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NEWSLETTER

THE JOURNAL OF THE LONDON NUMISMATIC CLUB

HONORARY EDITOR

Peter A. Clayton

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EDITORIAL

With this issue of the *Newsletter* we reach the end of Vol. VIII and its 20th number. The Newsletter has always consisted of 20 numbers to a volume. The next issue, for January 2018, will therefore be Vol. IX, no. 1. The present *Newsletter* will be the one current during the Club's 70th Anniversary year, having been founded by Seaby in April 1947.

It is always a source of some pride that the Club can produce so many from amongst its members to give interesting talks to the members and, not least, are well noted as speakers on the numismatic societies circuit and at major conferences.

All the talks reported in this issue of the *Newsletter*, except for one, have been given by Club members. They cover a wide range of numismatics, both in subject matter and date. Some, such as communion tokens, may look a slightly strange topic but nevertheless, as revealed in the detailed report here, they can be seen to have a wide influence in their numismatic information on very many aspects of daily life, economics, and social attitudes. Similarly, we note the re-use and re-cycling of coins and tokens in their 'after life' use that is not always apparent or fully appreciated.

In the ancient field we see how Richard Reece's seminal study of his designated Periods brings sense to the use of Roman coins in Britain and note especially how records on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) data base can throw considerable light on the occurrence and use of the coins in Britain.

An area of later Roman coins, i.e. the Byzantine Empire or Rome in the East, shows how by taking note of the history they project, often of little known emperors or obscure issues can be a beginner's guide to the series. Then we really come up to date in noting coins of the last two

decades, the 21st century – looking at them for what they are and what they tell us of immediate numismatic history and remembering that they are the history of tomorrow.

A rather unusual excursus is into the delights of eBay. Internet advertising of coins of all sorts is taking a major place now in numismatic collecting. It has tended to drive the old well-loved numismatic dealer off the street with his premises and trays of coins to browse through. Now it is generally at coin fairs that banks of trays of coins can be seen, the larger fairs being held mainly in London. Some Club members, like me, will remember climbing the stairs at 65 Great Portland Street above the car showrooms to the glories of Seaby's several departments, including the ancients on the top floor presided over by Gilbert Askew and the Colonel with his 'junk' box of ancients by the fireplace, all at 1/- (5p) each (and some are still in my trays!).

I have now edited and produced the Club's Newsletter for 22 years since Vol. 7, no. 18, June 1995. In our 70th anniversary year and with the production to come of a new volume, I have decided that this is the time to stand down as Editor and pass the mantle over to some younger shoulders. Technology has moved on a lot with computers, etc, from the first issues I produced and having imposed a style that seemed to find ready acceptance. The next Editor may find a better method of production but at least he has a year before the next numbered issue will be due for publication.

I am now probably the oldest remaining of the Club's early members. I joined the Club in 1954 at the instigation of Bill 'Pop' Jan, the well-known collector of 18th century tokens and Roman sestertii – so I have seen a great many of the Club's 70 years. I have served many times (and still) on the Committee and have had the honour and privilege of being the Club's President for eight years, 1987-95. I have thoroughly enjoyed

the Club's companionship (and that is the basic reason why we were named the London Numismatic Club and not a Society), the knowledge freely given and information exchanged in convivial circumstances and I very much intend to continue my membership and interest.

On that note, as Honorary Editor, it is 'Ave atque vale' – Hail and Farewell - from a post that I have much enjoined in being able to serve the Club.

Peter A. Clayton, Honorary Editor

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 2 February 2016

David Powell, a well-known member of the Club and of its Committee, spoke on ‘The Usage of Communion Tokens’.

Because of the social and moral aspect of the processes with which they were associated, the references to communion tokens (CTs) in the press of the day are more varied and probably more frequent than those of other token types. In addition to which, we are indebted to Dr Thomas Burns’s book on *Old Scottish Communion Plate* (1892), for which he attempted to gather, from churches and ministers up and down the length of Scotland, experiences, often gleaned from the parish records, of how these pieces were used. A few other late 19th century ministers also mentioned CTs when writing parish biographies, and together these anecdotes make for a very interesting story.

The reasons for use of communion tokens were threefold:

- Social control: The CT was seen as a ticket of worthiness
- Practical: Logistics of administration
- Security: A pass to prevent betrayal by spies (in the 17th century)

Allied to this, the reasons for excluding someone from communion were:

- Intellectual: Ignorance
- Moral: Behaviour
- Issues of affiliation: Desire to keep other denominations and beliefs at bay

If you think that the average person who kept his head down and didn’t do anything too obviously bad was immune from the adverse attention of the ruling ecclesiastic hierarchy, think again. You didn't have to resort to fornication or alcohol to upset the elders; according to Robert Shiells in *The Story of the Token* (2nd edition, 1902), one parishioner was debarred

from communion for riding to church on a bicycle!

References to communion tokens in the contemporary media fall into a number of categories, which we will deal with in turn:

- Debates over intellectual capacity
- Debates over moral fitness (which, to an elder, includes debates over affiliation).
- Legal disputes, either civil or ecclesiastical, between church members and ministers
- Losses of batches of CTs due to burglary or fire
- Losses of individual CTs due to petty theft
- Depositions of CTs under church foundation stones
- Contemporary expressions of numismatic interest

In order to understand some of the incidents, it will be necessary to appreciate the hierarchic structure of the ecclesiastical courts:

- Assembly (national)
- Presbytery (regional)
- Kirk Session (parochial), consisting of the local minister, known as the Moderator, ordained elders, and associate members

The Session could act in an advisory role to the minister, if he allowed it to; for example, from Deskford, reported by Burns, in 1744:

‘The Session are in favour of granting a token to Ann Duncan contrary to the intention of the Minister, as they thought she was exposed to less sin by living separately from her husband than living with him, because they could not agree.’

Debates over intellectual capacity

These are rare, primarily because they are the one thing that most people could agree on.

There is, however, one very moving passage in *The Elgin Courier* of 23 January 1857:

‘An illiterate female, in humble life, applied for admission to the sacrament but at the customary examination, could not frame one articulate reply to a single question that was put to her; and yet there was a certain air of intelligent seriousness, and the manifestations of right and appropriate feeling--a heart and tenderness indicated, not by one syllable of utterance, but by the natural signs of emotion which fitly responded to the topics of the clergyman. The minister, overpowered, handed to her a sacramental token; and with good reason, although not a reason fell in utterance from her.’

Exclusion on moral grounds

Some of the debates in this area are rather less savoury. The first case under this heading from *The Edinburgh Evening News* of 11 June 1878, seems reasonable enough, since expressing unity on Sunday did not sit well with being at odds the other six days of the week:

‘THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY. The appeal of Miss Taggart, Coleraine Synod, was preceded with. It appeared that Miss Taggart, who was a member of congregation, had been refused a communion token by her minister until a litigation case in which she was concerned had been decided. She appealed to the Synod, but they concurring in the refusal, she appealed to the Assembly. The appellant addressed the house personally at considerable length.’

The ministers and elders were often highly dictatorial, and every now and again some brave parishioner put his or her foot down, as per this incident reported in *The Belfast News-Letter* of 18 April 1834.

‘A complaint was made by Mrs. Clark, of the Invercauld Arms Inn, Braemar, against the Minister of Crathie, for refusing to give her a

token in July last. It had been the practice of the innkeepers at Castletown to give a ball at the beginning of the new year; and to put a stop to these amusements, the Minister issued an edict, prohibiting the innkeepers continuing the practice, under the pain of forfeiting their licenses, and of being refused Church privileges. Mrs. Clark, however, disregarded the order, and held her ball last year as usual. The consequence was that she was refused a token.'

Sometimes the animosity was at a more personal level. The following is a summary of a lengthy paragraph in *The Aberdeen Journal* of 1 April 1897:

'William Kennedy, of Springbank, Coull, was denied a communion token for no stated reason, other than "he has happened to impair his character since June 1895" (reason not given). "He applied to Tarland & Migvie, who would have accepted him, except that procedure demanded a disjunction certificate from Coull. The Rev. Alex McKenzie of Coull refused to cooperate so Kennedy had to go to his solicitor, whereupon McKenzie wrote several letters making unfounded accusations to the latter.'

Obviously some of the clergy had no compunction about taking communion themselves when in a state of enmity, however differently they treated their parishioners.

The denial of a CT was seen as a statement of defamation, and it was not unknown for those denied to treat it as slander and go to law over it, if they thought that their business interests would be affected by it. One such was the plaintiff, Thomas Davidson of Ballymena. suing the minister, Dr Mullan, in this case reported by *The Belfast Newsletter* of 13 March 1874.

Once again it is a long story, but here is the evidence of one witness:

‘DAVIDSON v MULLAN: I remember the 9th of Oct., the fast day before the communion. I remember the plaintiff getting a token for the communion that day. I saw Dr. Mullan about twenty minutes after Mr. Davidson got the token. Dr. Mullan said there was a gentleman who had a token that day who should not have got one. asked who the person was, and he said Mr. Davidson. He said he kept an irregular house, and that two of his young men had not turned out as well as he expected in consequence of getting drunk in Mr. Davidson's house.’

Exclusion on grounds of affiliation

If there was one thing that ministers were really touchy about, it was perceived affronts to their own personal status; they wanted to be top dog, and have everyone bow down to them. Congregations represented the building and retention of empires, and offences of drink and sex were as nothing compared to that of the humble parishioner who decided that, for whatever perfectly good reason, he would prefer to worship somewhere else or nowhere at all.

The following case, reported in *The Edinburgh Evening News* of 11 June 1878, requires a little explanation. A ‘quoad sacra’ parish is one created and for ecclesiastical purposes only; typically, when a town is expanding and becomes too large for one parish, which the Church decides for practical reason to split into two. A new church will be built, boundaries for the new parishes will be drawn up, and normally the members of the congregation will go to the church in whichever of the two new parishes they reside; which, in most cases, will be the geographically nearest and physically most convenient. The problems may occasionally arise, however, whereby for reason of personal convenience, friendships, family tradition or whatever, the occasional family may wish to worship in the other parish than that to which they have been assigned.

There are few things more calculated to infuriate a minister than to be deprived of a following in this way, and more importantly to him, a contributor to his collection plate; hence the treatment meted out to poor George Scott in the following, and the lengths to which he had to go to remedy it:

‘....a petition from George Scott, his wife and family, setting forth that the Kirk Session of Largs had, without premonition or warning of any kind, expunged all their names from the communion roll, on the ground that the house in which they reside was included within the bounds of the recently-erected quoad sacra parish of Skelmorlie, while they believed this pretended cause to be insufficient, and the whole circumstances lawless and oppressive, and asking the Presbytery to cite the Largs Kirk Session before them to be heard in the case, or to order the names of Mr. Scott and family to be restored to the roll.’

If going to another church of your own denomination was bad enough in the eyes of its leaders, going to one of another was deemed even worse. This from *The Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser* of 23 January 1852, referring to the case of a Mr and Mrs Adam. The latter is speaking to start with:

‘We explained that for a short time we had been attending the parish church of King-Edward '. The Moderator said, 'We hold you to have been absent from religious ordinances altogether—we hold the Established Church to be no church.' The Moderator, addressing Mrs Adam, most rudely and violently asked what she had to say for her conduct, and said, ' What has become of your Free Church principles? You were a Free Church person from the commencement, I thought.'

Mrs Adam, in reply, said ' I was unable to come to Macduff, and rather than hire a conveyance on the Sabbath day and keep a person from church, I thought it my duty to walk to the church within my reach.'

Which all sounds pretty reasonable, but folk who have studied too much theology tend not always to think so.

Parishioner relationship with the clergy and elders: a postscript.

Most of the preceding anecdotes show the parishioner in a somewhat adversarial position, often being bullied by the ecclesiastical authorities and often with no good reason. It would be good to hear what the parishioner's view was when he was meeting them one-to-one, on equal terms. An anecdote from *The Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald* of 18 August 1894 hints at the last-mentioned subject of affiliation in a gentler way, with dry humour, in the form of fictitious conversation:

- Minister: "Why weren't you at the kirk, on Sunday?"
- Rory: "I was at Mr. Dunlop's kirk."
- Minister: "I don't like your running about to strange kirks in that way. No' that I object to your hearing Mr. Dunlop, but I'm sure ye widna like yer sheep straying away into strange pastures."
- Rory : "I widna care a grain, sir, if it was better grass."

Whitstable is not exactly where you would expect to find mention of Scottish church matters, and even at that date news was being regurgitated round the country by local papers where it was thought to be interesting. *The Dundee Courier* of 11 August 1927 got hold of the following, and it would be interesting to know what Presbyterian elders, who could not countenance one of their regulars riding a bike, would make of this incident that had it occurred on their patch rather than down south in Somerset:

‘COCKEREL IN CHAPEL: YOUNG MINERS DISTURB SERVICE FOR TWOPENCE - Two young coal miners, Lawrence Wilfred Collins, of Timsbury, and Ronald George Maggs of Radford, Paulton, pleaded guilty at Temple Cloud Police Court yesterday to wilfully disturbing a service at the Primitive Methodist Church at Withy Mills, Paulton. During the service the door was opened and a cockerel was put in, which caused a great disturbance. Collins told a constable that a man offered him and another young man twopence between them if they would put the fowl inside the chapel. The trustees asked the Bench to be lenient, and the magistrates asked the defendants to find sureties of fifty pounds. Failing this they would be committed to the Quarter Sessions at Bath.’

Accidental abuse of the communion token system

This was an internal matter, hence not likely to get very much mention in the press, and indeed I have not yet found any; but there are examples in Burns, and Andrew Edgar’s *Old Church Life in Scotland* mentions some more:

‘In 1771 an unlucky lad in Mauchline gave a sixpence instead of a token to the elder that was lifting tokens at one of the communion tables. The lad was a communicant admitted to the table on that occasion for the first time. The tokens were in size as like sixpences as possible, and the act of the lad was evidently a mistake for which none could be more sorry than himself in respect that it threatened to involve him in the loss of sixpence.’

Edgar also mentions another case of a farmer who used a farthing as a CT, hinting that it might have been accidental, but does not say whether it was so. Both farmer and lad would have been put through the mill by

the Session, even if subsequently found not guilty. This example is also interesting; good to record that this time the man was considerably dealt with, and allowed to take part:

‘Two or three English soldiers presented themselves at that communion, and one of these came forward without a token. He happened to be seated near the upper end of the table, within whispering reach of (Rev.) Wodrow himself. He was seen by Wodrow to have no token, and he was desired by Wodrow to come out to the churchyard for a moment's private conference. He was then asked outside why he had presumed to seat himself at the Lord's table without a token of admission. "In my native country," said the man, "there is no such custom as you refer to, and if I have given offence it was not of intention, but in ignorance of Scottish ways.’

