a Saxon/Viking coin. The response and designs submitted have been astonishing. I cut the winning design as a reverse die and partner it alongside one of my stock obverse dies.



'Grunal moneta' striking a coin at the British Museum.

The die is then used to strike complimentary coins for children and the young-at-heart visiting the museum. The designer receives a specially struck coin in precious metal, and gets to present the reverse die to their school or to the museum. This gives an ideal opportunity for the museum to attract free publicity from their local radio and press.

On the academic side, the displays can be valuable experiments in overstriking, die life etc; brockages can be easily duplicated as can the problems of differing styles of dies and minting techniques. The knowledge discovered and the experience I have gained over the last six years of coin-striking and die-cutting are not attainable except by a "hands-on" approach to practical numismatics.

In conclusion, I am aware that there will always be opposition to fakes, replicas and reproductions, but I believe that the benefits far outweigh the problems. We need to raise public awareness, not only of numismatics but of our heritage and museums. My displays are seen by hundreds of thousands of people a year, many of whom leave with a greatly enhanced awareness of our historical heritage, and even if only the tiniest fraction of that number is then to take up an interest in coins, is the process not then justified?

MUSEUMS AND REPRODUCTIONS

Ian Carradice

The unique quality that distinguishes a museum from other, superficially similar visitor attractions is the authenticity of its collections. Museums are supposed to contain "real" objects of past civilisations, or of our more recent ancestors, or "original" art works, old or modern, or "real" natural history specimens, fossils, minerals etc. This is, of course, an over-simplification, because in many perfectly respectable museums some key exhibits may be largely, or entirely, modern fabrications. Consider, for instance, the science museum full of interactive models. In a science museum the original instruments or machines in the museum's collections, may be worthy of display, but for practical and conservation reasons a facsimile may be required to demonstrate the workings or effects which are the essential point of an apparatus, not its superficial appearance. Production of a replica may also be justified for security or record purposes. The University of St Andrews recently commissioned a replica of an old and unique instrument, not just because the replica could be used for display and demonstration, but also because it could preserve vital information about the original in the event of loss or damage to that piece. Detailed measurements and photographs might have sufficed for record purposes, but the replica contains all these data as well as providing an operable, displayable version.

Looking beyond science museums, replication is also widespread as a device for interpretation in historical museums. For instance, a "room setting" may be created in a museum or historic house in order to make certain authentic items more accessible to the visitor:- original 18th century furniture may need replica 18th century curtains and carpets to provide the right context for understanding its purpose (because the original curtains and carpets are either missing, or so faded and shabby that they couldn't possibly be shown alongside the furniture). Similarly, items of clothing are often

replicated in order to complete other outfits that cannot be properly understood in the incomplete forms in which the originals have survived.

But what about coins? Unlike textiles, they are usually metallic and the originals have therefore often survived more or less intact. Unlike old hand-made scientific instruments they are not usually unique, since the same pair of dies might have produced thousands of (originally) identical pieces (though there are "sole surviving examples"). Also, since a coin is not a piece of apparatus, a replica coin cannot be used to demonstrate a process, although it can play a part as the product of a process. Indeed, this is one of the uses of "replica" coins in museums, since they can be manufactured in live demonstrations of the minting process (an example that springs to mind is the Bigbury mint's operation in the forecourt of the British Museum at the time of the "Money" exhibition and International Numismatic Congress of 1986). However, the "replicas" involved in these demonstrations are not exact facsimiles of old coins, since that is not their purpose (thankfully, since sooner or later they would get into circulation).

The commonest use of true replica coins in museums is for display. With the use of copies, both sides of a coin can be shown at once, and rare examples from other collections can be represented. In the 19th century, numerous electrotypes of coins, superficially identical to the originals, were made, notably at the British Museum, where many examples still survive, often with their display pins attached.

The problem with such reproductions is that, unless their production and use is strictly controlled, they inevitably find their way into the antiquities trade. In fact, since the 18th century, many reproductions of coins and other antiquities have been made, not just for museums but for collectors. Even if they were originally sold in good faith as reproductions, it is easy to see how, with the passage of time, they can eventually be traded as genuine pieces. If reproductions are well enough made, and the markings usually applied to identify them are removed, it is easy to see how they can, like any fakes, be used to deceive collectors, and, if placed in plausible archaeological contexts (to assist their authentication), even confuse the archaeological record. Reproductions, then, have their uses in museums, but they can be a mixed blessing.

