



NEWSLETTER

THE JOURNAL OF THE LONDON NUMISMATIC CLUB

HONORARY EDITOR

Peter A. Clayton

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EDITORIAL

The Club has been fortunate in not only having excellent speakers this past year (as arranged by David Sealy), but also in that the speakers have been kind enough to take the trouble to supply scripts of varying lengths for publication in the Club's Newsletter. This is not as straightforward as it may seem – it is, for the Editor, in a way, a double-edged weapon. He still has to edit those scripts from the spoken to the written word, and also to then type it all out (unless, as does happen on rare occasions, the speaker supplies a disc and his hard copy printout). In the case of the current issue this has been largely done on a laptop computer whilst lecturing on a cruise on the *Crown Odyssey*, sailing from Istanbul, via Egypt and Jordan, to Mombassa – and you cannot really type into a laptop whilst sitting on deck in-between giving the scheduled lectures and answering the innumerable passenger questions. It does take many hours of work but, hopefully, the end product is something which is a worthy addition to the Club's long line of Newsletters, and of interest not only to those members who were fortunate enough to be present at the actual lectures in University College London, but also for those who could not be there, or the more far-flung members (and we even have some in Australia).

The Club has continued to live up to the ideas behind its foundation more than half a century ago. The talks have, again, this year covered a

wide spectrum of numismatics. We have had two that looked at the Roman coinage, British coinage in 1797 and also the gold standard, Russian wire money, British Far East coins in the colonies and Protectorates, the little known Aksumite coinage of Ethiopia, and Anglo-Saxon coins. The 'menu' has been a rich and varied one.

Despite the excellent programmes that David Sealy puts together for our delectation, the number of members present at the talks is still, sadly, very low. The London Club is different from the majority of numismatic clubs and societies around the country as few of its members actually live in London, most work in town and then return by rail to their homes. Other societies, apart from the two senior societies, are invariably focused on the living and working areas betokened by their name. This gives them an advantage in their membership attendance. Their members can invariably go home from work and return to their society's meeting later in the evening. At the London Club it is a question of coming to the meeting from work, and then making one's way home later in the evening, possibly after delaying a while for a convivial evening meal with some of the members present.

Our biggest problem is that we really do need more members, especially amongst the younger fraternity. Certainly members of your Committee have tried hard enough with all sorts of ideas to recruit members, but in the end it does come down to the individual present members proclaiming the Club's activities by word of mouth to like-minded friends. Without younger members coming into numismatics the hobby is going to die. It is all very well for the Royal Mint to loudly proclaim that it has so many thousands of young members – but where are they in the clubs and societies? They are not there. There is hardly any call made on the several special funds available through the senior societies to assist interested younger numismatists to attend the Annual Congress and the numismatic weekends organized by the British Association of Numismatic Societies, or to buy numismatic books to pursue their interest.

As usual, the Honorary Editor repeats his plea for material to include in the Newsletter in addition to the reported talks – short contributions that would be of interest to members generally (or specifically), or reviews and discussion of recent numismatic publications, will always be looked upon with a favourable editorial eye.

Peter A. Clayton, Honorary Editor

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 4 January 2000

To open the millennium year the Club was delighted to welcome as its speaker Dr Andrew Burnett, Keeper of Coins and Medals in the British Museum. In keeping with the occasion, Andrew had chosen to speak on 'a millennium subject', and he therefore chose as his title: 'Saecular Games, Anniversaries of Rome and Anniversaries of Emperors'.

Professor Michael Grant in his seminal book *Roman Anniversary Issues* (1950), looked at the Roman commemoration of events, especially of buildings and even coins. The Romans themselves thought in fives and tens, rather than say the 500th anniversary of the foundation of a specific temple. Grant, however, had decided to exclude Saecular Games and anniversaries of Rome!

The sources of our information for the dating of Saecular Games are Censorinus in the 2nd century AD, and also information deriving from 'the Sibylline Books'. There are different notions of the time span involved in saecula:

1. Saeculum = the maximum span of anyone's life, i.e. 100 years. The Sibylline Books talk of a cycle of 110 years. The Greek translation of Saecularis in the *Res Gestae* suggests every 100 years.
2. The Etruscan notion was of ten saecula, after which their rule would end.
3. This combined with the notion in Hesiod (*Works and Days*), of the Four Ages of Man: the ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron.

The date of the foundation of Rome, as we now have it according to legend, was 21 April, 753. All Roman dates were calculated from then — *ab urbe condita* — *auc* — 'from the founding of the City'. Even this date was, at one time, open to question, and alternatives put forward included 751, 748 (suggested by Fabius Pictor), and 728.

The First Punic War began in 249 BC, and there were many portents that led to the decision to hold the Ludi Tarentini in honour of Dis Pater and Proserpina, and to repeat them every ten years. They thus became known as the ludi seculares. They were held in Rome, to the north-west of the Campus Martius at a place called the Terentum.

During the first century BC Saecular Games were held on various

occasions: in 88 BC with beginning of a new saeculum and the era of civil war. The end of the saeculum came in 65 BC and, with it, it was thought, the end of Rome unless the gods intervened. There was a need for a heaven-sent man. For this there were various contenders at the time: Pompey the Great; Cornelius Lentulus Sura; Cicero; and the son of Pollio. Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* looks forward to a Golden Age (*eg tot surget gens aurea mundo*); later, Virgil in *Aeneid* 6, 791, identified Augustus as the necessary man, in words spoken by the Sibyl:

This is the *man*, this is he, whom you have often heard promised
Augustus Caesar, descendant of a god, who will again establish The
Golden Age which once reigned in the fields of Latium.

Augustus celebrated a saeculum in 17 BC (which perhaps was supposed to be 23 BC), after an interval of 129 years. The invention of 110 went back to 456 BC, but then why was not the date 17 BC and not 16 BC? It may have had something to do with the portent seen in the skies, a comet associated with Julius Caesar and announcing a new Golden Age. The occasion was celebrated from 30 May to 3 June, followed by games. The courts were closed and all mourning was forbidden. Celebration was held again on the tenth anniversary of 27 BC which, according to Dio Cassius began the habit of celebrating imperial decennialiam vows, but was this perhaps a case of retrojection. A new gold aureus of Augustus, securely dated to 28 BC, now puts a different complexion on the matter. According to the *Res Gestae* (22.2), Augustus presided over the Games himself. An inscription records: *ludi iei religions causa sunt instituti neque ultra quam semel ulli mortalium eos spectare licet*.

The poet Horace recorded a *carmen saeculare* sung by a chorus of children on the last evening of the Games before the temple of Apollo:

Sun of beauty who, with your shining chariot
Bring and close the day, ever new yet changeless —May
no greater thing than this Rome, our city, Rise in
your prospect...
Then, O gods, to tranquil old men give peace and To
the race of Romulus give all glory,
Riches and offspring.

There was an emphasis on purification with the distribution of torches of asphalt and sulphur to all citizens; on rebirth — both literal and metaphorical; on the principal gods who, instead of the gloomy gods of the underworld were now Diana and Apollo. The latter had especial significance for Augustus as being the god who guided his victory at the battle of Actium over Antony and Cleopatra on 3 September 31 BC. Many of Augustus' reverse types refer specifically to this, showing a standing Apollo with the letters ACT in the exergue.

Basically what we have here is, in fact, the reinvention of the old Roman religion in a spectacular new form, and it is something that can be seen in many of the reverse types now issued.

The reign of Claudius (AD 38-54) saw the 800th anniversary of Rome in AD 48. This was, presumably, on 21 April, and was at an interval of 63 years from the previous saeculum celebration, or 193 years if one ignores Augustus.

Claudius also celebrated Saecular Games, on the excuse that Augustus had celebrated them before they were really due; though his own *History* mentions how much trouble Augustus took to reckon the intervals separating their occurrences in the past, and to recommence the series, after the tradition had been broken, when the correct year came round again. Therefore, when the herald invited the people in the ancient formula to 'attend the games which nobody present has ever seen or will see again', a great shout of laughter arose. Not only had many persons present witnessed Saecular Games, actors were even billed to take part in them for the second times, as Suetonius recounts in his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (*Claudius* 21.2).

There were Saecular Games held in the reign of Domitian (81-96) in AD 88, at an interval of 40 years, or, 104 if Claudius is ignored, or even 110, if the story about Augustus having held them in 23 BC was true.

In the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161), the 900th anniversary of Rome fell in AD 148, and coincided with the tenth anniversary of Antoninus Pius himself. Coin inscriptions record this tenth anniversary with the PRIM DECENNALES COS III, and this was repeated in 157/8. Reverse types associated included the Wolf and twins, and a sow and piglets. An elephant appeared in 148/9 with the inscription MVNIFENTIA AVG. Medals were also produced.

Under Septimius Severus (193-211) the Saecular Games were celebrated in AD204. This was at an interval of 116 years, and coincided with his vota X in 202. This was also exactly 220 years after Augustus, so this would make in the seventh saeculum, and thus appropriate to Septimius. A fragmentary inscription (*NSc* 1931, 313), records: 'You should, with all worship and veneration of the immortal gods, for the security and eternity of the empire, frequent the most sacred shrines, for the rendering and giving thanks. So that the immortal gods may pass on to the future generations what our ancestors have built up and the things which, after previously conferring them on our ancestors, they have granted to our times as well.'

Septimius was born in Leptis Magna in north Africa and so it was very appropriate that some reverse types featured Liber Pater and Hercules of Leptis with the inscription COS III LVDOS SAECVLI FEC. Fragments of a new prayer also mention Bacchus, the god of wine, also particularly associated with Leptis during this reign. Other legends read, SACRA SAECVLARIA and show Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla sacrificing to Concordia and Tiber.

The reign of Philip I saw, in AD 248, the 1000th anniversary of Rome. The saeculum interval here was 44 years, and 100 from Antoninus Pius' premature celebration. There was a considerable issue of coins, especially of silver antoniniani, with reverse types recording SAECVLARES AVGG and many animals that included a lion, the Wolf and Twins, a goat (Philip II), a hippopotamus (Otacilia), a stag, and an antelope: they were all supposed to be animals for the Games, and had originally been collected by Gordian III to celebrate his Persian victory.

Coins with the reverse type of a column had the legend SAECVLARES AVGG COS III, and also MILIARIVM SAECVLVM. Aurelius Victor, however, notes (Chap. 28), that there were no religious celebrations.

The usurper emperor Pacatian, whose coins were probably issued at Viminacium (modern Kostolac in Serbia, about 60km down the Danube from Belgrade), recorded ROMAE AETER AN MILL ET PRIMO (an echo of Hadrian in AD121 with his ANN DCCCLXXIII NAT VRB P CIR CON (SC): 'in year 874 he gave circus shows to celebrate Parilia' = the birthday of Rome.

Another usurper, Carausius (286-293) in Britain issued coins from

his C mint reading SAECVLARES AVG with a lion reverse type. Another reverse, with a cippus and the inscription SAECULARES AVG, COS III, is a copy of the type of Philip save for the COS III. The previously held enigmatic letters that appear on a unique base metal medallion of Carausius, RSRS INPCDA, have now been identified as coming from Virgil's Eclogue, and can be read as *Redeunt Saturnia regna, iam nova progenies caelo dimititur* (*Num. Chron.* 1998, identified by Guy de la Bedoyere). Other laudatory/celebratory legends are *Renovat Romano*, and *Expectate veni* (the latter from Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk 5).

There were no saeculum celebrations under Constantine I, although the date would have fallen in AD 314, 110 years after Septimius Severus.

The 1100th anniversary of Rome occurred in AD 348, under Constans and Constantius II. Harold Mattingly suggested that the FEL TEMP REPARATIO reverse legend perhaps marked this event, but this was contested by the late Dr John Kent as having no direct connection. Mattingly took several types as being of an heroic nature, and therefore relevant, but Kraft subsequently demonstrated that Constans boat type referred to his visit to Britain in 342; the captives to Constantius' victory over the Persians; the hut and captive being dragged out by the emperor was Constans victory over the Franks. The legend *reparabilis ales*, alluding to might or rebirth could, according to Eusebius, stand for the succession of father to sons, i.e. Constantine I to his sons. Aurelius Victor (in Chap. 28) comments on the neglect of ritual. According to John Kent (in the C.H.V. Sutherland festschrift), there were no coins issued to mark the event. not even Urbs Roma medals.

There is a remarkable contrast with the triumphal entry of Constantius into Rome on 28 April 357, his 35th anniversary. The historian Ammianus (16.10) notes the large funds involved, the huge procession with the emperor in a golden chariot gleaming with precious stones, the rich banners and dazzlingly dressed soldiers, culminating with the erection of an obelisk brought from Egypt on the spina in the Circus Maximus. It was the occasion for the issue of gold medallions, coins and consular solidi.

In AD 448, in the reign of Valentinian III, there occurred the 1200th anniversary of Rome. Apparently there is nothing on record of the

event, nor any coinage. Valentinian did not hold the consulship, even though he usually went to Rome from his residence in Ravenna for the years in which he would have held the consulship.

The conclusions, drawn from recorded and coin evidence, therefore are that the idea of a 100th anniversary and of saecula were originally separate, and subsequently confused. The intervals could vary, as indeed could the emphasis for basically political reasons, as can be seen under Augustus. Perhaps the celebration element helped the idea of decennalia, as under Antoninus Pius. The vota became more important in the later centuries. The centenaries of Rome were not so important except for 800, 900 and 1000, where there was more interest before and afterwards.

The talk was illustrated by excellent slides of appropriate and magnificent coins drawn from the British Museum collection.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 9 February

The Club welcomed back Hilbo Neilson who had taken as his subject, '1797 and All That'.

Hilbo first gave a background to the coinage, noting that Pepin the Short had, around 755, instituted a new broad, thin coin which he called a denarii, its common name being denier. Offa of Mercia liked the look of these coins and re-organized his minting operations along the same lines. The denier, introduced to the Anglo-Saxon people soon became the penny, which lasted thereafter up into modern times, but now only seen in the Maundy money. Around the year 800, the measure of weight of Aachen was taking over from the Paris pound and the Cologne and Tower pounds were born. The Tower pound was, like the later Troy pound, of 5760 grains, of 12 ounces, each ounce being of 20 pennyweight – thus giving 240 pennyweights, each of 24 grains, to the pound.

The standard weight for the new penny was probably due to Ecgbeorth (802-839), and remained the standard for the next 700 years until 1526, when Henry VIII brought in the pound Troy, one of his less malicious tinkering with the coinage. This led to 5760 grains Tower being the same weight as 5400 grains Troy. A pound Tower was approximately 350 grams against the pound Troy of 373 grams. The Anglo-Saxon penny, as listed in the catalogues, was 22 1/2 grains.