Burglaries

Church premises were often situated in quite isolated, vulnerable places and were inevitably targeted from time to time by the criminal fraternity. Bags or boxes of CTs were often included amongst the items discovered by the thieves in the course of their searches on this occasion, with mixed results. CTs were usually of little use to them, but if the contents of a bag felt money-like then the burglars would sometimes take the lot without examining it first, as per this example of a burglary in Largo, Fife in November 1844, reported in *The Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser* of 2 May 1845:

‘Robert Brown Wilson and John Balsillie, from Kirkton of Largo, in Forfarshire—accused of stealing a ploughshare, with which they broke open the Session House of the Parish of Largo, and from which they stole a wooden box, containing two leather bags, in which were 7s in copper money and 2s in silver money; as also five linen bags,

containing three hundred and ninety-eight communion tokens. They both pleaded guilty of the first and received sentence of imprisonment in Cupar Gaol for six months.'

Concerning the burglary of the session-house overnight at Barony, Glasgow, on 17/18 November 1860, *The Newcastle Courant* of 23 Nov reports:

'Between Saturday night and Sunday morning, the Barony Church (Rev. Dr. Norman M'Leod's) Glasgow, was broken into by thieves. They next entered the Minister's room, in the session-house, from which they abstracted 2000 communion tokens, a bottle and a half of port wine, half a bottle of sherry wine, half a bottle of brandy, half a bottle of whisky, a small looking-glass, one or two brushes, and some other miscellaneous articles, including a few base copper coins.'

...to which a similar report in *The Fife Herald* adds:

'...and some wine, towels, brushes, &c. No books, however, were taken away.'

The Barony thieves obviously made off with their stash and looked at it later. Two thousand metal tokens have quite a considerable weight, so imagine the miscreants' dismay when, having struggled home with them, they found that the bag did not contain coin of the realm after all. As is also expressed in this report by *The Aberdeen Journal* of 24 November 1847 concerning a recent church burglary at Inverness:

'On Monday week, before daylight, the session-house of the North Church, Inverness, was forcibly entered by a thief or thieves, in search of the money collected on the previous day. The prize was found, and the parties at once decamped. The bag was weighty; and no doubt the spoilers, oppressed with its weight, as they carried it off, rejoiced in the anticipation of beholding the coin. We can picture them cutting

the strings of the bag and pouring the whole shoal of shining coins before them upon the table; but, alas! they had only carried off 300 pewter sacramental tokens! ‘

If the CT box or bag was examined before being carried off, there was a good chance that the thieves would write the contents off as being useless, of course, in which case they would be left behind; as happened at Edinburgh St Cuthberts, when it was burgled on the night of 28-29 August 1887:

‘A box containing a quantity of Communion tokens was pulled out to the middle of the floor, doubtless in the hope that the box contained money, but in this the thieves got a disappointment.’

One career criminal, Alexander McGregor, specialised in burgling churches and manses; there are a number of reports of his activities c.1885-86, and again around 1893. The following report in *The Dundee Courier* of 26 July 1893 relating to recent burglaries at Dunning and Amulree, and an attempt at Path of Condie, neatly sums up the nature of his activities:

‘Some seven years ago M'Gregor was apprehended on a charge of church-breaking at Ladybank, Fife. Numerous churches, session houses, etc. were broken into about that time, and he was ultimately sentenced to several years' imprisonment. After being committed to prison the church-breakings ceased, and there seems to be little doubt that he is the manse-breaker who has been moving about recently in various parts of the county. On Friday forenoon a bag with a quantity of church Communion tokens in was found in Garvock Wood and handed over to the police.’

Pick pickpocketing

Ladies often carried their CTs in their purses along with their money, in consequence of which isolated specimens were often among the items

recovered by the police when apprehending pickpockets. CTs were often oval or rectangular in shape, which lowered their capacity for being passed off as money, and hence reduced their desirableness to a thief. However, in the 1850s the well-known London manufacturer W. J. Taylor was stupid enough to make a few churches some silver and silver-plated CTs which were the exact size of the newly-introduced florin. This was asking for trouble, of the nature reported in *Reynolds's Newspaper* on 1 February 1857:

‘On Monday, a young woman with a child at her breast, who gave the name of Franciska Wesmiska, and said she was a native of Warsaw, was charged with stealing a purse, containing some silver and a “communion token,” during the service of Dr. Cumming’s chapel on Sunday morning. From the statement of the complainant, a married lady named Cole, it appeared that the prisoner entered the pew in which she was sitting, and took a seat close by her side. Some time afterwards, on feeling in her pocket for her purse, in order to take out the token (which resembled a florin somewhat in appearance, and was usually given to communicants), complainant discovered that it had been stolen. ‘

Losses due to fire

Church buildings were liable to accident just like anywhere else, and where fire occurred it is likely that most of the current CT issue would be lost, leaving it represented only by stray losses and thereby rendering the piece quite rare. Lead, being one of the least durable metals, would be amongst the first casualties. One such loss, recorded by *The Dundee Courier* on 11 May 1898, occurred at Kirriemuir:

‘Yesterday morning an alarming outbreak of fire occurred in Kirriemuir Bank Street United Presbyterian Church. A little after nine o'clock smoke was seen issuing from the roof of the building, and so

dense were the volumes of smoke in the interior that it was with considerable difficulty that the immediate seat of the fire could be discovered'

Expressions of contemporary numismatic interest

During the closing decades of the 19th century, more and more churches abandoned the tokens system and started issuing invitations by card. Collecting was probably frowned on whilst CTs were in widespread active use, except possibly by a few clergy on the quiet, but once they started going out of circulation in quantity it became more acceptable to preserve past memories by doing it. *The Aberdeen Journal* of 15 August 1894 records:

‘The use of these tokens has now almost entirely if not wholly disappeared. They are rarely to be met with, except in the hands of collectors. A hobby for token collecting has become an amiable craze, and is quite as interesting as the collection of stamps or coins.’

Dealers were certainly stocking them by the 1890s. This report of a theft from a dealer’s premises at Abercrombie Place, Aberdeen, in July 1898 records his stolen items:

- Two cash boxes
- 15 gold coins
- 117 silver coins
- 308 copper coins
- 87 church tokens
- A number of articles of jewellery

By 1901-03, also, talks were being given and articles written for CT hobbyists. Moreover, CTs were even being forged for collectors!

The most frequent targets of such activity was the popular 1678 Brechin piece, of which *The Dundee Courier* of 4 Sept 1903 writes:

‘....the fast getting rare Brechin Communion token. They are now mostly in the hands of collectors - Unfortunately there are several clever imitations in circulation and collectors would require to be very careful in seeing they are not imposed upon. The writer had the privilege of seeing two of these fictitious specimens, and so nicely are they produced in every detail that it is only the expert that could discover the difference from the genuine one.’

The piece today is one of the commoner of the earliest dated communion tokens, and there are certainly several varieties of it. At this distance in time it may be difficult to tell them apart, but one may presume that probably at least one of these is an original and at least one a copy. Their diameters are around 22-24mm, making them larger than most CTs of their day, and almost coin-like in the hand; which may account for why they have become regarded as one of the landmark pieces of the series.

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 1 March 2016

This was the occasion of the Club’s 68th Annual General Meeting. As usual, it was held in the Lower Common Room of the Warburg Institute, starting at the earlier time of 6pm, which gave more time for the Club’s customary Wine and Cheese party and socialising afterwards.

Anthony Gilbert, the President, delivered his address, recalling the year’s programme once again brought together and fruition by the Club’s Speaker Finder, David Berry. The Club’s membership stood at 50, with an average number at meetings of 16. Nineteen members present at the AGM.

The elected Club’s Officers and Committee were:

President	Anthony Gilbert
Deputy President	Anthony Portner
Secretary	Gerry Buddle

Treasurer Philip Mernick Programme Secretary David Berry
Newsletter Editor Peter Clayton Webmaster Harold Mernick
Committee Robert Hatch, David Powell
Tony Holmes was re-elected as Honorary Auditor.

The AGM closed with a vote of thanks to the President proposed by David Bell and to all those Club members involved in their many ways in maintaining the friendly ethos of the Club. The traditional Wine and Cheese party followed.

London Numismatic Club Meeting 12 April 2016

Ian Franklin, a previous speaker took as his subject “Roman Coins in Britain: An Introduction”.

[The script of his talk that Ian provided was so closely linked to his sequence of illustrations that it proved impossible to realign it into a reported text as is usually done. It is therefore presented from his text but with some slight editorial tweaks on punctuation, Newsletter style paragraphing, corrected spellings and the overuse of capitalisation which would be extremely obtrusive on the printed page. Editor.]

His intentions were to introduce Roman coins as used in Britain and to discuss their use using the 21 “Reece Periods” as a basis. Also to look at Roman coins relating to events in Britain, and to scrutinise coins manufactured in Britain during the Roman Period. A tall order indeed as the presenter made clear, but something he felt he had to attempt after 45 years of serious collecting! He also took the opportunity to introduce some of the Roman coins found at the Tower finds.

To begin he described the ways Roman coins have come down to us today. Hoards such as the Frome find of 52,500 mid-third century coins were buried for a reason. As a result, the coins they contained were selected

or chosen, and generally contain less “forgeries” than are as site finds and so may not represent coins in everyday use. Many Roman coins found in the UK are single finds found by field walkers, mud larks, chance digging, metal detectorists (legal or illegal), and of course on archaeological sites. This led to the question of looting of archaeological sites and the dreadful damage done by disassociating material from their context, when as the speaker said many times throughout the evening: “Context is everything”.

How are stray finds recorded? The Portable Antiquities Scheme is a DCMS funded project to encourage the voluntary recording of archaeological objects found by members of the public in England and Wales, and was introduced to allow as many finds as possible to be logged in a searchable database, the PAS Website. However, recording of coins in poor condition known as “grots” is, in the speaker’s experience, still not being done systematically because of a lack of awareness how important such items can be.

PAS data has been used in many ways – the best and most easily digestible for collectors being “*A History of Roman Coinage in Britain*” by Sam Moorhead, which uses illustrations of coins found and reorded by the scheme to tell the story.

Table 1

No.	Period – Principal Rulers	Beginning- end
1	Pre-Claudian – Iron Age	Pre 41 AD
2	Claudian (Claudius)	41-52
3	Neronian and Civil Wars (Nero)	54- 68
4	Flavian (Vespasian, Titus, Domitian)	62-96
5	Trajanic	96-117
6	Hadrianic	117-138

6	Hadrianic	117-138
7	Antoninian I (Ant. Pius)	138-161
8	Antoninian II (M.Aurelius)	161-180
9	Antoninian III (Commodus)	180-193
10	Severan I (Septimius Severus, Geta, Caracalla, Elagabalus)	193-222
11	Severan II (Severus Alexander)	222-238
12	Gordian III – Valerian	238-260
13	Gallienus (Sole reign) to Aurelian	260-275
14	Tacitus – Allectus	275-296
15	The Tetrarchy (Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius, Galerius, Constantine I)	296-317
16	Constantinian I (Constantine I, Licinius)	317-330
17	Constantinian II (Constantine I, Constantine II, Constans, Constantius II)	330-348
18	Constantinian III (Constantius II, Magnentius, Julian)	348-364
19	Valentinianic (Valentinianus I, Valens, Gratian)	364-378
20	Theodosian I (Gratian, Theodosius I, Magnus Maximus)	378-388
21	Theodosian II (Theodosius I, Honorius, Arcadius)	388-402
22	5th Century I (<i>Added by Sam Moorhead / PAS</i>)	402-445
23	5th Century II (<i>Added by Sam Moorhead / PAS</i>)	445-498

Something the speaker aimed to do in his own words, and with his own photographs and insights on the night.

As a spot of light relief, the following quotation found on the internet was used to highlight the sheer number of Roman coins encountered in

England - “Maybe if the Romans had learned some personal responsibility and took better care of their money by investing it instead of dropping it on the ground, their empire would have lasted a little longer.

Table 1 sets out the Reece “Coin Periods” as used by the PAS and archaeologists, the framework for analysis during the talk.

As was noted several times during the talk, Reece Periods are of differing lengths conforming to coinage production groups, and other factors, so comparative statistical analysis becomes difficult.

Period 1: Pre 41 AD Iron Age / Pre-Claudian:

Some Republican denarii that are found in Britain that must have arrived before the Roman invasion, either through trade or as bullion in themselves. Photographs of some of these finds were shown. How or if the existing Iron Age coinage had a relative value before the invasion of 43AD is impossible to prove.

Table 2 gives the standard post-Augustan currency system used.

Table 2

	Aureus	Denarius	Quinarius	Sestertius	Dupondius	As	Semis	Quadrans
Aureus	1	25	50	100	200	400	800	1600
Denarius	1/25	1	2	4	8	16	32	64
Quinarius	1/50	1/2	1	2	4	8	16	32
Sestertius	1/100	1/4	½	1	2	4	8	16

Dupondius	1/200	1/8	¼	1/2	1	2	4	8
As	1/400	1/16	1/8	1/4	1/2	1	2	4
Semis	1/800	1/32	1/16	1/8	1/4	1/2	1	2
Quadrans	1/1600	1/64	1/32	1/16	1/8	1/4	1/2	1

Finds of plated or counterfeit coins can be found in the pre-Roman coinage of Britain, so it might be that a similarly counterfeit denarius of Tiberius (14 – 37 AD) was a pre-invasion arrival.

The illustration of a denarius of Augustus converted into an amulet or an admission pass to a temple of Mithras from Verulamium Museum was introduced at this point to question how using Reece Periods without context might be misleading. Though minted in Period 1, the denarius was not re-purposed until much later. The actual find / usage date being 2nd – 3rd century AD.

Period 2: Claudian (Claudius) 41 - 54 AD

The Conquest of Britain in 43 AD was commemorated by a didrachm of Caesarea in Cappadocia (E. Turkey) showing Claudius in Triumphal chariot. c. 46 AD, and aurei and denarii of Claudius showing a Triumphal Arch of 46 – 47 AD.

The size of the invading army has been estimated as 50,000 men, but the lack of centrally produced small change led to copies of base metal coins being produced both here and abroad. At the Tower of London site, the earliest coin find was one of these. That such coins turn up in such large quantities must show a degree of official toleration – or even officially sanctioned manufacture. Interestingly post-invasion hoards show evidence

that both Iron Age and Roman coins were in use at this time. Was an accepted exchange rate in force or recognised at this time?

At the time of the invasion the basic pay for a legionary was about five denarii a week paid in silver. However, Claudian gold and silver coins are rarely found in Britain. Of those Claudian denarii that have been found, a large percentage are plated counterfeits. A group of denarii including Republican coins from an early post-invasion period context at Fishbourne Roman Palace, Sussex were illustrated. It is worth noting that Republican denarii continued to circulate – becoming increasingly worn – until the reign of Trajan.

Period 3: Neronian & Civil Wars AD 54 -69

The restart of base metal coin production by Nero in AD 64 led to the end of large scale copying, although a counterfeit / copy As from the speakers collection was illustrated. A genuine As from the Lyons mint found in the Thames was shown for comparison. Existing worn or copied coins were countermarked as an indication of approval for further use, such as a Sestertius of Claudius, with the letters NCAPR usually taken to mean “Nero Caesar Augustus Populo Romano”. Also

in AD 64, the silver denarius was debased by 7%. This was accompanied by a change in the Obverse Legend and portrait causing earlier denarii to be easily identified and withdrawn from circulation, by officials and also by informed members of the public!