CONFUSING THE ISSUE: IMITATION PAPER MONEY, PAST AND PRESENT

Virginia Hewitt

Imitation, they say, is a form of flattery; this has not always been true of paper money, but historically it is evidence of familiarity. In late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain, as the circulation of banknotes spread across society, so the appearance of notes became a popular format for a wide range of advertisements and satires. The understated authority of Bank of England notes was a favourite model, transformed for example into the Bank of Elegance, which confidently promised "to cut any Lady or Gentleman's hair Superior to any man in England or forfeit on Demand the Sum of **Ten Thousand Pounds**". The vignette of Britannia was replaced by the Royal Arms and the legend "Patent Perukes Wholesale & for



Note for five halfpence of the "Fort Montague Bank". Fort Montague, pictured on the note, was in fact a folly with gardens and tea-room, built in the cliffs outside Knaresborough in Yorkshire. The folly was begun by Thomas Hill, a weaver, and completed by his son, who issued the "notes" between the 1790s and 1810s

Exportation." Skit notes were also a medium for political comment, such as an example of 1795 promising to pay two pence to Sir Marmaduke Monopoly or Bearer, "on the Conquest of France and Establishment of Royalty": it purported to be issued by Self, Grumble and Bearmuch, and carried the printed signatures of David Discontent and Stephen Starvation. The intended purpose of these items was, of course, that they should be read and recognised for what they were, but skit notes were sometimes used by the unscrupulous as money, 'five halfpence' framed with flourishes easily being presented to an illiterate person as five pounds.

In the twentieth century, worldwide use of banknotes has increased the scope for their adaptation to a medium with a message. War-time propaganda has been disseminated by air-drops of spurious notes, appropriately annotated: these include German copies of Bank of England pound notes distributed in North Africa, printed on the back with Arabic inscriptions warning the Moslems to withstand the wiles of the Anglo-American rebels and their worthless currency. More recently in Britain, the "Anti-Poll Tax cheque book" combined propaganda and practical protest. Protesters were asked to pay the tax on crudely printed cheques which could not be processed by bank machines, thus obeying the law while snarling up the government's receipt of revenue. For purposes of advertisement, the ubiquitous US dollar is reincarnated in a range of guises, from vouchers from "The United Restaurants of Tony Roma's" in Tokyo, to Disney Dollars for use in Disneyland, signed by Scrooge McDuck and replacing the portrait of George Washington with Mickey Mouse.

Irreverent as such parodies are, they testify to the acceptance of paper notes as currency. Indeed the recognition of notes as collectors' items has created a market for reproduction notes, such as the copies of American Confederate Currency given away with bubble-gum packets in the 1960s. When the provenance is forgotten, unwary holders often think they are genuine, but the copies are immediately identifiable by their poor printing and tiny size - which may reflect the desperate depreciation of Confederate notes, but do little justice to their stirring imagery. In contrast, some of the most attractive imitation notes are those produced by security printers to advertise their wares. Nineteenth century bankers frequently ordered emblems and

vignettes straight from printers' samples; today, they are showpieces of engraving techniques and security features such as latent images or holograms. These dazzling designs are a reminder that notwithstanding cynical criticism of modern note design, 'Monopoly Money' remains a pale imitation of the real thing, belonging only on the gaming board.

EXHIBITIONS

MAKING HISTORY: BRITISH MEDALS AND NUMISMATICS 1600-1740

Exhibition in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, May-September 1998

This exhibition serves as a welcome and most attractive reminder that the antiquarian and patriotic impulse that was responsible for some of Shakespeare's finest works also led to the creation of many handsome medals in early modern England.

From the Elizabethan period onwards several influential writers such as Camden and Speed illustrated their works with drawings of ancient coins, borrowed from collections that were being assembled at the time, to substantiate their assertions of the antiquity and nobility of England and its institutions. From this it was a short step to encouraging the creation of medals to perpetuate the memory of worthy contemporaries and their actions. At the same time collections of ancient coins that had often been accumulated rather than selected according to conscious criteria were catalogued or otherwise systematised to create "histories" of coinages and historical periods.

