

REVIEWS

Ancient British Coins, by Elizabeth Cottam, Philip de Jersey, Chris Rudd and John Sills (Aylsham: Chris Rudd, 2010), xi, 243 pp.

Ancient British Coins, or *ABC* as it prefers to be called, is without doubt a major addition to the published literature on the subject. The book does not seek to replace previous catalogues and narratives but as a catalogue it may well do just that. It is also an attractive and easy to use reference book.

ABC has three stated aims. The first is to make ancient British coins easier to identify, date and classify. The second is to compile a comprehensive and completely illustrated catalogue. The third aim is to boost the popularity of the subject via a simple and accessible catalogue designed for convenience. It has to be admitted that the first two aims have clearly been fulfilled, while the increasing use of *ABC* catalogue numbers alongside other standard catalogues would suggest that the third aim too is being fulfilled.

The book is aimed at a wide readership including collectors, scholars, dealers, museums and metal detectorists (or 'metdets' as they are called in the book). It is extremely well researched and incorporates the latest ideas and hypotheses on virtually all aspects of Iron Age numismatics. Dating, tribal attribution and function are all dealt with. In doing so, the authors draw on a very wide variety of research and also introduce their own hypotheses. Although the research is very thorough there is much that is unreferenced and, consequently, it is not always easy to know what is accepted theory, what is more hypothetical or what is speculative. The latter is particularly true with regards to issuing authority and areas of socio-political control (i.e. what may be called 'tribal' areas). For instance, we can not assume that some of the inscriptions the authors mention refer to the personal names of rulers, what the full names could be expanded to, or the meaning of such names. However, the book is generally well balanced and where the authors do give other alternative points of view, they often explain why they prefer a particular idea or opinion.

The book's prose style can best be described as light in tone rather than academic but to my mind this does not detract from it. The idea, presumably, is to make the book more accessible, although as a consequence it does come across as less authoritative. For example, when discussing the function of coins, they are seen as produced by monarchs to meet royal or elite needs 'not to pay Mrs. Serf's weekly grocery bill' (p. 8). The authors' discussion of why they use the term 'Ancient British' rather than Celtic, Pritanic, or Iron Age is illuminating. For example, 'Iron Age, though popular with archies, curators and nummi nerds, seems a strange way to label ancient British coins, which are chiefly atypical of the period' (p.9).

ABC sensibly divides the British coin issuing areas into seven geographic regions (plus two for Gallic imports), but it also attributes each issue to a named tribe, and admits that they like to sort the coins by tribe: 'we know the dangers of doing so, but deem it well worth the risk' (p. 7). Indeed, the inherent problems of doing this are well known. It is pointed out that 'Celtic linguists testify to the great antiquity of certain tribal names' (p. 7) yet it is far from certain how static either the groupings or their names were. By questioning this tribal approach I do, however, fall into the authors' category of 'nitpicking academic numismatists', but the authors do comment that tribal areas are ill-defined and, in some cases, may consist of loosely connected confederacies. Dating broadly follows the phases devised by Colin Haselgrove.¹ Each issue is given an approximate age bracket, thus avoiding inherent problems of trying to accurately date particular issues, when dating some issues even to a decade can be difficult.

The catalogue at the heart of the publication is very good indeed and claims, probably correctly, that it includes all Ancient British coin types recorded at the time of publication, consequently containing 418 types that do not appear in Van Arsdell's catalogue.² All 999 coins are illustrated twice life-size in very clear black and white photographs. The issues are divided up by region and/or tribe, denomination and given a date and area code. Each issue has its own distinct name which throws up some interesting terms like the Bagendon Beasts type, while the Braughing Dragon silver unit apparently depicts what 'is clearly a water-dragon, akin perhaps to the Lambton worm ... and the Loch Ness monster?' (p. 22). Each type is fully described and provided with a contextual background. Very usefully, a four-way concordance allows cross-referencing with all the other standard catalogues. There is also a statement of rarity, although the authors have earlier pointed out that to do this can be misleading and subject to rapid change if a substantial hoard of a particular type is recovered. Following the catalogue is a fast identifier section which illustrates all coins, life-size and ordered by metal, size and denomination. All images are close together enabling rapid identification. If you are unable to identify a coin from this there is even an email help line. Perhaps most useful to students and academics is a very thorough bibliography covering nearly everything published on the subject. It is also commendable that the book highlights the significance of the role of the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Celtic Coin Index, and the importance of recording new finds and their find spots.

Overall this is a well produced and easy to use catalogue that will greatly aid anyone wanting to identify

¹ Haselgrove 1987.

² Van Arsdell 1989.

Ancient British coins. The background information on individual issues will help those wanting to know the background to the issues while the incorporation of previous research in a single volume and the addition of new thoughts can only help to advance the subject and stimulate discussion.

MARK CURTEIS

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 Van Arsdell, R. D., 1989. *Celtic Coinage of Britain* (London).

Hoards, Hounds and Helmets: A Conquest-period Ritual Site at Hallaton, Leicestershire, by Vicki Score *et al.*, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 21 (Leicester: University of Leicester Archaeological Services, 2011), xvii, 302 pp.

It is now twelve years since Ken Wallace and his fellow members of the Hallaton Field Work Group were fieldwalking ploughed fields in the parishes of Slawston and Hallaton. Having recorded late Iron Age and Roman pottery and a scatter of animal bones on the ploughed surface of one field, Ken took his metal detector back there and, over the next few days, recovered more than 200 silver coins, which he reported to the authorities. Most were identified as Late Iron Age coins of the Corieltavi. To protect the site from possible illegal metal detecting, excavation of the key areas commenced in secrecy in 2001 and continued over the next four years. This eagerly awaited book describes those excavations and discusses the archaeology and interpretation of the site.

The usual format of a modern archaeological report is followed, initially describing the area, the results of the fieldwalking and geophysical surveys of the site. There follows a detailed description of the excavations that, among other things, revealed a complex archaeology with many coin deposits and pits packed with pig bones. Plans of the site and its excavated features are interspersed with excellent photographs of key finds, many given a human scale by the inclusion of members of the excavation team or their hands. The nature of the site, and its deposits of coins, bones and associated artefacts (such as a Roman parade helmet and silver bowl), are reviewed against temple sites of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age (LPRIA), while the possible identification of at least part of the boundary ditch as the bedding trench for a palisade or screen is compared with palisades on temple sites such as Hayling Island. The conclusion that this must have been a ritual site is quickly reached without mention of possible alternative interpretations, and one is left with the impression that this is a 'no brainer' with further comment unnecessary. However, no matter how obvious this interpretation may seem (and surely some ritual dimension is indicated), several anomalous features suggest that this is not the whole story, and other interpretations should at least have been considered.

An excellent report on the extensive bone deposits by Jennifer Browning identifies 97 per cent as pig, removing the assemblage from any domestic context. By contrast, bone assemblages from LPRIA temple sites are more commonly sheep/goat and, even where pig bones are present, these are more selective in their skeletal origin. Pigs generally produce a significantly higher percentage of edible protein per live weight than sheep/goats or cattle and are associated with feasting in Celtic myth.¹ But, notwithstanding the discovery of a cast bronze handle with La Tène style decoration and possible fragments of bronze sheathing from a wooden tankard in ploughsoil associated with the bones, 'The Hallaton evidence does not neatly fit simplistic models of either "feasting" or "sacrifice"', (p. 135). So what other interpretations should have been considered? The sub-title of the book *A Conquest-period Ritual Site at Hallaton, Leicestershire* might suggest one. The events of the period between the early occupation of Trinovantian territory and the submission of the Corieltavian people to the invading Roman army, are great unknowns. The slow progression of the Roman advance towards the Humber was probably held back by opposition from mobile guerrilla forces, perhaps led by Caratacus himself, and one wonders whether Hallaton, with its possible palisade and evidence of votive offerings and feasting could also have been a major rallying point for opposition to the Roman army.

While the majority of the book is well written and informative, the sections on the coinage are disappointing. Ian Leins tells us that Roman coins were present in eight of the fourteen hoards found to the west of an entranceway in the boundary ditch, the latest being an unworn *denarius* of Claudius struck in AD 41–42, but 'As we cannot detect substantial differences in the Iron Age components of the entranceway hoards ... it is highly probable that they were all deposited in c. AD 43–50' (pp. 40–1). However, apart from the first part of this statement being debatable, Leins's dates are perhaps open to question in certain instances. His chronology for local coin production has 'Early bimetallic un-inscribed coinage (Ferriby gold and prototype silver)' as his second period and 'Late un-inscribed coinage (Kite and Domino gold and later boar/horse silver)' as his third. But the Kite and Domino gold is separate from the 'Ferriby' gold, having a more northerly distribution, while evidence from the 1908 South Ferriby hoard shows us that his Ferriby gold and later boar/horse silver are contemporary. His intuitive belief that the ratio of un-inscribed to inscribed North-Eastern coins in the Celtic Coin Index is somehow proportional to the length of time each of these coin groups was in production is also open to question, as careful analysis will demonstrate. His analysis of the dating implications of the stratified Roman coins in the hoards is also problematic, this time due to the low statistical significance of the small numbers of Roman *denarii* found in the different hoards. Then, in his discussion of the various coin types, Leins tells us that 'The main inscribed coinages show a degree of inscriptional variation, ... which hints at their engraver's (*sic*) basic lack of understanding of the Latin alphabet and language' (p. 47), and this

¹ Green 1992, 17–18.

becomes a theme throughout his analysis of the coin types. Although Leins argues that his Aun 1 coinage was 'struck from the same worn obverse dies employed for the latest unscripted coins' (p. 49) and offers, as proof, a coin on which possible 'boar legs' can be seen, his 'boar legs' appear more likely to be the result of a die clash. Similarly, he avers that one of his **VEPOC** coins was struck from an obverse die used for Aun 1 'with something adhered to its surface [*that*] produces coins with a distinct 'bean'-shaped indent' (pp. 49–50). However, not only do his 'bean'-shaped indents have different sizes, they are merely ghost images of the horses' chests on the coins' reverse sides.

Leins presents his typology for the North-Eastern coinage in Appendix I, although the reasoning behind his partition of the coin types is unexplained and his descriptions contain some factual errors. Several types are defined to accommodate as few as one coin (e.g. Vep 9b) while others include so many variants that one is left with the impression that they were defined to 'round up' all the remaining coins of that denomination that didn't seem to fit anywhere else (e.g. his Vep 2a and Vep 2b types). A coin of his Vep 9a type, which he references as new, is in the British Museum collection.² There are some errors and omissions in Leins's catalogue of the Hallaton coins (e.g. his numbers 99, 859, 952, 1745, 1907, 1932, 1933, 4240, 4319, 4600, 4601, 4602, 4607, 4610 and 4615 are all one type, but ten are listed as Aun 1 and five are listed as Aun 1b, three have (pellet ring below tail) after the type, one has (var) here and eleven have no comment). Although, in his typology, Leins uses the useful convention of spacing elements of the legend to indicate their position above the horse, below its belly, between its forelegs and in front of its forelegs, he dispenses with this convention for his catalogue, only leaving a space between the upper and lower elements (and even that disappears for his Iisuprasu 1 type – after coin 3357, **IISVP RASV** becoming **IISVPRASV**). It would have been helpful if the North-Eastern coins Leins illustrates had been referenced to his catalogue numbers.