Period 4: Flavian I (Vespasian, Titus, Domitian) 69 - 96 AD.

Denarii and Asses are the coins most commonly found from this period.

The reign of Vespasian was illustrated by an As from the Tower and a “JUDEA CAPTA” series denarius found in Southern England. Plated denarii still appear amongst finds from the Flavian Period and an example was shown. Domitian increased legionary pay to 300 denarii a year.

Illustrated were a regular As and copy, with Minerva on reverse.

The eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August in AD 79 during the reign of Titus buried Pompeii and Herculaneum, leaving the remains frozen in time. Using graffiti from Edoné's Tavern it is possible to see how, at least in Italy, prices of wine were advertised: "...Edonè says: Here you drink for an As, but if you give me two, you will drink better wines; and if you give me four, I'll have you drink some Falernian."

It is easy to forget that in northern England, we have our own time capsule of late 1st – early 2nd century prices: the Vindolanda Tablets. For instance:

Tablet 181: ... Candidus, denarii 2 (?)
 for timbers purchased, denarii 7 (?)
 a tunic, denarii 3 (?)
 from Tetricus, denarii ..
 from Primus, denarii 2 ½ (?)
 from Alio the veterinary doctor, denarii 10 (plus)
 from Vitalis the bathman, denarii 3 (?)
 total, denarii 34 ½
 the rest owe:
 Ingenuus, denarii 7
 Acranius, denarii 3
 the Vardullian cavalrymen, denarii 7
 the companion of Tagamatis (?) the flag-bearer, denarii 3
 total, denarii 20.

Tablet 182: "[[..., bugler, for the price of / ... modii 15, denarii 12,
 asses 1_]]

likewise, for sundries, denarii 2, asses 2

[[Sabinus from Trier, denarii 38_, asses 2]]

Ircucisso, as part of the price of bacon, denarii 13_

Felicio the centurion, bacon, 45 pounds
 likewise, bacon-lard, 15_ pounds /
 total, 60_ pounds, denarii 8, asses 2
 likewise, he (?) has received for sundries denarii 6, asses 2_
 Vattus ... / [[Victor ...]] / [[for the price of a horse ...]]
 [[Exomnius the centurion, denarii ...]]
 Atrectus the brewer, / as part of the price of iron, denarii ..
 for the price of pork-fat, denarii 11, asses 2 / Andecarus, denarii / Sanctus,
 denarii
 ...arius, denarii 2_, asses 1+ / ... / ..., denarii 2_+
 Sautenus, denarii _, asses 1_ / Varia...“

Tablet 327: "... and they are bringing (?) it with them in
 small change because ..."

The nature of the sums shown proves that coinage was in regular use in the military, and by extension, by the suppliers of the goods mentioned. The use of “small change” in the last tablet clearly suggests that base metal coinage of a token nature was used and accepted here in Britain.

Another anomaly of the Reece Period system was illustrated by the As of Domitian 88 - 89 AD, Rev: “FORTUNA” which had been placed in the mast-step of the “Blackfriars Barge” (late 2nd century) discovered in 1962. The date given by the coin went against the dating evidence found elsewhere in the wreck, and it may be that the coin was an heirloom placed as a symbol of good *fortune*. Again: “Context is everything”.

Period 5: Trajanic 96-117 AD

As was mentioned earlier, an remaining Republican denarii were finally withdrawn at this time, and a few denarii imitating Republican coins were introduced bearing the name of Trajan. An As found at the Tower of

London together with other coins illustrated this reign, together with a sestertius showing the Entrance Gateway to Trajan's Forum from the speaker's collection and a magnificent and rare sestertius showing the Port of Ostia, found in excavations at Caerwent.

Period 6: Hadrianic 117-138 AD

At this time denarii and sestertii are most generally encountered in finds.

Hadrian's reign is noteworthy numismatically for many reasons, not least because of the first use of BRITANNIA on coins. Genuine Asses found in the Sacred Spring at Bath were illustrated, together with copies from the so-called "Casting Mint". It seems that the significance of figure was not lost on Romano-British people and perhaps when supplies of the original coins ran out, copies were manufactured to fill the gap – or were the cast versions "Temple coins" of some sort?

Coins associated with Hadrian's visit to Britain c. 122 AD. include sestertii of the Emperor haranguing his British troops "EXERC[ITUS] BRITANNICUS": 'Army of Britain', and associated with Hadrian's Wall, the sestertius of 134 - 138 AD. showing Britannia sitting on a pile of stones. Also from around this period are the "Anonymous Quadrantes" showing no emperor's name, but the bust of a deity on one side and an attribute or animal on the reverse. Though considered by some to have been religious or donative in origin, and were of a very low value, three examples of these coins have been recorded on the PAS database. In worn condition these may well pass for later irregular copies, underlining the need to record as many of the Roman coins being found by competent appraisers.

Period 7: Antonine I (Antoninus Pius) 138-161AD

Sestertii are more commonly found than denarii in this period, however it doesn't continue like this.

The coin found in the best condition at the Tower of London is a denarius of Antoninus Pius which was illustrated along with Sestertii from the reign showing Britannia. Military actions in England may have led to these coins being struck, and the creation of the Antonine Wall, further north than that of Hadrian, may have been the idea behind the commonest of all Roman coins showing Britannia, the As with the reverse “BRITANNIA COS IIII” - Britannia seated dejectedly on a pile of rocks. For many years these coins were thought to have been the product of a British mint, however, they are no different in fabric or style to Asses manufactured in Rome at the time. It seems likely therefore that as they are most common here in Britain the majority of coins of this type were sent for British use. As with the Britannia Asses of Hadrian, many appear as deposits in the Sacred Spring at Bath. Cast copies are also noted. Coins of Marcus Aurelius as heir apparent also appear in this period.

Period 8: Antonine II (M. Aurelius) 161-180 AD

Illustrated from this period were an As of Lucius Verus 161-169 AD (as Joint-emperor with Aurelius), and an As of Marcus Aurelius from the Tower Foreshore. A sestertius marked “Silchester ..86” – probably an illegally excavated coin if 1986 – that ended up years later in a dealers £5 box may have helped date something else if it had not been removed

Period 9: Antonine III (Commodus) 180-193 AD

Commodus – or more correctly – his army, were involved in a military event in Britain, the nature of which is unclear. However, it justified the issue of a sestertius showing a seated victory, over “VIC BRIT” in the exergue - “Victory over the Britons”.

A medallion was also struck commemorating campaigns in Britain dated TRP X = 185 AD.

Also lost after the reign of Commodus was a bronze arm purse from

Tadcaster dating from AD 100 – 300. Bronze arm purses are mainly found on military sites and had hinged flaps which covered a hollow interior. Dating evidence for the loss / burial of the object came from the most recent of four denarii found with the purse, a denarius of Commodus.

Period 10: Severus – Elagabalus (Severus, Geta, Caracalla) 193-222 AD

Finds of base metal coins are scarce between 200 – 260 AD, perhaps because the relative value of the coins made them more noticeable when lost, or because a good supply was not reaching this country.

Severus who reigned between 193 – 211 AD, dying in York, reduced the silver content of the denarius to less than 50%. He also raised soldiers' pay. His "Victory over the Britons" denarii and aureus date from 209-211 AD, as does his "VICTORIAE BRITTANNICAE" sestertius.

An interesting use of a Roman coin was shown by a child burial with a coin of 210 AD in its mouth. Findings of "Charon's payment" may have been miss-interpreted by archaeologists in the past but the example in Verulamium Museum shows the idea of paying the ferryman was understood in Britain. Also from this period is the "Casting Forger's Hoard" found in an internal turret of the London city wall near the current Old Bailey. Currently on display in the Museum of London, it consisted of "old coppers" of Antoninus Pius with casts in clay of denarii of Severus and Caracalla, together with a sharp denarius of Caracalla to make more casts from. A spate of copying denarii occurs at this time, and the fact that if found counterfeiting in a house, that could be seized as punishment meant such work seems to have been done in more "public" places.

A silvered base-metal "denarius" of Geta as Caesar, re-assembled by the speaker from three fragments from the Tower of London was introduced at this point. Could it have been the work of the same forger?

After 215 AD, a double denarius? or as it is known today, “antoninianus” was introduced by Caracalla. This coin weighing 1½ denarii was possibly tarified at two on the basis the obverse bust has a radiate crown, previously used to show the difference between an As and its double value the dupondius. Caracalla also doubled legionary’s pay – perhaps to 900 Denarii a year. Antoniniani are rare finds in Britain at this time.

Period 11: Later Severan - Severan II (Severus Alexander) 222-238 AD

During this period, illustrated by denarii of Severus Alexander 222-235 AD and Maximinus I 235-238 AD – the Antoninianus temporarily disappears from the scene – perhaps because the new denomination is unpopular.

Period 12: Gordian III - Valerian 238-260 AD

This Reece Period is one of great change. The end of the silver “denarius” is in sight when the antoninianus returns. Silver coins of Gordian III have now reached 47% silver 53% and copper and the value of the gold aureus seems to have becomes related to its weight as bullion. Trajan Decius, 249-251 AD, reforms the coinage and seemingly attempts to reintroduce some denominations from the past that had gone out of regular use such as the semis. A new coin, the double sestertius is released and one example of this rare coin has been recorded in England.

Old denarii are over-struck with antoniniani under Decius. An example of a silver antoninianus of the Rome mint from 251 AD on an original denarius of Geta was shown. During the joint reign of Valerian with Gallienus (253 - 260 AD), more branch mints opened producing more coins.

Period 13: Gallienus Sole Reign to Aurelian 260 - 275 AD

After the defeat of Valerian I, the Roman Empire found itself in crisis: Between 260 and 274 the Gallic Empire in the West, and Palmyrene Empire (260 – 274 AD) in the East threatened its stability. The

end of the “silver” antoninianus occurred during the sole reign of Gallienus. Attempts to use a silver wash seem to have met with no success and “silver” coins disappear, leaving only base metal radiates of declining quality. Occasional Denarii do continue to appear in base metal but are very unusual and rare finds. In Britain

any new coinage came via the Gallic Empire, illustrated by an antoninianus of Postumus (260-269 AD) from the Tower of London. Evidence that Postumus visited his overseas province may come from a radiate: “NEPTUNO REDUCI” proclaiming the return of the emperor from overseas. Postumus issued double sestertii and dupondii of varying quality at this time. Many of these are over-struck on earlier coins such as one illustrated over-struck on sestertius of Clodius Albinus. The other

Gallic Empire emperors were Marius 269 AD, Laelian 269 AD, Victorinus 269–271, Domitian II c.271AD, Tetricus I 271-274 AD, Tetricus II c.273-274 AD. Die studies indicate one million coins a day may have been struck by Tetricus I underlining how only a very small percentage of coin loss could lead to the many Roman coins found today. Coins of the Central Empire at this time are mainly antoniniani of 97% copper and 3% silver. This includes the “Gallienus Zoo” series of coins invoking the help of deities showing animals sacred to them. Some of these, as well as “CONSECRATIO” types of Claudius II struck after his death were regularly copied here.

In around 274 AD Aurelian reformed the coinage again. A post-reform radiate with the legend “FORTUNA REDUX” of Aurelian found

at the Tower of London would go un-noticed on any coin dealer's tray today – they are common at the moment – and in the condition found it had not been previously attributed, but publishing it here is important as there are only two examples currently recorded by the PAS.

As the reformed coinage didn't reach Britain in quantity locally made copies filled the vacuum. Recently on display at the British Museum, the Fenny Stratford Roman forger's equipment consisted of three pots, two holding cast metal discs and hammered blanks suitable for good sized radiate copies, the last for smaller, poorer quality coins. Analysis of the blanks showed conclusively that older coins had been melted down to make the new radiates, and quality control of the alloys had been tightly controlled.

In order to show the range of irregular radiate copies, the speaker chose to illustrate those with the portrait of / or in the name of Tetricus I. Some have excellent style obverses, but awful reverses! Often the size and shape varies, but some designs look more than just blundered copies or inventions. One such example shown was the speaker's "Long Man of Wilmington" style figure, wearing a radiate crown.

Period 14: Tacitus to Allectus 275-296 AD

Interestingly, the Central Emperor Tacitas (275 – 276 AD) has no coins listed by the PAS!

Between 270 – 290 AD the price of wheat increases by 500% slaves and donkeys by between 800 and 1500%.

The "British Empire" of Carausius 286 – 293 AD, and Allectus, 293 – 296 AD. necessitated the founding of an "official" mint in Britain. Early in his reign Carausius over-struck earlier coins, and the quality of die-cutting was variable, but soon coins of a good quality were being produced in London, and debatably, elsewhere in Britain. As part of an attempt to

associate himself with Diocletian and Maximianus, Carausius issued radiates in the name of the Central Emperors, or in very rare issues with the “Three Brother Emperors” shown on the obverse with “PAX AVGGG” as a reverse type.

Carausius also issued a series of coins honouring the legions who had representation in Britain including the Praetorian Cohort. A great initiative of Carausius was the introduction of a fine silver denarius-like coin. This move was ultimately copied by the Central Empire. This and a supply of gold coins in his name undoubtedly show Carausius as aware of the need in the local economy for coins in all three metals.

In addition to the radiates that continued from the reign of Carausius, Allectus, his successor issued a smaller radiate with the enigmatic letter “Q” in the exergue, showing a galley / ship reverse

Period 15: The Tetrarchy 296 – 317 AD

During Period 15, Diocletian undertook a radical overhaul of the coinage, finally bringing in a group of cross - empire standard coins. This was followed by Diocletian’s Edict on Maximum Prices of 301 AD which was designed to stabilize the currency and economy. It fixed maximum prices for more than 1,300 products, and established the cost of labour to produce them. All prices were in denarii – but unfortunately we don’t know what coin / s that represented. As an example the following wages were used as examples:

Agricultural labourer (by the day) – 25, Stonemason – 50, Labourer of inside work for houses – 50, Maker of mortar – 50, Worker in marble – 60, Worker in mosaic – 60, Wall painter – 70, Figure painter – 150, Coach maker – 50, Iron smith – 50, Baker – 50, Shipwright in sea vessels – 60, Shipwright in river vessels – 50, To the advocate or lawyer for an application to the court – 250, At the hearing of a cause – 1000, To the

teacher of architecture, for each boy by the month – 100, To the servant who attends the public bath and takes care of the bathers' clothes – per bather – 2, To the servant of a private bath, for each bather – 2.

None of Diocletian's initiatives worked for very long, and it was interesting to note Andrew Burnett's quote from *Coinage in the Roman World* at this point, "During the 300's as a whole, prices increased by about 11% Per Annum – by about 30,000 by 400 AD". Underlines the nature of the price rises experienced in the last 100 years or so of Britain as part of the Roman Empire.