The exhibition begins with a display of ancient coins from the collection of Sir Robert Cotton and Charles I. It then illustrates how the antiquarian/patriotic inspiration linked Crispin de Passe's well-known series of silver counters of English rulers, Claude Warin's portraits of Carolean courtiers and Nicolas Briot's medals commemorating the events and personalities of the period of Charles I's personal rule to the rival series of awards, gifts and portraits, most notably by Thomas Simon, that commemorated parliamentary claims, actions and personalities.

Charles I made a half-hearted effort to use medals to mould the popular view of his achievements, but the attempt to create a medallic history in emulation of Louis XIV gathered strength from the time of the Restoration. John Roettiers led the way in the 1660s with a series of medals commemorating the martyrs to the royal cause during the Civil War and the achievements of Charles II's rule. Several of these medals, and their Dutch counterparts glorifying the later William III, were illustrated in written medallic histories on the French model created by Nicolas Chevalier and John Evelyn in the 1690s. The system was most fully elaborated in the thirty years after 1706, however, when all medals created by John Croker, the Graver to the Mint, required preliminary authorisation from leading Mint officials.

By the early eighteenth century, private individuals had begun commissioning portrait medals of themselves from masters like Soldani, Selvi and Ottone Hamerani in the course of their Grand Tours. By the 1730s this generation had assumed positions of power in government, the learned societies and at the Mint. They ensured the employment at the Mint of the talented

young Genevan engraver Jacques Antoine Dassier. In the following decade their patriotic wish to commemorate contemporary writers, scholars and poets of distinction and not simply rulers and politicians led Dassier to create an outstanding series of medallic portraits of British worthies under the guidance of George Vertue. By 1750 sophisticated minting machinery became available outside the Royal Mint and, while the antiquarian impulse initially continued as influential as ever, the direct or indirect official patronage that had been characteristic of much British medallic production over the previous 150 years became far less significant.

Luke Syson has put together an excellent exhibition. It contains some outstandingly handsome medals and slate and wax modellos, several of which will not be familiar even to expert visitors. Others will give pleasure because of their superlative condition. This particularly applies to the reverses of the medals of John Roettiers, which have been unjustly derided in the past. It is a rare delight to be able to see some of the recently re-identified coins from Sir Robert Cotton's collection. Books and literary texts are well-integrated with the medals. The explanatory texts contain several revealing literary quotations and cross-references to the exhibition of seventeenth century English prints which was running simultaneously elsewhere in the British Museum.

Syson could perhaps have made it clearer that the phenomenon he describes is a British manifestation of a European-wide phenomenon. The medallists were almost exclusively foreign - and the only British medallist, Thomas Simon, was a Channel Islander. At times I would have liked to find out more about individual groups of medals (is something known, for instance, about the commissioning of the Roettiers medals of the 1660s?). In places one can quibble with the relevance of individual exhibits - Hamerani's medal of the young Prince Henry Stuart (1731) does not really fit among portraits of predominantly Whig Grand Tourists. Nevertheless the exhibition succeeds very well in illustrating the mentality that links seemingly disparate medals listed in *Medallic Illustrations* - which itself can now be seen as perhaps the last manifestation of the antiquarian-patriotic mentality.

Peter Barber

NEWS

ERNEST GEORGE VINCENT NEWMAN, OBE

By the death of Vincent Newman on 30 March 1998, at eighty-four, numismatics has lost a good servant and a real character.

His working career was spent at the Royal Mint, which he joined in August 1937, having graduated with first class honours from the University of London and after a year spent in Birmingham as a metallurgist with ICI Metals Ltd. His important role as a Mint assayer prevented him from being called up in the Second World War but he threw himself wholeheartedly into ARP activities and characteristically, if not altogether wisely, he put together one of the finest collections of German incendiary bombs outside of Civil Defence establishments.

He remained within the Assay Department of the Royal Mint for the rest of his official career, rising through the ranks until in 1962 he succeeded Dr J H Watson as Chemist and Assayer. As such he was the senior metallurgist in the Mint and he showed himself to

be an innovative leader, always ready to learn from the experience of private industry in such matters as hot rolling and continuous casting. The post carried with it the formal duties of Queen's Assay Master, an historic title that he much enjoyed.