Overall, this book was worth waiting for, although Colin Haselgrove and I would have to disagree over elements of 'Leins's careful analysis' (p. 169).

GEOFF COTTAM

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 Hobbs, R., 1996. *British Iron Age Coins in the British Museum* (London).

Studies in Early Medieval Coinage 2: New Perspectives, edited by Tony Abramson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 261 pp.

TONY Abramson has for more than three decades been a leading organiser and facilitator in the field of medieval numismatics, lending his skills and energy to the

Yorkshire Numismatic Society and to the focus of his collecting interest: the early Anglo-Saxon coinage. This volume is one of several which have resulted from his dedication, and presents the proceedings of the second of (at the time of writing) four biennial symposia on early medieval coinage arranged by Tony at Cambridge and Leeds since 2006. The particular symposium on which *New Perspectives* is based took place in Leeds in 2008, under the auspices of the International Medieval Congress, and attracted a considerable audience of historians and archaeologists as well as numismatists. The symposia organised by Tony at the IMC have benefited considerably from the increased exposure offered by a major academic gathering, and the breadth of the 2008 audience is reflected in the scope of the papers offered here, which showcase ways in which the coinage can be used to shed new light onto aspects of early medieval history, culture and society. This is particularly apparent with the first six papers in the volume. Michael Metcalf ('English Money, Foreign Money. The Circulation of Tremisses and Sceattas in the East Midlands and the Monetary Role of "Productive Sites"') provides a characteristically incisive dissection of the implications of finds from one part of England, finding an unusually high proportion of foreign coins (especially at productive sites) that might betoken trade links spanning the North Sea. Tony Abramson ('The De Wit Collection of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge') picks out highlights from a major new acquisition by the Fitzwilliam of over 450 top-quality *sceattas*. This superb collection includes many rare and unique specimens, and Tony quite rightly highlights the exhibition based on it – 'Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round' – which visitors to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Norwich Castle Museum and Ipswich Town Hall Galleries may have seen in 2008–09. Catherine Karkov ('The Boat and the Cross: Church and State in Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage') and Anna Gannon ('Coins, Images and Tales from the Holy Land: Questions of Theology and Orthodoxy') both address the religious iconography of *sceattas*. Gannon's previous research into this subject has left little doubt of the strong Christian overtones found in the *sceattas*' iconography,¹ but these two explorations show how much more there is to the subject. Here, Gannon looks especially to a selection of facing images, which she suggests might be representations of Christ and the Virgin Mary, while Karkov delves into images of ships and the metaphorical meanings they impart. A different approach is taken in this reviewer's paper ('Kingship and Learning on the Broad Penny Coinage of the "Mercian Supremacy"'), in which I survey how kings involved themselves with the issuing of coin in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. The role kings took in managing coin-production emerges as far from straightforward, and there was considerable room for influence from moneyers, clergy and others. The last paper in this first section (Wybrand op den Velde and Michael Metcalf, 'Series E Reconsidered') is a summarized prelude to a major new study of the 'porcupine' *sceattas*, which has since appeared in two volumes of the *Jaarboek voor Munt- en Penningkunde*.² This vast and complex

¹ Gannon 2003.

² Metcalf and op den Velde 2009–10.

² Hobbs 1996, 183, no. 3308.

coinage has been a challenge to numismatists for centuries, and in these two publications op den Velde and Metcalf put forward solutions to many of the problems posed by Series E. In particular, differences in weight standard seem to betray two distinct groups within the series, probably to be associated with different mint-places.

The final four papers adapted from the original symposium in Leeds all concern later coinages, principally of the early tenth-century viking kingdoms set up in northern England. The catalyst behind this burst of activity was the 2007 discovery (and subsequent acquisition by the British Museum) of the 'Vale of York' hoard: a find of over 600 coins and other objects concealed in a silver pot around 928. Gareth Williams and Barry Ager, who have been at the forefront of analysing the hoard, join forces to provide a list of its contents ('The Vale of York Viking Hoard: Preliminary Catalogue'), and both provide a further contribution on aspects of its interpretation. Williams provides an overview of what the 'Vale of York' hoard has to say about coinage and circulation in northern England in the 920s ('Coinage and Monetary Circulation in the Northern Danelaw in the 920s in the Light of the Vale of York Hoard'), while Ager ('A Preliminary Note on the Artefacts from the Vale of York Viking Hoard') comments on the origins and parallels of items of metalwork. Megan Gooch's paper ('Viking Kings, Political Power and Monetisation') complements those on the 'Vale of York' hoard by opening up wider perspectives on the meaning of coinage in Viking-Age Britain, and on what its issue and designs might reveal about the authorities behind it.

As in the first volume of *Studies in Early Medieval Coinage*, contributions are not restricted just to those delivered at the corresponding symposium. In this case five further papers are provided. Three, those by Mike Bonser ('The "North of England" Productive Site Revisited'), James Booth ('Notes on the Keith Chapman Collection of Northumbrian Silver Sceattas: c. 700–c. 788') and Tony Abramson ('BNJ Coin Register Sceatta Index'), provide largely self-explanatory catalogues of important numismatic material. The other two are brief notices of intriguing new finds. Stewart Lyon ('The Earliest Signed Penny of Cricklade: a Local Find of Edgar's "Circumscription Cross" Issue') highlights a rare single-find of a coin of the tenth century, in this case the first known with a mint-signature from Cricklade, which was discovered within five miles of the mint of origin. Finally, Arent Pol ('A Square Madelinus from Katwijk: Trial Piece or Die Cleaner?') draws attention to a lead object probably identifiable as a trial piece used in the production of imitative gold tremisses in the seventh century. Trial pieces – unlike coins – stood little chance of being transported long distances before being deposited, so that one can be confident that the find-spot of this object (Katwijk) lies very close to the location where the imitative coins were being made.

The editor has, in short, done it again: he has produced a handsome and well put-together volume which demonstrates the vibrancy of early medieval numismatic studies. Abramson's series is setting a precedent for effectively combining academic research and numismatic resources, all packaged with great professionalism by Boydell & Brewer. Images are generally of high

quality – higher overall than in the previous volume in the series – though there is some fluctuation, not least in the material assembled (probably from diverse sources) by Mike Bonser. Also, Karkov's paper would have benefited from the use of photographs rather than simplified line drawings. In Naismith's paper one pair of images has erroneously been repeated. The omission of an index is unfortunate, but defensible in a volume of this nature. Overall, this is a book which will be of value and interest to all those with an interest in early medieval coinage and its interpretation.

R. NAISMITH

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The Coinage of Southern England, 796–865, by Rory Naismith, BNS Special Publication 8, 2 vols. (London: Spink, 2011), 174 + 413pp., 104 plates.

It is a real pleasure to welcome this two-volume corpus of the coinage minted in southern England between the death of Offa (796) and the arrival of the Great Army (865). Dr Naismith has succeeded in gathering up almost 3,000 specimens, and has presented the material immaculately, accompanied by a most thorough overall analysis in terms of varieties, dies and die-duplication, metrology, fineness, and moneyer complement and continuity at each of the mint-places. Some twenty-seven known hoards are summarized in terms of his classification, and there is a rich body of evidence of single finds (complete with its own index), which permits a regional study of monetary circulation. The lay-out and printing of the monograph are to the highest possible standard, and the Society may well be proud to have sponsored and to have done justice to work of this calibre, which appears as Special Publication no. 8. Each variety is illustrated by a chosen specimen placed alongside its description in the catalogue – a luxury made practicable by modern technology – and the whole body of accessible material is illustrated on 104 plates, containing almost 2,500 coins. The standard of photography is admirable. What a splendid achievement. Dr Naismith is to be warmly congratulated on his care and hard work, and on setting such a very high standard of presentation and analysis.

The catalogue is organized in terms of types, i.e. designs which, to the numismatist, are recognizably different from each other. (This does not imply that the differences were particularly significant to the issuing authorities, nor to the users.) Each type or variety is known from anything from one up to a dozen or more specimens. Thus (to take an example) the work of the London mint, up until 852, runs to 88 varieties or sub-varieties, known from 200 surviving specimens. These were struck from 156 known obverse dies and 163

known reverse dies: all the information is beautifully tabulated. Statistical estimation suggests a central estimate of 815 obverse dies and 1,115 reverse dies. Thus, only about a fifth of the dies originally used are represented among the coins known today: this may come as something of a surprise. Most of the coins are still singletons. The sources of the material are sufficiently diverse for us to be confident that for most purposes the corpus can safely be treated as a random sample. Nevertheless, much may still come to light through future finds, including plenty of new varieties over and above the eighty-eight now on record. For the general historian wishing to form a judgement on the place of the coinage in the economic life of southern England, the key figure is the estimate of 1,115 reverse dies – subject to margins of statistical variation of course, but deserving of a reasonably confident acceptance as a ball-park figure.

The same meticulous steps of tabulation can be followed through for mints other than London, namely Canterbury, Rochester, the East Anglian mint (? Ipswich), and the Wessex mint (Winchester or Southampton). Again, for the general historian the key figures (from Table IIIb) are the central estimates of the original total numbers of reverse dies over the seventy-year period: for Canterbury 4,970, for Rochester 1,065 obverses, for East Anglia 1,680, and for Wessex 350. (The ratio of reverse to obverse dies was generally somewhere between one and two.)

Armed with the information that the currency was produced from an estimated 9,180 reverse dies (Canterbury 54%, East Anglia 18%, London 12%, Rochester 12%, Wessex 4%) one can then go on to a regional analysis of the single finds, to discover how the mix differed from the over-all proportions, in different regions, and thus how freely the coins from the different mint-places mingled in circulation. Was there a contrast in proportions between north-of-Thames and south-of-Thames? What were the mints of origin, in the East Anglian currency? Was Wessex more self-contained than other regions? And so on. For the historian, the degree of diffusion of the currency is almost more telling than the sheer volume of the coinage, which could in theory have lain unused in people's treasure-chests. The two aspects taken together offer an irrefutable 'bottom line' for the economic history of ninth-century southern England. The single finds create wonderful opportunities for analysis; and once the main perspectives have been established, more subtle local divergences may be noticed. Another project: armed with these percentage figures, one can look at the composition of the (larger of the) twenty-seven hoards, to see whether they are typical of the region where they were found.

And of course one can slice the cake in the other direction, adding the coins of all mints together, in order to look at how mint-output varied chronologically during the seventy-year period, and whether the variation differed between different mint-places. Histograms are called for. (This will not be quite the same thing as the volume of the currency at any particular moment, because older coins remained in circulation for varying lengths of time.) Again, a surprise: at London, output jumped dramatically upwards from 840 onwards (and moneyer complement rose with it).

It is a signal merit of Dr Naismith's monograph, that it provides a perfect platform from which to go forward. As new finds come to light, they can be taken into account. There's no need to go chasing references, or checking dies for duplication, it's all there, in these two volumes. A landmark achievement.

MICHAEL METCALF

Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England. The Southern English Kingdoms 757–865, by Rory Naismith, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 351 pp.

MERCIA's progressive rise to hegemony south of the Humber was not fuelled by money. The old Mercian heartland in the West Midlands lay very much on the outer fringes of the zone of southern and eastern England where coinage circulated plentifully. Rather, the Mercian kings pursued their expansionist policies by force of arms, rewarding their followers with land. The kings of East Anglia, within whose realm a money economy had for a long time flourished, were not thereby empowered to withstand Mercian ambition. This is textbook stuff, much simplified, but nevertheless to the point. Rory Naismith's title is eye-catching by being rather unexpected. Had there been a sea-change in the role of money by 757, his starting-date?

