

## REVIEWS

'Sceattas and other Coin Finds' by Kirsten Bendixen, in *Ribe Excavations*, vol.1, edited by M.Bencard. Esbjerg, 1981, pp.63-101.

Until quite recently finds of sceattas were unknown in Denmark. There had been two or three base gold Merovingian coins, but that was all. The discovery, in less than two decades, of some 120 coins thus changes our ideas about the monetary history of eighth-century Denmark in a dramatic and exciting way. The finds have wider implications, too, for trade and contacts in the North Sea basin at a time preceding the earliest documented Viking raids on western Europe.

The find-spots of the coins are as follows: one was excavated at Hedeby, and another was a chance find within the ramparts there. Ten are single finds from excavations at Dankirke, just to the west of Ribe (on the west coast, nearly 100 km north of Hedeby), and these include an interesting range of types. Thirty-two are single finds from excavations at Ribe itself, and these are mostly Frisian 'Wodan-monster' or porcupine sceattas. Seventy-seven constitute a hoard from the island of Föhr, off the west coast but north of Hedeby, and these (which remain to be published) are mostly porcupines, and Merovingian types, but among them is the 'plumed bird' porcupine type for which an English origin has been argued.

All this adds up to impressive archaeological evidence for trade between Frisia and Jutland covering about a hundred years prior to the Krinkberg hoard of coins of Charlemagne. The earliest find from Dankirke is a pale gold tremissis of Dorestad, and next are two silver coins of the same moneyer. These early coins (together with those from Gadegaard, Föhr, and Sild) amount to clear evidence of a persistent monetary penetration from the later seventh century onwards, even if on a more limited scale than in the middle of the eighth century.

One question, of the many that arise, is of special interest to English numismatists; what of the allegedly English coins found in Denmark? They need not, of course, have travelled direct. It seems more probable, *prima facie*, that they were carried from Frisia, whatever their mints of origin. Given the delicacy of this question, Mrs Bendixen's approach to the specimens of BIIIB and BMC Type 37 - two stylistically related types for which a Mercian origin has been proposed - leaves much to be desired. The style, weights, and (probably) the alloy of nos.42 and 43 in her catalogue distinguish them as imitative. Where were they made? More intriguing still, the same two types reportedly occur in the Föhr hoard. Whether the 'plumed bird' coin(s) in the same hoard look 'official' or imitative, we must wait to see.

The coins are all well illustrated by enlarged photographs, and Mrs Bendixen is to be congratulated for putting them on record so clearly and thoroughly. One would have appreciated site-plans showing where these precious coins were found, one by one; and - since the question must eventually arise whether any of the Wodan-monster coins are imitations of Danish mintage - it is to be hoped that the most expert metal analysis will in due course be applied to them, in order to secure all possible physical data as a basis for judgement.

D.M.Metcalf

*Catalogue of the Early Northumbrian Coins in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne*

By Elizabeth J.E.Pirie. iv + 30 pp., incl. 5 plates illustrating 189 coins.

Between 1814 and 1933 the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne accumulated a collection of well over 400 coins of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, and it is these, transferred to the Museum of Antiquities in 1960, that are the subject of the present catalogue. The core of the collection was a parcel of 210 coins acquired by the Society direct from the 1832 Hexham hoard of ninth-century coins of Northumbria, and it is the Hexham hoard also that lies behind its other major constituent, a gift of around 225 coins (including thirty-odd forgeries) from a Northumbrian landowner, Sir Horace St Paul; there is some uncertainty about how many of St Paul's coins derived from the hoard, but, if this reviewer understands Miss Pirie correctly, she believes the total to be 130 (seventy-five vouched for as being from the hoard and as once having been his by John Adamson, the Newcastle antiquary who first published the hoard and who catalogued St Paul's coins for the Society in 1853, and fifty-five not so vouched for by Adamson but probably also from the hoard).