During the 1960s and 1970s he devoted more and more time to the examination of suspect coins and he played a full part with R J B Anderson of the Treasury Solicitor's Office in attempting to eliminate the counterfeiting of gold sovereigns. His retirement in 1975 coincided with a dangerous upsurge in the counterfeiting of coins to deceive the numismatic marketplace and, already well known to leading coin dealers, he was a natural candidate for the part-time post of Director of the International Bureau for the Suppression of Counterfeit Coins when that body was established by the IAPN. He served as Director until 1983 and then continued as a private consultant almost to the day of his death, his closing years enlivened by a long-running disagreement with the Japanese authorities over the authenticity of certain gold coins of the Emperor Hirohito.

His knowledge, experience and instinctive judgement commanded admiration and respect, and even in his eighties he never lost that flexibility of outlook and willingness to learn that made him such a valuable colleague. For those few whom he allowed to become close to him it was obvious that his shy and occasionally abrupt manner, which could be disconcerting to strangers, hid genuine warmth and concern for others. His integrity, too, was beyond reproach.

In mourning his loss, our sympathy is extended to Marie, his wife and companion for more than fifty years.

G P Dyer

MEMORIAL FUND FOR MICHAEL BROOME

The sudden death of Michael Rowland Broome (1927-1997) in June 1997 has deprived numismatics in the UK of one of its best known personalities. He would have earned this place just from his role as founder and long-serving Secretary General of the Oriental Numismatic Society, but his reputation as a numismatic scholar was of equal significance. His research reflected the broad range of his interests: concentrating on Islamic coinage, but also encapsulating Maria Theresa thalers, medals and areas of general numismatic interest. His monograph on Seljuq coinage will, it is hoped, be edited and published as an RNS Special Publication.

In consultation with Michael Broome's widow Muriel, and others of his family, and with the support of the Oriental Numismatic Society, the Royal Numismatic Society is proposing to establish a fund in his memory. The purpose of the fund would be to provide support for numismatic research, particularly in the areas of Michael Broome's own interests. Contributions to the fund should be sent to the Royal Numismatic Society, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3DG. Cheques should be made payable to the Royal Numismatic Society.

BANS 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

To mark the occasion of the completion of 50 BANS Congresses and 36 Weekend Lecture Courses in 1997, the British Association of Numismatic Societies is planning to publish a booklet at its York Congress in April 1999. Most urgently needed is a copy of the programme of the Lecture Course held at Manchester in September. Other early programmes and participant lists

as well as general photographs taken at any of the meetings also would be welcome.

Items may be sent to BANS President Keith Sugden, Department of Numismatics, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL.

MILLENNIUM MEDAL COMPETITION

An open competition to design a Millennium Medal was launched on July 17 by the Royal Mint and the British Art Medal Society. The winning design will win a prize of £10,000. The theme of the obverse must be the millennium, and the reverse should complement it in some way. The winning medal will be struck and marketed by the Royal Mint, while the other short-listed designs will be made available by the Mint to companies across the UK that may want to have their own medals produced, or may be issued by the British Art Medal Society. As a result, additional cash awards may be made. The competition closing date is 1 October 1998 and all the drawings received will go before a distinguished judging panel who will select up to ten designs to be made into plaster models. Mr Roger Holmes, Deputy Master of the Royal Mint and chairman of the judging panel, said that the competition offers an exciting chance to have the widest possible choice of ideas for a Millennium Medal.

"Medals are an excellent art form, particularly suited for both commemorative and presentation purposes. There can be no better subject matter than the millennium, a truly memorable moment in time."

Further information about the competition can be obtained from Luke Syson, BAMS, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG. Tel: 0171 323 8658. Fax: 0171323 8171.

BRITISH MUSEUM TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

From time to time the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum organises travelling exhibitions to various regional and local museums within the UK. Previous exhibitions have included *Artistic Circles - the Medal in Britain 1880-1918*, *Beauty and the Banknote - Images of Women on Paper Money* and *The Rev. Ernest S. Box - an Englishman's Collection of Chinese Coins*.

Any museum wishing to be informed about hosting future exhibitions should contact Philip Attwood, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3 DG.

BRITISH NUMISMATIC SOCIETY NEWS

At the May meeting the President presented a suitably inscribed silver Membership Medal to Mr Tony Merson in appreciation of his work as Honorary Auditor.