In fact the title is to some extent misleading. If the book had been called *A Guide* or *A Handbook to the Coinages of the Southern English Kingdoms, 757–865*, that would have given the reader a fairer idea of what to expect, namely a companion-volume for Naismith's excellent two-volume work, *The Coinage of Southern England, 796–865*, published the previous year. *Money and Power*, written with historians and other numismatists in mind, takes them (and us) systematically through aspects of the coinage, viz. its iconography (admirably illustrated with new material); the development of royal control over minting, and progressive unification of the coinage, to become a truly national, English coinage; die-cutting and the role of the moneyers; technical aspects of the study of weight- and alloy standards; the volume of output and the scale of the currency; and monetary circulation in the various regions as documented by finds. All this tills the ground for an up-to-date consideration of money and power, but it scarcely addresses the subject proposed.

Kings obviously controlled the designs on the coinages of their kingdom, placing their name and title, and in some cases their portrait, on the coins. This jealously guarded privilege of royalty was shared with the archbishop of Canterbury (and possibly, on a trivial scale, with one or two other ecclesiastics). This sharing, which was presumably done in order to give the archbishop a cash income, may have been a hangover from the period of the scattas, to which Naismith gives quite a lot of backward glances, e.g. as regards their iconography, even though it lies outside his remit. Offa, conspicuously, placed his portrait on many of the coins. Was his coinage under tighter royal control than what had gone before? Was the introduction of the broad penny a moment of change in that respect too?

How control was exercised, why it seemed so important, and what it amounted to are obviously key questions. If we ask ourselves how Æthelred II (978–1016), for example, controlled the complex and sophisticated coinages of his realm in the Viking Age, the answer seems to be, administratively with a very light touch. Were things all that different in the eighth/ninth centuries? In other words, was control effective while leaving few footprints for the modern historian to discover? We assume, with pitifully little in the way of contemporary written evidence, that the king took a cut from the minting process, either in fees as a per capita tax on mint-output. As indicated above, it seems unlikely that this profit margin was a major source of royal power, although it would be welcome.

After coins had been minted, and had left the exchange, was their circulation in any way open to exploitation by royal power? A monetary economy no doubt facilitated the collection of tolls on foreign trade, at the sea-ports, for example. But did ninth-century people pay per capita taxes? These are exceptionally difficult questions to ask on the basis of a database of the coins themselves. As a Guide or Handbook to the coinage, however, his book can be recommended as an interesting read.

MICHAEL METCALF

Viking Coinage and Currency in the British Isles, by Mark Blackburn, BNS Special Publication 7 (London: British Numismatic Society, 2011), xii, 416 pp.

THE production of this remarkable book was the last major project completed by the late Mark Blackburn (1953–2011) in the face of encroaching illness. Its genesis lay in the decision taken by Dr Blackburn in 2004, when he assumed the Presidency of the British Numismatic Society, to devote his presidential address to the coinage and monetary circulation in those areas of Britain and Ireland controlled or settled by Scandinavians, as well as adjoining areas whose monetary economies were most influenced by the Scandinavians. The lectures (I–V) that he delivered on this theme form the heart of the book, and twenty pages have been added to bring the material up to date. Their subject matter ranges from the earliest Danelaw coinages (I) to the two sovereign kingdoms of East Anglia and York (II) and the Dublin coinage from c.995 (IV), with a survey of the circulation of coins in coastal areas from Scotland, Man and other western regions of Scandinavian Britain (III) and finally a more general assessment of the Scandinavian contribution to the monetary history of the British Isles (V).

These five lectures are followed by ten other items which pursue their various themes in greater depth. The first three of them are concerned with early coins from the Danelaw south of the Humber (VI, from the Proceedings of the Viking Congress of 1997) and VII from those of the 1986 London International Congress, plus the 1989 report in the *British Numismatic Journal* (VIII) on the key hoard from Ashdon in Essex, buried in the late 1990s, from what may be called the imitative phase of Anglo-Viking coinage. In these and later papers, Blackburn explored what he called the co-existence of two contrasting forms of monetary economy, one the

‘bullion’, or ‘money-weight economy’ as prevalent in Scandinavia and the other a classic coin economy as practised in the Anglo Saxon kingdoms.

Then there are two articles (IX and X) on the hundreds of finds from the productive site of the Vikings camp at Torksey, Lincolnshire, occupied by the Great Army in the winter of 872–73, a subject which, despite failing health, Blackburn was still actively pursuing in the last months of his life. The first distinctive ‘national’ coinages of the Danish areas appeared towards the end of the ninth century and in the early tenth; that of York naming kings Siefred and Cnut, are treated in articles XII and XIII, and the East Anglian series in the name of the martyred king Edmund (XI, co-authored by Hugh Pagan). Finally, item number XV suggests the possibility of an as yet unidentified mint in the Irish Sea area in the 11th century.

These articles naturally concentrate on those aspects and series that have been less fully covered hitherto, and Blackburn now opens up new avenues for study and reflection. For example, he argues that the powerful Christian iconography and inscriptions of the regime at York from c.895 may have been designed to convey, not only a message of economic reliability and strong government, but also one addressed to both its own people and to the neighbouring countries that it can be counted as a member of the circle of Western Christian states.

Blackburn was a pioneer in the systematic recording of single finds and their interpretation, a task that has been of increasing importance as metal detecting has become more widespread and intensive over the last thirty years. His great strength was to be equally effective in the use of technical numismatic processes, as in exploring the wider fields of monetary history. The volume is full of detailed descriptions of the coins, their varying literacy, metrology, provenance and so on, but also of new historical and cultural ideas. Blackburn’s insights will surely give encouragement and impetus to the work of his successors in Anglo-Viking studies, and the present book will take its place alongside Dolley’s work on Viking Age Hoards in the 1960s, as one of the most significant staging posts in that on going process.

Mark Blackburn was the most distinguished early medieval numismatist of his generation. With his death, we mourn the passing of a great friend and colleague, but with abundant gratitude to him for this book and for the richness of the legacy that he has left us.

LORD STEWARTBY

The Ipswich Mint c. 973–c. 1210. Volume I: Eadgar to the End of Aethelred II c. 973–c. 1016, by J.C. Sadler (Ipswich: J.C. Sadler, 2010), 156 pp.

THIS privately-produced volume represents a genuine labour of love: a detailed, thorough and highly personal account of the coinage of Anglo-Saxon Ipswich. It bears the firm imprint of its author, John Sadler, long known in the numismatic community as the leading aficionado of Ipswich’s monetary history. Every page reflects the devotion and enthusiasm with which he has approached the subject over the course of four decades. Readers whose interests lie, for example, with the Anglo-Saxons

rather than with Ipswich specifically might be surprised to find the volume concluding with eighteen somewhat eclectic pages of 'Ipswich Par anumismatics', which have nothing to do with the early Middle Ages; instead, one finds medals, tokens and badges with some sort of Ipswich connection, dating from the seventeenth to twenty-first centuries.

The bulk of the volume, however, consists of a catalogue of coins bearing the mint-signature of Ipswich struck between King Edgar's reform of c.973 and the death of Æthelred II in 1016. This book is the first in a series aimed at covering the entire history of the mint down to its end in the thirteenth century. Discussion in this volume of the possibility of minting in Ipswich before Edgar's reform is only tangential, although it is acknowledged with the appearance of a Series R sceat among the cover illustrations, and the author alludes to the maintenance of a catalogue of coins of the independent kings of East Anglia. Within the bounds of coins which can unambiguously be attributed to Ipswich, Sadler's coverage is impressively broad. In addition to the material in the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*, he has obtained details and high-quality images of coins in the British Museum, the Royal Coin Cabinet at Stockholm and from a wide range of private dealers and collectors. For the latter in particular Sadler is to be especially praised, as it is only through long cultivation of friendships and common interests that one builds up the volume of information seen here. The likelihood is that very few coins have escaped his careful search of public and private collections across Britain, Europe and north America.

Sadler's material reveals Ipswich to have been a mint of no small significance. Overall, he counts some 341 surviving coins, struck from 105 obverse and 96 reverse dies; the die-totals might be adjusted slightly if all cut halfpennies and farthings were die-matched, which they apparently have not been in every case. These coins were made by about seventeen moneyers, with a maximum of six known in any one type (*Æthelred's First Hand* type); more often Ipswich seems to have been home to one or two moneyers at any particular point, though in *Last Small Cross* there may have been another resurgence, with five moneyers known. One awaits Sadler's second volume to find out the subsequent development of the mint. Nevertheless, a mint-study of a mid-size Anglo-Saxon mint is extremely valuable to Anglo-Saxon numismatics. Ipswich opens up a window onto one of the more prosperous regional mints, and has major potential to inform wider views of the state of the monetary economy. For its numismatic significance Sadler's study bears comparison with John Mossop's work on Lincoln or Yvonne Harvey's on Winchester, and it is to be fondly hoped that further studies – for instance of similar-sized mints in other regions of the kingdom – may be inspired by this achievement.

While Sadler must be warmly congratulated on the culmination of what has clearly been a lifetime of diligent study, he is the first to admit, in his preface, that this book 'is ... written without the constraints of educated people or intellectuals'. It bears the hallmarks of a less-than-formal progression into print. There is no list of contents, and although a student familiar with late Anglo-Saxon numismatics has little difficulty navigating the volume, additional guidance might have been

advisable. Other areas too would have benefited from editorial involvement. The reader will search in vain for a complete tabulation of how many coins are actually listed in the volume, and the various diagrams and tables presented at the end of the book – while useful – are not as fully integrated with the preceding material as might have been desired. References are few and not always clearly cited. Sadler assembles a quirky selection of introductory material, written in a garrulous style, with many asides on his own reasons for devoting so much time and energy to numismatics alongside a successful career as a maker of fine furniture. Yet these pages serve to personalise the volume in a way which is not always seen with more formal publications. Sadler's study of Ipswich shines above all with enthusiasm for the subject, love for the town and a justifiable eagerness to commit the information he has gathered to print – taken as such, and with proper respect to the value of the information he has gathered, it is a noteworthy publication in the field of Anglo-Saxon numismatics, and a major landmark in writing on the numismatic history of Ipswich.

R. NAISMITH

Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 60. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Part II. Anglo-Saxon Coins 1016–1066, by the late V.M. Potin (London, for the British Academy by Oxford University Press and Spink, 2012), lx, 118 pp., 48 plates.

THIS excellent volume makes available images and descriptions of 1,134 coins struck between the accession of Cnut in 1016 and the death of Harold II at the battle of Hastings in 1066. Of these, 876 are of Cnut, respectively of his *Quatrefoil* type (394 coins), his *Pointed Helmet* type (276 coins) and of his *Short Cross* type (206 coins). There follow 109 coins of Harold I, of which 1 is of *Short Cross* type (very rare indeed for this reign), 51 are of *Jewel Cross* type, and 57 are of *Fleur-de-Lis* type; 24 coins of Harthacnut, of which 7 are of *Jewel Cross* type, 16 are of *Arm and Sceptre* type, and 1 is an *Arm and Sceptre/Jewel Cross* mule; 118 coins of Edward the Confessor, predominantly of the first five types of his reign; and 7 coins of the *PAX* type of Harold II. It should be pointed out that the Harthacnut total given here is 17 less, and the Edward the Confessor total 17 more, than a quick reading of the volume might suggest, for by an uncharacteristic typographical mishap all the coins of Edward the Confessor's first type, *PACX*, have been inadvertently assigned to Harthacnut.