Diocletian's re-organisation of the coinage left a group of principal mints that remained fairly constant between 294 – 364 AD. A map showing them was shown and mention made of those contributing coinage to Britain on a significant scale: Arles (opened under Constantine I), Amiens (Magnentius), Trier, Lyons, Aquileia and Rome.

The need for a mint in Britain on a full-time official footing meant that the London mint reopened for the Tetrachy in 296-7 AD. Until recently the main reference for its output were volumes V and VI of *Roman Imperial Coinage Volumes*, but now a specialist publication, *The London Mint of Constantius and Constantine* by Cloke and Toone has also been published by Spinks.

The discussion of the evolution of the mint of London is best left to those references, but the fact many of the early issues of London have no mintmark may have something to do with the aftermath of the Carausian revolt. Gold and silver were not struck at the mint.

A "half-follis" of Constantine I AD 310 – 313 Minted in Trier and found on foreshore near to Tower Bridge in July 2013 was shown – an unusual find in the UK as were two gold 1½ solidi of Licinius (313-315 AD) Found in separate locations in Britain. Again, an unusual find that

may have entered the country as part of a donative?

Period 16: Constantinian I (Constantine I - Licinius). 317- 330 AD

Evidence suggests all previous coins were demonetised. The London mint was closed in 325 AD, and interestingly none of the 120 or so Roman coins found at the Tower of London site were minted in London!

Another coin find proving “Anything is possible” is one of Constantine I minted in Constantinople in 326 – 330 AD. With the reverse “SPES PVBLICA”, showing a labarum with Christogram piercing a snake. One example was recorded as a site find at Wroxeter, as well as one very poor example claimed as a British find on eBay. An example on the PAS database would be nice!

Period 17: Constantinian II (Constantine I, Constantine II, Constans, Constantius II). 330 - 348 AD

The small AE's that dominate this period are amongst the most common site finds of all. An example of Constantine II as Caesar from 330 AD contained a nominal 2% silver, which by 335 becomes only 1%! Keeping this miniscule amount of precious metal in the coins must have been a very difficult process.

The demonetisation of earlier coins led to over-striking of unofficial copies on old coins. One example shown was of a two soldiers /single standard, “GLORIA EXERCITVS” reverse over an earlier Constantinian piece.

The issues of 330 AD commemorating Constantine's new capital of Constantinople (“CONSTANTINOPOLIS” / Victory on prow), and the old capital Rome (“VRBS ROMA” / Wolf and Twins) shown were all finds from the Tower foreshore.

Period 18: Constantinian III (Constantius II, Magnentius, Julian) 348 - 364 AD

The 1000th anniversary of Rome was celebrated by the “FEL TEMP REPARATIO” coinage of the three surviving sons of Constantine, Constans, Constantine II and Constantius II, showing various reverse types. The biggest coin was initially 2.5% silver, and all previous coins were demonetised. Examples of the new “Fallen Horseman” reverse over-struck on now worthless coins older coins were shown.

A usurper emperor Ian actively collects coins of his Magnentius (350 – 353 AD). His use of the Christian Chi-Rho monogram as a reverse coin type was ground-breaking. As well as official coinage including over-struck specimens, copies from Sacred Spring at Bath and other irregular copies of Magnentius were shown. Sectionalised or “cut-down coins from this reign are quite common, though often not recognised or understood. These may exist as a result of a decree of 354 AD which outlawed “the large module nummi”, combined with a demonetisation of the usurper’s coinage.

Constantius II as Augustus (337 – 361 AD) was responsible in 355 AD for increasing silver production.

The famous, and often encountered AE1’s of Julian the Apostate (AD 360 – 363) with the reverse of a bull, are another coin seen frequently on dealers’ trays but not encountered in Britain. An example struck in Lyons was found recently in Cambridgeshire and was put on display immediately in the British Museum.

Period 19: Valentinianic (Valentinianus I, Valens, Gratian). 364-378

AD

The gold and silver coinage were reformed, and the main coins encountered are AE3’s and silver siliquae.

An AE3 of Valens 364-378 AD from the Tower foreshore was one

of many found in the area. Another interesting use of a coin was illustrated by a piece of lead wrapped around a solidus of Valens and nailed to wall of a temple / building in order to curse the Emperor?

Period 20: Theodosian I (Theodosius I) 378-388

Two new coppers were introduced at this time, but the North-west Empire only gets the smaller one! These AE 4's include examples in the name of the usurper Magnus Maximus and his son Flavius Victor. Maximus reopened the London mint briefly to mint gold solidi c. AD 385-387 London was known as "Augusta" for a short time, hence the mintmark "AVG".

Period 21: Theodosian II (Arcadius, Honorius) 388 - 402 AD

Gold and silver coins continue with small coppers.

Illustrated were various post AD 388 Æ4's from the Tower of London site. The late 4th century Roman riverside wall (which can still be seen) on the inner side of the Inner Curtain wall was dated by some of these AE 4's found in dumped material against the north face. The latest appears to be from c. 390 AD. Making this section of wall the latest dated building in Roman London.

As an aside, the Royal Armouries Collection, Tower Foreshore? 2013 Blog said; "There was also this jetton/coin (it was registered as a jetton). It's tiny, only approx. 1cm diameter. If anyone can help with identifying this, please do get in touch." Clearly from the photograph it was another AE4 from this period that had been unrecognised.

Coins from the late 4th century are generally rare in Britain, apart from the 20,000 + from the period AD 395 – 402 found at Richborough, Kent. This is the largest group of non-hoarded late Roman coins found on one site in Britain

A siliqua of Honorius (393 – 423 AD) minted in Milan, and an Honorius AE4 from Aquileia are representative of the last batches of siliquae and nummi to reach Britain in quantity c. 402 AD.

However, the story doesn't end there. The Tower of London "Hoard" found in the Inner Ward in 1777 included a silver ingot and three aurei, one of Honorius and two of Arcadius. What was happening on the Tower site for these, and possibly other ingots now lost, to be buried there? The end of Roman Britain should be regarded as when Constantine III took the British field army (we assume) to Gaul c 407. Post 409 AD Britain was on its own. Solidii and siliquae as bullion seem to be all that remains of the Roman coinage system. Hoards and finds of clipped siliquae like the one illustrated from North Yorkshire with the earliest coin of Julian, raise the question why the clipping was done.

The famous Hoxne, Suffolk, hoard of coins and jewellery found in November 1992 was buried after 407 AD, and included amongst the treasure were 14,865 coins, the latest being two siliquae of the usurper emperor Constantine III (407-411 AD). This may represent a hoard buried in time of trouble and intended to be recovered. In contrast, the Coleraine hoard from Northern Ireland (c. 410 AD) included siliquae and chopped-up silver plate probably representing captured loot or extorted payment. In early Anglo-Saxon England, money and coins went out of use. The Anglo-Saxon sometimes used Roman coins as pendants, piercing a hole in them, as in the example shown from the Ashmolean Museum. Were they objects of curiosity, heirlooms, or regarded in some other way?

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 5 April 2016

This evening was the annual Members' Own, 10 members, including the speakers, being present.

David Powell, using PowerPoint illustrations, spoke on the subject of lead

tokens as a probable means of parochial administration. He had for some while been aware that the initial combinations TC and HA were not only disproportionately frequent on these crude issues during the 16th-18th centuries, but often appeared together; so much so that they could not reasonably be assumed to be necessarily the initials of issuers in all cases.

The talk was provoked by the recent purchase of a group of 12 lead tokens found in the same field in Portchester (Hants) by a metal detectorist. No less than nine of them had either TC or HA on them, and on enquiry it transpired that the vendor had discovered another 26 specimens, mostly with one or other of these combinations, on the same site.

The theory, for which thanks originally to Thames mudlark the late Tony Pilson, is that TC stands for something like 'Token Coin' or 'Town Coin', and that HA is for 'House of Alms'. In earlier days, i.e. the 16th century, when tokens were generally smaller, 'T' alone is often found.

A range of these tokens from different periods was shown, plus some continental equivalents from Belgium, where an extensive and somewhat better-documented series of charity tokens, in both lead and other metals, has long been known. Some of these name the commodity for which they were used, bread being the commonest; although fire, wood, meat, clothing and (would you believe it!) peas and beans are amongst other commodities represented. The purpose of the donors would have been to give alms in a controlled manner, so that unintended purchases, such as alcohol, could not be made.

Finally, in this first section of the talk, a list of estimated dates of a number of the best Portchester pieces, with their various initials, was displayed; the theory being suggested that such initials as were not either TC or HA were probably those of churchwarden issuers, or other parish officials, and that armed with an approximate dating this might

conceivably be verified by an inspection of the local parish accounts.

The second part of the talk commenced with an introduction to Roger Lovegrove's *Silent Fields*, a book on the history of the deliberate killing of British wildlife. The Vermin Acts were first enacted in the mid-late 16th century and remained in force in different forms for many years, right throughout the period in which crude lead was current.

Underlying the policy of the Vermin Acts was the idea that each parish would nominate at intervals which species it considered undesirable and inaugurate a system of payments to be made to such of their parishioners who could provide evidence of killing them. The reason for this killing was that the nominated species were seen as eroding an already fragile economy by eating the crops, and the peasantry were happy enough to oblige by earning themselves a little very welcome extra money.

Both birds and animals appear very frequently on lead tokens, and David conjectured that practical aspects of administration of the Vermin Act were one reason, possibly the primary reason, for many of them. Sample tables of values for killing various species were shown, amongst which were rates such as a penny per dozen or half dozen for small species such as mice and sparrows. Very convenient if you actually killed a dozen, less so if you had only killed five or seven. The theory was put forward that you got a token per kill, and a different token for each species; and at the end of some period there was a point of reckoning where tokens were exchanged for cash.

The advantages of such a method were twofold. First, it saved having to settle in hard money immediately for each new creature killed and, secondly, it provided small change of finer granularity than the Royal Mint made provision for. If you killed two mice you might have to wait

for a few days to find a third one in order to make your two tokens up to a farthing, but at least you wouldn't have to carry their decaying bodies around in your pocket in the meanwhile.

A number of different tokens depicting various species were illustrated, including some most unlikely to be misinterpreted as shop or pub signs. Included amongst these was one of a hedgehog.

This section of the talk ended with a discussion of the vagaries of parish policy on vermin issues, illustrated by a hypothetical map that showed how stupid the effects of killing were when adjacent parishes made decisions in isolation without consulting their neighbours.

The talk concluded with pictures of a class of lead token which displays, instead of cross and pellets, letters (or even occasionally birds) in its corners. There is a family of these; they are not uncommon, but always interesting. Perhaps the four letters are sometimes the two initials of each authorising churchwarden, but the most common letters found seem to be, wait for it..... T,C,A and H1

Coincidentally, unbeknownst to David, **Robert Hatch** had brought along a selection of Scottish communion tokens as they were one of his many numismatic interests, and so members were able to handle some actual examples.

Robert Thompson's topic was 'Ships' Halfpennies'. He said that a fellow member of the Stanmore & Harrow Historical Society, Christine Thomas, has just published a nicely printed A4 book of 23 pages on *Wealdstone in the War Years*. In this she has printed extracts from the Whitefriars School log book, 1939-1946, including on page 19:

1944 January 20th Today was kept as "Merchant Navy Day". A speaker came from the Headquarters of the MN, and spoke to both Infant & Junior

Children. He was given a cheque for £20-7-6 being the amount collected by the children in farthings and ships' halfpennies for the fund.

What were these “ships’ halfpennies”? Given the date of 1944, I thought the children must have been collecting halfpence, which from 1937 bore that charming new design of a ship by Thomas Humphrey Paget (Spink 4115). He is believed to have been inspired by Drake’s *Golden Hind*, the first English ship to circumnavigate the globe. Yet I have not found the term “ships’ [or ‘ship’] halfpenny” in standard dictionaries, even in Harry Manville’s excellent *Dictionary of English Numismatic Terms* (Spink, 2014), with a guest essay on ‘Twentieth-century British Pre-decimal Coinage (1902-70)’ by our own David Sealy. I phoned David in his retirement home, but he could offer no solution.

The only use of the term ‘ship halfpenny’ I have found was in *The Daily Telegraph*’s obituary of T. H. Paget (1893-1974), as reprinted in *Spink Numismatic Circular*. Paget’s biographer, in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1980, was Graham Dyer, then the Royal Mint’s librarian and curator, and now Senior Research Curator. He replied by email on 20 April 2016:

‘I am not entirely persuaded that this is a reference to Paget’s ship halfpenny. Instead, I wonder if the description reflects the maritime purpose for which halfpennies of any type were collected by the children.’

So it remains a mystery.

Peter Clayton exhibited two large (68mm, 2¾ ins) medallions struck from the same dies by the Paris Mint in 1826. The obverse showed a Roman centurion holding a Gallic cock standard and unveiling the recumbent figure of a personified Egyptian queen - the Rediscovery of Ancient Egypt.

Designed by Jean Françoise Champollion, the reverse had a surround of Egyptian deities, each correctly identified in hieroglyphs only four years after Champollion's decipherment in 1822. It is the only 19th century medal known to Peter with correct hieroglyphs. In the centre an inscription recorded that Louis XVIII had ordered the reprinting of the 12 huge elephant folio illustrated volumes of the *Description de l'Egypte*. They, together with eight quarto text volume, were the result of the *savants* accompanying Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798, tasked with recording the flora, fauna and especially the antiquities. The volumes began publication in 1802.

One medal was the very rare original bronze striking of 1826. The second medallion was unique. Struck at the same time from the original dies it was a couple of mm thicker and slightly heavier than the bronze medal. It had been specially gilded at the Paris Mint (and marked) and an engraved inscription specially added in the blank area below the basic die-struck inscription on the reverse. This noted that the medal had been sent to the Topographical Institute of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (i.e. Naples). Research by Egyptological colleagues in Naples had found no trace of the Institute, or of the 12 elephant folio volumes of plates and the accompanying eight quarto volumes of text.

The mystery was that, presumably, the set of books had been sent from Paris, but only a gilded, not a gold, medal accompanied them. Even more mysterious was the fact that this unique gilded medal had ended up a few years ago in a box of miscellaneous commemorative medals in a charity sale in Hertfordshire – it now resides in Peter's collection with its bronze companion – Serendipity is a marvelous thing!

Philip Mernick spoke about a nine carat gold masonic medal presented in 1936 to Worshipful Brother A.C. Tupper, Master of the Borough of

Stepney Masonic Lodge. The Lodge was constituted in 1901 and met in the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street Station (1). The Lodge was for members and employees of the Metropolitan Borough of Stepney, created in 1900. The Borough was not granted arms until 1933 and used the Borough seal until that date. Philip illustrated the arms as appearing on the medal and compared them with those on the Borough seal and also a piece of Goss crested china. The medal showed a slightly simplified and rearranged version of the arms on the other two.