Inflation meant that silver increased in value and a Tower pound of

sterling silver was made into more and more pennies. This had risen to 266 by 1344, and gold returned as an acknowledged means of exchange. It was accepted lore that a coin should be the same by weight and by tale, i.e. its silver content should equal its face value. In 1344 Edward III issued a florin, and later nobles and their divisions. Between 1344 and 1351 although the nominal number of pence in the higher value coin, a florin or noble, remained the same, the grains weight fluctuated. The basic reason for this extraordinary situation was simply the law of supply and demand. Problems of bi-metalism were to dog succeeding Chancellors for the next 500 years. Gold coin was always valued in terms of the silver coins its value represented. By 1696 gold guineas were trading at 30/- per coin, largely due to the poor silver. Even by 1717, after the great silver re-coinage, they were still current at 21/6d. On 22 December 1717 an end was put to this by a proclamation that said the value of a gold guinea was to be no higher than 21/- silver. It was a turning point in the gold/silver relationship. During the 18th century silver was worth more abroad than in England, and led to no silver coins being minted from 1750 to 1799. Things were indeed in a parlous state.

In 1782 Samuel Garvett was commissioned to investigate, along with his son Francis, 'the state and charge of the arrangements at the Mint'. His recommendation, however, died with the change of the Minister Shelburne. His most notable recommendation was that silver should be cut to 76/- to the one pound. In 1797 a Privy Council committee was appointed to consider the state of the copper coinage. In 1788 they viewed the patterns submitted by Matthew Boulton of Birmingham, and then lapsed.

On 1 March 1797 the House of Commons requests that the King give directions for the immediate supply of copper coin. The Committee's immediate response was to place an order in July with Matthew Boulton for 500 tons of two penny and penny pieces. No farthings or halfpennies were ordered as it was felt they would utterly discredit the circulating coin.

By a proclamation of 26 July 1797 currency was given to the New Copper Coinage of 1 d and 2d. The one penny was to weigh one ounce avoirdupois, the two pence twice its weight. The intrinsic value (workmanship included) was to correspond as nearly as possible with the nominal value of same. Matthew Boulton had many good ideas and,

quite apt from serving his mining interests in Cornwall, he genuinely wanted to serve the public. However, in slavishly following his ideas, the Committee had created, for the first time, tri-metalism in Britain. The gold, silver, and copper coin, despite their fluctuating market prices, were to be the same by tale as by weight, and to conform to a fixed exchange rate between the coins of each metal. The war with France pushed up the price of copper so that 1lb avoirdupois produced, in 1797, 16 coins (1s/4d); in 1799, 18 coins (1s 6d), and in 1805/6, 24 coins (2/-)

It had been noted in 1792 that the position was being made worse by the French exchanging their assignats for as much silver as they could procure. In 1798 10,000 pounds of silver was delivered to the Mint to be made into shillings and sixpences. The delivering merchants (who included Dorien Magens Dorien) promised further large supplies possibly as much 100,000 pounds.

A re-constituted Committee of Council for Coin was set up on 7 February 1798 who, quite late in the proceedings, heard of this novel undertaking and promptly stopped it by Order in Council. This Order effectively cancelled the public right to deliver bullion to the Mint and have it struck into coin. The cancellation was due to the fact that the Committee had not decided on the weight of the new silver coin, and it was going to take another 18 years before it could make up its collective mind.

Various expedencies were tried over the coming years with regard to the silver coin. The Bank of England was encouraged to issue silver tokens, the Royal Mint also later issuing its own silver tokens which were largely captured silver Spanish coin that was countermarked with the King's head and a value. Frequently the silver in the host coin was below sterling silver, and the weight was also below the face value issue given them in Britain. This situation gave rise to the popular jibe of 'Two kings' heads not being worth a Crown'.

In 1805 'A Treatise on the Coin of the Realm in a Letter to the King', written by Charles Jenkinson, first Earl of Liverpool, was published. It was, in fact, largely the report of the 1798 committee but ill health had prevented Jenkinson working on it at the time. The thinking in this publication was very influential, as was the author.

From this time, a new Mint building on the site of a tobacco warehouse on East Minster Hill, or Tower Hill, was being considered,

planned and ultimately built. It was to be August 1812, however, before the Mint was wholly in place in premises suitable for the work it was called upon to carry out.

On 21 May 1816 the Committee (and it was the 1798 Committee, still extant!) reported to the Prince Regent that gold and silver money was urgently needed and should continue as it had hitherto. Also, that gold alone should be the standard coin of the realm, silver coin should be considered merely as representative coins and legal tender only up to the value of two guineas. The standard of fineness of silver coin should remain and be cut at 66 shillings to the Troy pound sterling. The belief was that the rate was sufficiently high to protect the new coins from being melted down, but not so high as to encourage making counterfeit coins.

A new gold coin, the sovereign, was Proclaimed current to the value of 20 shillings. Interestingly, the description of the design mentioned St George having a spear. All these recommendations were adopted, and served the country well for a hundred years. The copper coinage of 1805/6, at 24 pence to the pound avoirdupois, remained until 1860, when the copper coin was replaced by bronze.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Tuesday 4 April

Tony Holmes, a Past-President of the Club, spoke on the subject of `Russian Wire Money. Tony said that this talk was not a general account of Russian coins but was restricted to a collection made during the 1990s in Moscow, which he had later acquired.

The early Russian principedoms fell one by one to the Mongols under Genghis Khan (1206-27), who advanced from the east as far as the Volga. His son, Juji, was given a section of the Mongols, known as the Golden Horde, to complete the conquest. The hero Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod, having already proved his valour against the Teutonic Knights, now showed his wisdom by submitting to the Mongols without resistance and was made Grand prince with the duty of collecting the tribute from all the other princes.

The Golden Horde split into the Blue Horde and the White Horde and the coin collection begins with the small Islamic coins of Jani Beg (1341-57), Birdi Beg (1358-9), Khizyr Khan (1358-60), and Toktamish Khan (1376-95). It was the latter who reunited the Golden Horde. Then

there are some Russian coins struck under weakening Mongol suzerainty: a copper pul of Tuer, showing a moneyer at work, another of Kashlyn with a bird and branch, a silver denга of Pskov with a crowned facing head and, at last, a coin that names a ruler — Basil II the Blind, Prince of Moscow 1425-62. This shows a horseman with a falcon on his wrist. All these coins, and indeed the later coins in the collection, are so small that the inscription occupies the reverse.

There is a denга of Ivan III, 'the Great', of Moscow who threw off his allegiance to the Mongols, conquered Novgorod and Tuer and obtained other principedoms in various ways. He married Sophia Palaeologina, niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI. It was from Sophia that he obtained the symbol of the double-headed eagle, which he used as well as the St George arms of Moscow. It is recorded that on Sophia's first night in the Moscow Kremlin the grand-ducal bed collapsed under her — she weighed 26 stone! A denга of Basil III, 150533, shows a flower.

Tony said that he had been offered coins of Yelena Glinskaya who was regent from 1533 until 1538, when she was poisoned. There are no coins in her name, and she evidently struck the early coins in the name of her son Ivan the Terrible, and was responsible for the great reform of the coinage, requiring that the standard of the coinage be the same everywhere, with 100 kopecks equal to 1 rouble; 4 chetverts equaling 2 dengas, equal to 1 kopeck.

This is regarded as the first European decimal currency (although, of course, not perfectly decimal). Previously all silver coins were called dengas, but the Novgorod ones were worth twice as much as the Moscow ones since they contained twice the amount of silver. From this time onwards the kopecks can be distinguished by the lance (kope) which the horseman is wielding — on the dengas he is waving a sword. Coin lists often manage to misdescribe these attributes.

After the murder of Yelena, the Belsky and the Shuisky families competed for power, which means that when they seized control they executed any of the members of the opposing family that they could lay hands on. When Ivan was thirteen he got his dog-handlers to murder Prince Andrew Shuisky, the current regent, and arranged for his own coronation as Caesar — tsar in Russian — as he said that he was descended from Augustus, the first Roman emperor. Ivan's coins, after an initial

anonymous issue, described him as Knyaz Veliky (Prince-Grand) until 1547; tsar and Prince-Grand in 1547; and tsar and Grand Prince, 1553-84. The collection shows the three denominations (the rouble was a money of account at this period), and the mintmarks of Moscow, Pskov, and Novgorod.

Ivan became deranged at about the middle of his reign; his sadistic cruelty was extreme. At one stage he took about one third of the country as his personal property, turning out the landowners and sending out special 'oprichniki' dressed in black, on black horses, and carrying brooms to sweep the country clean. They were under oath to carry out any orders they were given, and were pardoned in advance for all crimes they would commit.

When Ivan was poisoned he was succeeded by his weak-minded son Feodor, 1584-98; the collection has a Pskov kopeck of his reign. Ivan the Terrible had beaten his eldest son to death with his own hands, and executed almost all of his relatives. One young boy, Prince Dimitry, had survived and was kept for safety in the castle of Uglich. The chief minister, Boris Godunov, who ruled for Feodor, sent two men to check on Dimitry — during their stay the nine-year old prince was found with his throat cut. A subsequent enquiry found that his death had been an accident (!), but it paved the way for Boris Gudunov to usurp the throne on Feodor's death, though he was not related to the royal line. There is a Pskov kopeck of Boris Gudunov in the collection.

Another usurper, the 'False Dimitry', seized the throne with Polish help but, having used him to overthrow Boris, Prince Basil Shuisky had him burned in Red Square and his ashes fired from a cannon in the direction of Poland. The coin that follows is therefore one of Basil Shuisky as tsar, 1606-10.

The early years of the 17th century saw the beginning of the Time of Troubles when numerous impostors roamed the country with bands of armed robbers, and a second False Dimitry arose. He claimed to be both the Dimitry who was murdered at Uglich, and the Dimitry whose ashes had left Moscow via a cannon (though he resembled neither of the persons he claimed to be!). Basil got the Swedes to remove him, but his supporters then transferred their allegiance to Vladislav, the son of Sigismund III of Poland, and he arrived with an army. There is an

example of one of his rare kopecks, apparently of the Moscow mint, as well as one in the name of the deposed Basil Shuisky, struck in fact by the Swedes in Novgorod.

With the country in total chaos, a butcher in Nizhni Novgorod (not the Novgorod occupied by the Swedes), gathered a peoples' army to expel all the foreign invaders, and there is one of their rare kopecks in the name of tsar Feodor, who had been dead for 14 years. It was struck at Yaroslavl, not at a regular mint.

A general assembly then chose Michael Romanov as the new tsar (1613-45), thus introducing the final dynasty, which was to rule, until 1917. There are eight of his kopecks, one from the Pskov mint and the others from Moscow, the only remaining mints of this reign.

Michael's son, Alexei, continued to experience financial difficulties and in 1654 decided to do what was largely acceptable in the west, and issue copper kopecks on a fiduciary basis. This, however, caused serious 'copper riots' and he was obliged to redeem the copper kopecks with silver. These are scarce now, but there is one in the collection, together with the much commoner silver kopeck.

Feodor III's short reign (1676-82) is represented by a silver kopeck, and there is one of Ivan V, Peter the Great's weak-minded half-brother, who shared the rule (in theory) from 1682 until 1696. Finally, there are two kopecks of Peter the Great, who began dating the silver kopecks from 1696 — these two are dated 1701 and 1702. This was part of his plan to reform the coinage, which he did skillfully, continuing the tiny silver kopeck alongside lower values in copper and higher values in silver.

The collection ends here, but it should be explained why most of the coins in it are known as wire kopecks. To get the weight right, silver wire was made and cut into lengths of the correct weight, the slight differences in thickness tending to balance out. The wire was then curled around to make a flat disc and struck between two dies, which flattened it into a disc. It was probably heated to help the process. As a result the coins are far from easy to read, and one can often see where the wire ended!

Tony said that this was an interesting collection, which included several rarities. The coins were far from round, each one had been mounted in pieces of card in a hole cut to its exact shape since coin albums were not available in Moscow when the collection was made.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Thursday 8 June

John Roberts-Lewis, a member of the Club's Committee, spoke on 'Adventurers and Treaties: 19th century British Far East expansion'. He said that the British government was reluctant to annex new territory for much of the 19th century. Rather, it was driven more by external factors such as wars with the French, and pressures from mercantile expansion.

Private enterprise pushed ahead of state policy, acquiring spheres of interest, then applying for recognition of the accomplished fact, which was not always too readily given. At the end of the 18th century the East, excluding India, was dominated by Dutch trading settlements. The British, at war with France since 1793, sent East India Company expeditions to capture Malacca and Ceylon. The Treaty of Amiens in 1802 returned the former to the Dutch, and the latter was confirmed as a British Crown Colony.

Under the British Ceylon had continued using Dutch colonial notes and copper stivers until 1801, when a local dump coinage made from old cannons and copper bars was minted by a Dutchman named Adrian Pieter Blume. Whilst government accounts used the Dutch system of gulden and stivers, an anglicised Rix dollar system, which could be related to the Indian rupee, was the private money of account.

The simultaneous use of more than one currency system was a feature in the area until the last third of the 19th century. The relationship between the systems and how the copper dump stivers and fractions, the British Soho Mint coppers and Ceylon minted silver dump Rix dollars coinage was shown in slides.

When Napoleon, who had declared war on Britain in 1803, annexed the Netherlands, and British expeditions captured French and Dutch colonial territories: in 1810 Mauritius and the Seychelles, in 1811 Java and the Celebes. On the Java expedition were two former East India Company clerks: Stamford Raffles and Alexander Hare. Lord Minto made Raffles Governor-General of Java, and Raffles sent Hare to Borneo as Resident and Commissioner, with orders to help the Sultan and suppress the pirates who were attacking him. Hare was successful and was appointed as the independent ruler of Maluka in 1812, and given the right to mint coins. Most of the six types are or very rare, and all are known with a countermark of a circle with eight spokes.

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1805, the Treaty of Paris returned Java and Maluka to the Dutch; Mauritius and the Seychelles were confirmed as British and administered as a single colony until 1903. Hare left Maluka for Sumatra in 1818.

Shortage of silver in 1814-15 led to a tiny (9mm diameter) locally minted silver tokens of one fanam. The Royal Mint, using metal from withdrawn British halfpennies, supplied copper half, one and two stivers whose designs were engraved by William Wyon. In 1821 the Royal Mint struck 400,000 silver Rix dollars, rated at is 9d [8 1/2p]. The head of George IV was by Pistrucci; the reverse, by William Wyon (previously struck only on proofs in 1815) was used with a new date. There was still a shortage of silver and in 1823 madras rupees and quarter rupees were obtained and countermarked with a crown. Circulated at 1 1/3 Rix dollars and 1/3 Rix dollars, the were equivalent to 16 fanams and four fanams respectively, in the Indian system.