The number of coins in the present volume which are by moneyers not previously recorded, whether for mints or for types, is not large, for, as one would expect, coins of English mints that reached Russia by trade or as booty during the later Anglo-Saxon period seem to have been predominantly struck at such larger towns and cities as Lincoln, London, Stamford, Thetford, Winchester and York, for which the roster of moneyers is already tolerably complete. Nonetheless the volume evidences new moneyers in Cnut's *Quatrefoil* type for Hereford (coin 74), London (204), Southwark (284–5), Stamford (296), Sudbury (302), Tamworth (305) and Wallingford (321); in the *Pointed Helmet* type for

Hertford (433) and Warwick (628); and in the *Short Cross* type for Canterbury (678) and London (753, 757).

The coin of *Short Cross* type for Harold I is by a moneyer at London who is new for the type (877), and there are new moneyers in Harold's *Jewel Cross* type for Gloucester (894) and for a mint which may be Norwich or Hertford (921–2), as well as a new moneyer at Rochester in his *Fleur-de-Lis* type (977). There are also new moneyers for Edward the Confessor's *PACX* type at Guildford (1013) and at Rochester (1032), and new moneyers for his *Radiate/Small Cross* type at Canterbury (1027), for his *Expanding Cross* type at London (1085), and for his *Sovereign/Eagles* type at Canterbury (1107) and, possibly, London (1110). Finally, a new coin of Edward's *Transitional Pointed Helmet* type (1100), one of only three coins of the type so far recorded, is by a moneyer Ulfcytl (Ulfketill), who may have worked at Bedford or at York, and in either case is new for the type.

All of this is helpfully indicated in the text which accompanies the plates, where the user of the volume will also find much meticulously recorded information on die-identities, both within the volume and with coins published in previous *SCBI* volumes. Credit for all this belongs, as in *SCBI* 50 (Hermitage I), to the unstinting labours of Bill Lean, and the volume will be an essential resource for any one with a serious interest in the later Anglo-Saxon coinage, and especially for students of the coinage of Cnut.

Rather less helpful is the fact that although the provenances of the coins are stated both on the text pages themselves and on pages devoted to 'collectors and dealers' (pp. 1–2) and to an 'index of finds' (p. 102), there is no explicit discussion in the present volume either of the way in which the Hermitage coin collection has been assembled or of the overall composition of any of the hoards from which coins in this volume derive. For information of this nature it is necessary to consult the introductory pages of *SCBI* 50, and the reader will discover when doing so that although these pages provide much indispensable data about the history of the Hermitage collection, the coin-specific information given there relates, understandably, only to coins that were included in that volume.

So far as the present volume is concerned, the majority of the coins, leaving aside some 370 that come from known hoards, either derive from what might be described as the *ancien fonds* of the Hermitage collection, i.e. the older core of the collection assembled from various sources from 1764 onwards, without recorded provenances for individual coins, or from one or other of two substantial private collections: that formed by Jakob Reichel (1780–1856), purchased for the Hermitage Museum from his heirs after his death, and that formed by the aristocratic Stroganov family, confiscated from them after the Russian Revolution in October 1917.

As explained in *SCBI* 50, both Reichel and the Stroganov family bought extensively from sources outside Russia, and in Reichel's case some specific evidence survives for purchases by him at London coin sales and from London coin dealers. Seemingly the evidence for such purchases by Reichel only relates to coins that are listed in *SCBI* 50, but among the Hermitage's 34 coins of types from Edward the Confessor's *Pointed Helmet*

type onwards, as many as 16 or 17 are ex Reichel, and it may easily be conjectured that most, if not all of these, were acquired by Reichel from London, since coins of the later types of Edward the Confessor and of Harold II are not found in any appreciable quantity in Scandinavia or in the Baltic region. Indeed, just one of the 34 coins concerned derives from a known Russian coin hoard, the remainder being unprovenanced or ex Stroganov, and this may be a pointer to the fact that some of the unprovenanced coins concerned may also derive from the British Isles rather than from within the borders of the Russian empire.

It is important to draw attention to the possible non-Russian provenance both of some of Reichel's coins and of other coins besides, for a glance at the provenances of coins in this volume of Cnut's *Quatrefoil* type shows that the collection contains coins of this type ex Reichel from such West Midland and South-Western mints as Chester, Crewkerne, Gloucester, Hereford, Shaftesbury and Taunton, and which are not obviously pecked. It is certainly not impossible that these should derive from Russian hoards, but coins from these areas of England are rather less likely than those struck elsewhere in England to have reached Russia by the normal processes of trade, and there was a very large hoard of coins of this type probably found around 1780 just outside Gloucester, from which specimens would still have been available for Reichel to acquire from the London coin trade in the middle of the nineteenth century. Students would thus be unwise to take it for granted that all of the coins just mentioned – or, for that matter, some of the other coins of this or of subsequent types that are without known Russian hoard provenances (whether ex Reichel or ex Stroganov or unprovenanced) – were necessarily found on Russian soil.

Finally, to get back on to slightly securer evidential footing, it is striking that all 17 of the coins of Edward the Confessor's *Expanding Cross* type listed in the present volume (coins 1083–99) are of the 'light' rather than of the 'heavy' phase of the type. Although 8 of these are ex Reichel or are without provenance, the remaining 9 are from the Vikhmyaz and Lodeinoe Pole III hoards, in both of which these are the latest Anglo-Saxon coins. The absence of coins of the 'heavy' phase of this type both from these hoards and from the collection as a whole is in its own small way an indicator of the improbability of the hypothesis that the 'heavy' phase of this type preceded the 'light' phase, although it is fair to say that the case for such a hypothesis will eventually be decided one way or the other on different and stronger grounds.

HUGH PAGAN

Markets, Trade and Economic Development in England and Europe, 1050–1550, by Richard Britnell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), xviii, 330 pp.

THIS very welcome volume contains a collection of twenty-one papers by Richard Britnell, one of this country's leading medieval economic historians. Twenty appeared between 1966 and 2001 in a variety of journals and multi-authored volumes, but one (no. XIX: 'Urban economic regulation and economic morality in

medieval England') is hitherto unpublished. All will be of interest to readers interested in the development of the medieval English economy, but this review can only concentrate on those aspects that seem likely to be of more general interest to the readers of the *Journal*.

Papers I–VI all deal with early markets (primarily of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries). One of the most striking points to emerge from these papers is the extent to which the creation of markets was a Europe-wide phenomenon, intimately connected with the growing need of lords to increase their cash income, on which their aristocratic way of life increasingly depended. As B. puts it, these new foundations were investments, 'as much designed to generate wealth as the railways and cotton mills of the nineteenth century, though they also carried symbolic values of lordship and power.' (I.190: since each paper preserves its original pagination, references to particular passages are therefore given to paper and page.) In Scotland, indeed, the establishment of the first burghs and markets was part of a deliberate policy of development by David I (1124–53), which also involved the creation of an independent Scottish coinage. Similarly, between 1066 and 1216, the north of England (i.e. the region to the north of York) saw the creation of some forty boroughs and markets in an area where none had existed before.

Paper VII rounds off this section with a fascinating case study of the development of Witham, Essex, where there was an old market (Chipping Hill), going back to at least the early eleventh century. In 1212 this was superseded by a new foundation about half a mile away ('la Neweland'), which was sited to take advantage of the growth in trade and travel along the main road between London and Colchester. B. goes into some detail about the people who lived there, their holdings and rents, and into the expected benefits that prompted landlords (in this case, the Templars) to create a new foundation. As he points out, one important, and often overlooked, factor was probably that the growing population of landless craftsmen and traders, reliant upon buying food-stuffs, would have provided a very useful guaranteed market for the products of demesne farming.

The next group of papers (VIII–X) cover the linked themes of economic development, work and trade in medieval England. Paper VIII is essentially a reassessment of the evidence for commercialization in England over the three centuries from 1000–1300. B. looks at the evidence under three main headings – urbanisation, economic specialisation and monetization. He begins this last section quoting Mayhew's suggestion that the average amount of coinage in circulation in England in the eleventh century was something like £25,000 but that this had risen to about £900,000 by 1300, a rate of increase which far outstripped even the highest estimates for the increases over the same period in population (sixfold) and prices (fourfold). B. also points out that an increase in the per capita amount of coinage in circulation is supported by plentiful evidence for an increasing monetization of the lord/tenant relationship, particularly during the thirteenth century, when payments in kind and labour services were increasingly converted to cash payments. The net result was that tenants were probably obliged to sell more produce to raise the money which was demanded. B. also suggests that the benefits of the growing commercialisation ended up

predominantly in the hands of the landowning class via these rents, dues, tithes and taxes, and that by 1300 a large part of the growing population of England (perhaps as many as 20 per cent) held little land and were obliged to support themselves by selling their labour or by engaging in trade/craft production within their local community, leaving them very vulnerable to poor harvests and downturns in trade. B. points out too that the shift in the basis of royal taxation over the period also supports the argument that the urban population and trade had become proportionally much more significant: in the eleventh century the principal tax was the geld, levied on land, while by 1300 the main tax on the laity was levied on movable property, thus ensuring that townspeople were brought into the taxation net. From 1275, this was accompanied by a tax on wool exports – a levy on trade – which became 'a principal support of royal finances, more regular than any other source of income' (VIII.14).

In paper IX, B. reflects on the signs of increasing specialisation of occupation over the period 1100–1300, but then points out the limitations of the evidence and questions what proportion of the workforce were actually affected by this phenomenon. He suggests that many with special skills must have fallen back on more basic work when times were difficult. *Inter alia*, he notes the number of artisans who turned to crime when they became impoverished, including one William the locksmith of Reading who took to counterfeiting (IX.9). Paper X considers the extent to which many English merchants used servants and agents to accompany their goods and carry out their business abroad, while they remained at home. In many cases, this allowed them to become involved in other activities. Among the examples that B. gives is Gregory of Rokesley, a London merchant who heard cases concerning usurers and coin-clippers in London and Surrey in 1276, and went on to act as keeper of the king's exchanges at London and Canterbury in 1279–81 (X.136). B. points out that there are hints that some twelfth-century merchants probably did the same, giving the example of the (numismatically) well-known family of Deorman of London, who were probably involved in the Spanish trade but also had widespread landed interests and worked as moneyers (X.138).¹

Two papers follow which contrast developments in England and North Italy during the early fourteenth century, XI looking at the economies in general and XII at towns in particular. In the first B. decides that the received wisdom that northern Italy was more 'advanced' than England does not hold good for every area of activity. One field where it did, however, was the money market. The opportunities to put money to productive use in Italy encouraged those with spare capital to put their money in banks, whence it was loaned out to industrial ventures and merchant partnerships. In England, although some money was deposited with Italian bankers resident in the country, the wealthy generally kept their cash reserves at home or placed it for safe keeping in religious houses. B. cites the example of the Elder Despenser, who, when his property was seized in 1326, had no less than £2,800 stored at two of his manors (XI.170).

¹ Nightingale 1982.

