

## INTRODUCTION

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(*President, British Numismatic Society*)

Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen, to this very special meeting to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the person who undoubtedly made the greatest impact on British Numismatics during the 20th century, and arguably of all time. As we shall hear, this was achieved partly through his own writings; partly through the energetic part he played in the work of the two societies (the British and the Royal) and in editing our *Journal* and the *Sylloge* series, and partly through his personal encouragement and influence on others. Indeed what makes this evening so special is that, although he died 17 years ago, many people in this room still have vivid and very personal memories of Christopher Blunt. There can be few people in our discipline who have been so universally admired and have instilled so much warmth of feeling, despite his reserved, modest and gentle manner.

That so many numismatists were regularly welcomed to his elegant country house, Ramsbury Hill in Wiltshire, also meant that we got to know his wife Elisabeth and other members of the family. I am particular pleased, then, to welcome here this evening, his son Simon Blunt, Simon's wife Julia and their son Christopher (Simon and Julia still live at Ramsbury Hill), his daughter Judith Mustoe and her daughter Sophie and, although Christopher's elder daughter, Anne, cannot be with us, her husband Prof. Karl Morrison is. Indeed, Karl was the one numismatist who crossed over the line to become a family member – evidently during *his* visits to Ramsbury he picked up more than just the odd reference on Carolingian coins. We are delighted that you all should be here, and honoured, Karl, that you should have made the trip especially from Princeton. One person, on the other hand, who cannot be here, and whom we very much miss tonight, is Lord Stewartby. Ian was the closest of Christopher's surviving numismatic friends, and he acted as his literary executor and advisor to the family. I am pleased to say that he has provided some notes to be read tonight.

Christopher was born on 16 July 1904, in the Vicarage at Ham Common, Surrey, where his father was the incumbent. His interest in coins had already begun when he was a schoolboy. Until the Second World War his work was exclusively on later medieval English coins, whereas after the War he quickly switched his attention to the Anglo-Saxon series. Of the four talks that we are to hear tonight, the first, by Peter Woodhead, will focus on Christopher's early work on later medieval coinages; the second, by Marion Archibald, will look at his contribution to Anglo-Saxon numismatics; Hugh Pagan will come third and talk about Christopher's role in the numismatic societies and his particular approach to numismatic research; while Stewart Lyon will provide us with some observations on Christopher's relations with leading historians of his day. Finally, I will read Lord Stewartby's note about Christopher, the person. It is a full programme, and I would ask you to keep any questions or comments that you may have until after the last speaker has finished.

I am pleased, then, to call upon Peter Woodhead to start the evening.