In 1825 sterling silver became legal tender in all British colonies and, whilst Ceylon tariffed the Rix dollar at is [5p] and 6d [2 1/2p] for government accounts, the rupee at 2s sterling [10p], was the local standard. Sterling was not commercially convenient, but no coinage bearing the name of Ceylon was issued until after 1869. British quarter and half farthings were, however, minted specifically for use in Ceylon.

Mauritius received British colonial 'anchor money' in 1820 and in 1822, based on a Spanish dollar standard. These, however, were not popular because French and Indian systems were in use. A curious undated issue of 25 and 50 sous, struck in Calcutta using .500 fine silver, was issued in 1822. Only the higher value carried the island's name, and this in its original Dutch form of 'Maurice'. It was very popular with French merchants who were still using livres and sous.

With sterling the legal tender, few coins were struck for the British territories in the east from 1825 to 1869, excluding estates tokens and tickets and East India Company coins. This was, however, a period of much territorial change. Sir Stamford Raffles purchased Singapore island from the Sultan of Jahore in 1819. His vision was not shared by the east India Company or by the British Government, who feared a war over Dutch opposition. A subsequent Treaty in 1824 resolved the matter; £300,000 of the Dutch debt to Britain was written off. British interests in Sumatra were exchanged for Dutch interests in India and Malacca. This

led to the formation of the Straits Settlements in 1826, uniting Penang, Malacca and Singapore. It was also the year in which Raffles died aged only 45. An ungrateful British government made his widow pay the cost of Singapore's founding expedition. Also in 1826, Alexander Hare established a trading settlement with John Clunies Ross on Cocos Keeling Islands. They were partners in extensive estates in Java, but by 1829 or 1830 they had quarrelled and Hare retired to Java, where he died in 1832. Clunies Ross received a Royal Grant in 1866, and the Islands became a British Protectorate in 1878.

During the First Burmese War of 1825-6, the Burmese advance on Calcutta down the Bramaputra Valley was stopped by an East India Company force of 10,000 Indian regulars under British officers. A junior officer, James Brooke, was injured and invalided out, though he eventually recovered. Years later, with inherited money, he bought a 140-ton armed schooner and, whilst in Singapore, he went to help Raja Muda Hassim in Borneo against pirates. For this he was rewarded and given land on the north-west coast of Borneo, becoming the Rajah of Sarawak. A rare copper keeping gives his accession date of 24 September 1841, and this was authorised in 1842. Brooke fought again in 1847 to save the Raja, and survived a serious revolt himself in 1857. He was knighted in 1863, and issued 1/4, 1/2 and 1 cent copper pieces in the same format as the Straits Settlements. They were struck by Heaton and Sons, Birmingham, from dies prepared by Joseph Moore; no mintmark being used. Sarawak's independence was recognised by Britain in 1864.

After the transfer of the East India Company powers to the Crown in 1858, the Straits Settlements was run by the Indian government. In 1862 copper quarter, half and one cent coins were struck at the Calcutta mint with the Wyon head obverse used in 1845, and 'Indian Straits' reverse. The Indian rupee was divided into 100 cents, but the Spanish dollar of 100 cents was the mercantile system used. The use of Indian coinage as legal tender ended in 1867 when the Straits Settlements became a Crown Colony. Fractional silver on the dollar standard for 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents formed the new currency and were supplied from the Royal Mint and also by Heaton. Some 1867 cents have a W mintmark for James Watt, Soho, but this is not, however, a direct continuation of the famous Soho mint of Boulton and Watt. From 1899 reeded edges were used to combat forgery. All the obverses were Leonard Wyon's Victoria

head with diadem.

Hong Kong, which had been used as a base for British ships mostly trading in opium, was established as a free port in 1841, being ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. Official accounts used the Imperial system based on the gold sovereign, and trade was based on the Spanish dollar. Petitions began for a Trade dollar and it appears that Victoria 'Young Head' crowns (of 1844, 1845 and 1847) were sent to the east since chop-marked specimens are known. The dollar standard was adopted in 1863, and bronze one mil and one cent pieces were struck. The Chinese would not accept the former and so millions were melted down; the latter was successfully issued up to 1901. The Royal Mint set up a branch in Hong Kong in 1866, striking dollars and half dollars for unlimited tender, and fractional silver of 5, 10 and 20 cents, all being current in the Straits Settlements. The branch was closed after two years as it was not a financial success. The dies were by Leonard Wyon, except for the obverses of the one and ten cents, which used the William Wyon design that was first produced for the 1849 British florin.

To the end of the century the Royal Mint and Heaton continued to supply the silver and the bronze. No more half dollars were struck after 1867, but a 50 cents was struck from 1890. The five and ten cents were popular in Southern China until 1890, when they set up their own mints. Subsequently much of Hong Kong's silver was returned and from 1906 until 1932 the Colony needed no further small silver.

In Sarawak, Charles Brooke, a nephew of James, became Rajah after James died in 1868. Copper coins of Straits Settlements format continued, all being struck by Heaton, but without the H mintmark, until 1888; thereafter until 1897 they had the customary H. Ceylon made the Indian rupee and its subdivisions legal tender in 1869 with the rupee being divided into 100 cents. Copper 1/4, 1/2, 1 and 5 cents struck at Calcutta but dated 1870 were issued in 1872. The obverse is the William Wyon head with coronet and a border similar to the Hong Kong dollar. The five cents has C.MINT in relief on the truncation, the rest of the copper has C.M. incuse. The reverse depicts a fan palm and the weights were based on the old British copper penny with those of the farthing, half-farthing and quarter-farthing being issued for the cent, half and quarter. By weight the five cents should be four cents, but a decimal system was being introduced, which was a compromise since the silver

as still binary rupees and fractions.

In 1892 the Royal Mint struck 10, 25 and 50 cents using Leonard Wyon's diadem head of Victoria and the palm reverse to replace the Indian silver. Mauritius had used sterling, including 1 1/2 d silver pieces specifically struck for them in 1837 and 1843, though other dates also have been supplied. Sterling was never popular because it was awkward: the penny was tarified at four cents, the Indian rupee at 2s 1 d in 1876. The first Royal coins based on 100 cents to the rupee were issued in 1877 when the Royal mint struck silver 20 cents and 10 cents, and also bronze five, two and one cent pieces. Leonard Wyon's design was also struck for some years by Heaton up to 1897 as well as by the Royal Mint.

An Englishman, Alfred Dent, later Sir Alfred, obtained rights in North Borneo in 1877. The circumstances led to an international row between Britain, Spain and Holland. British diplomacy and possession eventually won the day and in 1881 a Royal Charter confirmed the rights of the British North Borneo Company. The issued copper cents and half cents in a number of years between 1882 and 1907, all with the H mintmark and their format following that of the Straits Settlements. For some years cents of Sarawak, Brunei and the British North Borneo Company were imported into Singapore and in 1890 legislation was passed to prevent their circulation. Sarawak legislated against export of their cents, and a new design including an oval central hole was used between 1892 and 1897. Sarawak finally produced a series of silver coins in 1900 - 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents struck on the dollar standard by Heaton.

Finally, in 1895, a British Trade Dollar was at last produced using dies by G. W. De Saulles, Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint. These were struck at the Bombay mint to begin with, and during the next forty years also by Calcutta and the Royal Mint.

The pattern of colonial coinage had finally been established by the end of the 19th century. It was continued and expanded before replacement by independent coinages during the 20th century.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Tuesday 4 July

Dr Jonathan Williams of the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, spoke to the Club on the subject of 'Coins of the Roman usurpers'.

Jonathan posed the questions: What makes a king a king, or a president a president? How do they get there, how do we come to believe in them? These are questions that he and a colleague from the Museum, Clive Cheesman, had tried to tackle in an exhibition at the British Museum in 1999 that was entitled 'Rebels, Pretenders, Impostors'. It will be published as a book by British Museum Press.

The answers to the questions just posed might seem rather obvious: in the good old days of emperors and monarchies, people came to the throne by inheritance, mostly from father to son, power passing within a ruling house or dynasty. In the modern world of elective republics, heads of state mostly come to power by popular mandate or, in less liberal states, by internal party choice. Things are not, however, always as simple as that — neither were they in the monarchical past either. Even in the most dynastic of monarchies those where great stress was placed on the succession of the eldest son as the only acceptable means of transferring legitimate sovereignty from one generation to another, there were constant ruptures in the skein of supposed continuity. Take, for instance, Henry VII of England who, in 1485, overthrew and killed Richard III, the legal and crowned king, at the battle of Bosworth Field. Henry was sprung from a bastard line of the House of Lancaster only distantly connected with the royal family, the house of York and, moreover, one that had been expressly barred from succession to the throne. But, upon the death of Richard, there were no doubts about who was king — law and custom had to give way before the realities of power.

The question we were interested in, both in the exhibition and the accompanying book, was just how did he, and others like him, get away with it? How indeed does any usurper whose attempt at, or accession to power is unorthodox manage to persuade people to regard him, and it usually *is* a him, as the genuine article, the real king and not just a pretender? One of the ways that Henry VII achieved this was to marry the daughter of Edward IV, a previous king from the House of York, which allowed him to claim to have united the two feuding dynasties. This was a

point underlined in his rather splendid gold coins when he introduced the gold sovereign with its conjoined roses reverse, producing the Tudor rose. Henry was also helped by the fact that Richard III had himself been a usurper, having come to power in a palace coup. Richard had had his nephew, King Edward V, declared to be illegitimate and then (probably) murdered, whilst contemporary and later chronicles blacked his character to show that he was not universally popular. Despite this, Henry was troubled by would-be pretenders – Lambert Simnel, and the more serious Perkin Warbeck, who pretended to be Prince Richard, the son of Edward IV. However, the reputation for military success, some smoothing over of the dynastic cracks, did the trick. Henry was able to establish the Tudors as one of the most successful ruling families in English history.

What the usurper has to do to establish his claim is to make out that he is the natural choice of the gods and/or men, and that his predecessor was the wrong man for the job, whatever his qualifications by birth. Religion, politics and history are mobilised to persuade people who matter that this is the case, or at least to reconcile their consciences to the new man in power. Material culture is exploited to advertise the appearances, the claims and symbols of the new ruling house. In the medieval and modern periods we tend to know a lot about this kind of thing since much has survived the vicissitudes of time. For large sections of antiquity, including the Roman Empire, we are less well informed. Of the different kinds of decorative art and symbolism that were produced in the ancient world, one of the most abundantly extant is coinage and its attendant designs. It forms for us the most plentiful and varied source for the imagery of the successive emperors who ruled the Roman world from the late first century BC onwards, and has a lot to tell us about the rebels, the pretenders and the impostors of Rome.

The Roman Empire is known as a model of efficient, if somewhat brutal, organisation and considerable human achievement. The Roman army successfully defended thousands of miles of frontier from north Britain to North Africa for several centuries; Roman architecture erected monuments that have 'survived the biting rain and the flight of time', as the Roman poet Horace put it. Roman literature created masterpieces of both poetry and prose that are still widely read to this day, if admittedly mostly in translation, while Roman law elaborated certain fundamental concepts of jurisprudence which have ever since underlain most western

legal thinking.

Yet, the Roman emperors as a group are popularly known as a bunch of corrupt, conniving, immoral, incestuous, and treacherous scoundrels. How can this be? How can we reconcile these two rather opposite pictures? The answer is because there is substantial truth in both of them. The empire was a stable and enduring state that united the whole of the Mediterranean basin and much of continental Europe for almost 450 years. During this period it was regularly wracked with civil war, imperial family intrigues, armed rebellion and murderous usurpation. What eventually brought the Roman Empire in the west to an end (the eastern part continued on as the so-called Byzantine Empire down until 1453) was arguably not internal weakness so much as external pressures from peoples and states beyond the frontiers. How did the Roman empire manage to survive its period of self-immolation intact for so long more or less intact? Continuing instability at the top of the empire meant that emperors did come and go with alarming frequency, particularly in the apparently chaotic third century AD. Despite all this, the empire remained and the city of Rome endured: ROMA AETERNA, as she increasingly came to be called, the eternal city that would never fall, whose continuity guaranteed the future of the empire. Rome's eventual capture by the Goths under Alaric in AD 410 sent shock waves throughout the empire. St Jerome, hearing about this inconceivable event in the Holy Land, where he lived, wrote: 'In one city the whole world perished' — the fall of Rome meant the end of human history. For St Augustine of Hippo in North Africa, it provided the incentive to write *The City of God*, about the eternal city that would never fall, to refute the insinuation that it was the abandonment of the old gods by the Christians that led to the apparent decline of Roman power.

The symbolic appeal of Rome had created an important mental glue which held the empire together in times of crisis. The inhabitants of the empire from Britain to Syria, from Germany to Egypt, knew very little of one another's lives. They had some, if an increasingly minimal, sense of themselves as a civic community, even, or rather especially, after all the free citizens of the empire were enfranchised in AD 212. But they did all have a sense that they belonged to a community called the Romans, people who stood in a special relationship to Rome. Rome had become more than a city, it was the heart and soul of the empire, and each

emperor was its temporary incarnation. Though usurpers assaulted the city, and Roman legions fought one another in bloody battles, none of them turned against Rome as an idea. Secession on the part of one or more provinces with a view to creating a new state with a new name was never a feasible project. Areas of the empire did from time to time split off under their own emperors, but they always claimed to do so as Romans under the banner of Rome, not to separate themselves from her.

The talismanic name of Rome provided the symbolic bond that held the sprawling, multi-ethnic empire together through thick and thin, but there was a legal aspect to the unity of the empire as well – the Roman emperors existed within a constitution that long predated them. The city and the empire of Rome had been governed as an aristocratic republic for 480 years before Augustus took over and established himself as monarch in 27 BC. This inheritance was important to the Romans, and it remained important even under the emperors, or rather especially under the emperors. Romans did not like to think that things had changed much. The old Republic had to be perpetuated in their imaginations precisely because the reality of power had changed so much - but that is a side issue. The main point is that Augustus and his successor emperors were a sort of secondary, bolt-on addition to the Roman constitution. They were not, in theory, essential to it and, because of the republican background to the rise of the monarchy in Rome, dynastic connections were not an essential qualification for imperial office. What made an emperor legally an emperor was a law of the people and a vote of the Senate. This might in most instances have been a formality but, like many formalities, it was important.