The next pair of papers (XIII–XIV) deal with agrarian capitalism as evidenced by the minor landholders in the fourteenth century, with XIII examining the extent of production for sale on four small manors in north-east Essex and XIV focussing in more detail on one of these manors, Langenhoe, for which a series of account rolls survive. Five of these rolls belong to the period before the Black Death, when Langenhoe belonged to Lionel de Bradenham (who once appears as ‘Leo’ on XIV.380, in one of the very few errors to be found in this book). Exceptionally these rolls list by name everyone who bought grain from the estate in the relevant years. Comparison of the names with the court rolls for Colchester, just four miles away, reveals that about half of the buyers were Colchester townsmen. Interestingly, the account rolls almost never record market tolls being paid on these sales and B. suggests that what we probably see happening here is the manor serjeant of Langenhoe going to Colchester market, arranging sales with the townfolk and the buyers then coming to Langenhoe to collect their purchases, offering them the possibility of evading the cost of the toll themselves. Paper XV takes advantage of the rare opportunity offered by the Paston Letters to explore precisely *why* certain estate management decisions were made by one family of fifteenth-century landowners.

Paper XVI contains a discussion of *advantagium mercatoris*, a common marketing convention, widely found from the late thirteenth century onwards, which saw a purchaser given extra goods over and above the amount that he actually paid for. As B. demonstrates, this was not done as an adjustment to compensate for possible differences between measures, but was instead ‘a negotiated payment in kind from seller to buyer’ (XVI.40). Effectively it seems to have been the equivalent to the modern sales discount on bulk purchases, but in this case the buyer ‘accepted an addition to the quantity of goods he paid for rather than a subtraction from the price he paid’ (XVI.41). The advantage to the buyer is obvious, but the seller also benefited by avoiding the inconvenience and transport costs he would otherwise have incurred taking his goods to market and selling them in small quantities. One common form of *advantagium* in grain purchases was to measure every eighth bushel heaped rather than levelled, which effectively worked out at one extra bushel per thirty-two bushels, or one extra bushel per quarter. Another, and probably the more common form, was for the buyer to receive twenty-one units for every twenty he bought. This method was used not just for grains but for a range of other products. To the medieval mind this system had one big advantage in that it meant that all goods were bought at the current market price, the ‘just price’, which ‘had a firmly established status in public economic morality’ (XVI.47).

Papers XVII–XIX all deal with aspects of economic and price regulation in England. Paper XVII deals with ‘forestalling’, i.e. the buying and selling of goods before they reached a market, where the buyer was not a consumer buying the goods for his own use but rather a middleman who intending to resell them at a higher price and so make an ‘excessive’ profit. B. discusses the history of the offence and of the laws that came into force to prevent it. Paper XVIII deals with the related subject of price-setting in English borough markets

between 1349 and 1500. As B. notes, though there have been many studies on the regulation of trade and markets at this period, none have hitherto taken price-setting and how it actually worked as their focus. For example, while it is well-known, and well-documented, that local authorities regulated the price of bread and ale in line with grain prices, it is much less well-understood how the price of grain was arrived at in the first place. What B. discovers is that the price at which grain, and other foodstuffs, could be sold at market was not fixed by bargaining between buyer and seller, but was also (it seems) regulated by the town authorities, acting on the principal, accepted by contemporary theological and legal authorities, of the ‘just price’, set as low as possible and fixed by ‘a good and wise man’ (XVIII.4). The evidence suggests that the responsible official must have set prices for goods when the market opened, possibly after negotiation with the (major?) dealers. The prices set would, of course, vary according to supply and demand. Once set, the price was binding on all sellers, and fines were regularly levied for selling above the allowed price, although there are hints that a seller could exceed this price if his goods were of exceptional quality and the higher price had been officially sanctioned. Interestingly, buyers could also be fined for offering more than the official price for goods. B. gives many examples of the system in action. This group of papers ends with XIX, which focuses on what business practices late medieval townspeople regarded as morally acceptable and unacceptable and on their reactions to them.

The volume closes with two rather diverse papers. Paper XX, on urban demand in the English economy, is devoted to assessing (and rebutting) the proposition that by about 1300 the marketing structure of England chiefly revolved around the needs of the largest fifty or so towns. As B. shows, this thesis seriously underrates the importance of the demand for goods from the population of the villages and smaller towns. Finally Paper XXI examines the period from 1300 to 1525 to see if it can claim to be a period of transition from feudalism to capitalism and concludes that ‘in most respects the transformation from feudalism to capitalism was marking time, or slowing down relative to the period before 1300’ (XXI.369).

DAVID SYMONS

REFERENCE

Nightingale, P., 1982. ‘Some London moneyers and reflections on the organization of English mints in the eleventh and twelfth centuries’, *NC* 142, 35–43.

Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 62. *The Norweb Collection, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. Tokens of the British Isles 1575–1750. Part VIII. Middlesex and Uncertain Pieces*, by R.H. Thompson and M.J. Dickinson (London: Spink & Son Ltd, 2011), 438 pp., 68 plates.

THIS is the final volume in the magisterial eight-volume series that catalogues and illustrates the Norweb Collection, the largest collection (c.13,000 pieces) ever formed of brass/copper tokens issued in the period 1649–1672. Volume VIII features tokens issued in Middlesex, Uncertain tokens (those with localities

unidentified) and later forgeries and fantasy pieces together with extensive indexes. The other English counties, Ireland and Wales are covered in Volumes I–VI and the City of London in Volume VII. In addition to its major purpose of publishing the Norweb Collection, these volumes include additional features that contribute to the scholarship of the subject. Frontispieces include enlargements of the Glastonbury mercer's token re-oriented to show its motif as Glastonbury Tor (corrected from the previous notion that it was the Glastonbury thorn in Thompson's Volume IV introductory essay), and, in Volume VIII, a handsome map of Chelsea on which is shown the earliest representation (1717) of a tradesman's token. Introductory essays include such major contributions as the study of Bristol farthings in Volume II and discussion of contemporary references to tokens in Volume VII. The bibliography and details of dealers, collectors and collections in the abbreviations section of each volume is equally impressive. The highest possible standards of scholarship and photography (of difficult subjects) have been sustained throughout the series and a comprehensive index volume is planned. It is no exaggeration that this series is 'likely to remain the most comprehensive standard works on the series, perhaps for ever', as Mrs Emery May Norweb said in her Foreword to Volume I in 1984.¹

In 1989, in a paper in the *British Numismatic Journal*, Thompson marshalled documentary evidence which enabled him to conclude that, with the exception of Ireland, most tokens in this series were struck in London at the Tower Mint.² This resolved the vital question of central versus local production. This, together with Thompson and Dickinson's monumental publication of the Norweb collection, has put study of the 1649–72 token series on a thoroughly sound footing. This is to the benefit not just of interested numismatists, but also to archaeologists including people who work within and contribute to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. It also informs the surprisingly uphill task of persuading mainstream historians of the research potential of seventeenth-century tokens.

Despite their interest in urban hierarchies (market towns, regional centres, provincial capitals, relationships with London), historians have not seriously looked at the evidence provided by seventeenth-century tokens. The absence of coherent documentary sources for contemporary retail trade means that they are important evidence for ordinary traders in fixed shops in specific locations. It is interesting to note that what could be the earliest use of the term 'corner shop' appears on a token issued in Aldgate (Norweb 6475). Profit and prestige were no doubt the main general reasons for token issue, and most were issued by a surprising variety of tradesmen (and some women) including such subjects of historical interest as tobacco, sugar and coffee, the new and expanding seventeenth-century trades. The distribution of seventeenth-century tokens is uneven, and, noting that it is focused on Devon, eastward to Kent, around London and then along the east coast as far as Yorkshire, it is a London-focused trading distribution and broadly correlates with regional eco-

nomie development in the mid-seventeenth century. The incidence of shops outside market towns in this period might be shown from the evidence of detailed token distributions. Seventeenth-century tokens as laid out in the Norweb volumes provide evidence for research that could illuminate regional economic development in this period. These volumes are a fine achievement, the authors' sheer hard work, attention to detail and grasp of arcane sources has to be admired, and, as the *Sylloge* axiom has it: the authors have indeed placed the tokens in the Norweb collection at the service of those who would base studies upon them.

YOLANDA COURTNEY

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 Thompson, R.H., 1989. 'General or local production of seventeenth-century tokens', *BNJ* 59, 198–211.

Coinage and Currency in Eighteenth-Century Britain: the Provincial Coinage, by David W. Dykes (London: Spink, 2011), xii, 383 pp., 395 ills.

Dr Dykes states in the Preface: 'What I have tried to do in this book is to set the eighteenth-century token into the currency problems of the time, to say something about its manufacturers and issuers and their intentions, and thus to give a living dimension to a bygone monetary phenomenon (p. vi).' In his endeavour he has succeeded admirably.

The Prologue begins with a summary of the life and collecting habits of the 'redoubtable' Sarah Sophia Banks (1744–1818), in whose memory the book is written. Her manuscript catalogue of numismatic acquisitions is an invaluable contemporary source of information that has been put to good use in Dykes's articles over the last fifteen years.¹ A comprehensive discussion of the coinage and currency situation in Britain follows, from the emergence of pewter tokens in the late thirteenth century through to the Great Silver Recoinage of 1696–98, including an excellent account of the main aspects of the seventeenth-century series of tokens. A correction here: the earliest dated non-circular token in the series is the 1666 square halfpenny of Francis Sharley of Brailes, Warwickshire (p. 19). All of this is a great bonus, unexpected from the book's title.

Chapter I, 'The State of the Coinage', thoroughly covers the many inadequacies in the coinage and currency of Britain prior to the efforts of Matthew Boulton. Less than one-third of the £6.8 millions-worth of old hammered silver recoined in 1696–98 remained in circulation in 1717; Spanish, Portuguese and French silver coins became acceptable substitutes, and by the 1760s most British silver in circulation was worn William III coinage, providing great opportunities for forgers. 'The

¹ Thompson 1984, vii.

² Thompson 1989.

¹ Banks undated.

currency gap was filled by gold or by the increasing use of paper currency – promissory notes and negotiable drafts – as the country’s nascent banking system developed’ (p. 45). The gold coinage was supplemented mainly by Portuguese coins, with their useful fractional denominations valued at less than half a guinea. In the second half of the century the state of the copper coinage deteriorated: the coins’ weight was far enough removed from their intrinsic value to allow for a flood of forgeries. Yet punishment for this counterfeiting, done chiefly in Birmingham, was light or non-existent. Dykes discusses the many and varied stratagems tried by employers to cope with the lack of correct money for paying the growing number of industrial workers, including group payment in gold of a guinea or more; delay in payment of wages until late on a Saturday night while workers drank ‘on the slate’ at a local tavern; and the necessity for purchases to be made in company shops. The chapter ends with details of the first British penny tokens struck for Col. Mordaunt in the mid-1780s for paying his Lancashire mill employees. As the author puts it, these were ‘the swallow that made the summer’ of large issues of late eighteenth-century token coinage.