The collection is thus substantial and a key source of evidence for the composition of the Hexham hoard. It should be recorded that it contains other coins of significance, notably one of King Alchred; a most handsome coin of Archbishop Eanbald found at Coldingham in Berwickshire; and one of the celebrated coins long attributed to the seventh-century Northumbrian king Ecgfrith but now regarded, at any rate by those numismatists who have studied the Northumbrian series, as early-nineteenth-century forgeries.

Nevertheless it is for the Hexham coins that the catalogue will mainly be consulted and here it is necessary to enter one caveat about Miss Pirie's publication of them. One of the salient features of the Hexham hoard is that unlike other mid-ninth-century hoards of Northumbrian coins which end with coins of King Osberht (traditional dates 849-67) and have extensive representation of coins of Osberht's predecessor Aethelred II (traditional dates 841-44 and 844-49, with an interval in 844) by a moneyer Eardwulf, it contained no coins of Osberht and only a small number of coins of Aethelred by this moneyer. Numismatists have deduced that the hoard was deposited early in Aethelred's second reign and that Eardwulf's period of activity as a moneyer had then only recently commenced. In the section of comment on the Hexham hoard which Miss Pirie supplies as part of her introduction she hints that this may not be her view of the situation but does not develop her ideas in detail. She does however ascribe to the Hexham hoard, without comment, a few coins in the Newcastle collection which seem to this reviewer likely to be later in date than any of the much larger group of coins from the hoard preserved in the British Museum, and there is a danger that these coins will in future be regarded as certainly from the hoard, whereas in fact the position is not so simple.

Of the coins illustrated on her plates which she associates with Hexham two, nos. 374 and 439, fall into this category; both are derivative pieces later than the early phases of the coinage struck for Aethelred II by Eardwulf and neither seems to belong to the period of Aethelred II's reign prior to the deposit of the Hexham hoard. It is likely that among the coins she identifies as Hexham coins but does not illustrate there is more than one other interloper, for of the coins of Aethelred by Eardwulf in the collection she associates five certainly and six others possibly with the hoard, although the parcel from the hoard in the British Museum seems to contain seven such

coins only out of a total number of coins over twice the size of the total Newcastle Hexham holdings.

It will be open for Miss Pirie in the future to argue that this reviewer is wrong about the position in the series of coins nos. 374 and 439, and to argue that the British Museum parcel is not fully representative of the Aethelred-Eardwulf element in the hoard; but for the time being numismatists should be on notice that nos. 374 and 439 and some of the unillustrated Eardwulfs may not really be Hexham coins. In this context, it can be deduced from Miss Pirie's tabulation on p.6 of the respective compositions of the Society's parcel acquired direct from the hoard and of the St Paul coins claimed to be from it that coin no. 374 at least is a St Paul coin, for the Society's original parcel contained no obvious derivative items; and if it and the other coins under discussion can be shown to be St Paul coins, it should be feasible to disassociate them from Hexham on the grounds that the year 1853 when Adamson vouched for them as being from the hoard was almost a generation after the discovery and that Adamson's recollection as to the Hexham provenance of any particular coin may by then have been faulty.

Having made this caveat it is proper to say that we should be grateful to Miss Pirie for cataloguing the Newcastle collection and for illustrating as many of the coins as she has done. In a perfect world one could wish that all the coins had been illustrated, as they would no doubt have been had the catalogue been issued as a volume in the *SCBI* series, but one must be thankful for what one gets and it is understandable that the Museum of Antiquities should have blenched at the prospect of raising the finance to illustrate the whole collection.

H.E.Pagan

*Cardiganshire Silver and the Aberystwyth Mint in Peace and War*

By G.C.Boon. Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, 1981. xiii + 287 pp. Frontispiece and 66 text illustrations. £25.

In this story of the connection between Welsh silver and mint output during the reign of Charles I, Mr Boon has placed more emphasis on historical than on numismatic details. In doing so he has gone into the documentary evidence with great care and subjected the secondary sources to close scrutiny. The upshot is a blend of leisurely narrative and clear-headed analysis which will be of benefit to beginner and specialist alike.