Augustus was, in many ways, the first imperial usurper. He had taken power through armed victory in civil war – much as Henry VII had but, unlike him, he changed the republican system he took charge of by establishing himself as monarch over it. However, he made sure that he appeared to do so in a republican manner. This was his particular challenge in usurping power, to achieve an extraordinary act of political sleight of hand and persuade the Romans that not only was he the right man to rule the Roman world, but that the 'ship of state' could only continue with him at the tiller. The crucial point at which he achieved this transformation was not in 31 BC when he defeated the ships of Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in the Adriatic, but a few

years later in 28 and 27 BC. Throughout this period he successfully transformed himself from a victorious warlord with supreme but unconstitutional power over the state into the first citizen with constitutionally grounded supreme power over the state. No piece of evidence sums this up better than two coins from these years. The first is a unique piece in the British Museum, struck in 28 BC, which, moreover, is the only extant piece of contemporary evidence attesting to one of the most important events in world history – the establishment of the Roman principate, or imperial regime. It shows Augustus on the obverse wreathed in triumphal laurel and again, on the reverse, but this time sitting on his magistrate's chair as consul holding out a document scroll. Around him are the expressive but deceptive words: 'he has restored the laws and rights of the Roman people'. His whole plan hung on the credibility of this claim. It was, of course, a massive piece of pretence. What he was really doing was arrogating power to himself, not giving it to the people. He was making himself king in all but name, usurping power, and using it to force everyone else to act in public as though he did not in fact possess it, while deferring to him in all important matters of state and acknowledging his unique political position. A former senior British civil servant once said that the secret of politics is to have your cake and eat it – not perhaps a well-kept secret on reflection. Anyway, if anyone did, it was Augustus.

The second of these important coins was struck by him in 27 BC. It shows a very different kind of image, much more allusive and less wordy: the eagle of Jupiter holding an oak wreath crown with two bay tree bushes of the god Apollo behind and, above, Augustus' new name spelt out – AVGVSTVS – granted to him by the Senate in January of that year. Without going into all the complex Roman symbolism of it all, it conveys the transcendent, near-divine nature of Augustus' power and his divinely-blessed victory. But, at the bottom are two crucial letters – S C – standing for *Senatus Consulto* – 'By Decree of the Senate'. All this power and glory given legally and appropriately to Augustus by his fellow Romans in recognition of his having saved them from ruin and Cleopatra. The gods may well have supported Augustus' rise to power, and he may have won it through violence in battle, but it was the proper legal channels that gave him his right to exercise it. All his successors would maintain this theoretical position on the nature of imperial power, which would have

interesting effects on the nature of usurpation in the Roman system.

Though the realities of power meant that sons did tend to succeed fathers in Rome's post-republican monarchy, the necessity for all emperors, even those who inherited power, to lay claim to a senatorial mandate as the ostensible justification of their exalted position meant that the way was potentially open for usurpers and pretenders to dispute the succession and make good their own claim. If they succeeded, and this was usually through warfare, they too could become the legitimate emperor with the approval of the senate and people, no matter whose son they were.

Sometimes the Senate misinterpreted the actual nature of their role in negotiating the succession of emperors, as in AD 238 when, in opposition to the existing but unloved emperor Maximinus, they elected two of their senior members, Balbinus and Pupienus, to be co-emperors. This pair, although possessing the formal qualification for legitimate power courtesy of the Senate, lacked any support among the imperial Praetorian Guard or the people and, though they saw off Maximinus (who was murdered by his troops), they lasted only three months before they themselves were murdered by the Praetorians. They were replaced by a 13-year old boy, Gordian III, raised to the purple, again by the Praetorians. The senators wisely refrained from withholding their approval of the Praetorian nominee. They had, perhaps, learnt their lesson, having once mistaken their power of formal validation for the power of real political initiative which, as a body, they had lost very early in the history of the empire. Just how early this had happened was shown in the first real succession crisis which the Roman Empire faced in AD 41 after the murder of the mad, bad emperor Gaius, better known by his nickname of Caligula ('Little Boot'). Gaius died without a designated heir. There were no precedents for this event. Tiberius had succeeded Augustus in AD 14, and Gaius had succeeded Tiberius in 37, both by prearrangement. What should happen now? On the very day of Gaius' murder the Senate met and, as reported by the late first-century AD Jewish historian Josephus, the consuls declared their intention to assume executive power themselves and return Rome to republican forms of government after seventy years of monarchy (*Jewish Antiquities* 19, 1-4).

However, the words counted for little against the will of the real-power brokers of Imperial Rome. They were not the noble senators but

the Praetorians stationed in their barracks in the city of Rome itself, 12,000 or so troops whose loyalties were not to the Senate or people but to the emperor who paid their wages and guaranteed their not inconsiderable privileges. Gaius himself had increased their numbers. This significant force in Roman politics had no interest in returning to the aristocratic Republic, and every reason to look for a new emperor. They found one in the person of Claudius, Gaius' uncle and a grandson of Augustus' wife Livia on one side and Augustus' sister on the other. Was Claudius then a usurper? He had come to power in something approaching a military coup following the assassination of the previous and lawful emperor, but his succession was legitimised by the Senate and ratified in due fashion. No matter that he was not the designated heir of Gaius (Caligula), Rome's republican monarchy had ways of smoothing over abrupt dynastic transitions such as this which allowed the system to continue and did not require the total reorientation of the whole state.

Rebellion in the name of liberty had stirred the breasts of some of the more romantic senators, but meant little to the common soldiery whose allegiances to the emperors, as Claudius had wisely ensured, were focussed exclusively on themselves and their families. The coins the emperors struck were, of course, one of the ways in which this effect was achieved. Bearing the emperor's name and head on one side, the coins, particularly the gold and silver ones, were struck with the army very much in mind as the primary, if not sole, consumers. It is no coincidence that the Roman silver coin, the denarius, tends nowadays to be found in provinces where there were large numbers of soldiers stationed, i.e. on the frontiers, rather than in the central Mediterranean provinces. Now this is not to say that the designs on these coins constituted a form of propaganda as we would understand it. This seems to be an unhelpful term with far too many anachronistic connotations of the totalitarian twentieth century which do not apply very well to antiquity. Propaganda requires an element of political ideology, an idea to be *propagated*. There was no political ideology in the Roman Empire. Government in the Roman world was not about politics or policies, emperors had no manifestos or programmes. Ruling in Rome was not about producing new ideas so much as enacting a more authentic and effective realisation of the old ones. Emperors were not meant to be innovators but renovators. Novelty was understood only as revival, a New Age as the cyclical

recommencement of the Golden Age, the *saeculum aureum* (see Andrew Burnett's talk, above). It is possible to argue that coins were propaganda in a sense that they served to propagate the face of the new emperor, to spread his personality cult, but would you call a modern monarch's head appearing on coins or banknotes propaganda?

Roman coin designs are better described as monuments rather than propaganda. They were intended to bring events, buildings, people and their qualities to mind, in Latin *monere*, not to persuade their audiences of a particular way of thinking, *suadere* in Latin. They remind us who the emperor is, representing his likeness to us, they record for us and for posterity the virtues and achievements of the great man and his family. In effect they are small-scale, widely circulating and mass-produced monuments to his glory and position offered by a grateful Senate and People to their excellent leader — not propaganda pumped out by a political office located somewhere on the Palatine Hill in Rome, for which there is no evidence. The argument there is that the concept of propaganda does not adequately account for whatever that might be. What, then, about the coins of the Roman usurpers?

The concept of 'Change' is central to modern western ideologies, but this was not the case in the ancient world. Change towards an unfamiliar unknown was eschewed in favour of the restoration of the familiar, but lost, past. The usurper was figured not as the bringer of a new age but as the restorer of Rome, the one who would take Rome back to its very origins and revitalise the old commonwealth through new victories in the old style.

In AD 68 and 69 the Roman Empire underwent a further series of succession crises involving the rapid rise and fall of four emperors, all of whom were usurpers in the sense that they took power by violence and were not designated to succeed their predecessor. However, all of them were duly recognised retrospectively, upon their seizure of power, by the Senate and People as the lawful emperor. It all began with the first stirrings of rebellion against Nero in AD 68. He was extremely unpopular with the senatorial elite, having killed too many of them in dubious circumstances in his later years, though he was rather a favourite with the soldiers and the people of Rome as he was a bit of a character. Early in 68 one of the governors of Gaul, Julius Vindex, entered into open rebellion

against Nero and called upon the governor of one of the Spanish provinces, Servius Sulpicius Galba, to proclaim himself emperor. Vindex's revolt was put down but Galba was recognised as emperor upon Nero's suicide in early 68. Although Galba's reign was an inastute and inglorious one, and although later historians heaped criticism upon his memory, he was always acknowledged as a legitimate emperor. Though he had taken power by force, though he was unrelated to Nero, it was universally accepted that Galba had been an emperor, even if he should never have become such according to his merits. 'By general consent', wrote the historian Tacitus, a master of the ironical aside, 'he [Galba] would have made an excellent emperor had he never become one'.

Galba quickly became unpopular and in January 69 two rebellions broke out against him simultaneously: one among the legions on the Rhine frontier, who had never liked him, led by their commander Vitellius, and one in Rome itself led by Otho, a former henchman of Nero who had transferred his allegiance to Galba at an opportune moment. The second of these, being closer to Galba succeeded at getting at him first: he was hacked to death in the Roman Forum. Otho was duly proclaimed emperor by the Senate, but the German legions would have none of this. Instead of rebellion against Galba they now transferred their enmity to Otho, determined as they were to see their man, Vitellius, in power. Vitellius' army lumbered south and eventually met Otho's in northern Italy, and defeated it in April 69. Otho committed suicide and the Senate proclaimed Vitellius as emperor. He was no more successful than Galba or Otho in securing the loyalty of the empire. In July the armies of the east swore an oath to their commander, Vespasian, as though he were emperor, the armies of the Danube broke out into revolt against Vitellius and in support of Vespasian. By the end of the year Vitellius was dead and Vespasian acknowledged as emperor. He managed to stop the wheel of fortune turning, established himself as emperor, founding the Flavian dynasty, and was to be succeeded by his two sons, Titus and Domitian, the latter being assassinated in 96.

The historical lessons of these events are threefold. First, they demonstrated once again the importance of the army in making an emperor. Without that support no emperor could continue in post for long. Secondly, they revealed the essentially secondary role of the Senate in making emperors when the issue was in doubt. This august body of

senior statesmen and nobles could really only rubber-stamp a *fait accompli*, they had no power of initiative because they commanded the loyalty of no troops whatsoever. Thirdly, however, it also revealed the vital nature of this secondary role. For even though the Senate could not elect emperors against the wishes of the army or the people, its validation of decisions taken elsewhere, on the battlefield for instance, was still a *sine qua non* for aspiring emperors. Legitimacy was conferred on emperors by the Senate, it was not by heredity or by the gods. It was this, paradoxically, which both opened the way for usurpers to aspire to the purple, birth being no bar, and yet it also ensured the stability of the whole system, even during periods of intense civil strife, because it was not as if the whole framework of the state was in doubt, only the relatively superficial question of who would fulfil the role of emperor for the next few years (or less). No emperor, however rebellious his origins, ever proposed the abolition of the Senate and the establishment of an absolute monarchy. Even Constantine the Great, who was innovative enough to create a new city in Constantinople as a second capital, had to create a second Senate to sit there, so inviolable was the prestige of this apparently powerless, but crucial, body.

If we examine the coins of the three unsuccessful usurpers: Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, it is immediately apparent that they were all newcomers, and they all had to move quickly to convince the people that mattered, the senators, the army and the people of Rome, that they were worth supporting. The way in which intelligent Roman usurpers tended to do this was first to secure the formal approval of the Senate and people, and then pay large amounts of money to the Praetorians and the legions. This, however, was only the start. Usurped power could always be legalised and fidelity bought, but to acquire an enduring hold on the Romans' imagination, the person of the emperor had to be able to represent something more than just his own personal interests. That something was usually the restoration of the Roman past and Roman tradition, as defined in a variety of different ways by successive contenders.

Before proclaiming himself emperor, Galba had claimed to be the Legate of the Senate and people, reverting to Rome' pre-monarchical republican tradition and suggesting, though not exactly promising, that he might be about to revive it. A coin of his has a variation on the restoration

theme as its motif: the reverse carries the figure of Rome personified, holding a globe on which stands a tiny figure of the winged goddess of Victory who reaches out with a laurel wreath to crown her. The accompanying legend reads ROMA RENASCENS, meaning 'Rome is being reborn'. This is an unprecedented coin design, so put the two together and we get the idea of the particular character of the rhetoric being used by and about Galba during his brief period of office. It suggests that Galba is the one who will restore Rome to her pristine state, and bring her new victories to match the old. This is a rhetoric of newness, but it is not a rhetoric of change. It is newness in terms of a return to the old ways and the good old days, just the sort of thing Romans liked to hear.

The next usurper, Otho, employed what superficially was an odd tactic when he came to power. He actually went out of his way to stress his affinities with Nero, using public art and architecture as part of his programme. This was not, in fact, as extraordinary as it might at first appear. Nero had been deeply unpopular with many senators but not with the army or the people. Like Nero, who was 30 when he died, and unlike the aged Galba who was 71, at 36 Otho possessed the attraction of youth which, since Alexander the Great, had been recognised as a desirable quality in a new ruler. According to Suetonius, in his *Lives of the Caesars*, Otho was hailed as Nero coming to power and was reported to have signed his name as Nero on documents (Suetonius, *Life of Otho* 7). Otho had Nero's public statues and images re-erected, and paid for the completion of his notorious palace the *Domus Aurea* (Golden House), constructed on the ruins of the great fire of Rome in AD 64. He also reportedly intended to marry Statilia Messalina, Nero's widow. All of this might simply be attributed to a deep streak of misguided megalomania in Otho, but no doubt expected in one who aspired to be Roman emperor.

There is good reason to believe that much of Otho's Neronian revivalism was designed and conscious, aimed at appealing to those sections of the urban populace and the army who still held Nero's name in high regard. Like Claudius, and Galba eventually, Otho too adopted the names of Caesar and Augustus that no emperor could dispense with. Both of these titles can be seen on his coins. There was, in fact, a considerable posthumous personality cult which grew up around Nero's memory, prompting the appearance of a number of impostors or false Neros. A

similarity might be loosely drawn between Nero and Elvis Presley in this respect. Both died relatively young, both were (great) musicians and performers, both lived in extraordinary houses (the *Domus Aurea* as a kind of Roman Graceland), and both were allegedly seen on several occasions after their deaths.

The coins of Otho also tell us something more about his public image. The obverse shows him as a young man, not quite as young as Nero, but no dissimilar in other respects. The reverse has a figure of Pax, goddess of Peace, who is surrounded by the legend PAX ORBIS TERRARVM, 'the Peace of the whole world'. Again, this is not simply a pretty picture, it has meaning and its implication is that Otho is the man who will put a stop to the civil wars and restore peace to the world. Peace, of course, for the Romans was not merely the absence of war, it meant peace through military victory over one's enemies. The Roman verb connected with the word *pax*, *pacare*, means 'to pacify' in the sense of 'to conquer by force of arms'. Nero had issued coins with the reverse type of the temple of Janus, shown with its doors closed to signify that no wars were being waged throughout the Empire.