The evening's talk on "*Land assessment and the silver economy in Norse Scotland c. 900-1266*", delivered by Dr Gareth Williams, was followed by the Council Sherry Party which was enjoyed by a large number of members and their guests.

The Society's next meeting will be held on 22nd September.

ROYAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY NEWS

The Society's annual medal for 1998 has been awarded to Jean Baptiste Giard of the Cabinet des Médailles in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

RESEARCH AWARDS

Five grants were awarded from the Nicholas Lowick Memorial Fund (Oriental Numismatics); two grants from

the Neil Kreitman Endowment Fund (Central Asian), and four from the Martin Price Memorial Fund (Greek).

Each year the Society offers small grants, usually up to £500, towards special research projects in areas not covered by specific funds. Two such awards have been approved this year.

For information on awards, write to the Secretary, Royal Numismatic Society, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3DG, or e-mail rus@dircon.co.uk

BANS CONGRESS

Bristol, 3-5 April, 1998

We were told that it is now 50 years since the British Association of Numismatic Societies initiated its Coin Days. For the 1998 Congress we were located at Badock Hall, of the University of Bristol. Congratulations must go to Mark Manning and Mike Stanton of the Bath and Bristol Society for having found such an excellent venue after the frustration of losing a previous choice through a double booking, and for keeping the cost to delegates below, just, the psychological barrier of £100. The standard of the student accommodation was way above what I remember from my student days, and the quality of the food was excellent, and it must have been something of a disappointment that only some forty seven participants were resident for the whole weekend. The weather could have been better, but we cannot hold the organisers responsible for that.

In the absence of a civic reception, Friday evening was given to an excellent, but non-numismatic, talk by Robin Bradbury on the SS Great Britain, copiously illustrated with slides from its launch in 1843 to its return to Bristol from the Falkland Islands in 1970. On Saturday Dr Simon Bean of Liverpool Museum made a welcome return as a Congress speaker, this time on the subject of the pre-decimal coinage of the Isle of Man, covering the island's history and coinage from the Norse invaders of the 10th century to the reign of Queen Victoria. This was followed by Edward Besly of the National Museum of Wales on "Bushell, Bristol and recent Civil War discoveries", showing how coins were struck in Bristol from dies originating in Oxford and Shrewsbury, and how Bristol dies were later re-used at mints which may have operated in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Bridgnorth. Stephen Minnitt of Somerset County Museum then spoke on counterfeit coinage in Somerset 1810 to 1850, with interesting information on how counterfeits were manufactured and placed into circulation, and on the punishments meted out to those who were apprehended in these activities. Saturday afternoon was left free for visits to the SS Great Britain, Bristol Museum, Harvey's Wine Museum and other attractions, and in the evening we had an excellent Congress dinner.

On Sunday morning, Joe Cribb of the British Museum spoke on British origins of Indian numismatics, with particular reference to early efforts to attribute and date the coins of the Kushans. Stephen Clews, curator of the Roman baths and pump rooms, spoke on the banking system in 18th century Bath, with some interesting insights into those Bath bankers who had the misfortune to be declared bankrupt. Finally Peter Guest, temporarily attached to the British Museum to work on the Hoxne hoard, spoke on "The evidence of hoards for the circulation of coins at the end of Roman Britain", with graphs indicating how the composition of late 4th and 5th

century hoards from Britain differed from those found on the continent. After Sunday lunch, the Congress dispersed, with members already looking forward to the next Congress, to be held in York from 11-13 April 1999, and the autumn weekend at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, from 18 to 20 September 1998.

Michael Anderson

MICHAEL METCALF - AN APPRECIATION

Professor Michael Metcalf retires as Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room on 30 September 1998. Michael began collecting coins himself at the age of eleven, and started what was to become an outstanding career as author, editor, and publisher, when he launched his own magazine *The Curator*, at about the same time. These twin pillars of his career, writing and collecting, were deeply rooted in his early life.