Chapter II, ‘The Great Contention’, is about the rivalry between Thomas Williams and Matthew Boulton. A revealing insight is given into both men. Williams was the driving force behind the Parys Mine Company in copper-rich Anglesey. His effective takeover of the rival Cornish Metal Company gave him a virtual monopoly in the production and sale of copper, hence his nickname ‘the Copper King’. He used his copper for coinage as a means of paying his huge workforce. Thus the Parys Mine Company tokens were born, production of them for currency beginning at Williams’s own rolling mill site in Flintshire before transferring to Birmingham on a large scale. These pennies were of good weight, heavier in proportion to existing regal coinage, and quickly became popular in many parts of the country. Matthew Boulton, maker of buttons and miscellaneous metal objects, merits many pages on his working life from the 1760s to 1789 including his creation of the Soho Manufactory. Dykes contrasts his enthusiasm, ingenuity and enterprise with his inability to make money from his schemes until he linked up with James Watt to manufacture steam engines. As the author puts it, Watt’s steam engine ‘was ultimately to be Boulton’s salvation’ (p. 96). Boulton’s early coining activities are discussed and the chapter concludes with his takeover of Williams’s token manufacturing operations.

Chapter III, ‘A Most Satisfying Adventure’, is largely about Boulton’s Soho mint and its products from 1789 to 1804. Much detail is provided on the issue of Soho’s tokens during this period, as well as some of Boulton’s other successes, notably the ‘prize’ of the British government contracts to produce over 100 million copper coins between 1797 and 1800. The Associated Irish Mine Company’s tokens of 1789 were the first coins to be struck on a steam-powered press. Boulton’s ambivalent attitude to tokens generally is contrasted with his passionate desire to make regal coinage. ‘While the steam engine business was the most lucrative of [Boulton’s] adventures, it was the mint that gave him most satisfaction’ (p. 155). Table 1 sets out all of his token contracts. Higher value currency at this time is not ignored: the aspects of the draining of Bank of

England gold reserves, the increasing use of banknotes, and the issue of Spanish dollars countermarked at the Tower Mint with the king’s head to pass for 4s. 9d. and their replacement by third-guineas in 1797 are covered.

Chapter IV, ‘A Birmingham Token Consortium’, concerns the Westwoods and John Hancock. It begins with John Westwood’s entry into token manufacturing on a big scale in 1789, aided and abetted by the engraver Hancock, and their continued association until the former’s death in 1792. Their products are listed in Table 2. One of the contracts was for John Morgan, a Carmarthen ironmaster, whose halfpenny, with its views of activity in his two iron works ‘is a magnificent example of Hancock’s work’ (p. 168). There were in fact *two* reverse dies for this issue, not one as Dykes has it, and one of the obverses was altered to show brickwork under the furnace archway at Carmarthen. After John Westwood’s death his brother Obadiah continued the association with Hancock: their products are listed in Table 3. After Obadiah’s bankruptcy in 1794 his son, John junior, saw out the family connection with coining in 1797. The younger John was responsible for a series of copies and specious pieces for the collector market. The chapter ends with a section on the engraver John Jordan. It is difficult to know at whose workshop his tokens were struck; wherever those of Meymott & Son were originally produced, the dies of D&H Middlesex 378 ended up with William Williams (see below under Chapter VI).²

‘The New Men’ of Chapter V were the Birmingham manufacturers of tokens who came on the scene from 1791 onwards. Most were button makers, the most prolific being Peter Kempson and William Lutwyche, who between them made tokens for over 100 issuers. At least another ten less significant manufacturers are known. Details of all are provided in Table 4 and its footnotes; Table 5 shows the number of commissions secured by each for 1792–98. Both Kempson and Lutwyche were proactive in seeking contracts for businessmen around the country. Concurrently they made irredeemable pieces for general circulation, counterfeits of existing common tokens, and rarities for the collector market; there was no law to prevent this. Lutwyche, ‘it is thought, was an old hand at counterfeiting Tower halfpence’ (p. 206), and is known to have struck many evasions – coins like the current regal halfpence and farthings but with different legends to avoid prosecution for forgery – put out as orders for bona fide tokens dried up in 1796–98. Dykes discusses costs associated with producing tokens, which greatly increased in the period (Table 6). Then he gives details on the more interesting issues, copiously illustrated by images of people, places and the pieces themselves. Particular attention is given to Lackington, Burchell and Pidcock of London, Bisset of Birmingham, and Wright of Dundee.

The title of Chapter VI, ‘Collectors, Dealers and Radicals’, is self-explanatory. A mania for collecting tokens developed, evidenced by the excellent condition of many specimens surviving today. Birmingham manufacturers, including Boulton, and Skidmore and Williams in London milked the boom. Rarities were created by the striking of ‘genuine’ tokens on blanks

² D&H references are to Dalton and Hamer 1910–18.

with unrelated edge inscriptions, and 'mules' from dies not intended to be used together. Several contemporary token collectors are identified; some commissioned their own limited-mintage private tokens, often fine examples of the die-sinker's art, the idea generally being to exchange them with fellow collectors. Spence is the important 'radical' of this chapter, and a strong flavour of the man and his tokens is presented. He embraced the idea of mixing his own dies; after his bankruptcy Skidmore, manufacturer of his tokens, muled Spence's anti-establishment dies with his own, some with quite contrary themes. Further radical figures connected in some way with tokens are brought to life by the inclusion of two contemporary portrait caricatures featuring several political agitators.

The collecting boom was abating in 1796, so to help keep it going Skidmore, like Kempson, issued series of medallic pieces featuring buildings, churches, etc. His numismatic activity is well covered in the book, but William Williams's issues are largely unrecognized by Dykes. This reviewer has noted that the obverse of Dalton & Hamer's Anglesey 404 – a genuine issue by Williams for the Parys Mine Company – was also struck with five other dies (D&H, Anglesey 419–23). From these mules dozens more die-links can be traced which include all the halfpennies of Williams himself (D&H, Middlesex 913–17), those attributed to the engraver Prattent (D&H, Middlesex 459–63) and the farthings of the coin dealer Denton (D&H, Middlesex 1053–8 and Surrey 16–24), clearly indicating a Denton/Prattent/Williams consortium. The only die-link of a plausible William Williams token with a known Skidmore production that this reviewer can trace is the unique piece that was lot 695 in the W.J. Noble Collection of British Tokens, sold by Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd at Melbourne, Australia, on 7–8 July 1998, which is a mule of the reverse of a Skidmore halfpenny (D&H, Middlesex 566) and the reverse of a Denton farthing (D&H, Middlesex 1056). It would be good to examine this piece so as to ascertain if each side of it might have been struck at different times, i.e. not in the same workshop. One other possible Skidmore/Williams link is the exceedingly rare D&H Cambridgeshire 19, a halfpenny of David Hood with a Skidmore edge; the engraver was Milton, but neither this nor its commoner variants has ever been claimed for a particular manufacturer, except Robert Bell who opted for Skidmore although without evidence.³ Thus this reviewer argues that the tokens illustrated by Dykes as nos. 263e, 280c, 281a, 282b and 307–9 should be attributed to William Williams. Nos. 330–1 are illustrations of pieces that die-link with others from the Kempson stable, not Skidmore and Lutwyche respectively.

Chapter VII, 'Last Things', begins with a review of contemporary comment on tokens and their usage. The author estimates that when they had run their course approximately six hundred tons of copper had been converted into perhaps forty million provincial coins. Copper tokens alone could not satisfy the demand for change, but the perception that coining in silver was solely a royal prerogative seems to have prevented any significant issues of unofficial coinage in this metal in

the eighteenth century. The chapter continues with a fine section on Colonel Fullarton of Ayrshire, his canal scheme there and proposed token coinages in silver and copper, and ends with a brief look ahead to unofficial coinage in the early nineteenth century.

Three appendices follow. Appendix I is a schedule of provincial coins issued between 1791 and 1798. The listing is strictly of those that were intended to serve as coins. This reviewer would have liked the list to have been extended a few years before and after this eight-year period, so as to include the important original large-scale token coinages of the late 1780s and many of the datable issues in Stafford, Scotland and Ireland in the first few years of the nineteenth century, when arguably this series ends. Appendix II has biographical notes on artists, engravers and die sinkers. Appendix III is a discussion on the nine contemporary catalogues of tokens, concluding with Thomas Sharp's of the collection of Sir George Chetwynd of 1834: collectors of early editions, in particular, will appreciate the detail here. These appendices are invaluable in that they shine a bright light on these contemporary figures and their work.

The Bibliography is divided into three sections: Manuscript Primary Sources, Printed Primary Sources, and Secondary Sources. These many references underline perhaps the greatest achievement of this book: the painstaking dissemination of research sought for from far and wide, especially from contemporary sources. The author's own articles on tokens, published in the *British Numismatic Journal* and elsewhere over a near-60 year timespan and drawn upon for this work, are included.

The concluding Index seems generally comprehensive. As Dykes states, images of coins and tokens are not ordinarily included, nor are entries in the Tables or Appendix I; but this is somewhat unfortunate, as is the lack of reference to some interesting information in the footnotes. A user seeking references to particular tokens in the book will often find them only after considerable searching. The curious but interesting token of 'George Jobson' of Northampton, for example, referred to in footnote 25 on p. 210 and illustrated on p. 262, is absent from the Index, as is its manufacturer, Morgan; furthermore, Dykes omitted to list in the Bibliography his then forthcoming illuminating article on this piece.⁴

There are nearly 400 wide-ranging illustrations throughout the work from over forty sources, including tokens, coins, medals, people connected with the era, cartoons, contemporary ephemera and views of places where tokens were issued. One illustration, enlarged for the dust jacket, is an action-packed view of Swansea's Market Square in 1793, which includes the shop entrance of token-issuer John Voss. Typographical errors are remarkably few in number.

This splendid volume, notwithstanding the few criticisms noted above, can be heartily recommended. It is a must for all collectors and students of the late eighteenth-century series of tokens, an essential *magnum opus* companion to Dalton and Hamer.

MICHAEL DICKINSON

³ Bell 1966, 9.

⁴ Dykes 2011.

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The Standard Catalogue of the Provincial Banknotes of England & Wales (Honiton: Token Publishing, 2010), by Roger Outing.

WHEN it comes to the history of provincial banking and banknotes in England and Wales, a number of important questions still remain unanswered. For instance, how extensive was the note circulation of this growing body of private banks after 1750, and how widely did circulation occur outside of the respective localities of individual banks?¹ Although addressing these sorts of questions is beyond the remit of Roger Outing's most recent work, future scholarly studies which seek to answer such questions will no doubt benefit enormously from this impressive volume.

As Outing clearly states in his introduction (p. xiii), 'no other single work has attempted to list all the private and joint stock banks of England and Wales. That is the primary purpose of this publication.' Of course there has been some excellent forerunners to this recent catalogue, including most notably the work of Geoffrey Grant, as well as that of Margaret Dawes and C.N Ward-Perkins, both of whom Outing professes to having 'rigorously plundered' during his research.²

The overview of English banking history contained at the beginning of Outing's catalogue is both clear and concise, charting as it does the origins of banknotes as London Goldsmiths' receipts in the late seventeenth century; through the creation of the Bank of England and the turbulent war-torn years of the eighteenth century; and finally the development of joint stock banking after 1826 and its relationship to the modern day global banking industry. Although Outing suggests that the domination of the banking system today by a small number of large firms has been somewhat of a 'logical conclusion' to the English banking story, at the same time he issues his own warning to historians thinking of drawing a line under any more major developments in the banking sector. Thus he argues (on p. 13) that the recent crisis has forced us all to 're-learn the principles of banking that were first developed over 200 years ago.' In a passage which therefore serves primarily to justify the publication of his own work, Outing has demon-

strated why such studies will continue to be of use to not only historians and numismatists, but to bankers, politicians and economists alike.