Finally, Vitellius. His first approach to the problem of his public image was to try to establish himself in the Romans' mind as part of a great dynasty. His father had been a great general and politician in the AD 40s, and he had two children, all of whom were mobilised in his public imagery to suggest that the emperor was the right man for the job, and that he had turned the position into a settled family business, so as to lessen the chances of someone else doing what he had done. The problem faced by all usurpers was, of course, that they could not undo their own example. This is why they had to seek elsewhere for legitimisation and or validation. In Rome it was to the Senate and to public opinion, particularly that of the army. Vitellius was also portrayed as the restorer of *Libertas*, political liberty, a very important concept for Romans, and not just those at the top of the social ladder.

The Roman Republic had prided itself on its liberty, in contrast to other peoples who were slaves to kings and tyrants. The compromise that all Romans had to make under the emperors was between liberty and monarchy. Could they continue to believe that they were living in a free state when that state was plainly governed by one man? Many of them clearly could, but the success of this necessary delusion depended very

much on the behaviour of the emperor. Nero had infringed on the liberties of the Senate by murdering too many senators and acting like an arbitrary tyrant rather than the leader of a free people. So, he was removed, not by the senate as a body but by individual senators in charge of large armies rebelling against him. His downfall was a lesson to his successors of the limits of an emperor's power which Vitellius, at least on the evidence of the coin, seems to have learnt. The reverse of the coin shows Liberty holding in her hand the Cap of Liberty (a symbol picked up much later by the Jacobins in Revolutionary France), and around her the legend reads LIBERTAS RESTITVTA – Liberty restored. Vitellius is presenting himself as the champion of the freedom of the Roman people, the one who has liberated Rome from the slavery imposed by his predecessors. The restoring of the liberty of the people had been a common political metaphor at Rome for a long time – Augustus himself had used it when he took over in the 20s BC, representing himself as 'Champion of the Liberty of the People of Rome'. The concept had gained renewed currency during the period of revolt against Nero in mid-68 when some romantics had hoped, forlornly, that his downfall might lead to the restoration of the old Republic. It was useful, therefore, for Vitellius to pick on this, as Galba had before him, and present himself as the harbinger of liberty. Much good it did him.

So, three themes – the Rebirth of Rome, the Peace of the Whole World, and the Restoration of Liberty – were all exemplified in turn by the coins of the three usurpers of AD 68-69. Just to show how little the Romans cared for change by looking at a few coins of later usurpers it is possible to trace the continuity of these ideas into later centuries. Take, for instance, the coins of Postumus. He was a Rhine frontier commander who, in AD 260, was proclaimed emperor by his troops (perhaps prompted) in opposition to the feeble and unloved emperor Gallienus. Postumus ruled what was in effect an autonomous state covering most of Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, and Britain for nine years. He set up a Senate, had yearly consuls of his own, and there was no sense in which he was anything other than a Roman emperor. His coins present him as restorer of Gaul and of the world respectively, following on from a tradition of restoration imagery that goes back, again, to Augustus – there the emperor raising the *Res Publica* up from her knees. As a conqueror Postumus is most vividly depicted as Hercules, the prototype of the world

conqueror in Graeco-Roman mythology.

The coins of a slightly later usurper, Carausius, who took power in Britain and northern Gaul in the 280s and 290s, drew heavily of the symbolism of Rome refounded, as on the denarius showing the Wolf and Twins (Romulus and Remus) and the legend ROMANOR RENOVAT – the Restoration of the Romans. Through his coins we can see how this northern European on the margins of the Roman Empire was desperately keen to register his credentials as a Roman. Not that they were in doubt – Carausius was as Roman as any inhabitant of the city itself, but it is an illustration of just how pervasive the aura of the Roman name was. None of the Roman usurpers present themselves in public as anything other than Roman emperors.

Though Postumus' realm is commonly called the Gallic Empire, and Carausius' the British Empire, these are misnomers -these were rather Roman sub-empires. Even the famous Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, Postumus' contemporary in the 260s and 270s, struck coins on which she calls herself Augusta, and her son Vaballathus Augustus, the regular titles of the Roman emperors. She has gone down in history as an anti-Roman rebel, and has since become a national hero for the Arabs, and particularly the Syrians, as a supposed rebel against western domination. Yet, she also had coins struck with the image of Aurelian, the so-called legitimate emperor who eventually ended up unseating her and reuniting the empire.

An enduring and binding sense of Roman-ness and an elusive but persistent notion of quasi-Republican constitutionality are what underpinned the unity and continuity of the Roman Empire in the face of continued and often prolonged periods of civil war. Paradoxically, it was these twin features that permitted the rise, indeed the proliferation, of usurpers because of the lack of dynasticism among the Romans. Anyone who could plausibly claim to be the right man to restore Rome and her ancient prowess and liberties could make a case that he should be emperor, and the claim did not always even have to be very plausible. Take, for instance, that of Calocaerus – who held the not very exalted position of Master of Camels on Cyprus. He proclaimed himself emperor in the 320s – and Constantine the Great had him crucified. Unfortunately Calocaerus did not quite get around to striking any coins for himself, unlike Silbannacus who made coins in lead, but which are only known

from the literature.

Roman-ness and constitutionality also constrained the actions of usurpers — they were not free to do as they wished. They had to abide by the rules of the imperial game. It was necessary to press the right button with the people and the army, strike the correct imperial pose, outwardly respect the increasingly notional rights and liberties of their subjects, and make coins that showed them off in the right way to the present, and to posterity. In this last ambition, at least, they succeeded, leaving us their portraits and associated symbolism to try and make sense of, and to write history from.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Wednesday 9 August

Hallowed by a long tradition in the Club the August meeting has always been a Members' Own evening, and this August was no exception. Seven members presented short papers, exhibiting relevant coins or showing slides.

Paul Edis spoke on a Crusader gold bezant with Christian legends in Arabic. Some crusader coins, such as the deniers of Antioch and Jerusalem. At Antioch we see 'helmet' types of Bohemond IV and V (1201-51), and of Raymond Roupen (1216-19). At Jerusalem there are the obole and denier of Baldwin III (1143-63), with the reverse showing the Tower of David. Gold coins were also issued - in imitation of Islamic coins — and were essentially a territorial currency for use in the Crusader principalities. A gold bezant struck for use in the Kingdom of Jerusalem was probably issued in 1187 when the Crusaders had suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Saladin. It was modelled on the dinars of the Fatamid Caliph al-Amr (1101-30) but was of lower weight and fineness (only approximately 80% gold), and had faulty calligraphy. The Counts of Tripoli also minted bezants, probably from 1187 to 1250, with only 62% gold, and these imitated the dinars of Caliph al-Mustansir (1035-94).

Some bezants had a cross and the letters B and T in the legends —these could stand either for Bohemond, i.e. Count Behemond V and his successors, 1233-87, and Tripoli, or, Bezant/Tripoli. In 1250 these bezants attracted the censure of the Papal Legate, Eudes of Chateauroux, who had come to Acre with Louis IX (St Louis). He found it scandalous

that Christians should be striking, as he reported, coins 'bearing the name of Mahomet and the number of years from his nativity'. The practice was forthwith banned by Pope Innocent IV under threat of excommunication. The design of the coins was therefore changed, although their weight and alloy remained the same.

Gold bezants (and silver dirhams) were struck thereafter inscribed with legends in correct Arabic but containing Christian proclamations of faith and the date, still written in Arabic, from the incarnation of the Messiah. The Cross was now given a prominent place. These bezants ranged from 62% to 68% fine, and weighed approximately three grammes. Their legends read, starting from the exterior margin: 'Struck at Acre in the year one thousand and two hundred, three and fifty of the incarnation of the Messiah'. The inner margin read: 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit', whilst the central field proclaimed 'One Godhead'. The reverse, from the exterior margin, read: 'We are glorified by the Cross of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, in whom is our salvation and our life'; this continued on the inner margin: 'and our resurrection, and in whom is our deliverance and pardon'. There is a cross in the central field.

The dates known for these pieces include 1251, 1253, 1254, 1256, 1257 and 1258. There are, however, a number of specimens with either missing or illegible dates, and it is also possible that immobilised dates were used, thus extending the date range of issue. If the earliest date, 1251, is correct, the authorities must have acted immediately on the instruction of the Papal Legate, as Pope Innocent N's written confirmation of the ban on the earlier Islamic copies did not arrive in Syria until 1253. Some of the bezants have pellets in the first, or the first and fourth quarters of the reverse Cross, and it is rare to see a full specimen with complete marginal legends. Although these bezants belong to the last years of the Latin kingdom, they are still interesting coins.

John Roberts-Lewis spoke on some numismatic connections of the S.S. Great Britain. John had found the evening lecture on the S.S. Great Britain presented at the 1998 BANS Congress at Bristol of interest but, he noted, without any apparent numismatic content. When the ship was visited on the Saturday afternoon, a large tub of modern brass 'tokens' was observed in the shop on the way out. They appeared to have had some slight circulation and were toned. The obverse shows the ship

with six masts, without sail, a funnel and the date 1843, the year of her launch, below. The reverse has the ship's name above and ENTRANCE below, both within an indented rim around a plain centre.

These pieces were not packaged as souvenirs, had no any accompanying information, and were being sold at a trivial price. Were they perhaps used by the public for entrance when the ship was first opened after her partial restoration? No one, however, was able to confirm their original purpose. Another question raised was whether they were based on or copies of a 19th century piece. Contemporary descriptions of the launching ceremony estimated that some 30,000 people watched from Brandon Hill, which forma a natural amphitheatre. Also, subsequently whilst being fitted out, visitors with a written permit signed by two Directors, and having paid five shillings [25p] to the Workmen's Sick Fund, were given access. Neither seems appropriate for use of a token, nor has anything been found in dealers' lists.

There are, however, a number of well-known commemorative medallions which show the ship under sail and steam combined. At the time it was the largest ship in the world. designed by I. K. Brunel, it combined all the elements of a modern ship for the first time with the use of iron, steam propulsion and a screw propeller.

The consulting engineer was T.R. Guppy who had designed and patented the buoyancy tanks used with the iron lifeboats - probably another 'first'. Guppy was described at the time as a Bristol merchant and had inherited his father, Samuel's business. Samuel Guppy had issued a series of token pennies, halfpennies and a farthing in 1811 on behalf of The patent Sheathing Nail manufactory which he owned.

John showed slides of some of the medallions referred to, a 19th century painting of the ship on her trials, an aerial view of the restored vessel in the dry dock where she was originally built. Brunel was also featured, as was the enigmatic Entrance ticket or token .

Peter Clayton exhibited a tiny (17mm diam) silver medalet with, on the obverse, the Egyptian obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, surrounded by a legend reading: A BATTU A THEBES 31 OCTOBRE 1831 ERIGE A PARIS 25 OCTOBRE 1836 / OBELISK DE LOUQSOR. On the reverse, in six lines, was: DURANT LA REGNE DE LOUIS PHILIPPE IR SOUS LA DIRECTION DE M. LEBAS INGENIEUR DE LA MARINE. Alongside he showed five other bronze

medalets (a^y. diam 25mm), all with varying obverse legends, some with fuller details of the obelisk, and also alternative reverses. There were also three larger medallions of a similar nature (52mm diam) which gave fuller information, including its height and weight, one muled with an Arc de Triumphi obverse instead of the portrait of Louis Philippe, and other with a scene that showed the obelisk and personification of the rivers Nile and Seine in concord.

Peter then preceded to show where the obelisk came from, one of pair that originally stood in front of the entrance pylons of the temple of Amun at Luxor. They were erected by Ramesses II (1279-1212 BC), and an illustration from a scene carved on the temple walls showed the whole facade of the temple with them in place. An original drawing by Charles Barry in 1820 showed the pair still there, almost half buried in debris. A coloured lithograph drawn by David Roberts in 1838 showed only the one remaining, that on the east side of the entrance, its companion on the west having been removed to Paris seven years before.

On the pedestal of the obelisk, as erected in the Place de la Concorde, was a dedicatory inscription for Louis Philippe's involvement and, on two other faces, picked out in gold, a representation of the means of taking down of the obelisk in front of the Luxor temple, and the other with its re-erection in Paris. Comment was added about the so-called 'Cleopatra's Needle' on the Thames Embankment - height 20.87m, and weight 187 tons, by comparison with the largest extant obelisk, outside St John Lateran in Rome, height 32.18m and weight 455 tons, both these being erected earlier by Tuthmosis III (1504-1450 BC). By comparison, the Concorde obelisk is 22.55m high, and weighs 227 tons.

All nine medallions exhibited were different in various ways, by legend, or obverses and reverses. [This paper, together with illustrations of the medallions and ancillary items, can be viewed on the Dix Noonan Webb site at: www.dnw.co.uk

The Jubilee or Holy Year: its coins and medallions, was the subject of **Tony Holmes's** contribution. The word 'Jubilee', Tony said, comes from the Hebrew 'Goghel' - a ram's horn, because Leviticus 25 provides that every 50 years a ram's horn is to be blown, like a trumpet, to announce the Jubilee. No farming is to be done and all land which has been sold returns to the original seller. The practice seems to have ended with the Exile.

In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII declared a Christian Jubilee, when some two million pilgrims visited Rome. Since there was only one bridge over the Tiber, St Angelo, the Pope ordered that people entering the city should use one side of it and those leaving the other, to alleviate the congestion. This is said to be the origin of our present system of keeping to one side of the road for each direction. No medals are known for this event, but a translation of the Bull declaring the first Jubilee was passed round to which had been affixed a lead bulla or seal (hence the name Bulla) of Boniface VIII.

It was pointed out that 50 years would be more scriptural than 100 years, as originally intended, so the second Holy Year was held in 1350. In 1475 it was decided to hold it every 25 years, which makes 2000 a Holy Year. It appears that it was in 1475 that coins were first struck to commemorate the jubilee.

A coin of Pope Julius III shows 1550 (Roman letters MDL) on the Holy Door. One of the five main doors of St Peter's is normally bricked up and at the beginning of the Holy Year the Pope comes and begins to break down the brickwork with a hammer, and subsequently enters through the gap.

At the 1575 Jubilee (represented by a silver testone) Pope Gregory XIII swung the silver hammer so vigorously that it broke and the Pope injured his hands. There was also a regrettable disorder when the crowd broke through the line of marshals and some 200 people pushed in before the Pope himself could enter. Much to his grief, a number of people were trampled to death.

In 1600, represented by a copper quattorino, Pope Clement VIII, despite poor health, personally washed the feet of pilgrims and waited on them at table, as well as hearing their confessions. At the Jubilee of 1675 ex-queen Christina of Sweden, who had become a catholic, played a part.