At the centre of the Borough seal were the four parish saints: St Anne, Limehouse; St Mary Matfelon, Whitechapel; St Dunstan, Stepney; St George in the East. In the centre is the White Tower in the Tower of London. At the bottom is a representation of the Borough's docks with, to the left, the London & Blackwall Railway. To the right, a loom represents the local weaving industry.

On the medal, however, the White Tower moves to the top and Tower Bridge is shown at the bottom. There are crude representations of the four saints, the railway, the docks and the loom in the same positions as on the Borough seal.

(1) Built between 1880 and 1884 by Charles E. Barry, grandson of Charles Barry designer of the Houses of Parliament. It has recently been refurbished and is the only hotel within the City of London



Harold Mernick gave an illustrated talk entitled ‘The Fall of the Mexican Silver Peso’. A sequence of slides showed a decline in value from one to 5000 pesos over a period of two centuries.

The familiar silver peso, or dollar, was represented by the full 27g. 900 fine issues of the Spanish Colonial Empire, the First Mexican Empire, the Mexican Republic, the Second Mexican Empire and the resumed Mexican Republic. Eight significant coin types, all of the same size and metal content, covered the period up to 1914. From 1920 to 1945 the silver peso shrank to 16.66g. of .720 fine silver. From 1947 to 1949 there was a further reduction to 14g of .500 fine silver. By 1950 the silver peso was only 13.33g. of .300 fine silver and by 1967 it was only 16g of 100 fine silver. The peso then became a base metal coin.

However, the silver peso tradition had not been abandoned. In 1921 a two-peso coin, celebrating the centenary of the Mexican Republic, was issued with almost the same specification as the original silver peso coin. This became the first of a new series of silver coins with gradually increasing denominations. From 1947 to 1953 a five-peso coin approximately maintained the silver peso specification. After 1953 the five-peso shrank to about half its former size. The new silver peso now became a ten-peso coin. The silver content was kept steady until 1960 when silver issues were discontinued. From 1968 to 1972 the 25-peso coin became the new silver peso. From 1977 to 1979 the tradition was continued with a 100-peso coin, but within five years even the 100-pesos became a small brass coin. So ended the tradition of Mexican silver pesos struck for general circulation.

To some extent Mexico still continues the tradition with the annual issue of a one ounce silver bullion coin containing 33.625g. of .925 fine silver.

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 7 June 2016

[This meeting was held at The Mary Ward Centre, Queen Square, to assess the premises should the Club find it necessary to move from The Warburg

Institute. No speaker had been booked because of this and the opportunity was taken to test the facilities available and produce several short presentations.]

David Powell gave a PowerPoint presentation on Thomas George Middlebrook: 'One of Life's More Eccentric Collectors'.

T. G. Middlebrook (1845-1907), for whom four different tokens were struck by the London medallist Theophilus Pinches in order to advertise Middlebrook's own private museum, was first and foremost a publican, from at least the date of his marriage (1874) until his death; initially in Southwark, and then from 1879 at the Edinburgh Castle in Camden (in North London). The real Edinburgh Castle up north, probably taken as it appeared on his inn sign, appears as the reverse of Token 1.

The Windsor, Pembroke, Edinburgh and Dublin Castles were four public houses set up in different parts of 19th century Camden, initially for the purposes of keeping apart the different groups of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish navvies, respectively, who were at that time building the railways of North London, and between whom there was frequent racial tension, especially when under the influence of alcohol.

The electoral registers confirm 1879 as being the likely year of Middlebrook's arrival at the Edinburgh Castle, and that is the year on the obverses of Tokens 1 and 2, but I am not wholly convinced that the museum was active that early. It may be, for example, that Middlebrook did not progress his antiquarian interests seriously until after the death of his wife in 1887, when he might have been looking for some alternative activity to occupy his mind. The date on the Castle piece could be intended as a foundation date, to convey a sense of longer establishment of the museum than was actually the case. It is my belief that Tokens 2-4 can be approximately dated from newspaper articles recording the purchase of

the various items mentioned on them, to various years in the period 1895-99, and it may be that Token 1, depicting the Castle, is not that much earlier.

Middlebrook's enthusiasm for antiquities was inspired originally by a stuffed monkey, dressed as a cobbler, which he had acquired as an ornament for the Edinburgh Castle's bar. In due course he acquired some most bizarre and exotic items, many of them of highly dubious authenticity, for which he made some outrageous claims, for example:

- 5 auks' eggs
- The Balaclava bugle [Charge of the Light Brigade, 25 October 1854]
- The Chesapeake flag [A US ship that struck to HMS *Shannon* off Boston, Mass., 1 June 1813]
- Haydn's flute
- Cromwell's spurs and helmet
- Dr Johnson's eye glasses
- One of the 30 Pieces of Silver [paid for Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Christ]
- The Spear which killed General Gordon [at Khartoum, 26 January 1885]
- Edward VII's first shoes
- Tourniquet used when amputating Nelson's arm [at Tenerife, 15 July 1797]

It is clear that he was intent on sensationalism, opting for such a wide range of unlikely objects rather than a coherent subject-based group. Given that he was of very ordinary background (his own father was a labourer, his wife's father a carpenter), one wonders from where he got both his knowledge and his money.

Amongst these items, the Chesapeake flag and the Balaclava bugle seem to loom large as the centrepieces of Middlebrook's collection. It is because the token depicting the castle is the only one not to mention either of these, that I believe it to be the earliest.

Middlebrook developed an obsession with the eggs of the Great Auk, a species of bird that became extinct in the mid-19th century. There were only about 75 known eggs in existence and Middlebrook reputedly had it as an ambition to acquire ten of these. In the eventuality, he got five, four of which (believed to be the first four) were acquired at auction in London in April 1895, April 1897, July 1897 and July 1899 at a cost of 180, 280, 160 and 300 guineas respectively. Token 2, in which Middlebrook's head combines with the original reverse, mentions one of these eggs, presumed to be the first, and was probably issued to celebrate its acquisition; hence it was probably struck in 1895. Token 3's obverse is an 1897-dated Victorian Jubilee piece; the price of the egg is specifically stated on the reverse as being 280 guineas, and hence relates to that acquired in April of that year.

Token 4 mentions the flag and the bugle for the first time, as well as an unspecified auk's egg, said to be 'the largest egg in the world'. This probably means the 300-guinea one acquired in April 1899, although this is not certain. Regarding the other items, the Balaclava bugle was not acquired until March 1898; until his death in 1893 it was the property of Trumpet-Major Henry Joy, the lancer who originally sounded it in the Crimea all those years before [see Editorial note]. I do not know exactly when the Chesapeake flag was purchased, but an American newspaper suggests that it was in 1899. The likelihood is that Token 4, with its Christmas message, was issued near the end of that year.

Theophilus Pinches jnr (1856-1934), the son of Middlebrook's

medallist, worked in his father's die-sinking business until 1878, whereupon he took up a curatorial position in the British Museum and became an expert in Assyrian studies, which he then went on to lecture in, at London and Liverpool universities, until just before his death. It would be interesting to know if there was a friendship between the two men that might have contributed to Middlebrook's interests.

Middlebrook's activities seem to go quiet after the end of 1899, probably because his ambition was outstripping his ability to finance and accommodate them. When he died, his assets amounted to only £811, just a little more than he had paid for the bugle. It is likely that he was in serious debt, and that most of his estate went into paying it off. The largest egg and the bugle both made substantial losses when auctioned in 1908, although the American interest in the Chesapeake flag ensured that one item, at least, attracted lively bidding. There were doubts expressed in the press at the time over whether some of the items, particularly the bugle and four of the auks' eggs, were genuine.

There is an article on Middlebrook and his museum in *The Harmsworth London Magazine*, vol. 3, pp. 396-400, written in November 1899. His bidding at auction was sometimes considered outrageous, and attracted the attention of the press on a number of occasions; in consequence of which there are also quite a number of references in the British Newspaper Archive. Most of these are factual, but one or two are satirical, and in 1918 one auctioneer, looking back at his career, described Middlebrook as the most eccentric bidder whom he had ever had to deal with. It seems, though, that Middlebrook had charitable intentions; his museum was free, he lent the bugle at least twice for use in charity concerts, and amongst his unfilled ambitions was a project to build an art gallery and lending library on the site of the Edinburgh Castle's tea garden.

One American author, George Webb Appleton, even wrote about Middlebrook, only very thinly disguised as ‘Brook Middle’, into a novel: <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/das-halsband-des-kaisers-7426/13>. This is a German site; Google Appleton's name, and Middlebrook's, to get the option of an English translation!

[**Editor’s note.** The Editor must declare that he has a particular interest in The Charge of the Light Brigade, the men who rode in it and their medals, so he was especially interested in David’s Token 4.

Over the years there has been much controversy as to whether in fact Lord Cardigan’s Light Brigade Orderly Trumpeter sounded ‘charge’, and who, if sounded, was the trumpeter who did so.

Trumpet-Major Henry Joy is often cited as the trumpeter who sounded the ‘charge’ for the Light Brigade. However, although he was a 17th Lancer, part of the Light Brigade in the Crimea, he was, unusually, Orderly Trumpeter to Lord Lucan of the Heavy Brigade. As such he rode behind Lord Lucan in the Charge of the Heavy Brigade and is recorded as having sounded, ‘trot’, ‘canter’, ‘gallop’, and ‘charge’. He was wounded and had two horses shot from under him.

T-M Joy died 17 August 1893 and is buried in Chiswick Old Cemetery, Hounslow, London W4; a marble cross marks the grave provided by the 17th Lancers. The plinth records that he had sounded the Charge of the Light Brigade, but he did not ride with Lord Cardigan in the Charge of the Light Brigade with the 17th Lancers, so he could not have sounded ‘charge’.

Officers of the 17th Lancers had suggested that a silver copy of Joy’s bugle should be made and presented to him in exchange for his battered bugle. He declined and the silver one was never made. Joy kept the bugle

and his family sold it and his four medals at auction through Messrs Debenham, Storr and Sons in 1898 where George Middlebrook bought it for 750 guineas. At Middlebrook's death in 1907 the bugle and four medals were again sold at auction and bought by the American W. W. Astor who donated them to the Royal United Services Institution in Whitehall, and when that closed and the collections were dispersed they passed to the National Army Museum, Chelsea.

Returning to the actual Charge of the Light Brigade, Lord Cardigan's Orderly Trumpeter was Trumpet-Major William Brittain, 17th Lancers. He sounded at least 'walk', 'trot', and 'gallop', but there is no record of 'charge' being sounded – it is generally thought that the horses made their own decision under the heavy fire. Brittain was severely wounded in the charge and died at Scutari on 14 February 1855. His trumpet was sold at Sotheby's, 20 April 1964, and was bought by the American Ed Sullivan and the actor Laurence Harvey for £1600. They donated it to the regimental museum of the 17th/21st Lancers, the Queen's Royal Lancers, Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire, where it resides along with many relics of the Charge, including the stuffed head of Ronald, Lord Cardigan's charger.

Postscript. Through David's kind offices the Editor has since acquired an example of Token 4 that features the Balaclava bugle.]

Peter Clayton circulated two bronze medallions and a sketch by William Brockendon (1787-1854) now in the National Portrait Gallery. The link between the three was Giovanni Belzoni and the pyramid of the pharaoh Chephren at Giza.

The first medallion (AE54, BHM 969) carries left-facing bare head Edward Thomason early in 1821 the die was created by T. I. Wells (signed below truncation). The portrait is extremely accurate and Brockendon's

pencil sketch for it is in The National Portrait Gallery (a copy was shown). The reverse features a truncated pyramid and the legend OPENED BY G. BELZONI MARCH 2nd 1818. This refers to Belzoni's opening of the Second Pyramid at Giza of the Fourth Dynasty pharaoh Chephren, since antiquity it was believed to be solid with no interior passages. The original sketch for this reverse is seen very small in the bottom left hand corner of Brockedon's Belzoni pencil sketch. Although Brockedon knew Belzoni and produced a splendid painted portrait of him in 'Turkish' dress (National Portrait Gallery, but presently hanging in the Trustees Board Room in the British Museum), he had not seen the relevant pyramid. What he represented was actually the Great Pyramid of Giza, of Chephren's father the pharaoh Cheops. That pyramid is indeed truncated, having lost its top 30 feet. Chephren's pyramid is complete to its pyramid apex.

Which brings us to the second medallion shown (AE55). The obverse is a facing portrait with the inscription JOHN KENT FBA KEEPER 1983-1990 (i.e. of the Department of Coins and Medals, The British Museum). The reverse shows a bird's eye view of the Second Pyramid of Giza (Chephren's) with its complete upper casing from the NNE, including the entrance that Belzoni found. The legend reads: 'NIL SINE LABORE'. The design for the reverses of the series of medallions commemorating Keepers of C&M is generally chosen by the recipient. The piece is unsigned but the artist has got the pyramid correct that should have appeared on Belzoni's medallion.

David Berry, in part to test the Mary Ward facilities and projector, showed a series of enlarged illustrations of coins that he had produced using his microscope camera, and the results were splendid.

Harry Mernick illustrated and drew attention to the series of paperweights that the Royal Mint had produced over a number of years, and their steady and dedicated price rise.

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 5 July 2016

The Club welcomed Duncan Pennock to speak on ‘The joys of eBay’.

Duncan said that the talk was a repeat of one given at the Token Congress in October 2014 and was a light-hearted PowerPoint presentation consisting of 96 slides looking at that modern source of so many space fillers, eBay. As per the introduction it was aimed at that section of numismatists who have struggled to embrace any modern technology beyond that of the quill pen. The review embraced a wider review of what is available when broadening eBay search parameters beyond “Ryal” or “Jetton”. With a computer and some time, eBay can be a rich source of tokens and income, all you need is a ZX81 with a Terabyte memory upgrade, internet connections and you are ready to go.

An aspect of eBay is that the range of objects for sale encompasses items which can be difficult to resource via local hardware stores such as a Microwave light bulb. However, pitfalls for the unwary do exist, not least pricing, at £999,999 each an equivalent costing option might be the purchase of 22,227 Microwaves at £44.99 each from Amazon for the same nett outlay. On the plus side it was noted that the delivery charges were free. Also gleaned from the page was the fact that 27 have been sold and the seller has 99.9% positive feedback, which indicates some kitchens have a larger outlay than might be immediately apparent. The talk diverted, due to audience participation, into the wider aspects of money laundering, for which several members displayed surprising erudition.

The next object lesson chosen was that of an old fashioned work surface mounted bean slicer, nowadays more difficult to obtain and

occasionally seen in antique bric-a-brac (junk) shops. At £18.38 Buy it Now option, not totally unreasonable, however, when £31.49 postage is taken into account, less of a bargain.

A direct line union jack telephone was then reviewed, new and free delivery but at £1,000,000.00 possibly excessive, it had in addition to Buy it Now and eight watchers a 'Make Offer' option and had received two assumedly unsuccessful offers.