The book begins, as it should, with the mines; Part I describing in some detail the activities of the two great entrepreneurs Sir Hugh Myddelton and Thomas Bushell. Because the ores were good Mr Boon is inclined to believe that the claims made by these men in respect of their earnings are broadly correct, but he judiciously warns that in both cases to equate earnings with profits would be overly optimistic. The costs of drainage, which Bushell in particular incurred through driving adits into the mines, and of wages were always great and, consequently, a much higher level of output than was ever actually achieved would have been necessary before either Myddelton or Bushell could have enjoyed high profit margins.

Parts II and III are devoted to minting, first at Aberystwyth, then at

the other royal mints, and finally at Aberystwyth again. Throughout, Mr Boon keeps a firm eye on the supply side of the equation, indicating in so far as he can the quantities and sources of the bullion used; on the personnel responsible; and on the output, very largely silver, which resulted. Although, naturally enough, much of this is fairly familiar ground, it makes up a well-told story and this, in turn, forms the basis for some most rewarding comment concerning both the striking of coins and the location of some of the mints. Because students of the series have come increasingly to recognize that a far more considerable place needs to be found in the early Stuart period for the use of coinage machinery than has hitherto been allowed, Mr Boon's arguments in favour of the rocker press being used at Aberystwyth are most welcome. And by the same token, when students have become increasingly sceptical of some of the attributions which have customarily been made in respect of Charles I's issues, it is excellent to see Mr Boon's attempt to knock some sense into the discussion by expanding his earlier remarks in connection with Aberystwyth and Dyfi Furnace, and making fresh assertions in connection with the B coins (Bridgnorth) and the 1645 A coins (Ashby). The limited nature of the evidence means that we may still only speak in terms of probabilities rather than of certainties but thanks to Mr Boon the debate has shifted towards more acceptable ground.

Last, but by no means least, come the Appendices of documents prominent amongst which are Bushell's mint indenture (30 July 1637), the Aberystwyth mint account book (1638/9-1642), Bushell's *Remonstrance* (1642), and Bushell's *Case...truly stated* (1649). The last two are both in facsimile. Obviously, each of the documents has a part to play in the story which Mr Boon tells but, equally obviously, such a large body of documentation will also have wider significance and the National Museum of Wales is to be congratulated in making it so readily available to the numismatic world. All in all, this is a most welcome book which will serve us well for many years to come.

C.E.Challis

### *The Splendid Shilling*

By James O'Donald Mays. New Forest Leaves, Burley, Ringwood, Hampshire, 1982. 186 pp. Illustrations in text. £7.95.

This is an eminently readable book, the sort of book which could well encourage a younger reader to take a more serious interest in the subject. For the specialist, it contains all sorts of information of stories and customs concerning this particular denomination that he is unlikely to find in a technical work of reference. Only very recently, I purchased a small parcel of coins, soon afterwards to be asked 'for the return of the new 1912 shilling, if it be there'. Dr W.Gordon Sears (now deceased), well known as an author of nursing text books (and, incidentally, father of actress Heather), I knew had been a pupil at Christs Hospital; having read this book I now know that he received the Lord Mayor's shilling (pp. 151-52). The author deals primarily with English shillings, touching on those of Europe, Scotland and Ireland, and the British Commonwealth, past and present. In recent times, decimalisation has seen the end of the shilling, if only in name.

