ADDRESS BY EDGAR J. WINSTANLEY
PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Delivered at Anniversary Meeting, 30 November 1953

FIFTY years ago today, less than a hundred yards from this room, a number of people came together and founded the British Numismatic Society. There is a tradition that the idea of forming the Society was conceived in a railway carriage by three men during a journey from Waterloo to Winchester. Those three men were Major Carlyon-Britton, our first President, L. A. Lawrence, our first Director, and W. J. Andrew, our first Secretary. The aim of the promoters was to encourage and facilitate the study of English coins. The pages of the twenty-six volumes of our Journal justify, I think, our claim that the object for which the Society was founded has consistently been realized.

The account of the inaugural meeting printed in the first volume of the Journal includes the names of between twenty and thirty people who it may be presumed were present. None of these members is alive today. There is a list of members printed at the end of the volume amounting to about 450 names, representing the strength of the Society at the end of the first year of its life. It includes the names of three members who I am happy to say are still with us. They are Mr. Taffs, Mr. Raby, and Colonel Evans.

Until quite recently I could have included a fourth name—that of Mr. Leonard Forrer—but he died a fortnight ago. Mr. Forrer has been for many of us and for long a figure so familiar that I find it hard to realize that we shall not see him again.

I find it hard to realize too that before I was born, and I am not a young man, Mr. Forrer had already begun that long career of service and devotion to the firm and to the science with which we shall always associate his name. Though Mr. Forrer's primary concern was with ancient coins, he took a great interest in the welfare of the Society and was indeed one of our benefactors. We were proud to make him an honorary member in 1950. Members will recall that Mr. Forrer read a paper to us in April 1948 entitled "Reminiscences of sixty years as a coin dealer". It was the occasion of the largest attendance that I can remember. I am not the person best fitted to speak of Mr. Forrer's great achievements as a scholar; I will speak only of what came within my own experience. Let me remind you of the cataloguing of the immense collection of Lord Grantley—a task that Mr. Forrer undertook and carried out single-handed, undisturbed by the interruption of a heavy "blitz" on King Street while he was in the midst of his work. That was probably the last of his great work of cataloguing. He had done work of the greatest distinction in cataloguing the Weber collection of Greek coins. He was the first editor of the Numismatic Circular and only gave up the editorship a year or two ago. He will be remembered too for his important Biographical
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Dictionary of Medallists and for numerous other scholarly publications. I am not sure, when I think of all those years devoted to numismatics and of what Mr. Forrer achieved, that the feeling uppermost in my mind is not one of envy. His life must have been a very happy one. You will, I am sure, join me in paying a tribute to this gentle old man, and in offering our sympathy and condolence to his two sons—fellow members with us of this society.

This year we have also lost Miss Farquhar. Her life was even longer than Mr. Forrer’s, and she too was a distinguished scholar. Miss Farquhar’s obituary has been appropriately and affectionately written by Mr. Taffs and printed in the current number of the Journal. Dr. Willoughby Gardner and Dr. Arnold have also been taken. Dr. Willoughby Gardner will be remembered for his collection of pennies of the Chester mint. Dr. Arnold was a man of many talents. A Master of Arts and a Doctor of Medicine, he practised as a solicitor, holding also the qualifications of a barrister. He contributed one or two papers to the Journal and was a supporter of the claims of Edward V to the coins with initial-mark sun and rose dimidiated, on which he read a paper to us three years ago. We have lost seven members by resignation and three by removal under the by-laws. Our losses amount therefore in all to 14. We have elected twenty-one new members during the year, increasing our strength thereby by seven. This though good is not good enough. In view of our difficult financial position we must try, by every proper means open to us, to increase our membership substantially.

The problem of finance is one that your Council has been studying very earnestly during the past twelve months. A prospectus has been prepared and printed, outlining the aims and work of the Society and giving the conditions of membership and its advantages. During the next twelve months it will be used to publicize the work of the Society in every direction that the Council sees fit. This is work in which every member can play his part. I appeal to members to do all they can to bring in new and suitable recruits. For the last two years we have had to draw on capital to pay for the printing of the Journal. This is a state of affairs that must not be allowed to continue indefinitely.

It is the intention of the Council to make the Numismatic Congress next year the occasion of a big recruiting drive. The organizing of the Congress is in the hands of this Society, supported by the “Royal” and the London Numismatic Club. We should take the opportunity that the Congress will give us of bringing our work and our aims to the notice of a wider public than we are normally able to contact. We have secured good premises at King’s College in the Strand. Details of the Congress will be made public early in the New Year. The Congress will mark not only the occasion of our fiftieth anniversary but also that of the granting of the Royal Charter to the “Royal”. It was for this reason that the President of the “Royal”, Professor Grant, asked that they might be associated in the most active way with the Congress. We agreed to this gladly. It provides another example of
the friendly relations that exist between the two Societies and that have in fact existed constantly throughout the fifteen years that are as far as my experience can reach back. I was particularly pleased to receive a letter from Professor Grant soon after his election as President, expressing his satisfaction with this happy state of affairs. It is and always has been our aim to preserve and promote the friendliest concord between the two Societies.