Much much cheaper was a second hand shirt, like new condition, hardly worn, inscribed cufflinks once owned by US Senator Joseph Biden, which started off at \$750,000 and had reduced to \$167,835.

The range of items for sale is truly breath taking, next a puppet scene for the grandkids, which really beggars belief: a modern lounge with curtains as per the theatre, an Alsatian dog in the foreground, a bearded man wearing sandals and wearing a dressing gown alongside another man, a background picture of John and Yoko and a blonde angel with wings. Duncan still struggled to come to terms with the title, 'Jesus tried to cheer up Paul McCartney – using a Lambchop Puppet', £154,030.57. The item was for sale in October 2014 when the original talk was given, and the good news as of July 2016 was that it remained for sale; however, with the falling pound it now costs about £40,000 more than before.

A copper plate based on Napoleon's visit to Egypt in 1798, 'Portico of the temple of Dendra', next caught the eye at £10,000,000. This served to introduce the potential for establishing provenance via eBay, a search on other items offered by the seller revealed a USB Hub and card for £28.47, a filing cabinet for £79.97 and a label printer for £69.97 - all items obviously consistent with office equipment, although one would have anticipated a high end art gallery.

Having reviewed the wider aspects of eBay the talk now lurched towards numismatics, starting with the Real de a ocho, more commonly referred to as a Spanish piece-of-eight, which was used as the search term.

First, a really good image, complements of Wikipedia, established the basic expectations and the closest hit was a very worn Bolivia Philip (?) of Spain 8 Reales , reserve £200.00.

Extraneous hits included a ‘Very rare set of eight one penny coins from 1899 to 1906’, only £0.99 opening bid, the pennies’ conditions, with a strong tail wind, were around about Fine and the use of the term ‘very rare’ led to a digression on changing rarity values, specifically the way that a 1912 H [Heaton mint] penny, originally scarcer than the 1912 sans H, now appeared to be more common when emerging from Charity shop accumulations.

Continuing the pieces of eight search the possibility of deliberate fakes was now introduced as a timely warning, as not all sellers are members of the BNTA. The first instance clearly states that the coins are brand new, not original and at £2.20 each and free delivery the only real question was why was the order limited to one per customer? What is needed is a genuine piece, but you will have to pay for it: an image of a pirate with requisite hat, legend Piece of Eight 1780, reverse Hispaniola (ship) 1780. Hispaniola in Scarborough, £2,500.00.

Having exhausted some of the lesser known varieties of pieces of eight, the talk focussed on more recent coins of the realm and some surprising expectations prevalent in post decimal coinage, highlighted were ‘Ultra Rare 2013 £1 coin’ priced £1,000,000.00 and ‘Ultra Rare 2013 £1 coin – Buy quickly before it goes’, also at £1,000,000.00. followed by ‘I have a ultra rare 2013 1 pound shield of the royal arms’, starting bid

£40,000.00, price £60,000.00 which gives such exceptionable value compared to the other two offers, one scarcely wants to criticise the grammar. Having exhausted the higher value denomination an offer on eBay as of the day of the talk, 5 July 2016, caused some consternation, old 50 pence coins at £9,999,999.00 caused some re-evaluation of junk trays.

And so to tokens, and the necessity of refining one's search, a simple search on 'tokens' resulted in 32,678 hits, and assuming 10 seconds a look, that results in 90 plus hours of reviewing, thus refining the parameters is essential. A suggested new specialist field of collecting was 'Token Turtle' which reduced the hits to 23, far more manageable. Images of Leonardo, the Turtle wagon and Shredder, General Traag and Donatello, Krang and Splinter etc, were reviewed but at £17.21 each plus £17.23 postage the market bubble appears well under way. A couple of USA Hudson's Bay Company tokens next caught the eye: 'Important Hudson's Bay Company Barrel Hoop Trade Token/Gingras Unique type R-10 \$7,500 , Onion Lake only \$5,500'. One of the images was protected via the seller's logo, Vancouver coins, both very very nice tokens and indicating the strength of the American market; my trays of unidentified initials has, needless to say, been checked for any with HBC.

The lower end of the USA market was then considered, a dime love token but it is unsure what the response would be when presented, 'Darling I saw this and thought of you', as it was a very worn dime with a vast irregular shaped hole. For £7.95 drill a hole in a coin and call it a love token?

The rare Sikh temple tokens were then reviewed but again the word rare appears to be a flexible concept, especially with 34 identical hits. Similarly, 11 very rare Bahawalpur Palaces tokens.

A set of half a dozen commemorative Token Congress coins for £18 brought back memories and a very nice about EF model penny was available, but at £45.38 plus £9.72 postage it seemed a little steep.

A Good Luck token (Obv = Rev = Good Luck Always, around a cat, was up for sale at the time of the talk and had surprisingly accumulated 40 bids and reached £23.41 plus £4.41 postage, there are surprising niche markets out there - cats on coins?

A very worn Columbia token was £49.99, now £32.49 (35% off) was next, followed by one in much better condition and at £12.50 with impeccable references (Galata, *Token Book 2*), a much better bet.

The use of photographs or good scans was next enlarged upon, two hideously out of focus images of Ruffler and Walker being the example, but at £99 may be a little steep. A miniscule image was next and the use of Photoshop enhancement to blow the image up to something reasonable revealed that with a total resolution of maybe 10x10 pixels, enhancement was a losing proposition. An un-researched token or coin c. early nineteenth century at £0.95 plus £6.50 postage served as a reinforcing reminder to always check for postage costs, although for the out of focus image unless one collected metal discs, disappointment was possibly in store.

A series of tokens with holes and a starter set of Readers Digest tokens, which at £1 plus £2.80 postage was less outrageous than most then featured. And so it continued, books costing £250 more than new direct from Galata, Ruffler and Walker (in focus, VF, 99p and 50 tokens in memory of the good old days £189.08 - Why the 08p?

The talk concluded with a token recently purchased which had triggered off a few trip wires in the speaker's mind. Item, condition: 'The condition of this coin is very good. Please judge for yourself. On one side

is gold gilded and says Newark Silver Token for 1 shilling town hall. On the silver side, It says The current value payable in cash notes, T Stansall, CH A'moore, Rich D Fisher, WM Fillingham, WM Readett, and T Wilson. This is a rare silver token coin and are very hard to find.'

The image consisted of a yellow token held by a semi-naked man in the background. Moving hurriedly on, the token is therefore Nottingham Newark 4, 5 or 6 but no gilded or copper examples are known, an unknown variety (?), worth a punt. A bidding war followed - who else collects shillings?

The token arrived, in a box, cellotaped. The next three slides said, 'Pregnant Pause', 'Cellotaped ???', and Old Discoloured Cellotape'. This did not result in the hoped for sympathy from the audience, quite the reverse. So we now know that discoloured cellotape is indistinguishable from gilded or copper.

Next images showed in sequence the cello tape removed, (yuck !). The secret weapon Isopropyl alcohol plus cotton buds, image getting better and then a quick trip down to the garage for the finishing touches - images of angle grinder, rasp file, wire brush and shot blast cabinet.

Final result, Dalton Nottingham Newark 5, Bright EF.

And there you have it, the Joys of eBay.

London Numismatic Club Meeting, 4 October 2016

David Powell spoke on 'Numismatic Recycling: Second Careers for Retired Coins and Tokens'. Although the main focus was on engraving and its various uses, some mention was also made of counter stamping where deployed for similar purposes.

Engraved coins are too often collectively referred to as love tokens (because that is one of their most frequent functions) or transportation tokens (by those who desire to boost their price tag); however, this is over-

simplistic and, whilst those terms describe two of their roles, there is much more to them than that. During the lecture David discussed these and other issues:

- ¥ Types of usage, and by whom.
- ¥ Types and conditions of host coin selected.
- ¥ Ways in which the design of the host piece was exploited for best effect.
- ¥ The variety of engraving styles.
- ¥ Timescale of usage.
- ¥ The use, and limitations, of genealogical techniques, when trying to discover the story behind the piece.

A provisional list of uses for these pieces was suggested, and most then illustrated. It was probably, to some people, surprisingly wide-ranging:

- ¥ Event notification and celebration
- ¥ Love tokens
- ¥ Other personal
 - Ð Gifts
 - Ð Well-wishing
 - Ð Souvenirs
 - Ð Visiting cards
 - Ð Identity cards
- ¥ Work and Business
 - Ð Commercial tokens and trade cards
 - Ð Passes
 - Ð Parochial administrative use, mostly associated with the Poor Law
 - Ð Apprentice pieces
 - Ð Artwork intended for sale as such

¥ Beliefs

Ð Political

Ð Moral

The various themes of this subject are heavily intertwined, to the extent that often one cannot ascertain with certainty the precise purpose of the piece. An ex-Georgian halfpenny was displayed showing just a lady's name and a date. The question was, what precisely did she do on 20 March 1778? did she:

¥ Get born?

¥ Get christened?

¥ Have a birthday?

¥ Fall in love?

¥ Get engaged?

¥ Get married?

¥ Get transported?

¥ Lose her husband to transportation, or to an extended period of naval duty?

¥ Die?

¥ Get buried?

The possibilities are numerous, and the use of parish registers and other records will resolve only a few of them. One can conjecturally hypothesise that the date is one of baptism, marriage or burial, and go looking for it, and occasionally one is lucky. It is worth attempting on occasion, but the hit rate is quite low. There are, however, some cases where the information on the coin will supplement the parish registers and provide data which may not otherwise be known; for example, the piece may include a precise location and birth date, which a mere baptismal entry and parish name may not supply.

The blank parts of the field, such as the space to the sides of the head and the angles between the shields, on early milled silver, are ideally suited to the engraving of personal data and, when used for such, the result is often quite attractive. Less so is the engraving of data across the monarch's head, a practice to which some did unhappily resort. On copper, both use of the field and engraving across the head is rare, indeed almost unknown; flattening the surface before reuse is more commonly favoured.

Pieces which use the field of the coin in this way are thought generally to relate to celebration and notification of the major events of life. When the name of the donor is also engraved, one can presume that they were probably a godparent, and it would appear that this sort of baptismal use was quite common. One William III crown shown was clearly engraved by the recipient rather than the donor (his aunt), the suggestion being that he had had it engraved in her memory after her death.

Other illustrated examples of good usage of natural design included the use of the space next to the shields on a William and Mary halfcrown and, rather unusually, an inscription right round the side of the shield on a George IV second issue shilling.

A large number of pieces are indeed love tokens as surmised, but one must not assume that the young lovers necessarily went off kissing and cuddling into the sunset. Some no doubt did, but consider the following rather contrasting romantic scenarios:

¥ A gave B a love token and the two young lovers went and got married, had a large family and lived happily ever after.

¥ A gave B a love token. Some while later A dumped B (or vice versa), whereupon B, not wishing to be reminded of his/her ex, threw it in the Thames for some metal detectorist to discover 200 years later.

One piece illustrating a likely example of the latter phenomenon was

shown. The piece named a young Huguenot couple called James and Sarah from Shoreditch, with very precise details of their names, ages and James' address, dated 1804; which was all very sweet until one looked up Ancestry and found that James married a Charlotte in 1809. Perhaps we should give them the benefit of the doubt, assume that they married, Sarah died in childbirth, and that we haven't found the records of that yet....

Some expressions of love were very definitely genuine, but their circumstances can often be deduced from the context. 'Faith, Love & Friendship 1804', accompanied by a bunch of flowers, is quiet and straight forward enough, but some examples are more plaintive, particularly those which hint at an expected long period of parting. 'When this you see, remember me' is a notably frequent formula on such pieces, and others in similar vein. Where there are depictions of sailors, or ship's wheels, or anchors, one may reasonably presume that the absent beloved is in some sort of naval service; but on some pieces there are hints, with varying degrees of certainty, that the absent beloved has been a naughty boy and, consequently, been invited by His or Her Majesty's Government to spend some years abroad. The practice of stippling, that is, making the legend wholly out of a series of dots, is particularly associated with transportation pieces. The results are usually unattractive and frequently difficult to read.

Reciprocal pairs of love tokens are known, and an example was shown in which IB pledged constancy to AS on the back of one grotty William III halfcrown and vice versa on another. The date, 14 April 1797, was presumably that of engagement or marriage.

Death pieces are more sombre. They usually have a simple name and date, occasionally accompanied by a picture of a funeral urn on the other

side, and one is sometimes left wondering whether they are a memorial to the deceased or a notification of the funeral. Some of them have the date of death of both husband and wife on a single piece, which rather precludes the latter possibility, and one of these was shown in which a correlation of the two pieces of information was able to deduce, by recourse to the National Burial Index, exactly which parish the two parties came from.

The saddest piece of all amongst the ones shown, but not the only one to resort to poetry, was one which clearly related to a baby who died in the earliest days of infancy. Wording of 8-10 lines is not unknown on Georgian halfpennies or smaller coins, and occasionally a piece is rolled thin to accommodate extra expression.

Whilst there is evidence that people of all levels of society used engraved pieces for their purposes, the frequency of high-value denominations such as crown and halfcrowns, plus the amount of high-quality artwork, is an indication that usage may have been somewhat skewed towards the upper echelons of society, or at least to those more educated. In consequence, there is a higher probability of encountering someone famous when researching them. In addition to the earl's daughter mentioned below, other pieces shown included:

- ¥ a probable confirmation gift from his godfather to the Regency architect Michael Searles (1750-1813), designer of many buildings in south-east London.
- ¥ an apprentice piece by Francis Crow (1755-1835), watchmaker and silversmith of Faversham, and inventor in 1813 of the liquid-dampened compass. Dated 1771, the reverse design was based on a Spanish eight reals.
- ¥ an apprentice piece by George Rushall (1791-1846), one of the engravers of Britain's first postage stamp, the famous Penny Black.

Personal commemoration of events on engraved coin was in decline by about 1860, but there were other initiatives of a commercial nature thereafter. Victorian small silver was extensively used for making trinkets between 1890 and 1914; the simple engraving of one name, and maybe holding for a pendant, to make a cheap gift. The First World War largely killed the practice, but an isolated example of a nickel-brass threepenny piece of George VI was amongst the modern examples illustrated; as also was a silver threepence with a Christmas pudding on one side and the date 'Xmas 1904' on the other.

Alongside this personal material there was, at about the same time, the introduction of the 'Hobo'. These were again amongst the cheap gimmicks of the time, bought purely for their amusement; common copper and bronze pennies of the period, with the ruler's head mutilated in some amusing manner by additional engraving. Queen Victoria was the most usual victim, and appeared on this occasion variously attired as a British army officer, a Salvation Army officer and a jockey. She was accompanied by Napoleon III, dressed as a Prussian army officer.

There is one particular manufacturer during the Edwardian period whose work appears quite frequently, always on freshly struck pennies of the reign, and whose style regularly combines the inclusion of a wavy band across the middle of the reverse in conjunction with preservation of the date and exergue. The band contains whatever inscription the customer desires, but as those seen mention such diverse places as Southampton and Dublin, it is to be presumed that he had a central base and was marketing across the country.