Aside from being the first work to comprehensively catalogue all of the private and joint stock banking firms of England and Wales, Outing's target market for this book is evidently banknote collectors. Moreover as the catalogue contains a detailed section on pricing and assessing the physical condition of notes, it will also serve as a useful tool for the beginner wishing to build a collection.

The main catalogue is grouped into four sections, each covering a different selection of note issuers. Section 1 is the largest and deals with the provincial banks of England and Wales; section 2 covers London banks apart from the Bank of England; section 3 focuses on private note issuers such as manufacturers, and section 4 deals with so-called 'skit notes' which will be returned to in due course. The issuing banks in each of these sections are listed alphabetically by place name, with each bank separated by a solid horizontal line, and each new location printed in a larger bold font within a highlighted column. The layout is relatively simple and easy to follow, with the information given being as follows: the trading name of the bank; the partners involved at different stages in the bank's history; the start and end date of the bank, and Outing's own estimated market value of the surviving notes.

Unlike a number of other paper money catalogues, Outing has chosen to separate the banknote images from their entry in the main catalogue, choosing rather to compile them into one large appendix at the end of the volume. Whereas some who wish to consult the text and images simultaneously may find flicking backwards and forwards somewhat irksome, others who wish to study just the visual elements of the notes will greatly appreciate this choice, as it allows for far easier comparison between different designs. The quality of the scanning is on the whole very good, and the decision to reproduce the notes on a dark background does much to emphasise the various shades and colours of both ink and paper.

One of the most striking things about this work is the decision to include a section on what Outing has called 'Skit Notes', which were in fact more commonly referred to in the eighteenth century as 'Flash Notes'. As he rightly observes, these imitation banknotes were mainly printed for humorous purposes, often with strong 'political overtones', but they could also serve as commercial advertisements. Their inclusion is curious given that they were technically neither money nor were they issued by banks. Through my own work I will hope to show is that there was in fact often only a fine line in the minds of many contemporaries between Flash Notes and *real* paper money, and that both historians and numismatists interested in late eighteenth-century banknotes – and in particular their forgery – must begin to take such imitations more seriously. Given my own interests it is therefore pleasing to see them receiving some detailed attention in such an important work, and thereby hopefully raising their profile significantly in the minds of both collectors and numismatists.

JACK MOCKFORD

¹ Only Emmanuel Coppieters has ever attempted such a study, his focus instead being the notes of the Bank of England (Coppieters 1955).

² Grant 1972; Dawes and Ward-Perkins 2000.

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Numismatic Finds of the Americas: An Inventory of American Coin Hoards, Shipwrecks, Single Finds, and Finds in Excavations, by John M. Kleeberg (New York: American Numismatic Society, 2009 [Numismatic Notes and Monographs 169]), 358 pp.; *Mark Newby's St. Patrick Coinage*, edited by Oliver D. Hoover (New York: American Numismatic Society, 2009), vii, 333 pp.

READERS of the *BNJ* are alerted to two recent publications from the American Numismatic Society, *Numismatic Finds of the Americas*, by John M. Kleeberg, and *Mark Newby's St. Patrick Coinage*, edited by Oliver D. Hoover. Both were published by the Society in 2009, but any similarities between them end at that point. The first book is a masterpiece, perhaps the best single work of its kind ever devoted to Western Hemispheric numismatics. The other may be most charitably described as a work in progress.

John M. Kleeberg, author of *Numismatic Finds of the Americas*, spent a decade as the Society's Curator of Western Hemispheric Numismatics. It was my good fortune to meet and work with him during those years, and to get acquainted with the quality of his scholarship. I recall his marvellous work on the enigmatic New Yorke in America token, one of the best-written and closest-reasoned pieces I have ever seen on early American numismatics. He brings all of his reasoning abilities, as well as an amazing attention to detail, to this latest work.

A useful introduction begins by defining the various categories and similarities of, and differences between, 'hoards' and 'finds', then offers a general sketch of the historic, numismatic, and economic forces at work between the sixteenth century and the twentieth – the time-frame during which the hoards were created, lost, and recovered.

The main body of the Kleeberg work consists of three parts. The first, and very much the largest of the three, discusses numismatic finds in the Americas. It is arranged along chronological lines, based on the known or assumed date of deposition, rather than the date or place of discovery. This choice of arrangement makes good sense, and it is followed in the third and final part, devoted to 'Finds of American Coins Outside the Americas'. The middle portion of this book adheres to a slightly different model, but one that makes abundant sense. 'Treasury Accumulation and Release of U.S. Silver Dollars' gives a brief sketch on how (and why) the United States Treasury released millions of silver dollars to the public, following this introduction with a simple earliest-to-latest arrangement of the Treasury dispositions, from the 1920s through to the beginning of the 1980s.

As I mentioned, Kleeberg's writing has been typified by closely reasoned, careful argumentation, and

nowhere is this quality more on display than in *Numismatic Finds of the Americas*. In many instances, the information published about a hoard shortly after its discovery was tantalizingly brief, providing few if any data other than the event itself and the number of pieces comprising the find. In these instances, Dr Kleeberg attempts to fill out the record, informing his readers that, based on larger circumstances, certain types of coinage might reasonably be expected to be present, or that the actual deposition date of a hoard is not necessarily what was initially believed. As an example of the latter, consider his remarks about the composition of a cache of five hundred copper coins and tokens, discovered along the St Lawrence River in 1954:

The account of the hoard [from *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, July 1954] says that it was "more than 125 years old," which would make the date of deposit 1829, but given its composition and its find spot it fits best with the other copper hoards known to be associated with the Lower and Upper Canada rebellions of 1837, namely the Bank of Montreal hoard and the find at Chambly Barracks.

Whenever Kleeberg passes beyond cold facts and enters the realm of speculation, one feels comfortable with what he has to say, has confidence in his conclusions.

Numismatic Finds of the Americas might be expected to be dry reading, a simple compilation of fact after fact, of dates and numbers. But it isn't: I found it fascinating, a marvellous account of people and their wealth, of misfortune and good luck. One of the elements behind the book's appeal is the sheer unlikelihood of some of the objects discovered, as related to the places where they were found. A find of Spanish-American, Brazilian, French, or Portuguese gold coins might be expected and easily explained: after all, these coins enjoyed several centuries of commercial popularity in the English colonies and the United States. But a batch of Chinese cash discovered in western Oregon? Or a Venetian copper coin, struck for Dalmatia and Albania, discovered along the Chesapeake Estuary? Or a silver penny of Edward II, unearthed in the wilds of Long Island? What's going on? What's going on is that all of these objects were *money*, as defined by one or another group, and were therefore worth keeping, carrying about – and carefully burying in anticipation of better times. The sense of whimsy attached to some of the hoards that Kleeberg discusses is part of the appeal of this work; I highly recommend it to your consideration.

I cannot say the same of the second work under discussion, *Mark Newby's St. Patrick Coinage*. This book is a compilation of most of the papers given at a conference held at the museum in November 2006. The one-day event was intended to carry on the work of a series of earlier meetings on American topics, initiated back in the early 1980s. These earlier gatherings were usually referred to as COACs (Coinage of the Americas Conferences). They typically took up two or three days, involved a dozen or more speakers – and could be expected to result in a publication that would make a useful contribution to American numismatic scholarship. The 2006 conference (and this book) are pale copies of the earlier series, and, while this volume suffers from editorial problems and the occasional misstate-

ment of facts, a number of its problems can be traced back to the nature of the early COACs.

They were intended to shed new light on broad swatches of the American numismatic story. I was personally involved with the first three – choosing speakers, helping to select topics, editing the resulting publications – and they centred on the American large cent (1984); the nation's obsolete currency (1985); and the first century of the country's silver coinage (1986). Later symposia addressed American medals, the coinage of British America, and Caribbean numismatics, among other topics. All of these early themes were wide-ranging, with something for everyone. But America's numismatic story is a fairly recent affair – at least, in comparison with its European, Indian, and Asian counterparts; this quality inevitably means that, after two dozen or so general conferences, the organizers will begin to run out of major themes. They will, in fact, be tasked with saying more and more about less and less – if only to keep the series alive. I believe that's what happened in the case of the 2006 one-day meeting, called to investigate a relatively unimportant figure named Mark Newby.

Newby was a Quaker who came to America in the early 1680s. He settled in New Jersey and soon died (a pure coincidence and *not* cause-and-effect: many New Jerseyites have enjoyed long, productive lives, even during colonial times). Save for his immediate family, Newby would have occasioned little notice during his lifetime and even less today, except for one circumstance. When he came to America, he carried a quantity of attractive, Irish-related coppers with him, each bearing an image of St. Patrick. They came in two sizes, and Newby brought enough with him to inspire the colony's General Assembly to make them legal tender, worth a halfpenny each (May 1682).

That much isn't in dispute. But virtually everything else about these pieces is unclear. Who made them, and where, and why? How did Newby acquire them? What, if anything, was the exchange relationship between the large- and small-module tokens? How were they manufactured? It was to probe and answer these and other questions that the 2006 COAC was called, papers were presented – and a new book finally emerged.

All well and good; and *Mark Newby's St. Patrick Coinage* might have been expected to shed welcome light on an admittedly minor affair. But with one exception, there's nothing really new here. One is tempted to pose an impolite question: if there's little new, why bother to publish it? Keeping a research and publication series alive is one thing; having something worth disseminating is another.

We have a hint of things to come in the editor's introduction. The first paper was given by Robert Heslip, and it dealt with the circulating environment to which the St. Patrick tokens belonged. But we are informed that his presentation wasn't included in the book; no reason is given, and this omission casts a pall on everything to follow. Thus truncated, the book begins with an examination into the tokens' intended denominations, by Philip L. Mossman. Following Mossman comes a discussion of the possible identity of the kneeling king seen on the pieces' obverses (contributed by the book's editor, Oliver D. Hoover). The Hoover article is succeeded by William Nipper's 'Old and New Takes on the St. Patrick Coinage', 'Ormond and Blondeau: in

Search of an Irish Coinage' by Brian J. Danforth, and 'Coinage in the English Colonies of North America to 1660' by Louis E. Jordan. Roger S. Siboni and Vicken Yegparian complete the main body of the text with a shorter piece, 'Mark Newby and his St. Patrick Halfpence', while Robert Hoge brings the entire volume to a close with a census of St. Patrick pieces in the collection of the American Numismatic Society.

The contributions vary widely. The most useful is the Danforth article, the only one that interjects new ideas into the discussion. The writer makes a fairly good case that the Newby pieces were really coins, struck at the Tower Mint in the late 1660s by Pierre Blondeau, acting on behalf of the Irish Lord-Lieutenant, James Butler, 12th earl of Ormond. He gets a good deal of the technology wrong, however: Blondeau may have invented a way of simultaneously striking edges and faces of a coin, but he certainly didn't do so in the way described; and I tend to think he was making claims without the ability to back them up, as would another inventor, named Jean-Pierre Droz, a century or so later. And he weakens his own case by stating that 'the circulation of St. Patrick coins in Ireland lasted for several decades'. If that were true, how did Mark Newby acquire them cheaply enough to carry with him to America, less than a decade after they were struck?