The papers read at our meetings this year have had some novel features. In May Mr. Stride and Mr. Newman came from the Royal Mint to read a paper jointly, which, while it had particular reference to a forged crown of William III, dealt in general terms with the methods used at the Mint to test the structure of metals in the detection of forgery. We have good friends at the Royal Mint. They include the Deputy Master himself and his assistant Mr. Howell.

In October the problems of the short-cross coinage were presented in the form of a discussion with exhibitions rather than as a formal paper. There was a large attendance and some keen debate. This is an innovation which might profitably be repeated. I think the pennies of Edward I and Edward II would lend themselves well to this kind of treatment.

Mr. Ian Stewart read a paper in September on the heavy silver of James III and James IV of Scotland. His conclusions were revolutionary but his arguments were presented with every appearance of good reasoning. We have scholars of great promise among our junior members.

The early appearance of the Journal this year has been welcome. I think we can discern in this the hand of Mr. King. I would like to offer our thanks to him and to Mr. Blunt for so well produced and so well balanced a number.

The Numismatic Congress held at Bournemouth was every bit as successful as any previous congress has been. It was evident that Dr. Burstal and Mr. Bartlett had worked very hard and had given that careful attention to detail that ensures success. The papers were first class. The exhibitions and the ways of presenting them were attractive and some of them novel. Our thanks and congratulations should go to Bournemouth and to the Wessex Numismatic Society.

The exhibition of English coins, many of which were lent by members of this Society, was an outstanding feature of the International Congress held in Paris in July. A graceful letter of thanks to members of the Society was addressed to me by the Director of the Paris Mint. I am glad that members responded so generously to the appeal sent out by the British Museum. Much of the success of the exhibition was due to Mr. Carson for his efficient work of organization—a matter in which I think Mr. David Spink too had a hand. I hope that if an account or list of the coins exhibited is printed in the Proceedings of the Congress, we may be able to secure a copy for our records.

Two years ago I was glad to say a word of welcome in your name to Mr. Dolley, then newly come to the British Museum. Today, again
in your name, I would offer a welcome to Dr. Kent who has joined the Coin Room staff. It is specially good news for us that Dr. Kent is to share with Mr. Dolley the care and charge of the English coins. Is it too much to suggest that the work of this Society has played its part in bringing about this recognition of the importance of our English coins? Our hopes of the work of cataloguing the English coins in the Museum now going forward more rapidly are doubled. It will not have escaped your notice that Dr. Kent was nominated this evening for election to membership.

Mr. Dolley spent some time in Stockholm this summer. We hope to have some account from him early in the new session of the work he did there. Mr. Dolley has told me that while he was in Stockholm he was constantly helped in the kindest way by Dr. Rasmussen and his assistants. Let me ask Mr. Dolley in your name to convey to Dr. Rasmussen our warm appreciation and thanks for this service.

From time to time it has been suggested that this Society should undertake the making and publishing of a record of some of the great collections in the country either in museums or in private hands. It was with this object to some extent in mind that a publications fund was founded some years ago. An opportunity has now presented itself of putting this money to the use for which it was intended. The British Academy has intimated to us and to the “Royal” that it would be prepared to consider giving financial support to such a venture in English coins. Without delay the two Societies have jointly set up a committee to tackle the work in a practical way.

It has been decided to begin with the English coins in the Lockett collection. The reason for this choice is evident. The Lockett collection is the largest, the most complete, and the most important reference library of English hammered coins in private hands. It seems inevitable that sooner or later it must be broken up and sold. There is need then to act without delay if a record is to be completed in time. With the friendly co-operation of Mr. Lockett’s family and of Mr. Fred Baldwin the work has in fact begun. The first stage of the work consists of making plaster casts of all the coins to be recorded. This is in itself rather a major undertaking but it is an indispensable preliminary. The work from this stage onwards is looked upon by the committee as team work. Volunteers, with special knowledge of whatever coin series is being worked at, will be wanted to compile the record of that particular series. In many cases it will be a member of this Society who will be most fitted to undertake this work. It is intended to publish the work in parts, but it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the success of the project—and at present it is not much more than a project—depends on the support given it by students and collectors. That support must come in large measure from the members of this Society. Nothing, I am afraid, is more likely than the failure and lapsing of this admirable venture, if sufficient numbers of the first part are not sold on publication to justify going on with the next part.
This year has seen a new organization come into being—the British Association of Numismatic Societies. Its foundation was urged by Mr. Harkness at the Cambridge Congress eighteen months ago. Since then, due largely to the vision and persisting courage of Mr. Harkness, the Association has come into being. One of its first functions has been to form an executive committee, which under the chairmanship of Dr. Sutherland has taken over the work of the body that has been known to you by the name of the Co-ordinating Committee. The formation of this new Association has been greeted with a good deal of enthusiasm by the provincial Societies. The three London societies have agreed to affiliation and to the degree of financial support that that affiliation implies. I received a very friendly and encouraging letter from Mr. Wright, the President of the London Numismatic Club. At the same time there has been some adverse criticism. It is said that such an association is superfluous and that it can do no more than duplicate the work of this Society. May I say that I do not believe that this is true. It has been pointed out before that the work of this Society is ultimately to publish. Now it is not likely that that will ever be the work of B.A.N.S. The aims of the Association are not to be defined in one sentence but one of them is to bring the provincial societies in closer touch with one another and in closer touch too with the London Societies. This work it is already doing with a good deal of success. It aims too at encouraging the smaller societies by helping them with their work in every direction. If the Association is to succeed it needs the goodwill of the London societies. I appeal to its critics to still their criticism, which I think the Association is likely to survive, and to look on it as a body working for the good of numismatists and of numismatic science.