One word of caution. There are even more modern engravers around than those who made these pieces, who have the skills of their predecessors and, armed with a supply of worn cartwheel pennies and their later bun-

head Victorian bronze equivalents, of which there are plenty around, seek to use them to carve a living in the 21st century. Some of the results are quite good, and their artistry is often to be admired, but they can be easily confused with genuine older work.

The use of engraved pieces as visiting cards by ladies in high society is known from very early in the 18th cent, and an example of 1736 shown was finely engraved with classically inspired artwork. This was followed by a conventional Queen Anne halfcrown of 1707 with the lady's name, full address and year of issue (1780) engraved, in no less than six lines, down the queen's bust. Whether she issued some more in 1781 so as to exclude those with whom she had fallen out in the preceding twelve months, one can but conjecture.

The issuing of pieces for specific years and even one-off events seems to have been quite normal, as was illustrated by the next piece, a cartwheel penny, and one of the finest I have seen which fits the description of:

¥ "Obv: blank";

¥ "Rev: blank".

The edge, however, is engraved with the name of a lady, daughter of an earl and wife of a rich landowner, plus a date, 16 September 1841. I rather imagine that it was a ticket to her latest ball.

More recently, counterstamping and engraving have been used by ladies in more modest circumstances, as pieces to put in their purses and handbags to indicate ownership should the latter become lost. An example illustrated gave the full name and address of a young unmarried lady on Tyneside, complete with a 1911 census entry showing her at home with her family. As she was born in 1889 and married in 1918, the date of the piece can be conjectured to be within a few years of 1910.

Contemporary to this, with a similar idea in mind but made in very

different circumstances, were the many kitbag tags made, or commissioned from locals, by soldiers in France in WW1. These are various in design, but the common detail featured is name, regiment and regimental number; they are usually holed, and their purpose is to identify the owner of the kitbag, or corpse attached, should the owner not be lucky enough to survive. The regiment and number are often enough to identify the soldier, and if online records do not reveal his history then the regimental headquarters may well do so for a small donation, and be happy to oblige. An example of such a helpful letter from a regiment was shown alongside one of the three such tags illustrated.

The use of engraved pieces more generally in the world of commerce and business, other than as a commodity to sell, is one aspect of the series which is less well known. A small percentage of engraved items, and a much larger percentage of counterstamped ones, were clearly made to fulfil the same roles as some types of better-known tokens, and a number of examples were illustrated. Irish slap tokens, mentioned by W. J. Davis in his early 20th century book on the coinage of the 19th, are one example; outworn Georgian shillings and sixpences, deliberately engraved with the names of traders, used to remedy the shortage of ready cash. Other pieces illustrated were issued by a chemist, a blacksmith, a cutler and two butchers. One of the last-mentioned, based in West Sussex, had his own name mentioned on one side and a London name mentioned on the other, from which it may be conjectured that the piece may have been a receipt for some sort of sack, crate or other container used when he took his goods to market.

Some of these dated back to at least the 1770s. Also illustrated were a pair of engraved calendar medals, dated 1725 and 1734, and proclaiming a Leeds origin. The working part of the design was very much along the

lines of the pieces struck in copper by Glover, Turner, Powell and other Birmingham manufacturers from 1742, and not too dissimilar from the central idea of other earlier calendar issuers.

Counterstriking was, of course, much more common than engraving for commercial purposes, probably because of the ease and lesser expense of producing the pieces in bulk. Those engaged in metal-related trades were particularly fond of counterstruck pieces, and found the cartwheel coins and other large late Georgian copper particularly congenial for their purposes. Likewise the issuers of the well-known 'Poor Man's Pub Checks' which poured on to the scene from 1883; blank brass disks with Queen Victoria or a double-headed eagle on one side and nothing on the other, bar space to stamp whatever one liked; typically initials, depiction of pub name, and value. These are not re-usages of course, as they were struck specifically for the purpose, but they are part of the chronology of counterstamping, and an alternative to the re-use of existing coin. Illustrated alongside several examples in the talk, however, was something more unusual: a 'To Hanover' gaming counter, of similar weight and construction, counterstamped for use as a bonus check.

Some counterstruck coins are exceedingly common, and were obviously distributed in vast numbers; for example, the 'Borwick's Powder' advertising piece and the Empire Theatre's advert of its play 'Immense Success'. that is, assuming that the latter piece is an advert, rather than an entrance ticket; again not, obvious. Both pieces were struck on Napoleon III copper, because by the time of issue it was illegal to counterstamp English small change but not foreign. Napoleon's copper was deliberately imported in bulk in an attempt to evade the law before this loophole was closed.

Before leaving the subject of commercial issues, it must be said that

some of the finest issues are by those apprentices learning their trade, and it may be conjectured that the best of them are actually test pieces done as a grand finale to demonstrate their skills not only to their master but to all and sundry. Maybe they subsequently carried them around as a CV to show to potential employers. Along the way, as they learnt their trade, there were also lesser examples, of various levels according to how far through their seven years or so the apprentice had got at the time concerned; and these survive, at all stages of attainment from very basic to extremely mature. One interesting apprentice piece included in the talk was a cartwheel penny modified for use as a sundial, complete with hour scale round the edge and two holes in the middle for fixing.

Some of the best show fine artwork and are confusable with pieces which might have been deliberately made for sale; perhaps the apprentice was allowed to enhance his finances a little by making and selling such items. The choice of topic on such pieces was various; flowers were quite popular on the simpler ones, country scenes on the finer ones. The view of country cottage set within rolling scenery was so popular that one wonders whether its appeal was as an idealistic view of what married life would aspire to when the recipient was finally wedded to the donor.

Some pieces are just totally ambiguous. One depicted a name (George Bell) and date of birth on one side and a man standing beside a barrel on the other. Was it personal or commercial? Was George a publican, in which case why do we want to know his date of birth, or was it George's father depicted, alongside the barrel whose contents he was about to use to celebrate the arrival of his newborn son?

Belief features but little on engraved pieces, but there were a number of fine political pieces issued in the mid-1820s, probably in some quantity,

to express public sentiment regarding the hanging of the unpopular banker Henry Fauntleroy for fraud in November 1824, and then again regarding the behaviour of George IV and Prince Leopold shortly afterwards. The first used cartwheel pennies, the second the very new pennies of the current monarch. The lack of subsequent issues in similar style may suggest that the manufacturer's activities were suppressed by the authorities, but that is uncertain.

Religious faith was a rare subject for engraving but one or two persons of an introspective disposition had Georgian halfpennies engraved with suitable reminders of their faith to which they could turn when the need for comfort and assurance arose. These would presumably be carried round in bags and pockets, or secreted in hidden places.

If engraving has long departed as a means of expressing political sentiment, counterstamping has most definitely not. In the early 20th century 'Votes for Women' was a popular overstrike, whilst since 1969 Irishmen of various persuasion have counterstamped modern coins with a variety of things, not always polite, to express their opinion of the political situation in their own country. Examples of '1690' (date of the Battle of the Boyne) and 'RIRA' (Real IRA) were shown, alongside a 10p supposedly revalued at two shillings by an anti-decimal protestor!

Moving now from usage to production, the practice of engraving old numismatic material started becoming popular about 1720, although some earlier examples are known. The heyday of the practice was the rest of the 18th cent and the first half of the 19th. For much of this period the coin in circulation was of low quality through excessive wear, a factor which was of far less importance once one ceased to use it as money. After the great recoinage of 1816 and the introduction of at least some semblance of

a decent copper coinage in the 1820s, what better way to get some value out of all the inferior material left over from the previous century and a half?

The choices of host material, when engraving, were:

- ¥ Specially made blank.
- ¥ Coin in good condition.
- ¥ Coin in poor condition, used as it stands.
- ¥ Coin in poor condition, smoothed flat before use.
- ¥ Some hybrid of the last two.

Examples of all were shown and, frankly, smoothing flat works well whilst engraving over old design, typically monarchs' heads, looks ugly. Where one side of the piece is smoothed, and the other retained, it is usually the monarch's heads which were kept. On a couple of examples featuring Charles II crowns, the entire reverse inscription was retained in one case and the date and crown only in another, the centre being in both cases filled up with personal detail; a pleasing effect, retaining the link with antiquity.

There is rarely any link between the date of the host and the date of the event commemorated; sometimes people choose brand new coins, sometimes very old ones. In the cases of the 1663 and 1668 crowns just mentioned, the date engraved on them were 1796 and 1851 respectively. In other cases, it is obvious both from the condition of the coin and the stated or proven date of the engraving that the piece was extremely new at the time. Alternatively, the coin selected is occasionally in excellent condition despite being already very old, as per a good VF 1679 crown shown, engraved in 1773.

Hammered coin would have finally gone out of circulation as a result of the great recoinage of 1696/97, after a period of gradual withdrawal during the previous three decades, so that by the start of engraving trend it

would have been largely out of everyone's lives; nevertheless, there were inevitably a few stragglers lying around in private drawers, one or two of which found their way to the engravers' workshops. A worn 1593 sixpence, mintmark tun, and marked with a lady's name of likely of East Yorkshire origin, was shown.

The presence of the engraver's name is almost, but not wholly, unknown; where seen, it has been on the back of pieces shaved flat on both sides but only used on one. An example shown was marked, 'Sterry / Engraver / Worcr' and was traced by the British Newspaper Archive to be Paul Sterry, engraver of Worcester, who died on 29 November 1836, aged 63. An example was shown of a pair of pieces which from stylistic evidence looked clearly to be the work of the same hand. Both pieces, although undated, had a male name on one side and a female one on the other, and in one case a matching Manchester marriage of 1802 was found in an online parish register. This gives a fairly good clue of where one might go looking for the other couple.

A good number of the halfpennies, when traceable, relate to people from fairly humble origins, and the above-mentioned Manchester piece is an example; Jabez, the husband, was a wood-turner. It is clear that there were a fair number of engravers around to whom the ordinary clientèle could turn.

The fineness of engraving is, sadly, sometimes a bar to a piece being photogenic. Strongly cut pieces usually reproduce better, even if not so delicately executed, and rustic ones even better. At the crudest end, only, does the design match that of lead token issues; however, in commercial usage there may be a slightly larger overlap of the two series.

The coins selected for engraving in the heyday of its practice were for the most part Georgian halfpennies or early milled silver, with social

background no doubt determining the choice to some extent. Although most denominations were used, on occasion the larger were obviously favoured disproportionately for their ability to accommodate greater amounts of information. Whilst most host material in England was drawn from the main United Kingdom coinage, there was no requirement that it be so, and to conclude the talk a variety of both paranumismatic and foreign hosts were illustrated, for example:

- ¥ George I Anglo-Hanoverian thaler, 1722
- ¥ Swedish copper Öre of Karl XI, 1673
- ¥ French écu of Louis XV, Paris mint, 1758
- ¥ Russian rouble of Elizabeth, 1754
- ¥ Jernegan's lottery ticket, 1736
- ¥ Bank of England dollar, 1804
- ¥ Bank of England 3/- and 1/6 tokens, 1811-16
- ¥ Various 18th century halfpenny tokens listed in Dalton & Hamer
- ¥ Sentimental Magazine token commemorating Olivar(sic) Cromwell, issued in 1773.

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London Numismatic Club Meeting, 1 November 2016

Sixteen members were present at Club member Tony Holmes's talk on 'Twenty-first Century Coins', a very good turn-out and the highest number for some while. Even though the topic covered less than two decades, there is a surprising variety of modern pieces that could be collected cheaply though the number of dealers with 'junk' boxes for collectors to sift through is declining.

Tony argued that the coins still being produced are as interesting as ever and the sort of coins he started with collecting 70 years ago is still possible. Those who told us that no coins would be in use after 2000 have been proved wrong. In Britain there are, in fact, more coins in circulation than ever before.

We were shown some 'impaired' euro coins, i.e. by private enterprise. There were coins issued by and for territories and states undergoing claims and counter-claim through conflict and war. North Korea struck coins that were convertible, but only for the use of tourists. Some countries issued coins of the same denomination but with different diameters and at the same time. Revaluations of denominations meant that some old pieces were kept in circulation to run alongside the new ones, the numbers were different but the same size informed you of their equality in value.

We had coins from the states in Eurasia and also the fractious states and quasi-states in the Balkans and the peripheral of the Black Sea. Tony pointed to the mint marks and peculiarities in design where these features could assist in identity.

Most of the coins shown were of low grade coppers, brass, aluminium or zinc, or composites. This had made quality photography challenging, and magnification on the screen emphasised the small nicks and scratches.

Overall this meeting was a fine evening and Tony was able to nicely fill an hour's slot and still leave room for comments, queries and suggestions on these modern coins.

[Report kindly prepared by Tony Gilbert in the Editor's absence abroad. Tony Holmes had compiled a hand-written catalogue describing the 37 coins he showed, but without the illustrations to accompany them (and the Newsletter cannot print such illustrations) to reproduce a tabulated catalogue would have served little purpose for Newsletter readers.] **London Numismatic Club Meeting, 6 December 2016**

Anthony Portner has spoken to the Club on several occasions on aspects of Byzantine coins and this talk took members right back to the beginning with, 'Starting to collect Byzantine coins'.

Anthony said that the Byzantine empire was the successor of the Eastern Roman empire. It varied vastly in extent from its commencement in 395 AD to its final conquest by the Turks in 1453 AD. He showed maps showing the extent of the Empire in various periods of its history.

'Like most collectors he started by collecting British and Roman coins. His interest in the Byzantine coinage was first aroused when the vicar at his school gave him a 20 nummi piece of Phocas (602-610) which was no longer in his possession.

Some years later after university he started building up a collection of Byzantine coppers. His aim at the time was to obtain a representative collection as far as was possible of a coin or coins of each emperor who

struck in copper. He no longer was in possession of his original copper collection and he subsequently disposed of both his Roman and British collections.

There is no doubt that artistically and for variety of type the coinage cannot compare with the Greek and Roman coins. The quality of the copper furthermore leaves a lot to be desired. He always jokes that when they struck their coins the Byzantines did not consider the needs of future collectors.

However, because of this when he started his collection the lack of interest in the Byzantine coinage in general meant that research into the coinage lagged far behind research into the Greek and Roman series.

This meant there was ample opportunity for new discoveries to be made. Add to that was the fact that because of a general lack of interest, asking prices were considerably lower than for comparable Greek and Roman coins.

A reason for the lack of interest was that there was no up to date catalogue of the coinage. Collectors had largely to rely on the reprint of the famous Ratto Auction catalogue of 1930, together with John Lhotka's *Introduction to East Roman Coinage*. Neither were satisfactory for the novice collector. The BMC catalogues by Wroth published in 1908 and 1911 were not readily available and commanded a hefty premium when either came on the market.

This problem was largely remedied in 1974 with the publication of *Byzantine Coins and Their Values* by David Sear. Even today despite the extensive literature published on the coinage in recent years, the novice collector can rely on the 1987 revised edition which is still readily available in reprinted form.