A silver guilio of 1700 shows rays of Grace coming through the door. Samuel Pepys's nephew was present at this opening, and he wrote home:

'The Cardinal advanced to the Holy Door. The guns of Castell St Angelo were discharged, and he knocked thrice with a silver hammer on a small cross of brass fixed in the mortar of the door, pausing a few minutes between each stroke, while some words were repeated. Having given the last stroke, he retired a little and down fell the door, which made no small

dust, being of brick, plastered on both sides, and kept together by a frame of wood round, and supported on the inside with props, which being taken away, it fell into a case set to receive it, for its more ready removal; the Cardinals etc. entering afterwards to sing vespers, and the people by degrees following in most astonishing crowds...'

Pope Innocent XII was too ill to open the Holy Year and in fact he died before the year finished. He was a holy and austere pope who required strict standards of dress and behaviour during Holy Year visits. Unusually, there are coins for the closing of the Holy Door of a different pope, Clement XI.

The Holy Year of 1850 was cancelled because of the 1848/9 revolution, and that of 1875 because, after the rest of the Papal States had been taken away in 1860, Rome itself was taken in 1870 and the Pope became the 'Prisoner in the Vatican'. All coinage ceased but rather curiously there exists a medal for the Jubilee of 1875 that never took place (rather as one can find medals for the coronation of Edward VIII).

Pope Leo XIII, famous for his concern for justice for the working class, tried to improve relations with the Italian government and held a Holy Year in 1900. He was delighted when King Umberto I supported it and took part, although his assassination later that year did cast a shadow over events. The Pope, although aged 90, entered St Peter's on his knees, attended many devotions during the year but struck no coins to commemorate it although there are medals.

The Lateran Treaty of 1929 allowed the Pope, Pius XI, to strike coins for the tiny Vatican City and in 1933 he declared a special Holy Year for the 1900th anniversary of Christ's death. The 100 lire of 1975, with its modernistic representation of the miraculous draft of fishes, breaks away from the traditional types and is often not recognised as a Holy Year coin at all, but it was intended as such and the date reads:

'AN.IVB.MCMLXXV'. As yet, no coins for the present year have been seen, and their design is awaited with interest.

Philip Rueff showed two 18th century tokens with a legal connotation. One, of penny size, he had recently acquired from Spink's new premises on Southampton Row. In very fine condition, apart from a striking crack, it was one of Kempson's series of Notable London Buildings which had been issued for collectors rather than with the idea

of alleviating the chronic shortage of small change. It was thus not really a genuine trade token. It had been manufactured at Kempson's factory in Birmingham and was probably engraved by Wyon.

The obverse bore a two-storeyed hardstone building with a classical facade, flanked by two smaller wings. The legend read: SESSIONS HOUSE / BUILT 1774 / OLD BAILEY. On the reverse was the coat of arms of London and Westminster surmounted by a coronet, and the inscription LONDON + WESTMINSTER 1797. The impressed edge inscription reads: "I promise to pay on demand the bearer one penny."

The Old Bailey is, of course, the Chief Criminal Court of London and for England. It has been the scene of many famous trials over the last 200 years, including those of Roger Casement, Joyce ('Lord Haw-Haw'), Christie and Bentley, the serial killer Sutcliffe, and Rosemary West, as well as for, relatively, minor offences such as shoplifting and minor assaults, etc., in the "off peak" season.

The original Old Bailey was lost in the Great Fire of London, and even the new Old Bailey of 1774 did not last long - six years in fact. This brings us to Lord George Gordon, the youngest son of the Duke of Gordon. In many respects his career resembled that of the late Oswald Mosely. An ardent if not fanatical, Low Church and dissenting Protestant, he became President of the Protestant Association, as well as becoming MP of a Rotten Borough - Ludgershall, Wiltshire - in 1774.. In 1780 he led a protest march of 40,000 men to the House of Commons to demonstrate against some very limited relaxation of the draconian laws discriminating against Roman Catholics. Alcohol and religious enthusiasm in about equal measures led to the crowd getting out of control, and the ensuing riots lasted for eight days. During that time London was virtually under mob rule, Catholic chapels were attacked and several prisons such as Newgate were forced open and their inmates freed. The Old Bailey itself was set on fire and partially destroyed. The mob even burnt down the house of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield who, fortunately, was not at home at the time.

The situation was grave, in fact, not so far short of the French Revolution of ten years later. In due course, the troops were called out to disperse the mob and some 210 'rioters' were killed before order was

restored. The Old Bailey was only rebuilt in 1782. The present structure is basically a Victorian building which in some ways recalls its predecessor.

Lord George Gordon was brought to trial on a charge of High Treason. He was represented by a leading council of the day, Thomas Erskine. Such was the latter's powers of oratory that Gordon was acquitted, whilst 20 of his less fortunate associated followers were hanged. Gordon was, however, a marked man, who became more and more eccentric. In 1786 he was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury for refusing to give evidence in an ecclesiastical case. Gordon therefore renounced Christianity and embraced Judaism, becoming an Orthodox Jew, which was somewhat unusual, to say the least, for an 18th-century nobleman.

The Establishment had not forgotten him and he was arrested on a charge of sedition in January 1788, sent to King's Bench, fined £500 and ordered to find sureties for his good behaviour of £15,000 for the term of 14 years. He was also sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He died of fever in Newgate on 1 November 1793. A half-penny token issued by Thomas Skidmore commemorated the event. The reverse shows the Old Bailey, but a slightly less impressive building, engraved by James and Jacobs. On the obverse, however, is a bust of Lord George Gordon with a long beard and the wide, flat hat of the Orthodox Jew looking for all the world like the late Sir Alec Guinness in his well-known role as Fagin in 'Oliver Twist.'

An interesting silver shilling of Edward VII dated 1902 exhibited by **David Sealy** had an added inscription 'SMS Emden 9.11.1914'. The SMS *Emden* was a German cruiser of 3650 tons which had orders from Admiral Graf von Spee to act as a lone raider and cause havoc in the shipping lanes of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Armed with ten 10.5cm guns and two torpedo tubes, and with a top speed of 24.5 knots, she destroyed 23 ships and made night attacks on strategic seaports. A large convoy of 28 troopships left Perth in early November 1914 with six armed escort vessels, one of which was HMAS *Sydney*. The *Sydney* was sent to investigate a suspicious vessel reported approaching the Cocos island Group - it was the *Emden*. *Sydney* moved in to the attack, and was hit several times as she closed in, fixed her range and scored repeated hits on the *Emden*, which lay ablaze and helpless

with her three funnels shot away. Her captain, von Muller, ran his ship aground on a reef at the southern end of North Keeling Island. During the engagement, the *Emden* lost eight officers and 126 crew, the *Sydney* lost four dead. The addition to the Edward VII shilling was a curious and unusual memory of an important sea confrontation.

Harold Mernick drew attention to non-metallic medallions, which fell into two categories: medallions made from strange patented processes, and unorthodox materials. He displayed a number of examples of each category and commented on them. A portrait medallion pair of a husband and wife was by Cameograph Photographic Sculpture of Pall Mall. It had presumably been worked up from an image on a silk plate and then mounted in a fitted silver case. A three-dimensional portrait of Prime Minister Gladstone of silk was by the Stucco Manufacturing Co.

Materials other than metal could include gutta-percha; vulcanite (basically rubber with sulphur added, which can move to plastic); celluloid, represented by a Victoria Old Head portrait; coal, of which there were a lot of commemorative medals, many of them relating to the opening of collieries; porcelain, principally used by the German factory of Meissen and, in the 1920s, produced as coins during the Notgeld inflation period; bois durci (hardened wood), which was reduced to a flour, mixed with oxblood, and produced a wide range of medallions beautifully engraved and copied in copper. A mint mark of a stag that occurs is presently unidentified; wooden medals, the latest being for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. They were essentially of pine wood, heated and compressed so that the resin melted; rock and lava was principally from Vesuvius and Etna, and tended to be used for portraits of Victor Emmanuel or the Pope.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Thursday 7 September

Vincent West addressed the Club on the subject of Aksumite coinage. The Aksumites of ancient Ethiopia were one of the great civilisations of the ancient world. At their capital of Aksum they erected the largest standing stones in Africa, one of which was taken to Rome by Mussolini in the late 1930s. (It is presently being returned to Ethiopia from Rome where it had been erected just beyond the end of the Circus Maximus.) At the height of its power, the Aksumite empire stretched west into the

Sudan and across the Red Sea into Arabia, and it traded with the Mediterranean world and with India. Only three other civilisations contemporary with the Aksumite issued gold coins: the Romans, Persians, and the Kushans.

The first king of Aksum was Endubis, about AD 270. His coins carry both Greek legends and pagan symbols. The king's bust is in profile on both the obverse and the reverse, but his eyes are shown full face, following ancient Egyptian conventions. Like many of the Aksumite kings, he is otherwise unknown to history and so the coins are a key source for Aksumite history.

The conversion of King Ezanas to Christianity around 330 is reflected by the replacement of the pagan symbols by the Cross, which also became the reverse type on the silver and copper issues. The Cross (or crown, etc.), may have a gold inlay applied. This unique and unexplained phenomenon must have been very labour intensive. Gold coins continued to have the king's bust on both sides.

One of the few other kings known to history who struck coins is Kaleb who invaded the Yemen about AD 520 in support of persecuted Christians.

On the later silver and copper coins, the local Semitic language, Ge'ez, replaces Greek and Christian legends, such as 'Through Christ he conquers', and mottoes like 'Joy and peace to the people', appear. Byzantine influence is apparent with the facing busts seen on later copper coins.

Armah, the last king to issue coins, about 630, used a novel design of the king enthroned on his coppers. With the loss of the Yemen to the Persians and the rise of the Arabs, the Aksumites lost their foreign trade and abandoned Aksum.

The coins, though not in general as rare as they once were, are still scarce and many types are extremely rare. The anonymous copper coins are the ones most often seen. A large hoard of over 800 gold coins was found near al-Madhariba near Aden in the late 1980s and is now in a museum.

The best book on the coinage is *Aksumite Coinage* by Stuart Munro-Hay and Bent Juel-Jensen (Spink, 1995). There is also the

Catalogue of Aksumite Coins in the British Museum (British Museum Press, 1999), also by Munro-Hay. His doctorate thesis was on the Aksumite coinage, and it broke new ground in the study of the coins.

London Numismatic Club meeting, Tuesday 10 October

The Club was delighted to welcome Mr Stewart Lyon, a past-President of the British Numismatic Society and well-known authority on Anglo-Saxon coins, Mr Lyon had taken as his topic, and title, 'Do Anglo-Saxon coins always tell the truth?' He said, to this question one might add, 'the whole truth and nothing but the truth?'

The information readily yielded by a penny of the Anglo-Saxon period consists of its designs, the name of the issuing authority, the name of the moneyer responsible for striking it and, particularly in the last century of the Old English State, his *burh* or town. A little extra effort enables its weight to be determined, but establishing its fineness requires an assay that in those days could only have been undertaken in bulk by the authorities, and even today calls for specialised laboratory equipment.

A minted penny, when current, would have passed for a penny of account although often a great deal lighter than a pennyweight of silver. In other words, it was a token coinage which would doubtless have been devalued to its intrinsic value when it ceased to be accepted at its face value. So its designs and its weight and fineness would have become important in that situation.

We, as students and collectors of the series, have other interests. Can we always rely on the obverse and reverse inscriptions? Can we tell whether a coin was an official or unofficial product, or even a foreign imitation?

Let us begin with the obverse inscription. Most collectors are well aware, for example, that in the Plantagenet period the Short Cross issue bore the legend *Henricus rex* regardless of whether Henry H, Richard I, John, or Henry III was on the throne, and its successor, the Long Cross issue, was minted in the name of *Henricus rex III* for the first six years of the reign of Edward I. What, then, of Anglo-Saxon penny?

Fortunately there is clear evidence that a change of ruler was usually - one might say almost invariably - reflected in the coinage within

a few months. When Offa of Mercia died in 796 and his son a few months later (coincidentally, it would seem), his moneyers in Kent and East Anglia did not at first strike coins for Coenwulf, the next Mercian king, but for rulers who seized power locally - Eadberht Praen in Kent, and Eadwald in East Anglia. There is no documentary evidence for Eadwald, who would be unknown were it not for his coins. Neither ruler lasted more than a couple of years before the Mercians regained control.

The situation was to recur a quarter of a century later. After Coenwulf died in 821 he was succeeded by his brother, Coenwulf I, for two years, then by Beornwulf for a further two years, and by Ludeca for another two. The East Anglian moneyers minted for all three, but then the people threw off the Mercian yoke for good and the same moneyers began to work for the first of a renewed line of East Anglian kings. In Kent, things moved faster. Only two of Coenwulf's six moneyers at Canterbury are known to have minted in Coenwulf's reign, and none for Beornwulf. All six began to strike pence with their own names surrounding a royal portrait and the Latin name of Canterbury occupying the reverse: in other words, they needed to mint money, but were not sure whose authority to proclaim. Quite soon, perhaps by 823, a man called Baldred seized the throne and they started to mint in his name. But in 825 Egberht of Wessex invaded and expelled Baldred, and after that the moneyers coined for Egberht. The Vicar of Bray (of King Charles I's day) had nothing on them!

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Canterbury - Wulfred - had moneyers of his own and was accustomed to his own name and portrait replacing that of the king. During the period in Ceolwulf's reign when the royal moneyers replaced the king's name with their own, so the archbishop's moneyers replaced his name with theirs while continuing to show a tonsured portrait. Evidently, the archbishop drew his minting authority from the king, and in this period of uncertainty it was felt unwise for his name to appear when the king's did not. Wulfred resumed the coinage in his own name in parallel with Baldred's, and eventually in parallel with Egberht's also.

Half a century later, the Mercian king Burgred (852-874) having been dispossessed by the Danish army which was trying to conquer the whole country, another Ceolwulf succeeded him. The *Anglo-Saxon*

Chronicle describes him as a foolish king's *thegn*, but that seems to be a disparaging judgement made after the event, because for a few years in the late 870s he shared with Alfred of Wessex and Archbishop Aethelred in an attractive coinage of good silver which replaced the debased coinage that the two kings had inherited from their predecessors.

In the tenth century the fluctuating fortunes of the English kings in their attempts to recover the territory conquered and occupied by the Danes is clearly reflected in the coinage of eastern England. From then on, all we are missing is an issue in the name of Edmund Ironside, the warrior son of Aethelred the Unready who ruled southern England for a few months before his untimely death in November 1016, after which Cnut of Denmark succeeded to the whole kingdom. We have coins which reinforce the historical evidence that on Cnut's death in 1035 the kingdom was once again divided geographically for a short time between his sons Harold and Harthacnut and, of course, the reign of the second Harold, Godwineson, from January to October 1066 is clearly reflected in the coinage.