Michael read Geography at St John's College, Cambridge, and went on to study for his PhD under the guidance of Philip Grierson. Combining his interests as numismatist and historical geographer with a daunting appetite for languages, Michael produced an outstanding thesis on the medieval coinages of the Balkans. This thesis, together with an impressive run of early articles, marked Michael as an outstanding prospect. He was quickly spotted by Humphrey Sutherland as the sort of scholar needed to augment the team in the Heberden Coin Room. From 1959 to 1963, while Michael earned his living at the Registry in Cambridge, and with Dorothy started his young family, Sutherland scoured the University system to find the money for a new appointment which was always (unofficially) earmarked for Michael. He began work in the Coin Room on 1 November 1963.

Michael's scholarly output has been outstanding by any standard. He submitted 120 publications for consideration when he supplicated for his D.Litt. in 1986. Since then the flow of scholarship has continued further, and his complete bibliography contains well over 200 items. His range has been enormous, including studies of the medieval coinage of all of continental Europe as well as studies of British, Byzantine and Islamic coinage and monetary history. Year after year he has produced numismatic papers of the most precise accuracy which collect the available data, and arrange the material to reveal new patterns and interpretations which dramatically forward the subject. These numismatic studies were often of profound historical importance. This was particularly true of his early application of quantitative techniques to the coinages of Anglo-Saxon England as long ago as 1966. Thirty years on, the evidence of a host of new single finds has thoroughly vindicated his prophetic and, at the time, unfashionable, work. Michael has produced not one or two *magna opera* but, at the last count 13, covering Byzantine and German coins, Thrymsas and Sceattas, the late Anglo-Saxon coinage, and the coinage of the Crusades and the Latin East, with special attention to Cyprus.

It might reasonably be expected that a career of such prolific output would have had little room for other work. In fact his curatorial contribution has been outstanding. As a collector himself, he bought for the Museum with a shrewd eye, and accomplished a series of remarkable acquisitions, especially where new hoards or single finds brought material onto the market, the significance of which others were less quick to recognise. While some

institutions forbid their curators to collect for themselves, Michael's personal collection has been the source of a series of outstandingly generous gifts to the Ashmolean, most notably 25 sceattas given in 1988, and a further dozen given this year. It is characteristic of the man that these gifts were quietly added to the Coin Room's Accession Book without any other notice.

The Museum and the Royal Numismatic Society have benefitted greatly from Michael's work as an efficient and skilful administrator. He edited the *Numismatic Chronicle* from 1974 to 1984, and currently serves as President of the Society. As Keeper, he has offered particular encouragement to the Coin Room series of publications, and to the Oxford Symposia on Coinage and Monetary History, which have established themselves as an important bridgehead between numismatic scholarship and broader historical study.



Michael Metcalf in conversation with Kolbjørn Skaare.

After working alongside Michael for 27 of his 35 years in the Museum, I may be permitted to end on a personal note with two memories. Within a year of my arrival at the Ashmolean, Michael and Dorothy arrived one evening on the doorstep of my rented flat to offer me the loan of a deposit on a house. It was an act of great kindness and generosity to a young colleague wrestling with spiralling house prices. Twenty years later, as I struggled with sickness in the family at home, making my attendance in the Museum frankly erratic, Michael as Keeper responded with the same kindness and understanding for a colleague in trouble. His advice to me then - to put first things first - is counsel he has always followed himself. In a career of outstanding achievement he has always identified his priorities clear-sightedly, and pursued his convictions unwaveringly, but with great kindness. As a steadfast friend and scholar, we look to see him in the British and Royal Numismatic Societies and in the Museum often.

Nicholas Mayhew

LECTURES, SEMINARS, COLLOQUIA AND CONFERENCES

Gods, Graves and Numismatics: A Symposium

The Third Cambridge Numismatic Symposium will be held on 12-13 March 1999 with the title: *Gods, Graves and Numismatics: Interpreting Early Medieval Coin Finds of Northern Europe in Sacred Contexts*. The conference will be held at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and will unite archaeologists and numismatists in an investigation of coins in graves, within churches, and in other sacred contexts (wells, foundations, hearths, boundaries etc). Social messages are embedded in such depositions, and the very material which numismatists may

reject for analysing coin circulation, and which archaeologists may see mainly as a dating tool, actually forms a unique category of "archaeo-numismatic" evidence. This symposium aims to shed light on the social practices reflected in coins found in sacred contexts, drawing comparisons across the different regions of Northern Europe.