Errors have crept in, many of a minor nature, but errors none the less, which would mislead the younger, impressionable reader. A provincial reader might wonder where Durham House was (p.24): it was formerly the palace of the bishops of Durham in London, situated south of the Strand where it doubtless fronted to the river. It is now in John Adam Street, until recently better known as Stanley Gibbons Publications Department. Forgeries of Philip and Mary shillings dated 1554 and 1557 are noted (p.32): these are undoubtedly of the very rare varieties with date below bust, both by Emery (*BNJ* 40 (1971), 166-67), the latter a concoction. A variety of Elizabeth shilling with the queen holding a sceptre (p.34) is unknown to me. James I shillings with Welsh plumes over shield (p.41) are not rare: James II shillings with Welsh plumes in centre of reverse certainly are (three known), but are not mentioned (p.60). Students are agreed that issues formerly attributed to Coombe Martin (p.45), can safely be assigned to Furnace, Aberystwyth. The Carlisle shilling (p.50) does not occur other than round. The 'Caroli Fortuna Resurgam' pieces (p.51) are controversial to say the least (see *NCirc* 90 (1982), 229-31) if for no other reason, they bear no mark of value. One would infer that the legends CAROLVS SECONDVVS and HANC DEVS DEDIT (p.52) appear on one coin, which they do not. Silver tokens generally are not rare (p.90); that of Mackintosh & Degraues, Tasmania (p.94), certainly is, but not so rare as to be represented only in a few great museums. Coins of Edward VIII (p.112) were also issued for Kutch (N.W.India) but without a portrait.

Several of the coin illustrations could have been better, as indeed could the quality of the specimens chosen for illustration, viz. Henry VII, Philip and Mary, Charles I (Tower and Carlisle), and Charles II. On p.142 the top two illustrations are transposed. Even younger readers would not acknowledge Phillip (sic) Whitting and this older reader has only ever known Jock Murray as Lt.Col.J.K.R.

P.D.Mitchell

*The Casting-Counter and the Counting-Board, A Chapter in the History of Numismatics and Early Arithmetic*

By Francis Pierrepont Barnard. First published Oxford University Press, 1917. Reprinted Fox, Castle Cary, 1981. 357 pp., 63 plates. £30.

Reprints normally escape the attention of the reviewer. Here is a notable exception. The reprinting of Professor Barnard's voluminous work is in itself a noteworthy event, and how pleasing to record that the new volume matches the original. The book is sturdily bound. The quality of the paper (120 gsm toned art) is extremely good and the illustrations in litho reprint even clearer than the originals in the Clarendon Press volume. The price of £30 is extremely reasonable for such a handsome book, containing so many superb plates. It is good to know that 'Barnard' is now available to all.

It would be churlish of me to criticize Barnard's work, which appeared nearly seventy years ago, but I feel that a few cautious comments would not be out of place. Obviously the chief value of this reprint to the modern scholar lies in the photographic illustration of more than 600 counters - English, French, Flemish, Italian and German - from Barnard's own collec-

tion, which was bequeathed to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The student of the history of mathematics will undoubtedly find Barnard's chapter on the actual methods of calculating on the board as recorded by sixteenth-century mathematicians such as Recorde, Awdeley, Reisch, Cusanus and Kobel, just as fascinating as the author's contemporaries did.

The student of jettons, however, must treat some of Barnard's attributions with the greatest caution. Although he was a professor of medieval archaeology, Barnard rarely used archaeological evidence in his chronology. He failed to realise that the so-called Anglo-Gallic series was, in fact, purely English, and that some of the dies for the sterling head jettons were actually made with the same irons and punches as the dies for the Edwardian mint pennies.

Some of Barnard's attributions of the early French series are very fanciful. He did not realise that some of the common pieces such as the 'mouton' or 'dauphin' types were not confined to Berry or Dauphiné, but were struck in many regions of France. His coverage of the Nuremburg rechenphennig is extensive, but many of the earlier Nuremburg pieces were unrecognised, and he did not know that there were several Wolf Laufers and Hans Krauwinckels. Thus his attempted dating of many of the signed pieces is open to question.

Nevertheless, 'Barnard' remains the standard work and a reprint was long overdue. One hopes however that a more up to date survey of jettons used in this country, put in an archaeological context, will appear in the foreseeable future.