So, Anglo-Saxon coins - the official ones, at any rate - adhere very closely to the truth of who was exercising authority in the area, where and when a coin was struck. What about the inscriptions on the reverse?

Before Edgar's reform of the coinage in or about the year 973 the name of the moneyer's town is not a systematic feature of the coinage. King Athelstan was the first to attempt to require the town to be shown as well as the moneyer, and he failed to enforce this in the reconquered Danelaw except at York and Norwich. Before he died the practice had been abandoned in Kent, and in the next two reigns it was only Norwich that routinely maintained it. So there are few grounds on which to query the validity of reverse inscriptions.

After Edgar's reforms the moneyer's town is always named, and the number reached more than 60 during the reign of Aethelred II, 'the Unready' (978-1016). We can now ask whether the named town represents a true statement of where a coin was actually minted - or whether there are circumstances in which the moneyer might have minted somewhere else. To answer this question we first have to look for and then interpret die-links between moneyers naming different towns but using a common obverse die. Serious work on the identification of such links began with the late Professor Michael Dolley and his team in the

1950s and 1960s, and I am proud to have been one of his helpers. It has continued ever since but has achieved the most startling results in the past ten years through the keen eyes of Bill Lean. He has found more than two dozen examples of die-links, or die-chains, including different named towns in Aethelred Ifs Crux type, and in the Long Cross type more than 40. In the latter case they include chains of die-links involving up to seven named towns in a single chain.

Now, if we look at that particular chain, we find that two of the obverse dies involved were used by a moneyer Godric with signatures of both London and Hertford. This could simply mean that a London moneyer of that name was also contracted to coin money in Hertford from time to time. And, although we are not aware of any die-sharing, the chain also includes a moneyer Aelfwi at both Bedford and Buckingham, and a moneyer Edwine signing at London and Huntingdon. Again, these could be moneyers who minted in both the places named. If the reverse dies were used in combination with more than one obverse, and obverse dies at any one location could be used by more than one moneyer at that location, we can explain the building of quite a substantial chain of die-linking without having the necessity to challenge the truth that the town named on a coin is where the coin was minted. It is more difficult, however, to explain why a reverse die of a moneyer Godric shared one obverse die with a reverse naming Edwine of Huntingdon, and another obverse die with a reverse naming a moneyer Aethestan of Chichester. Perhaps Edwine brought back to London the obverse he had used at Huntingdon, and it was picked up by Godric. But that still does not explain how one of Godric's obverses came to be used by Aethestan of Chichester.

Still less can we understand another discovery of Bill Lean's in the same Long Cross type and involving a different moneyer of Chichester named Cynna. A reverse die of his was combined with an obverse die that is also found in conjunction with reverses naming moneyers of London, Southampton, and Winchester - all with different names; and the same Chichester reverse was combined with a second obverse die that was used with reverse dies of moneyers of Winchester and Wallingford. It does not seem creditable that the first of these obverses travelled between four different towns, let alone that the second obverse involved a fifth town. However, the alternative is that some of the reverse dies were not used in

the places named on them.

We find other evidence that such things must have happened when we consider die-links in Aethelred's final issue, Last Small Cross. In this issue, which spans the period from c. 1009 when the army of Swein and Cnut was rampaging across the country in a campaign of conquest, it is quite clear that the cutting of dies became more decentralised than at any time since Edgar's reform. So when we find an unexpected die-link, we can ask whether the dies involved were of a style typically used at either or both of the named towns. If at only one, the possibility that the other moneyer was minting away from his accredited town has to be seriously considered. For example, there are several instances in which a London moneyer is linked to a different moneyer in a distant town. In one case, involving Huntingdon, all three dies are of London style and the possibility that the obverse moved from one place to the other cannot be entirely ruled out. But in another case the town involved is Warwick and the obverse is of Winchester style, virtually unknown at London, and the reverse die of the London moneyer, Osulf, is unlikely to have been made in London either. So it seems that Osulf travelled to Warwick, for a reason we cannot know, and was required to coin some silver in that area, borrowing an obverse die from a local moneyer and probably getting a reverse die specially cut for him. The die named him as Osulf at London because that is where he would be found if any question arose about the weight or fineness of the coins he struck with it.

Yet another example involves the unidentified south-western *burh* of Cothaburh, which obtained its dies from Exeter. But one of the obverses dies, used by two local moneyers, is also known in conjunction with a reverse die naming a London moneyer. Once again, the reverse is of a style not associated with London and more likely to be the work of an Exeter die-cutter. So it seems that this London moneyer was on one occasion visiting the south-west, and if it is the case that Cothaburh is to be identified with the fortress of Indanburh where the Archbishop of York was imprisoned half a century earlier, then it may be that this moneyer was travelling in a royal party, and it was required to coin some silver at Cothaburh for the king or some other high-ranking person.

Not all dies-links can be explained in this way. There are questions of links such as Thetford - Wilton - Lincoln, but which Wilton? Wilton, Wilts, had been transferred to Salisbury (i.e. Old Sarum). This is only but

one of the anomalies that have arisen and have yet to be explained. Another question is that of intrinsic value, the fineness of the coins involved. We don't know this fully either, but there is reason to suspect that some unusual marks that have been noted on some reverse dies of lightweight coins may denote deliberate alloying.

So, to sum up: obverse dies, unless they are overseas imitations, do tell the truth about the issuing authority. Reverse dies, similarly, name the moneyer and his accredited town, but that does always mean that those dies were used in that town. We can also be misled in the sense that if we attribute a coin to the minting town named on it, it may not be so. Whether we can always recognise when that is happening is another matter.

When coins were minted at light weights, to what extent are they truthful in their implied assertion that they were worth a penny? At least those who used coins on a considerable scale could distinguish light from heavy pence, but they could not tell if there was excessive alloy in any of them (and here we may note the 'pecking' in Scandinavia).

So, finally, no, Anglo-Saxon coins do not always tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I rest my case.

London Numismatic Club meeting, 7 December

Dr Kevin Clancy, Assistant Curator of the Royal Mint discussed why Britain went on the gold standard in 1816, the problems the system encountered during the first few years of its operation, the development of the international gold standard from the late 1870s, why this system was abandoned at the beginning of the First World War, and why Britain again made a brief return to gold between 1925 and 1931.

The justification for having a currency backed by precious metal was outlined with reference to the debate between John Locke and William Lowndes during the 1690s. Locke believed that the case for retaining silver as the standard of value and not altering the weight of the silver coins rested in natural law and that for a government to seek to alter the standard would be to deprive people of their property. Lowndes, on the other hand, argued that there should, as there had been in the past, periodic changes to the weight standard of silver coins. Unlike Locke he

did not believe that this would lead to a spiral of price rises, but rather that government would merely be acknowledging changes that had taken place within the economy.

Gold became a more popular medium of exchange during the hundred years after Locke and Lowndes were writing, and by the end of the 18th century influential men, such as the first Earl of Liverpool, were urging that Britain should adopt a gold standard and at the same time make silver a token coinage with a legal tender limit. The war against Napoleon prevented government for a number of years from taking action to reform the currency but from 1815 there was increasingly less justification for deferring change. Preparations also had to be made for the Bank of England to begin redeeming its notes in gold, a facility that had been suspended in 1797. Government responded in 1816 with a Coinage Bill that recommended a single gold standard and made provision for a new coinage of gold and silver - detailing, in effect, most of what Lord Liverpool had been arguing for. Although he died in 1808, the Coinage Act of 1816 was largely based on his ideas, and it passed through Parliament with very little dissent - without, in fact, a recorded vote.

The currency settlement of 1816 remained unstable for the following few years, in part because of temporary increases in the prices of both gold and silver but also because of the continuing uncertainty over the Bank of England's resuming payment of its notes in cash. Two parliamentary committees were set up in 1819 to resolve the question of Bank restriction and they resolved that a staged reintroduction of cash payments be instituted. By 1821 Britain was operating a gold standard with a circulating gold coinage and a paper currency convertible into gold. Despite some degree of uncertainty over the appropriateness of the gold standard as the foundation of Britain's monetary arrangements, the system survived and for half a century Britain, alone of its international trading partners, maintained this policy.

Mid-19th century discoveries of gold and silver made the adoption of a gold standard by several other countries more attractive. By the end of the 1870s most of Europe, as well as the United States of America, was on gold and the classical international gold standard was born, bringing exchange rate stability, if not price stability, to many countries. The

commodity-based system of international payments, however, could not survive the massive disruption of the First World War and Britain, together with several other countries, went off gold. But the 1920s brought a renewed interest in the stability and economic growth that were seen as the main advantages of the old system.

Winston Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, put Britain back on gold in 1925, but the consequent increase in the value of sterling meant that export industries in particular were hard hit by difficult economic conditions. Recession began to take hold after the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and unemployment in Britain increased markedly. Government attempts to defend the existing value of the pound in 1931 within the international system amounted to a package of deeply unpopular austerity measures and, coupled with the market pressure to devalue sterling, Britain left the gold standard in September 1931.

Subsequent systems of fixed exchange rates and, indeed, the movement towards a single European currency, bear comparison with the gold standard in the sense of being international systems of currency co-operation.

Report on the Club visit to the Royal Mint, Llantrisant, on Wednesday 12 April 2000

by Anthony Gilbert

Through the initiative of David Sealy, the LNC was invited to pay a visit to the Royal Mint. The date was set for us, as was the maximum number that could be accommodated - 18. Sixteen members had originally expressed an interest (depending on the day that was chosen) but, in the event, only nine actually were able to make the trip. The writer had booked a mini coach to meet us at Cardiff Central railway station for onward travel to Llantrisant, some nine miles away. We were met by a large 53-seater luxury coach - we thus had space and comfort to spare !

At the Mint we were greeted by Graham Dyer, Librarian and Curator, and then split into two parties - one was led by Dr Kevin Clancy, Graham Dyer's assistant, and the other by John Williams, who is the Mint's Dispatch Manager. An immediate impression since the writer's last visit (shortly after the Mint had relocated from Tower Hill), was that the site has become more developed. The Mint now has its own foundry and

is able to accept quite thick strip steel for rolling.

We were conducted through the various operational sections employed in producing the blanks - rolling, pickling, annealing and stamping. In response to the EC's worry over the controversial 'health hazard' promoted by the nickel content in coins, the Mint has built a receiving shed, which is also used for recycling worn coins returned by the High Street banks.

The artists' engraving room presented one of the most interesting parts of the tour. Since the writer's last visit, technology has indeed moved on apace. We were informed that all of the Mint's engravers held, as a minimum qualification, a degree in Fine Arts, or its equivalent standard. The original dies are still cut by hand, but the engraver now used a large screen graphic computer monitor which provides a three-dimensional pictorial progress of such features as depth of cut, potential metal flow intolerance, and struck flan rocking imbalance. Truly, the engraving department appeared to have succeeded in harnessing the power of the computer age to the artistic expression of traditional craft skills.

One of the unsung departments that we saw was the die and matrix production room. The senior operator informed us that this was regarded as a 'dead-end' job, i.e. once you come into this room, you never leave. Joking apart, his statement may have had a grain of truth in it, but only because the people working in that department need to have a high level of competence in electrical engineering, allied to an understanding of the artistic element of engraving which their equipment is required to interpret. On one side of the room the Mint was still using the superbly engineered belts, pulleys and wheels Janvier reducing machines, whilst on the other side were the latest computerised ultra-precision laser cutting machines producing matrices. One can only marvel at the span of time separating the technology of one side of the room from the other - some 80 years!

Club members were lucky to be present when the UK year 2000 proof gold sovereign was being struck. The special dies used had been prepared by grinding with diamond paste, and then each coin was struck by receiving four stampings of the machine in order to produce the mirror-like finish in the field. Most interesting was the advanced

technology employed in the minting of the UK £2 bi-metallic coin. The guide to the group of members that I was with explained in detail the initial problems encountered, and how they were overcome. Also, the UK and New Zealand proof millennium 'crowns' were being struck at machines next to each other, although differing techniques were used to apply gold to parts of the design finish. A TV image enhancement analysis attachment was in use on both machines in order to allow the operator to inspect minutely the struck piece before its final removal from the machine. The techniques used in striking these crowns were an industry 'first'.

That windowless 'gold room', actually a squat flat-roofed and flat-sided building, still intrigues me but, alas, I accept that it must remain out of bounds, and probably rightly so, to all but the very few. Each of the section or departmental leaders to whom we were introduced were most welcoming and informative about their particular operations and contribution to the process as a whole.

The Royal Mint has approximately 1000 employees and is a serious player in world markets, producing coins for over 80 countries. Although many of these countries are tiny, it is still an impressive performance. Technically all Mint staff are civil servants, but the Mint is expected to produce a return on turnover commensurate with other similar manufacturing companies. It makes room to produce high speed, high technology run-of-the-mill circulation coins alongside the tried and tested low speed, low technology craftsmen-finished items such as police medals. It was demonstrated that the Mint continues to respond to client-led market forces, like all industry sector leaders, and is prepared to invest in new and developing techniques.

We were informed that 20% of the Mint's output is the production of low value coins for the UK market - where do they all go? Basically, we were shown round a factory complex making what is really, in an engineering context, an ordinary product, but one wherein the component processes, both design and manufacturing, have technologically advanced together to produce a world-leading item in its field.

After completing the tour of the Royal Mint's various workshops we were given coffee and biscuits, and then taken to Graham Dyer's part of the complex, the library and museum, of which he is the Curator. We were told that with regard to archival material becoming available in the

market, there is an unwritten 'understanding' with the British Museum, which interests itself with material approximately pre-1660, whilst the Mint concentrates on post-Restoration coins, etc. Graham Dyer said that we might be surprised to learn that there are still some gaps in the collection, and that they are not generally of the unique or rare variety but of the relatively common pieces. This shortfall was currently in the process of being corrected. He showed us one particular cabinet holding the George V 1933 penny, and pointed out that the museum is always available for serious research.

The Club members then left to join the coach back to Cardiff station for the train back to Paddington, and home. It had been a superb day out, and one, for the writer, of a few surprises in regard to what we had seen. Graham Dyer generously invited the Club to pay another visit in the future. Perhaps then, those members who were unable to make this particular visit will be able to do so, for I am sure that there will be further technological advances to be seen.

CLUB AUCTION RESULTS

by Anthony Gilbert

101st Club Auction, 10 May 2000

The auction meeting was held at the Warburg Institute, Woburn Square. A small attendance was present to bid on the 80 lots on offer from six vendor Club members. There was a good mixture of items covering a wide range of fields of coins, medals, tokens and bank notes. Club auctioneers David Sealy and Marcus Phillips did their best to encourage sales but, unfortunately, 40% of the lots remained unsold; 33 lots being returned to the vendors.