Further details can be obtained from the organisers:

Dr Mark Blackburn, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge CB2 1RB, UK
Tel: 01223 33 29 17 / fax: 33 29 23 / e-mail: mab1001@cam.ac.uk
Kristin Bornholdt, Peterhouse, Cambridge, CB2 1RD, UK
Tel: 01223 328 823 / e-mail kab27@cus.cam.ac.uk

September

- 22 BNS
John Symonds Udal and his collection of Dorset tokens
Peter Preston-Morley

October

- 20 RNS
Title to be announced
27 BNS
The Norman mint of Carlisle
Charles Farthing

November

- 10 BAMS
The business of casting: making and marketing of bronze sculpture in France 1850-1950
Patrick Elliot, assistant keeper, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

- 17 RNS
Title to be announced

- 24 BNS
Anniversary Meeting and Presidential Address

December

- 8 BAMS
Personal Architecture
Jane Sedgewick, jeweller
15 RNS
The Coinage of the First Anglo-Afghan Wars, 1839-1842
Steven Album

January 1999

- 12 BAMS
The French and British in Egypt 1798-1801: the medallic view
Peter Clayton, Egyptologist and numismatist
19 RNS
Civic Coin Design in the Antonine Period, AD138-192
Volker Heuchert

Contacts:

British Art Medal Society (BAMS) Ms L Goldsmith, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 0171-323 8260. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Cutler's Hall, Warwick Lane, London EC4.

British Association of Numismatic Societies (BANS) Mr P H Mernick c/o Bush, Boake, Allen Ltd, Blackhorse Lane, London E 17 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. Those attending should on arrival at the Warburg Institute show their signed meeting cards to the Porter.

British Numismatic Trade Association Ltd (BNTA) Mrs Carol Carter, General Secretary, PO Box 474A, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 0WJ. Tel: 0181-398-4290, Fax: 0181-398-4291.

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 WC1 3DG, tel. 0171-323 8228. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London WC1.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

11 November 1998 - 11 February 1999

One by one: commemorating the First World War. European medals from the Museum's collections

Main Entrance of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. - Supported by Sotheby's

AUCTIONS AND FAIRS

September

- 5 *The London Coin Fair*
9.30am-5pm
Carlisle Suite, Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London W1
Contact: Frances Simmons, tel. 0171 831 2080
8 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
South Park Hotel (formerly Central), South Park Hill Road
Contact: Graeme Monk, tel. 0181 656 4583
8 *Coins, Medals and Banknotes Auction*
Bonham's
19 *Coin Fair*
9.30am-3.30pm, admission £1
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Enquiries: Davidson Monk Fairs - 0181 656 4583 or 0181 651 3890
30 *Coin Auction*
Glendining's

October

- 1 *Banknotes Auction*
Spink's
7 *Auction of the George Zacos Collection of Byzantine Seals*
Spink's
7/8 *Auction of Ancient, English and Foreign Coins, and Commemorative Medals*
Spink's
9/10 *COINEX LONDON*
London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square
Contact: Carol Carter, BNTA, tel: 0181 398 4290
12/13 *London Coin Auction*
Baldwin's
15/16 *Coins, Medals and Banknotes Auction*
Sotheby's
24 *Coin Fair*
12-6pm, admission £1
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Enquiries: Davidson Monk Fairs - 0181 656 4583 or 0181 651 3890

November

- 11 *Medals Auction*
Glendining's
17 *Croydon Coin Auctions*
Details as September 8
17 *Auction of Ancient, English and Foreign Coins, and Commemorative Medals (Including the Paul W Karon Collection of English Crowns)*
Spink's
21 *Coins, Medals and Banknotes Auction, Hong Kong*
Contact Spink's for details
24 *Orders, Decorations, Campaign Medals and Militaria Auction*
Spink's

December

- 1 *War Medals and Decorations Auction*
Sotheby's
3 *Baldwin's New York Coin Sale (in conjunction with Vecchi's and Münzen und Medaillen)*
contact Baldwin's for details

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

Baldwin's: Royal Society of Arts, John Adam St, London
Bonham's: Montpelier St, Knightsbridge, London SW7 1HH
Glendining's: 101 New Bond St, London W1Y 9LG
Christie's/Spink & Son: 5-7 King St, London SW1Y 6QS
Sotheby's: 34 New Bond St, London W1A 2AA

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