George Berry

#### *Tavern Tokens in Wales*

By Neil B. Todd. Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, 1980. xxvi + 236 pp. £8.

In this lavish and almost fully-illustrated catalogue Dr Todd has fulfilled his objects of identifying the relevant checks (this was the contemporary term, actually appearing on fourteen of the pieces included) and, through valiant efforts, of dating as many as possible. Further refinements in dating will be made, such as a *terminus post quem* for p.95, no.120 of 1893, the year in which Navigation was renamed Abercynon; but such is inevitable. Of greater concern is the likely completeness of the corpus. Pub checks would seem to be characterized by limited output and uncollected specimens; and a small group of nineteen Welsh pieces which could not be notified before publication includes no less than ten new types.

The arrangement by counties calls for no comment, but the choice of headings does. In accordance with the principle of autonomy announced on p. xxi, separate headings should have been provided for various parishes (civil and ecclesiastical) which are subsumed in Flint, Aberdare, Bridgend, Cardiff, Treherbert, and Abergavenny. Moreover, Bridgend and Llantrisant are given localities which belong elsewhere. All this points up the lack of an index to places. Since the work is not in Welsh the place name on pp.25-35 should be Aberavon. The annotations to p.109, no.161 and to p.188, no.79 would have benefited from use of the gazetteers in the biblio-

graphy. Despite the imprint the text evidently does not carry the authority of the National Museum of Wales.

These criticisms are peculiar to Wales. If the work is used as a model for future publications two aspects ought to be improved. The notation is unnecessarily complicated, requiring both number and county, except that there are confusing interpolated sequences for Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. New discoveries will hardly be accommodated thereby in their proper position, and a single numerical sequence would have been much better. Secondly, the legends should be transcribed, for the illustrations are not always legible. Transcription might indeed help the cataloguer, witness p.5, no.11 (no.7 is also by Bird), and p.181, no.27 (by H.Smith, dated for example on p.175).

The provision of illustrations is, however, a great boon, going beyond the individual entry to provide evidence for dating by style, evidence of die-linking (the author might like to reconsider whether this does necessarily indicate a common manufacturer), etc. Dr Todd has therefore given us a valuable collection of material, not particularly well organised, but a stimulus and a contribution to further work.

R.H.Thompson

*Studies in Numismatic Method presented to Philip Grierson*

Edited by C.N.L.Brooke, B.H.I.H.Stewart, J.G.Pollard and T.R.Volk. Cambridge University Press, 1983. xxx + 337 + (1)pp., including 21 plates and other text illustrations. £50.

This volume is the first collective tribute that the numismatic community has paid to one of its most distinguished figures, and a glance at the list of contents will show the calibre of the contributors and the wide range of subjects covered. It is no exaggeration to say that Professor Grierson has more successfully combined the roles of historian, student of coinage and coin collector than any numismatist living and working in Britain in the century and a half since the emergence of numismatics as an independent discipline, and it is satisfactory to be able to report that each of the twenty-three essays in this volume exhibits that application of intellect to mere fact that has been the distinguishing characteristic of Grierson's own contributions to numismatic science.

Eight of the contributions relate to Greek, Roman or Byzantine numismatics and thus fall outside the proper boundaries of a review in this *Journal*, although it is no doubt permissible to remark that the overall standard of these seems very high indeed. The remaining contributions all relate to aspects of the coinage of Western Europe between the beginning of the eighth century and the end of the fifteenth century, and here the student of the British coinage will find much that is relevant, directly or indirectly, to his own studies.

Many of us will no doubt turn first to one or other of the essays on British or British-related topics by the familiar quartet of Dolley, Blunt, Archibald and Stewart, each in its own way characteristic of its author but all offering unfamiliar themes or lines of thought. Dolley, for example, who writes on the coinage of Aelfred, steers so clear of sexennial-cycle polemics

that he not merely forgives Aelfred what he sees as Aelfred's conscious abandonment of periodic recoinage as a weapon of monetary policy, but hails it as 'imaginative' and 'statesmanlike'; while Blunt, discussing privy marking on the English coinage in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, casts himself in the unexpected role of the champion of the opinions of W.J.W. Potter against those of Brooke and Lawrence.