All that being said, Brian Danforth's work is still worth close scrutiny. It deserves a greater prominence than it received, because it does increase our understanding of the origins of these pieces. But a couple of other contributions, while valuable in their way, have little or nothing to do with the topic at hand. Jordan's article runs for 101 pages, but barely mentions the ostensible topic of this conference. Nor does it tell us anything that we didn't already know or could not find elsewhere. And while Oliver Hoover's carefully-reasoned investigation of the identity of the king on the Newby coins comes to a firm and probably correct conclusion (the monarch is David, not Charles I, as has often been assumed), his attention might have been more gainfully employed elsewhere, investigating questions more central to the entire Newby story.

More careful editing, a more judicious choice of topics, and the missing contribution by Robert Heslip might have materially improved *Mark Newby's St. Patrick Coinage*. But as long as COACs choose to concentrate on the smaller, more obscure corners of American numismatics, I don't see much chance for improvement in the volumes they inspire.

R.G. DOTY

An Introduction to Commemorative Medals in England 1685–1746: Their Religious, Political and Artistic Significance, by Brian Harding (London: Spink, 2011), 84 pp.

UNTIL relatively recently late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century medals were deeply unpopular. Scorned by the connoisseurs as mere mass-produced commercial speculations lacking any individuality they were neglected by the general run of collectors as relating to an uninteresting period of history. Dealers could hardly give them away. And they were plentiful: Hawkins,

Franks and Grueber take no less than 746 pages to cover the medals created between 1685 and 1746 in *Medallic Illustration of the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the Death of George II*.

The tide began turning from the late 1970s. Some historians began to realise that such medals frequently represent an early form of official propaganda. They could provide unique insights into contemporary mentalities. Their creators, recognizing their potential to sway opinions among the political and social elites, took them seriously. They employed some of the best brains of their time to think up highly sophisticated, allegorical designs which they knew would readily be collected or willingly received as gifts, prior to being pleasurably puzzled over and their messages, with their frequently classical and contemporary resonances, eventually deciphered. The quality of execution of the medals usually reflected the care taken over the design and many are masterpieces of the engraver and die-sinker's art.

Hitherto the English-speaking beginner seeking to understand such medals has had to rely on general introductions to medal collecting, which on the whole devote only a few pages to such medals, or consult specialist works on particular medalists or series or articles in *The Medal*. Though *Medallic Illustrations* continues to be invaluable as a catalogue, its lapidary text is often unhelpful, reflecting as it does unrefined nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon protestant prejudices. More recent catalogues, by Christopher Eimer and Daniel Fearon, though beautifully illustrated, do not have the space to give detailed explanations of individual medals. The only exception is Christopher Eimer's splendid *Introduction to Commemorative Medals* (1990). This however extends from the Renaissance to the present day and is now difficult to come by.

Brian Harding's book sets out, as its title suggests, to provide the necessary introduction. He admits that in the space available he has had to be highly selective, and that his main criterion has been the quality of engraving. Most of the book takes the form of a stroll through the period 1685–1746, reign by reign, event (predominantly military) by event, with an emphasis on the period 1685 to the early 1720s. Broader discussion of the wider context of medal production, government control, circulation and prices are briefly (and slightly repetitively) discussed in the short foreword and epilogue. One of the delights of this book is the superlative quality of the photographs of the medals, all of them in colour and many of them enlarged to bring out the detail.

Though the book is suffused with love and enthusiasm for the subject, this reviewer found it rather frustrating. The historical commentary generally goes little further than that in *Medallic Illustrations* and leaves relatively little space for the discussion of the individual medals. Given the general absence of eighteenth-century history from most school curricula, the extent of the historical commentary may be necessary, though Dr Harding's accounts could be more nuanced to take modern scholarship into account. The publishers might, however, have allowed more space for the discussion of individual medals.

More space would also have enabled more discussion of the allegorical and artistic aspects. Though the allegories are explained in broad terms, there is no discus-

sion of the sources from which the allegories were taken, though this frequently added additional levels of meaning for contemporaries. Similarly, the artistic element is too often covered by a simple statement of his opinion, without further discussion of the elements in the medal that earned Brian Harding's approval.

More space would have enabled medals, such as the *Appeal against the House of Hanover* medal of 1721, which has been the subject of repeated specialist analysis in recent years, to be properly discussed. Similarly the deeper meanings of some of the medals could be drawn out. Appendix 2 illustrates the reproductions of the medals lining the Duke of Marlborough's tomb in Blenheim Palace – one of the few 'discoveries' in this book – without discussing their background or linking them to the medal that Dr Harding selects to commemorate the Duke's death in 1722. Though it is not mentioned in the text, Dassier's medal actually dates from the 1740s in part because at the time of Marlborough's death his redoubtable widow's efforts to commission a medal portraying her husband as the scourge of France were thwarted by the then Francophile government. The medal and the designs at Blenheim not only reflect the importance attached to medals at the time, as Dr Harding says, but also form part of his widow's campaign to honour her husband's memory while making mischief for a government she had come to despise.

If space were to be saved, it could perhaps have been through the elimination of the other appendices which are too short to be of much value. The four brief biographies of medalists in Appendix 1 account for only a percentage of the medalists whose works are illustrated in the book. Perhaps the reference to Forrer in the bibliography was all that was needed. Similarly the three adverts for medals, all from the period 1689–95, in Appendix III are hardly representative of the ones that appeared throughout the period, though Dr Harding makes a telling point when he observes that the cost of a 'modest collection' of medals was the same as commissioning a portrait in oils.

In summary, then, this book, attractively illustrated and designed though it is, and illuminated by a love for the subject, does not meet the objectives that its title promises.

PETER BARBER

Royal Commemorative Medals 1837–1977. Volume 5. King George the Fifth 1910–1936, by Andrew Whittlestone and Michael Ewing (Llanfyllin: Galata Print, 2012), 172 pp.; *Portrait of a Prince: Coins, Medals and Banknotes of Edward VIII*, by Joseph S. Giordano Jnr. (London: Spink & Son Ltd, 2009), 679 pp.; *Royal Commemorative Medals 1837–1977. Volume 7, King George the Sixth 1936–1952*, by Andrew Whittlestone and Michael Ewing (Llanfyllin: Galata Print, 2009), 80 pp.

DUTY, romance and personal tragedy are not the usual themes of dry, scholarly numismatic catalogues but three recent publications on royal commemorative medals and coins provide images of kings, loved, criticised and pitied. The latest volume in the 'Royal Commemorative Medals' series by Whittlestone and

Ewing covers the reign of King George V.¹ The second son of Edward VII, the future king George V toured extensively both before and after his coronation, relieving his father of the burden of royal duties and acquiring the love and respect of his subjects.² The format of volume 5 follows the classic chronological and alphabetical listing of official and unofficial medals for the king's coronation and silver jubilee, of royal visits and events. Apart from events involving the British royal family, the authors include visits of head of states to Britain, e.g. King Fuad of Egypt in 1927 and the visit of the King and Queen of Afghanistan in 1928. The ornate badges given to attendees at the Guildhall receptions in the City of London are also included. One seemingly eccentric inclusion is the portrait medal of Samuel Fox (WE 5383) but it only serves to confirm the comprehensiveness of this series. The reverse of the medal explains that a park, Fox Glen, given by Fox to the people of Stockbridge and Deepcar, opened on Coronation Day, 22 June 1911. As in previous volumes rarity and value are ascribed as a rough guide to each medal.

Whittlestone and Ewing covered the medals of the Duke of Windsor in his various royal guises in one of the earliest volumes of their series.³ However, the latest addition to the bibliography of Edward VIII, *Portrait of a Prince*, seeks to be even more comprehensive and is heroic in scope. It is an almost impossible task and no doubt there are omissions. Giordano has absorbed and reiterated previous research but in addition he has added information about the coinage, whether the official proposed series or fantasy issues produced for collectors. In respect of the official coinage he is indebted to Graham Dyer's work,⁴ which dealt only with the official patterns for the coinage, not with the medals nor with any unofficial patterns or medals.

In the foreword to Giordano's catalogue Dyer opines that the present work is 'more than a collector's handbook; it is in a real sense a biography of a tragic figure' (p. xii). Indeed a sympathetic, romantic narrative runs through the author's narrative, with references to the velvet obelisk and plinth displaying the Duke of Windsor's own medal collection recurring periodically like a Proustian madeleine, with a melancholy whiff of lost possibilities.⁵ Those who interpret history differently may well wince at such a view, of a prince who abdicated for love and refused the burden of kingship. The prince's character is shown in his personal preference for a left-facing effigy on the coinage (his better side) rather than the conventional right side – vain, or single-minded and seriously interested in the commission? Giordano would have us believe the latter.

Joseph Giordano has been a passionate collector of the memorabilia of Edward VIII, duke of Windsor. His

collection started after the death of the duke and this book, *Portrait of a Prince*, is primarily a catalogue of Giordano's collection with additional information. Like the Edward VIII issue in the RCM series Giordano covers familiar ground from boyhood and the investiture of 1911 through to accession to the throne, abdication and finally death. The catalogue has four main sections: pre-accession medals, accession and proposed official coinage and coronation medals, retrospective modern medals and fantasy coins. The official pattern coinage is well covered, with the Paget patterns as well as those by other artists which were not adopted. Giordano includes the Metcalfe designs for the official coronation medals and other designs as well as prize medals and school attendance medals unpublished elsewhere. Although RCM volume 6 includes the Churchill mules made by S.G.M. Adams and the Richard Lobel fantasy medals it is less complete than Giordano's work. It is frustrating that the mintages given for these fantasy coins will always be uncertain as records are incomplete.

The story of the abdication and subsequent coronation of the reticent, stammering 'Bertie' is by now well rehearsed. In contrast to Giordano's tome on Edward VIII, the Whittlestone and Ewing RCM vol. 7 *King George VI* contains a mere 80 pages. The future George VI was born Prince Albert on 14 December 1895, the second son of the duke of York. Following the abdication of his elder brother in 1936, he was next in line to the throne and chose to adopt the name George VI. In order to save on public expenditure, the date of his coronation was the same as that intended for Edward, 12 May 1937. The medal producers were given little time to produce new designs; the trade was already geared up for Edward VIII's coronation.

In contrast many medals were produced for the royal visit to Canada in May and June of 1939. As in previous volumes, other royal events have been included, e.g. Princess Elizabeth as heiress presumptive in 1939, but there was no other reason for the issue of the medal by Amor (WE 7874) in Australia. Because of World War II no medals were recorded for the years 1939–1947. This slim volume is remarkable for recording medals for events which never took place, e.g. the planned royal visit to Australia in 1949, cancelled due to the king's illness or the visit to Kingston upon Hull, cancelled twice for 1948 and June 1951. Fifty-five thousand medals were made and found in a storeroom in 1990. They have been sold ever since to raise money for the Hull Museum Service. As with all the volumes in the series, this is a useful contribution to the library. All that remains to complete the series is volume 8, cataloguing the medals of Queen Elizabeth II from her accession in 1952 to her Silver Jubilee in 1977.

FRANCES SIMMONS

REFERENCES

¹ The series *Royal Commemorative Medals 1837–1977* (RCM) catalogues medals commemorating events involving British monarchs from the accession of Queen Victoria to the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth in 1977.

² Medals issued prior to his accession are covered in vols. 1 and 4.

³ Whittlestone and Ewing 1997.

⁴ Dyer 1973.

⁵ Sotheby's New York, 29 June 1998.

Dyer, G.P., 1973. *The Proposed Coinage of King Edward VIII* (London).

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