

PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2007

M. A. S. Blackburn

DURING 2007 the Council has looked at some of the Society's constitutional procedures and practices, particularly those concerned with the election of Officers and Council, with the intention of bringing these into line with twenty-first century concepts of transparency and democracy appropriate to a society of our size and composition. As a result we have introduced two changes, and proposed a third involving amendments to the By-Laws which will be considered at an Extraordinary General Meeting in January 2008.

First, we have provided for a degree of rotation among the six Vice-Presidents. In recommending nominations, Council will see that at least one of the nominees for Vice-President has not served in that capacity during the previous year. This will allow more of our senior members to be involved in governing the Society, while enabling those who remain active to return after a year or two's break. Implementing this policy now for the first time, Peter Woodhead offered to step down and Graham Dyer was nominated in his place.

The second reform that Council agreed upon involves the procedure for nominating a new President, which normally occurs every five years. Hitherto, the President in consultation with the Past-Presidents has proposed a name to Council. Now the procedure will be formalised, and an advisory committee consisting of the President, two Vice-Presidents (preferably who have themselves been President), another officer and two ordinary members of Council, and chaired by a Vice-President, will make a recommendation to Council. The Council will remain responsible for the final selection of the nominee whose name

will appear on the ballot paper. This new procedure will be tried out next year when a search will be undertaken for my successor.

Finally, the Extraordinary General Meeting in January will consider a proposal to amend the By-Laws giving Members of the Society an opportunity to nominate candidates as Officers or members of Council. Any names put forward in this way would then appear on the ballot paper along with Council's list of nominees. We have also proposed an amendment that would allow the Council at some stage to provide an alternative optional means of electronic voting, particularly for our overseas members.

Talking and corresponding with members, I sense that there is a general contentment with the way the Society is being run, and I hope that these modest reforms providing a little more openness and accountability in our affairs will strengthen the Society as it looks forward to the future.

In the Summer *Newsletter* I reported that the Council wished to introduce a new award to recognise those people, up and down the country, who give selflessly of their time and energy in supporting and promoting British numismatics. Mr Jeffrey North has very generously offered to fund such a medal, which we would like to call the Jeffrey North Medal. Designs are being commissioned and I hope that we will award the first medals later next year.

We have heard from the Treasurer that the Society's finances continue to be very healthy. Despite producing a bumper volume of the *Journal* and publishing Robin Eaglen's volume on the *Abbey and Mint of Bury St Edmunds* last year, the Society's net worth by the end of 2006 had grown by 10 per cent. to £149,000. This means that we well on our way to restoring our funds in real terms to the position they were in in 2000 when we had assets of £137,000, the subsequent depletion occurring

in part because of the need to increase subscriptions, which we did in 2003, and in part because of the costs of the centenary celebrations and the production of the special additional volume of *BNJ*.

Our membership has increased again this year, and it now stands at a record 649, compared with 635 last November. During the year, there have been 27 elections (four of which were institutions), three deaths, seven resignations and six amovals (including one institution).

	<i>Anniv Meeting</i> 2006	<i>Anniv Meeting</i> 2007
Honorary	7	7
Ordinary	507	516
Ordinary (students/under 21)	9	11
Institutions	<u>112</u>	<u>115</u>
Total	635	649

Of the three deaths I have to report, two in fact occurred during 2006, and only one this year:-

Mr Sidney W. HARL (elected 1967), died 15 September 2006 at the age of 82. One of our long-standing members in the USA, Mr Harl was a financial advisor, a Director of the William S. Paley Foundation and a generous supporter of the American Numismatic Society.

Mr Patrick Irvine KING (elected 1938), died 8 July 2007, at the age of 84. The County Archivist for Northamptonshire, Mr King was our member of longest standing, a remarkable 69 years.

Mr Jeffrey MAY (elected 1994), died 15 July 2006 at the age of 69 (b. 9 November 1936). A former Head of Archaeology at Nottingham University and excavator of various sites in Lincolnshire, he

published a number of papers on Celtic coinage, especially that of the Corieltauvi.

One of our members, Mr Charles MacKechnie-Jarvis of Salisbury, celebrated his 100th birthday in August 2007, and to mark the occasion the Society presented him with one of our Silver Membership Medals, specially inscribed on the edge. His daughter sent a letter saying how much he had appreciated this and that her father maintained his interest in coins.

Some of our members have received distinctions: Michael Anderson has been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; Tuukka Talvio has been appointed an honorary docent in numismatics at Helsinki University, largely for his work on Viking-Age coinage; and Martin Allen received our own North Book Prize at the May meeting for his work on *The Durham Mint*. I should mention that the drinks party tonight is being sponsored by Michael Anderson in celebration of his fifty years of membership of the Society, which in fact fell in October last year, so please come and join us after the meeting to toast his 51st year!

We have had another year of varied and interesting lectures ranging from a detailed analysis of the coinage of the Iceni to a fascinating biographical account of Martin Folkes. The Linecar Lecture was delivered by Prof. Simon Keynes, who demonstrated admirably how numismatic evidence can contribute to a historical understanding of the reign of King Æthelred II. Our Summer meeting was held in the Chichester, in the handsome new wing of the Pallant House Gallery. Six papers addressed the theme Currencies in Crisis, and for the second year the event was jointly hosted with the Royal Numismatic Society.

Peter Woodhead is stepping down as a Vice-President, a position he has held since 1981, indeed he has been a member of Council in various capacities for 40 years, and continuously since 1974. His

contribution has been enormous, but I won't say more as I hope that he will be willing to return to for a further stint before too long. Angela Bolton, Joe Cribb and Adrian Lyons retire from Council having served three years. Angi has given us a useful link with those recording finds for the Portable Antiquaries Service, while Joe, as the current president of the Royal Numismatic Society, has fostered relations between our societies, one tangible result being the joint Summer meetings that we now hold, and Adrian's experience and sound judgement has been a great benefit to our deliberations in Council and on the Finance Committee. Elina Screen is giving up as Secretary, having fulfilled that role with charm and efficiency for three years, but we will not be losing her services, as she has taken on responsibility as one of the two Editors of *BNJ* in the place of David Symmons. David is stepping down after six years as an Editor, working first with Nicholas Holmes and then with Philip De Jersey. During that time they have produced some excellent volumes, the last two being perhaps the largest we have ever published. The work of an editor is more onerous than most people who have never done it realise, and often the greatest reward is the satisfaction of knowing that one has done a good job. David, you have done that! Thank you!

Finally, I thank my other co-Officers and Council Members for their support over the past year, and all those other people who help the Society in different ways, whether examining our accounts, manning the library, representing us at Coinex, or serving wine at our parties. It is only by working as a team that the Society can move ahead and flourish.

The President then delivered the second part of his address, 'Currency Under The Vikings. Part 4. The Dublin Coinage c.995-1150'.