The highest price of the evening was £15, reached by consecutive lots - an Elizabeth I shilling initial mark 2, and a Charles I shilling, initial mark tun type 3a. A mixed group of 17 lots, European and Commonwealth, sold well with low reserves. A superb Edward VIII coronation medallion went to the writer for £2.50 A strong group of English 16th to 19th century coins from one vendor did very well, as all had reasonable reserves.

The small attendance meant that some unusual items did not find

buyers, e.g. the 'fun' lots of mixed bank notes and oddments of medals and tokens. Nevertheless, Club auction meetings are still 'meetings', whereat members can socialise and converse, either during or afterwards.

Total sales were £237.50, with the Club benefiting by 10% of that in its usual commission.

102nd Club Auction, 9 November 2000

The Club auction was held in the lecture room of the Warburg Institute. The Institute has made Club members very welcome on our recent visits for both auctions and the Annual General Meeting. Marcus Philips and David Sealy acted as auctioneers for the 105 lots that were on offer, submitted by seven vendors.

Disappointingly, only twelve members attended; perhaps the current problems with the railways were a major factor in keeping the numbers down. In all 61 lots fell under the hammer, which meant that 44 were left on the table - a disappointment for the vendors. The lot with by far the highest reserve, a Queen Anne 1714 guinea, with 'scrapes', received no bids at the £145 expected opening price. Bank note lots were out of favour on this occasion, although these colourful and interesting plate-loads do sometimes spring surprises from the floor. However, English silver did well, as pieces lotted at sensible reserves in the more collectable medium grades mostly attract welcome bids at these Club events. A 1913 sovereign of George V fetched £42, but the top price of the night of £50 was attained by a Henry VIII 2nd coinage groat of York with TW initials (for Thomas Wolsey).

Books did quite well, a copy of Michael Mitchiner's *Jetons, Medallets and Tokens*, vol. 1, in a little used condition fetched its reserve of £30, a bargain on the published price. One vendor sold all of his twelve lots of books, which listed some usual and difficult to come by items, and covering a wide geographical field. The reserves here totalled £27, but the lots achieved a commendable £45. The submission of ancient coins can be a chancy business and, as with any lot, vendor success does depend very much on who turns up on the night.

Total sales were an excellent £610, with the Club receiving 10% of that in commission, so the hire cost of the room for the evening was well

covered. Overall, a reasonable auction and Club night was enjoyed by all. There was a wide spread of collecting fields represented by the lots on offer, and we have to thank both vendors and bidders for making it a good Club evening.

BOOK REVIEWS

Roman Coins and Their Values. Vol. 1:

The Republic and The Twelve Caesars 280 BC - AD 96.

David R. Sear, Spink, 2000. 532pp, b/w illus throughout. Hardback, £45.

In the mid-1950s there appeared in the *Seaby Coin & Medal Bulletin* an advertisement for the post of a young numismatist with an interest in ancient coins to join the Ancient Coin Department under Lieut.-Colonel J. Kozolubski; preferably he would have completed his National Service (conscription was still in force), or be exempt. The young man who successfully applied was David R. Sear, and thus began an association with Seaby that was to lead to a large number of books on the ancient series that can only be properly described as the *vade mecum*, or Bible, for each area covered. The 'flagship' of the many books that David Sear produced in an outstanding career in numismatics has been *RCTV*, as it is colloquially known.

Seaby had published their first *Catalogue of Roman Coins* in 1936, then an enlarged edition by Gilbert Askew, FSA, in 1948, listing 3,400 coins (128pp, costing 5 shillings - 25p); the 1954 edition, now by H.A. (Bert) Seaby, had 3629 coins, plus five photographic plates of casts of coins to add to the line drawings in the text (132 pp, for 14 shillings - 70p). Then, in 1964, came the first edition to be produced by David Sear -the coins listed had risen to 4312, line drawings illustrated the text and there were now eight plates photographed from the actual coins by Frank Purvey (288pp, for 30 shillings - £1.50). This edition went through four revisions until 1988, when the line drawings in the text (except for a few particularly rare and difficult coins to find) were replaced by coin photographs by the present reviewer. The *RCTV* 1988 edition soon became the most popular, and useful, one volume guide to the Roman coinage, and it continued to be as the four revisions and many reprints showed.

With the present volume of *RCTV* David Sear has performed an incredible task in producing a new and, indeed, much finer book. The present publishers, Spink, took over the Seaby numismatic list from B.T. Batsford publishers when that company disposed of several of its major lists that included numismatics and archaeology. Spink early realised that David's major revisions and enlargements of the text could no longer be contained in a single volume, and it was decided to divide into two volumes. In volume one there is now virtually a complete listing of the Republican series, ordered by chronology (no longer by the old Cohen sequence). The bronze coinage features large in this new section and is a valuable innovation and addition.

Because of the unprecedented expansion, it was felt that a good, sensible, division in the sequence of the Roman series would be to finish with the Twelve Caesars, i.e. the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD), last of the Flavians, and his family. This lists 2931 coins - up to this point in the 1988 edition there were a mere 945! Not only has the number of the coins been substantially increased, their condition is given in two states, VF and EF, and values in £s sterling and US dollars. There are many useful notes appearing under a number of the Republic and Imperial issues particularly, explaining their sometimes enigmatic allusions to either the moneyer's ancestors or events. For even more detail on the Imperial period, readers should consult David Sear's other recent book, *The History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors 49-27BC* (Spink, 1998; see also *Minerva* November/December 1998, p. 47). Even with the, literally, world-wide numismatic resources placed at David's disposal to acquire illustrations (sources are acknowledged on p.7), it has still proved to be impossible to photographically illustrate some of coins, and good line drawings have been used so there is at least some visual record.

Expansion in the Imperial series has meant more attention has been paid to the Greek Imperial/Roman Provincial issues, notably of Alexandria. These are featured in another Sear book, *Greek Imperial Coins and Their Values* (1982), but then only in proportion relative to the myriad of mints that existed. The coins from Roman Alexandria have become more popular in recent years, so this area is, yet again, a most welcome expansion in the volume.

The coin listings are, naturally, the major part of the volume but the well-illustrated introductory sections on denominations, Imperial reverse

types, countermarks, mints from Augustus to Diocletian, mint marks, and dating are a concise and valuable guide to the many vagaries of the Roman series that can often confuse, or confound, the beginner (and also at times the more adept!).

In the previous editions, where appropriate, the chronological criteria of a reign, i.e. the TR P, COS, etc., dates were given at the head of each reign together with a concise biography of the main points of the relevant emperor's reign. Here these dates have been incorporated into a single table (pp. 305-9) which gives a much wider view of how it all 'works'. Notable as well here is the addition of a fifth column with the Alexandrian regnal year dates - always a cause of some confusion with their commencement in August, and counting even a few months prior to the new year of an emperor's accession as being the emperor's year 1.

The old adage, the advice always given to any beginner in a series, is, first, get the books, then go and buy the coins. *RCTV* vol. 1, is something that no one interested in the Roman series can afford to be without. The second volume, due later in 2001, will take the history on to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in the fifth century. Greedy as all numismatists are, in welcoming vol. 1, we can only echo Virgil's words in *Aeneid* Book V, in looking towards the publication of volume 2 - *Expectate veni.*

Peter A. Clayton

Medieval English Groats. Ivan Buck. Greenlight Publishing, Witham, Essex, 2000. 66pp, over 400 colour illus. Paperback, £15.

Amongst the British numismatic fraternity Ivan Buck's long-time interest and expertise in groats is well known. Here, very welcome indeed, is the culmination of his many years of minutely observing the series, its idiosyncrasies and rarities. Whilst the title says 'Medieval', this study goes beyond the normally accepted cut-off date, 1500, for the period. The coverage runs from the introduction of the groat (a coin of four pence value) under Edward I (1272-1307) and concludes at the end of the Tudor period with Elizabeth I (1558-1603). Prior to Edward I's reign the largest coin current was the silver penny, that went back to Anglo-Saxon times (the exception was the excessively rare gold 'penny', possibly representing 20 silver pennies, of Henry III).

Whilst most available coin catalogues will give simplified lists of groats, and add a selection of the varieties and mint marks available - here the 'skeleton' is clothed in the flesh of an extremely interesting accompanying text. The background history is explained under each reign, and reference made to other, earlier publications, such as Ruding's *Annals*. English medieval groats is a series that can be extremely deceptive to the beginner - they all look the same: approximately 3cm diameter (here they are enlarged by one third to better show detail), facing-head regal 'portrait', long-cross reverse and two lines of inscription with pellets in the cross angles - end of story. But it is not so. Ivan Buck has shown that, to make a bad pun, there are more than two sides to a coin. He has looked at the series in detail, explaining the various classes found in different reigns, the weights, the mints that produced the coins other than London and, of particular interest, the mint errors that occur. Chapter 4, on the die sinkers' errors under Henry VI, is particularly interesting. How, one wonders, with something so official as the coinage, could so many errors occur? The majority appear to be on the reverses of the coins, often a question of spelling or use of the wrong letter punch. Chapter 13 is similarly interesting, on mules and muling - once again, such errors betoken the human frailties and mistakes that can occur even with something as tightly watched as the coinage.

Ivan Buck's survey of medieval groats is not only illuminating for the series but is also a useful adjunct to the main catalogues where only an indicative selection from the various reigns is given.

Peter A. Clayton

The Norweb Collection, Tokens of the British Isles 1575-1750. Part VI. Wiltshire to Yorkshire (Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles). R.H. Thompson and M.J. Dickinson. Spink, 1999 [September, 2000]. 264 p, incl 43 pls. Hardback, £25. *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 49: The Norweb Collection. Tokens of the British Isles, 1575-1750. Part VI. Wiltshire to Yorkshire, Ireland to Wales*. R.H. Thompson and M.J. Dickinson. Spink, 1999 [September 2000]. lxxi + 266pp, 43 pls. Hardback, £25.

With this volume of the Norweb Sylloge of British tokens a massive task reaches its culmination in listing the token issues of England during the

dates specified; there only remains the final volume to come which has taken London and Middlesex aside. The Norweb collection consisted of around 13,000 tokens, many of them having remarkable pedigrees and, indeed some being an entire 'named' collection such as the Ralph Nott collection, there were some 800 from the Virgil Brand collection, and several thousands from Fred Baldwin and others. Although the project was mooted in 1973, it was not until 1984 when the first volume in Sylloge form emerged. Initially Robert Thompson took it on alone, but was subsequently joined as co-author by another well-known numismatic expert in the token field, Michael Dickinson.

The present volume follows the normal Sylloge format of listing the pieces on left hand pages and with photos facing; there is a classified index of types, lists of abbreviations, collectors, dealers and collections cited, a full bibliography, and a useful Addendum to Parts I-VI. Robert Thompson has also added a very interesting short essay on Sir William Petty and his views on small change. Petty was a remarkable character who served as physician-general in Cromwell's army in Ireland, and yet still managed to be knighted by Charles II in 1662. Not only did he write on the subject of money and be responsible for issuing tokens, he seems also to have manufactured them.

Together, Thompsan and Dickinson have produced a series of volumes that no seventeenth century token collector can be without. *Peter A. Clayton*

Lead Weights: The David Rogers Collection

Norman Biggs and Paul Withers. White House Publications, Galata Press, Llanfyllin, 2000. 70pp, b/w illus throughout. Paperback, £15.

Lead weights have, so often in the past, been shunned by numismatists as being para-numismatics, and by archaeologists because they were difficult to understand. Twenty years ago very little was known about them although they had been used in England for about 2000 years, since Roman times. That situation has changed radically with the publication of the collection formed by the late Dr David Rogers (tragically killed in a car accident in 1999). It is by far the largest and most important collection yet published. Rogers was a meticulous observer of things that many would rate as 'unconsidered trifles'. His interests included medieval small

change, the farthings and halfpennies (and cut examples), and even Romano-British cosmetic grinders (his collection has gone to the British Museum).

Over a period of some 14 years Rogers scoured the trays of dealers, but more often the mixed bag that metal detectorists offered at various markets, seeking the unusual and the unexplained. He thus built up not only a large collection of lead weights, but also an unrivalled knowledge of them as his analytical, medically-trained mind observed the differences and relationships involved.

The present publication, brought to fruition by Biggs and Withers, represents nearly 300 examples divided into 11 categories plus an 'unclassified' section. Roman weights are included as well as 13 rare pre-Norman Conquest pieces with embedded coins, and shield-shaped weights. Notable amongst the stamped weights is the series of the Plumbers' Company with their mark of an angel carrying a large pair of scales (lead weights were the province of that Company). Norwich, the second city in England, had a system of tradesmen's' guilds that reflected those of London and the city set up an official standard for East Anglia. They are important in relation to London and are illustrated and dealt with in depth here.

The Introduction to the catalogue is a meticulous survey of weights and weight-systems in use under the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and in medieval times. Each section of the catalogue is preceded by introductory comments, and then every weight is illustrated at actual size with full information about it, description, its weight, size and thickness, plus any appropriate comment.

This book will be invaluable to all museum curators and collectors, as well as metal detectorists who have been themselves largely responsible for the finds, thereby making such a publication possible. As Dr Geoff Egan writes in his Foreword, this guide 'is a milestone in the rational, carefully considered interpretation of a most difficult topic'.

Peter A. Clayton

EDITORIAL TAIL PIECE

**Doesn't anyone else in the Club read books on numismatics -
if they do, their views on them would be welcome.**

B. A. N. S.

The British Association of Numismatic Societies

ANNUAL CONGRESS

Manchester
6 - 8 April 2001

The Congress will be held at Woolton Hall, University of Manchester

Outline Programme

Friday 6 April:

Evening Reception at Manchester Museum and illustrated talk by
Dr Jonathan Williams entitled 'Writing on Celtic coins'

Saturday 7 April:

Papers by

Paul Withers - Medieval round halfpence and farthings: a Reassessment
P. Stoddart: Edward Carter Preston medallist

Afternoon excursion to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral for guided tour of
Edward Carter Preston's monumental sculpture, led by his daughter, Julia
Carter Preston. Followed by visit to Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the Lady
Lever Art gallery, Port Sunlight

Evening: The Linecar Memorial Lecture

by Virginia Hewitt - 'Lost and found: National identity on paper money
in Central and Eastern Europe'.
Followed by Congress Dinner.

Sunday 8 April:

Three short papers by Keith Sugden, Joe Bispham, and Graham Dyer.
Lecture by R. Lyall "The tokens of Malta".
Lunch and dispersal

Overall cost to include excursion and wine/soft drinks with both evening
meals is £108. Non-residential rates available.

**Further details from: Keith Sugden or Phyllis Stoddart,
Department of Numismatics, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL [Tel: 0161 275 2676]**