

THE BRITISH NUMISMATIC SOCIETY



Newsletter

January 2005

From the President
Dr Mark Blackburn

Dept. of Coins and Medals
Fitzwilliam Museum
Cambridge
CB2 1RB

01223 332917
mab1001@cam.ac.uk

Dear Member,

It is difficult to focus on the Society's *Newsletter* in the wake of the Asian Tsunami. No one can fail to have been moved by the plight of so many whose lives have been devastated. My brother and his family were in the Maldives, but thankfully are all right. I hope that other members touched by it have been equally fortunate.

Congratulations

Let me start by sharing two happy pieces of news. Nick Mayhew, Keeper of Coins and Medals at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford has been accorded the title Professor, following in the footsteps of his predecessor Michael Metcalf. Stewart Lyon, our senior Vice-President and Honorary Member, has been awarded a PhD by Cambridge University for his contribution to the study of Anglo-Saxon coinage. We offer our warm congratulations to them both.

Two Secretaries and the New Council

The job of Secretary, which is so fundamental to the functioning of the Society, has always been extremely onerous. Charles Farthing, who has filled this post with great energy, enthusiasm and efficiency for the last six years, proposed that the post might sensibly be divided between two people, and this suggestion has been adopted. Charles, I am delighted to say, has kindly agreed to stay on as Membership Secretary. He will continue to maintain the membership records, deal with nominations and elections, and conduct correspondence with members. Meanwhile, Elina Screen has taken over the other functions, including taking the minutes at the General, Council and other meetings, organising mailings and being responsible for general correspondence of the Society. For constitutional reasons she is designated as the Secretary, but they will be working closely together as a team. Elina introduces herself in an item below.

Five new members of Council have been elected, four of whom have not served before. Joe Cribb is Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, but it is in his capacity as the newly elected President of the Royal Numismatic Society that I am particularly pleased to

welcome him to our own governing body. I hope that through his presence we can foster further collaboration between the two societies. Frances Simmons, with her husband Howard, runs Simmons Galleries, and is particularly interested in modern and contemporary medals. She is a council member of the British Art Medal Society, and again I foresee opportunities for strengthening our links with sister organisations. Angie Bolton works for the Portable Antiquities service as the Finds Liaison Officer for Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Their expanded scheme now employs 46 people gathering information about recent metal-detector finds, by far the largest category of which is coins. Adrian Lyons, having retired from the Army in 2000, is now Director General of the Railway Forum, a lobby group for the rail industry. He has a keen interest in Anglo-Saxon and Viking coinages. Robin Eaglen has been on Council before, and he made a valuable contribution to the Woodhead report on the Society's Future Policy, elements of which have still to be implemented. He brings experience from senior corporate management, though in retirement he is completing the first of his two long-awaited volumes on the medieval mint of Bury St Edmunds.

Among those retiring very special thanks goes to Nick Holmes, who has served as an Editor of *BNJ* for ten years, producing eleven volumes with over 2,500 pages. That represents an enormous commitment of time and energy, and is a lasting contribution both to the Society and to our discipline. The other person to whom I would particularly like to say thanks and farewell is Virginia Hewitt, who is leaving the British Museum to return to Scotland. Virginia has not only had a huge influence in promoting the study of banknotes and establishing a national collection, but she has always been a very willing supporter of numismatics within the Museum, the Societies and generally. She will be missed. I am pleased, however, that with the election of three more women their representation on Council is now, I think, higher than it has ever been.

The Journal

You should by now have received your 2004 volume of the *British Numismatic Journal*, which began to be posted out before Christmas. At last we have managed to end the confusing practice of the volume always being dated a year in arrears. This was an intended consequence of our issuing two volumes during our centenary last year. Henceforth the volume that goes to press at the beginning of the year and is published around December will be dated that year (although it will have the proceedings of the previous year).

Under new arrangements, the *Journal* is being despatched by Spink, and this necessitates a change in the arrangements for those members who had agreed to collect their own copies to save postage. Their volumes will be available for collection, not from the Warburg Institute, but from Spink's Book Department (69 Southampton Row) until the end of January. If you are unable to collect by that date, you are asked to contact Philip Skingley (020 7563 4046 or e-mail pskingley@spinks.com) to ensure a volume is available there when you visit. One advantage of this change is that volumes can be collected at any time between 9.30am and 5.30pm, Monday-Friday.

Lecture Programme

The enclosed meetings' card, redesigned by our Director, Kevin Clancy, offers an interesting series of lectures spanning a broad chronological and thematic range. The Summer Meeting will be held in Shrewsbury and takes the theme of how bullion supply has influenced coinages in various periods. These meetings are always well attended, and provide an excellent opportunity to socialise with other members. The fee of £12.50 is essentially to cover the cost of lunch, tea and coffee, which are usually very good. You are encouraged to sign up now by returning the enclosed form to the Director.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Blackburn

ELINA SCREEN: THE NEW SECRETARY



As a child I had an intermittent interest in coins. My first numismatic (or perhaps financial?) memory is of the excitement of the introduction of the 20p coin: my grandmother and great uncle would carefully save up all the 20p pieces they received, and share them between my brother and myself. We also followed changes to the coinage on our annual visits to my mother's homeland, Finland.