Recently he had acquired a book published in 2015 by Spink, *The*

Beginners Guide to Identifying Byzantine Coins by Prue Morgan Fitts. This is a useful book when starting to identify the coins. However, its value is reduced by inter alia the failure to thoroughly proof read it.

Later, he switched his attention more to the gold and silver whilst still retaining his interest in the coppers.

When starting collecting the coppers it should be borne in mind that normal grading does not apply in general to them due to their abysmal condition often made worse by the practice of the mint to overstrike old issues.

The grading suggested by John Lhotkha is rather more appropriate. He has conflated both condition and rarity and has suggested grading it appropriately. The lowest grade is unidentifiable(U) and is self-explanatory. The next higher grade is acceptable(A) and corresponds to the standard condition grades of 'poor' and 'fair' and to 'common' in the rarity scale. Desirable (D) is above acceptable corresponding to 'good' and 'very good' and to 'scarce'. Very Desirable(VD) corresponds to 'fine' and the lower degrees of rarity, while Extremely Desirable(ED) is used to denote the ultimate in both condition and rarity. Thus using this system it is possible to have a common copper of Justinian 1(527- 565) in fine condition rated as very desirable and a 'poor coin' of Tiberius 111(685-695) of some rarity given the same or even a higher classification.

It is however true that recent discoveries since Lhotkha wrote his book have brought a limited number of better quality coppers onto the market where normal grading would apply. However, for the majority of coppers Lhotkha's gradings are still valid.

A follis from Constantinople was illustrated to show how normal grading is not satisfactory. The obverse legend is partly missing as is part of the reverse. This coin would hardly grade more than fine but actually it

is very desirable because of its rarity - struck during the short reign of Justin 1 and his nephew Justinian III (4 April 527- 1 August 527) as the position of Justinian's name is clear. An even rarer coin of the joint reign struck in Antioch would be described as extremely desirable because of its condition and rarity.

A follis of Leo III (717-741) and his son which grades only nearly GF is actually very desirable both on account of its rarity and the fact, believe it or not from its condition, that one would be hard pressed to find a better specimen.

Although copper coinage was struck by most rulers the collector will find when starting that there are basically four principal series which are readily available. These are the large regular issues from Anastasius to Phocas (491-610) the generally miserable coinage of the early Heraclian emperors (610-668) and the various 'anonymous coppers' of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In recent years coppers of the early Palaeologan emperors (1261-1341), generally in very poor condition, which were formerly rare have also become relatively common and easy to acquire. Coins from the later Heraclian emperors up to the striking of the anonymous series are more difficult to find as are the issues subsequent to the anonymous series up to the reoccupation of Constantinople by Michael VII Palaeologus (1261).

A nice follis of Constantine VI and Irene (780-797) from the middle period was illustrated.

Anastasius (491-518) reformed the bronze coinage striking coins with his obverse bust and with the mark of value on the reverse. The mint issuing the coins is also usually given. The commonest mark of values are M for the 40 nummi or follis, K for the 20 nummi or half follis, I for the deka or 10 nummi, E for the penta or five nummi. Specimens were shown

from various mints and rulers. Other rarer denominations were struck inter alia by the mint of Thessalonica and Alexandria under Justinian I (527-565). Heraclius (610-641) was one of three rulers who struck a 30- nummi piece.

Coins from this period can often require a lot of interesting research to identify the precise issues which often carry issue marks (sigla) on the reverse. A slide showed an attractive follis of Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantin but, as usual, part of the coin was missing, in this case the full date. By researching the issues it can be conclusively shown that this particular coin was struck in year 22 of his rule (631-2). A coin – a deka - of his great-grandson Constantine IV (668-685), recently purchased for £20, shows that interesting coppers are available at reasonable prices even today.

Sicilian coppers are often nearly as common as those of Constantinople and often better struck. A deka of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine struck in Catania was contrasted with what was actually quite a reasonable deka of Constantine IV from Constantinople

In the tenth and eleventh centuries the emperors replaced their bust on the obverse with Christ or the Virgin Mary together with an inscription not naming the emperor or the bust of the Virgin or a cross on the reverse - two such coppers in better than average condition were illustrated. These coins have become much sought after in recent years.

Numismatists have of course been zealous in attributing the various issues to various emperors and this has largely been accomplished by means of finds and overstrikes. The first coin illustrated has been attributed to the reign of the last few years of Basil II and the reign of his brother Constantine VII (c.1020-1028). The second coin illustrated has been attributed to the reign of Romanus IV (1068-1071).

A word on overstrikes. One of the reasons why the copper coinage is in such miserable condition is that instead of melting the old and withdrawn issues down the Byzantines invariably just re-struck them. In some cases more than one under type is visible. This can prove very helpful in the dating and sequence of issues. An interesting Constantinople over strike of a coin of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine on a coin of theirs minted in Sicily was illustrated.

The Latin rulers of Constantinople (1204-1261) and Thessalonica (1204-1224), also did not put their names on the coins. It is only in recent times that it has been realized that they struck coppers and probably gold. The coins jumble up old types and also create new ones. If the emperor is named it is of a former Byzantine emperor. Three specimens illustrated gave an idea of their variety.

The Palaeologan period is particularly interesting for the variety of types issued. However, their end appearance leaves a lot to be desired as the standard of minting had sunk to a very low level. A nice trachy of Michael VIII (1261-1282) was illustrated. Two trachea of his son Andronicus II (1282-1328) also illustrated the style of which is more characteristic for this period.

The collector should always strive to purchase coins with a clear obverse as this is usually not clearly struck up or in most cases non-existent.

Turning now to the silver.

Silver is generally rare as the Byzantines usually operated a bimetallic currency. Unlike the coppers and as with the gold normal grading rules generally apply. However, during the reign of Heraclius a thick silver coin called the hexagram was struck in quantity and these are reasonably common - a specimen of Heraclius and his sons and of Constans

II (641-668) was illustrated.

Normal grading does not apply to the later Hexagrams of Constans II and his sons as they are usually very poorly struck and flat in part and if the portraiture is clear command a premium. A perfectly acceptable specimen from Constans sole reign together with a very nice specimen of Constans II (641-668) and his son the future Constantine IV were illustrated.

The hexagram was issued at a particular low point in Byzantine history when money was desperately required to finance the war against the Persians. The church inter alia agreed to let its silver be melted down and turned into coinage.

Later Leo III (717-741) issued a flat silver coin called the milaresion which was influenced by the Arab dirhem and is often overstruck on them. These also, whilst not as common as the hexagram, are usually available to collectors. Specimens of various rulers were illustrated. A peculiarity is that until the reign of Michael II (820-829) they were normally only struck when there were joint rulers.

Surprisingly the Palaeologan period produced extensive silver issues particularly after the striking of gold was discontinued. The later silver coin was called a stavraton - halves and quarters were also issued. Again, many coins do not show the ruler's name but can normally be identified by the sigla of which there are many permutations. Those where the rulers name can be read command a premium.

Turning finally to the gold.

Whilst gold coins cost considerably more than the coppers solidi were issued in large numbers up to the end of the reign of Constantine IV and have survived in large hoards. Unlike Roman gold they are easily

obtainable and for the most common issues in VF condition, the price is often little more than the current gold price. Coins issued by the provincial mints are considerably more expensive but often of great interest.

The Byzantines continued the system they had inherited from the late Roman period i.e. a solidus of c. 4.55g. struck in ten officinae or workshops with its half the semissis and its third the tremissis. Coins from the first reign of Justinian II (685-695) onwards are not so frequently encountered and prices for issues until the commencement of the reign of Alexius I (1081-1118) reflect their scarcity whilst still being considerably easier to acquire than the corresponding Roman issues.

Justinian II, during his first reign (685-695), placed the bust of Christ on the obverse and relegated his standing figure to the reverse, calling himself the Servant of Christ. This was the beginning of the religious symbolism which dominates the later coinage. He again placed the bust of Christ - this time a young bust- on the obverse during his second reign (705-711), although his predecessors had reverted to the old types, as did his successors. It is usual to regard the side of the coin which has Christ, the Virgin or a Saint on it as the obverse.

Leo III (717-741) initially also used the old type but in 720 however he did away with the old types and placed his son Constantine V on the reverse.

The coinage of Justinian's second reign had already omitted the officina letters and their use is now often confusing where they are not totally omitted which signifies the end of this centuries old system - later issues often have control marks, the meaning of which is not perfectly clear.

Under the reign of Leo's son Constantine V (741-775) the semissis

and tremissis disappear from general circulation. No definite reason is known for this but it fits a pattern of general simplification of the coinage leaving only one denomination in each metal.

The next change in the coinage occurred in the reign of Nicephorus II (963-969) who introduced a light weight solidus called the tetarteron. The normal solidus, in order to distinguish it from the tetarteron, is now called a histamenon nomisma. The name seems to be analogous to the English word *sterling* meaning something that is set up, established a standard. It was in fact only a continuation of the old solidus/nomisma.

Nicephorus was the first to issue a coin with solely Greek letters although the mish mash of Greek and Latin continued for quite some time. It was only during the reign of Basil II (976-1025) that the tetarteron becomes distinctive from the histamenon nomisma. The histamenon becomes gradually thinner and assumes the cup (scyphate) shape so characteristic of later Byzantine coinage in all metals. The tetarteron by contrast assumes a thicker smaller shape rather like the old solidus

When debasement sets in in the 11th century the tetarteron is always more heavily debased. Their minting also deteriorates and it is hard to find the later debased issues without a striking crack.

Alexius I (1081-1118) reformed the coinage and issues of this emperor are reasonably common as are those of his successors up to the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204.

Coins of John III of Nicaea (1222-1254) and the miserably struck specimens of the Palaeologan emperors have been found in large hoards and are readily available to collectors.

Although the empire's gold coinage ended severely debased for many centuries it provided the yardstick for Europe.

An appropriate ending is to repeat the words of Cosmas

Indicopheustes, an Egyptian merchant in the time of Justinian I

‘... and there is yet another sign of the power which God has accorded to the Romans to wit, that it is with their coinage that all nations do their trade; it is received everywhere from one end of the earth to the other; it is admired by all men and every kingdom for no other kingdom has its like’.

Such a eulogy is hardly likely ever to be written about the euro!!

THE THIRD HISTORICAL MEDALLION CONGRESS

Warwick, 21 May 2016

Following on from last year’s event (reported in *LNC Newsletter* Vol. VIII, No. 19, January 2016, pp. 52-6) which had unfortunately clashed with the joint RNS/BNS summer meeting held at York, this year’s gathering was sensibly slotted into a May weekend. The venue was the same as for the previous two Congresses, the geographically well-positioned and accommodating Hilton hotel at Warwick. The joint organisers were again John Cumbers and Andrew Wager and the total attendance was 35.

The opening speaker was John Whitmore (who has sadly since passed away on 7 August 2016). He presented ‘The Return of the Gasman’s daughter - new light on a 19th century medal producer’. This was another of John’s obscurely entitled talks whereby a web is woven around an unlikely connection between an event or a person and something numismatic. On this occasion, the connection was between his abode and the firm of medallists Harris and Lucock.

Charles Riley next delivered ‘Welsh language medals: an Englishman’s Odyssey’. This contribution was only the second talk that

this reviewer has heard on Welsh language medals. The speaker showed slides of some very rare pieces commemorating Eisteddfods and Cultural Societies. Not all Welsh language medals are what they seem, however; Charles pointed out some with obvious etymological inaccuracies, and others that were just pure concoctions.

Peter Glews presented ‘What L19 did before she crashed’. This talk centred around a Karl Goetz medallion portraying the German flag airship that crashed on 31 January 1916.

The next speaker was Philip Attwood, Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, who gave the last contribution before lunch on ‘Frank Bowcher: new information, new ideas’. Phillip is researching this medallist’s works for his intended future publication. Frank Bowcher came to accept the reducing machine in producing medallions, and he had a close working association with Spink, though he also worked for Pinches. He specialised in designing the obverses of medals, with the reverses being designed by others and where these reverses were emblematic and crowded with symbolism – flags, shields, crests and monograms. Bowcher did not work for the Royal Mint; the Mint viewed him to be more a sculptor than a commercial artist. Bowcher used medals as a promotional medium in order to procure sculptural or monumental commissions. After

lunch, LNC member Peter Clayton presented ‘Aegypt in Numis: Historical medallions of Ancient Egypt and Egyptologists’. This fast-paced and knowledgeable talk on Peter’s specialised subject centred on Ancient Egypt and its monuments on medallions and also portrait pieces of prominent Egyptologists of the past such as Giovanni Belzoni. We were shown some of the many medallions that portray monuments, temples and obelisks on their reverses.

John Cumbers said that he was interested in South African history, and spoke on 'Islandlwana 100 years on'. He explained that his talk expounded a new perspective on a modern commemorative set of eight silver medallions, minted in 1979, commemorating the centenary of the Zulu War of 1879 at which the British defeated and deposed the Zulu Chief Cetewayo. John said that there is still much research yet to be carried out on South African commemorative pieces.

We then held an 'Identification Workshop', and to quote from the programme: 'a session in which delegates bring along uncertain or 'mystery' medallions, or pictures/slides, for discussion and possible identification'.

After tea, Andrew Wager delivered another of his engaging talks, 'Some nineteenth century medallion dies and trial strikes'. The title did not do his presentation justice. As a history schoolmaster, Andrew knows how to construct a tale around some ordinary facts or events, build suspense, and then to enthral his audience before the conclusion. This talk concerned a box of about 200 medallions, dies and strikes that had been given to him by 'Aunt' Mabel Tye when he was a boy. These pieces had sparked his interest in medals. 'Aunt' Mabel was related to the diesinker firm of Sherriff & Tye. The final talk was given by Peter Waddell, 'W. Parker and T.P. Dorman and the early awards of Northampton Amateur Athletic Association'. An explanatory six-page booklet was supplied free to anyone who wanted a copy. The talk was sourced from a booklet written by W. Parker entitled 'Eighty Years of Athleticism – N&C AAC 1863 – 1943', that briefly described the early history of the Northampton and County Amateur Athletic Club. Mark Dorman was the mayor of Northampton in 1863. The medals and shields were for swimming and gymnastics as well as athletics.

Upon completion of the formal programme, the Congress concluded with an evening meal followed by a Bourse, ample opportunity for discussion, purchase and exchange of ideas.

This one-day event provided a low-cost, high value, good organisation, and high content Congress. The day-long programme was a simple format costing £62 to include all refreshments, lunch, evening meal and parking. Attendees were offered the flexibility to add on an extra day or two either side of the Congress (this reviewer did). The benefit here, of course, is that the collector has more time to converse with fellow enthusiasts from far and wide, which one is unlikely to be able to do in a local Club setting. The May time-slot now seems about right, there are now specialist numismatic interest groups, seminars and congresses every month from April to October. If you add in all of the Coin Fairs and allied history-related collecting fields - award medals, art medals, banknotes, antiquities, artefacts, detecting, archaeology, coins, tokens - then there should be something of interest for everyone several times a year.