Ian Stewart and Marion Archibald look wider afield, the former unravelling the wide but curiously fragmented impact of Scottish coin types on the other coinages of Western Europe, and the latter making sense of the coin nomenclature used in the account books of the Netherlands-based Scottish commission merchant Andrew Halyburton at the end of the fifteenth century. The monetary relations between Britain and North-Western Europe are also the prime concern of Dr Hatz's essay on finds of Anglo-Saxon coins and mediaeval English coins in Schleswig-Holstein.

Among the other contributors, Dr Spufford writes with authority on mint organisation in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century; Dr Metcalf's note on the alloy of the Merovingian silver coinage, although offering no very decided advances in knowledge, does admirable service in publishing the hundred such coins in Grierson's own collection (and those who fancy themselves as interpreters of problem coins can wrestle happily with the task of assigning the last fifteen of these to their proper places of origin); and Mme Dumas is interesting on the occurrence of personal names on the obverses of coins struck in the duchy of Normandy at the end of the eleventh century, although her theory that the names are those of local Norman magnates rather than those of moneyers will eventually need more evidence in its support than she is able to adduce at present.

This reviewer feels rather less happy about the proposition advanced in M.Lafaurie's contribution to the volume that references in Carolingian capitularies to measures against coin forgery indicate that changes in coin type were simultaneously being put in hand, and his consequent conclusion that there were changes in coin type in 854 and 861 as well as at other more familiar dates in the ninth century. The proposition is a bold one and although Lafaurie's arguments are no doubt worth consideration, it is not clear that he is on the right track. Rather oddly, the very same capitularies are discussed in Dr Suchodolski's paper which immediately follows it in the volume, and although Suchodolski's purposes are different it must be said that he manages to render a key passage from a capitulary of 819 in a more accurate and intelligible manner than the one in which the editors have allowed it to appear in Lafaurie's paper.

The volume's published price will no doubt depress immediate sales and it may be that the numismatic public would be well advised to wait and see if it is offered in due course at book sale or remainder prices; but in the long term it will represent solid value on its purchasers' shelves and if in some future epoch barter again becomes a feature of our national economy *Studies in Numismatic Method* might not pay one's medical bills but it could well clear one's account with the coin trade.

H.E.Pagan

*The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition. Essays to mark the Bicentenary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and its Museum, 1780-1980*

Edited by A.S.Bell. Edinburgh, John Donald. x + 286 pp., 9 plates, illus. in text. £15.

Some of these essays deal with one or more men and their place in the Scottish antiquarian tradition, including lively personal recollections from Angus Graham of those who dominated the scene shortly before and during World War II. Others deal with a theme over a longer period. Dr Ian Stewart's 'Two Centuries of Scottish Numismatics' is the most interesting to readers of this *Journal*, although not primarily aimed at such specialists. He reviews the nature of the material, gives reasons for the prominence of collector-students, and briefly recounts the development of the coinage itself, explaining that hoards can still revolutionise our knowledge of the earlier periods. He then gives a chronological account of published work and major collectors, in fact beginning earlier than 200 years ago, and concludes by mentioning new trends in numismatic studies. A comprehensive bibliography, with some comments, supplements the essay. Dr Stewart gives due prominence to the great advances made by Edward Burns, in *The Coinage of Scotland* (1887), using scientific techniques well ahead of other work in medieval numismatics. Apparent omissions in this thoughtful essay are explained by the coverage of Dr R.B.K.Stevenson's history of the museum (national since 1851). This includes the growth of the collection, in which coins were always important; the treatment of treasure trove; and the work of (honorary) curators of coins and others to whom we are indebted.

J.E.L.Murray