This has been an eventful year. The crowning of our Queen, the coming of peace—or if not peace of a cessation of fighting in Korea, the conquest of Mt. Everest; even the regaining of the "Ashes", have been great and happy events, and perhaps they tend to put our numismatic news in the background.

But this is after all our fiftieth birthday, and for us that is a great event. We have had our excitements too. The coming to the British Museum of a trial striking in lead of a penny of Edward the Confessor is certainly "big news". The discovery of a London half-ryal of Edward IV with mint mark "rose", an earlier coin than any previously known of that denomination, was important too. It is possible also that the treasure trove hoard of Edward pennies from Bootham, York, now under examination at the British Museum, may lead on its publication in the Journal to suggestions of importance in the attribution of what have been hitherto considered to be sede vacante coins. The gold crown of Henry VIII exhibited by Mr. Schneider at our last meeting may, after sufficient study, cause us to have to attribute the "K" hitherto given to Katherine of Aragon to another Katherine.

As I see it, the year closes with our studies in a lively state of
progress. The early series—Saxon and Norman—remain in capable and energetic hands. I fancy that Mr. Dolley may before long be giving us quite a lot to think about. The later medieval series seem for the moment to be at a standstill. Nobody seems actively interested in Henry VI or Edward IV. Yet I do not believe that the papers of Mr. Whitton and Mr. Blunt have exhausted either the interest or the possibilities of these coinages. I heard Mr. Mattingly say the other day that a catalogue or a standard work on a coinage was not to be looked on as a "terminus". It was, he said, a "junction" from which one "went on".

Mr. Mattingly has recently left this country for New Zealand. I asked him before he left to offer the greetings and good wishes of our members to our brethren in New Zealand, and to assure them of our readiness to be of service to them. Work in helping to organize next year's Congress and my normal duties at this time of the year as president have disrupted my work on Richard II, but I intend to return to the attack at the earliest moment. I believe there is a real revival of interest in Charles I. I have hopes that we may be getting news of activity from a provincial quarter before long. The milled series too is likely to be receiving attention next year.

There seems then good reason to hope that, if we can surmount our financial difficulties, we may look forward to a year of good progress. I look on the coming Numismatic Congress as an opportunity of strengthening our position and for improving our status. The organizing committee is alive to the possibilities involved and is working to make the Congress in every way a memorable event.

I have, to my regret, to tell you that our Treasurer has asked to be relieved of his office by the end of next year. Mr. Elmore Jones has worked for us as Treasurer for seven years, and you will agree that we must respect his wish. But we do so reluctantly because we know how well our affairs have been looked after, while they have been in his care. We have the highest appreciation of the steady hand that has gathered in our income with such skill and cheery firmness, and of the other hand too that guarded our expenditure no less firmly, and with equal good humour. Our indebtedness to our Treasurer is very great.

The reading of an address annually, on the same occasion and for the same purpose, carries with it some risk of repetition and of monotony for those who have to listen to it. In spite of this danger I am not to be deterred from saying this year again, how grateful I am to the Officers and Council for the consideration and support they have given me. From the Secretary, Mr. Doubleday, I have received such kindness and courtesy as almost to defy adequate acknowledgement. Let me tell him in these words how deeply I have appreciated it, and how greatly we value the work he is doing for the Society.

And let me end by reminding you that gratitude has been defined as looking for further favours.
THE BRITISH NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 1952

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We beg to report to the Members that we have obtained all the information and explanations we have required. No credit has been taken for subscriptions in arrear. We have examined the above Balance Sheet with the books and vouchers of the Society and are of the opinion that subject to the above remark the same is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of the Society's affairs, according to the best of our information and the explanations given to us, and as shown by the books of the Society.

GILBERTS, HALLETT, & EGLINGTON, Chartered Accountants.

THREE ANCIENT BRITISH COINS