But it was only as an undergraduate at Cambridge that I woke to the importance of coins for the historian. I originally thought that I would like Tudor history best, but over my first year as a student I found my interests moving backwards in time until I reached the early middle ages, where I have remained ever since! Our courses on early medieval European and Anglo-Saxon history were always accompanied by lively classes on

coins. Later, as a research student working on the Carolingian emperor Lothar I (795-855), I was encouraged to consider the numismatic evidence by Mark Blackburn.

Since 1998 I have worked as a research associate at the Fitzwilliam Museum. Over the five years I supported the *Medieval European Coinage* project, I encountered coins from Spain to Scandinavia, and from Brittany to the Balkans! I am currently cataloguing the Anglo-Saxon and medieval coins (to 1279) in Norwegian museums for the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*, which is proving to be very interesting and rewarding work.

It was a great honour to be elected a Secretary of the Society in November. I am particularly looking forward to meeting more of the members over the coming year, and to learning more about non-medieval coins.

Subscription Payments via the Web

Subscriptions are now due and if you haven't yet paid yours you can now do so on-line using a credit or debit card. The Society has opened an account with WorldPay, part of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. This has primarily been done to facilitate overseas members making their payments in sterling, but it may also be used by UK members as well.

There is a cost, which we have to pass on, and so ordinary members using this service are asked to pay £2 on top of their subscription of £32, and those with a reduced subscription £1 on top of their £15. The same procedure can also be used for other payments, such as the fee for the Summer meeting, or to make a donation to the Society. For access to these facilities go to the Society's website:

www.britnumsoc.org.

Numbers

Have you noticed a number after your name on our address labels? This has been introduced to facilitate the traceability of volumes of the *Journal* distributed through Spink. You may be interested to know that the number relates, in fact, to the order in which members were elected to the Society and is, in effect, your membership number.

Come and Join Us

As usual, there will be a drinks party following the meetings in May and November this year, although inadvertently omitted from the programme card. These are excellent occasions on which to meet other members and discuss mutual interests. Do come if you can.

Editing *British Numismatic Journal* 1995-2004: Some Reflections

Nick Holmes



Putting together each volume of *BNJ* has in recent years been the responsibility of the holders of two editorial posts. The Commissioning Editor deals directly with contributors, receiving (and occasionally soliciting) articles, finding appropriate people to undertake peer-reviewing, and liaising between authors and reviewers to ensure that papers accepted for publication are of a sufficiently high academic standard. In addition, lists of new publications are scanned to identify those which merit a review in the Journal, and appropriate people are identified and approached to write reviews.

The next stage of the process, often split between the Commissioning Editor and the Production Editor, involves checking accepted papers for typing errors and incorrect grammar and punctuation (apologies to those for whom my zeal in this respect has been irksome!), and converting texts and footnotes into the correct format to maintain a consistent house style throughout each volume. In addition, plates have to be prepared from the illustrations sent in by contributors.

Ten years ago this was a fairly labour-intensive procedure, since virtually all

papers were submitted in hard copy only. All corrections and formatting had to be done in the form of manuscript instructions to the typesetters, and plates had to be set up manually, by cutting out prints of individual coins, medals, etc, and gluing them onto a backing sheet. Now that computers are used by almost all contributors, with both text and illustrations usually sent in electronic form, formatting and editing of text can be done on screen by the editors. This not only eliminates most of the potential typesetting errors, but saves the society a great deal of money in production costs. Photographs sent on CD-ROM can be arranged and positioned as text illustrations or plates by the printers.

Once the format of all the papers has been finalised, responsibility for calculating the size of the volume, obtaining cost quotations, liaising with typesetters and printers and overseeing the production of the volume lies with the Production Editor, whose job includes distributing first proofs to contributors for correction and ensuring that all are returned in time to meet production deadlines. Subsequently it is his job to oversee and approve each stage of production, up to and including distribution to members.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of work involved in editing *BNJ*, and it tends to come in concentrated bursts, at different times within the cycle of production for the two editors, but there is also great satisfaction to be derived from seeing a collection of typescripts, photographs and computer disks converted into the finished volume. It has been an honour to be involved with the editing of the Society's journal for ten years, and I am grateful to all those with whom I have worked (Edward Besly, Gareth Williams and David Symons), and to all who have contributed during this period. I wish every success to the new team of David and Philip de Jersey.

Visit the Society's Web site: www.britnumsoc.org