MEMBERS may be interested in the medal which is illustrated above. It is in the Royal Coin and Medal Collection in the National Museum of Denmark at Copenhagen, by whom it was acquired in 1921 from Captain Fr. P. Grünwaldt of Copenhagen (1840–1923). It is cast in bronze and has no reverse. It is reproduced here by kind permission of Dr. Georg Galster, the Curator.

It would be pleasant to claim for the medal that it was a contemporary portrait of Henry VIII’s famous queen. There are relatively few portraits of Anne, perhaps because she was not particularly beautiful. The Venetian Ambassador said of her that she “is not the handsomest of women; she is of midling stature, swarthy complexion, long neck, wide mouth, bosom not much raised, in fact has nothing but the king’s great appetite and her eyes which are black and beautiful and take great effect on those who served the queen when she was on the throne”. Although the medal fits well enough with this description, it is almost certainly necessary to class it as a “restoration”, that is to say, a replacement, in a following century of a medal which it was then felt should have existed. Forgery is too strong a term.

The medal probably owes its origin in the long run to a three-quarter face drawing by Holbein, now in the possession of the Earl of Bradford. This drawing is the source of a number of paintings and prints. The majority of these, for instance the paintings in the collections of Earl Spencer and the Earl of Warwick (the former exhibited at Agnew’s in 1935), have restored the necklace which is scarcely indicated in the drawing by a long rope, the two cords of which fall straight from the shoulders to the top of the bodice. In a Hollar print, dated 1649, which is explicitly stated to be taken from a
Holbein drawing at Arundel, the same portrait is reproduced in reverse, but instead of a long rope, Anne wears a short, tight collar of large pearls, from the centre of which hangs a single drop pearl. Presumably the Arundel drawing is the same as that now in the possession of the Earl of Bradford.

Although the Hollar print shows Anne three-quarter face and the medal in profile, the latter was probably taken from the former. In the medal the details are exactly as shown by Hollar, especially the necklace. It would be possible for the two to have had a common ancestor, itself derived from the Holbein drawing, but it is more likely that Hollar invented the necklace. Though not inappropriate to Tudor times, as the lead medalet of Anne in the British Museum (Medallic Illustrations, vol. i, p. 34, no. 22) shows, it is very much in accordance with the taste of Hollar’s day. A lightly sketched line in the Holbein drawing may imply that Anne, notoriously fond of jewellery, was wearing a necklace of the kind; in any case it is quite sufficient to have given Hollar his cue.

Other portraits of Anne show her in somewhat similar, but not identical, costume, and with quite different jewellery. The principal group is associated with the painting (no. 668), in the National Portrait Gallery, to which I owe much of this information. A different portrait, supposed to be of Anne, was exhibited at the City of Bradford Art Gallery in 1943, and another still, of which I have seen no reproduction, is stated to have been in Basel.¹

There are other suspicious points about the medal. One would hardly expect to find a portrait medal of an ordinary Court lady at this time in England, but, had Anne been more than that when it was made, she would surely have been referred to under one of her titles. After she was queen, when a medal would be less exceptional, it would have been quite impossible to omit all reference to the royal title. The form of the name seems unusual. Boleyn or Bolleyn were the commonest spellings and forms such as Bolen and Bulen occur; the spelling of the name seems to have been more or less interchangeable with that of Boulogne, but, nevertheless, I have not actually come across a case where it is spelt Boulen. The use of a round u instead of a v in the early sixteenth century is, as Sir George Hill pointed out to Dr. Galster in 1921, not impossible, but very unusual.

The small letters at the end of the main legend are a problem. They have defied all attempts to read them. If the medal were really Tudor, one would expect them to be a continuation of the main legend: the common formula was to conclude the name with a statement of the subject’s age or the date, preceded by some abbreviation of Aetatis Suae or Anno as the case might be. The legend is clearly neither of these. Read from the centre the first two letters could be seen as Z3, a possible indication of age. Read the other way up, they might be an artist’s signature or a date. Dr. Galster has suggested that the word might be FESEZ?, an improbable artist’s name in

¹ See P. Friedmann, Anne Boleyn, 1884.
France or elsewhere. The last four signs could conceivably be read as \( \xi \varepsilon \zeta \) (i.e. 1532), but this is not particularly easy. The medal is probably not an original cast, and the legend has no doubt suffered on the process of aftercasting.

I fear the medal must be placed in the same category as that of Thomas More (Medallic Illustrations, vol. i, p. 34, 23), also cast in bronze, which Sir George Hill has condemned in his Medals of the Renaissance (p. 151). Both are "restorations", but in both cases the appearance of the metal and the style of casting suggests that they are relatively old. Judgements on the basis of style are apt to go astray, but it would not be surprising if both could be shown to have an origin in the seventeenth century, not necessarily in England. If a specimen can be found on which the small letters are legible, it may be possible to prove whether this conjecture is right or wrong.