PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
1983

J. D. BRAND

Membership

FIRST I should report to you on the state of our membership numbers. We have elected or reinstated sixteen members during the year, six have resigned, four have died, and nine have been removed for non-payment of subscription. This gives a net deficit of three, and our total membership tonight stands at a little below five hundred.

Michael Dolley, a Medallist and an Honorary Member of this Society, was one of the widest known of all our members. He had a great influence on many people. Indeed, I recall a sentence from my speech in 1981 proposing him for Honorary Membership: 'if we discounted, ignored, every word that Michael Dolley had ever published he would still be the prime candidate for Honorary Membership on account of the encouragement he had unstintingly given to so many other numismatists'. His own publication record was actually, of course, quite prodigious, and a bibliography of his works will appear in a memorial volume which some of his friends are organising. An extended obituary notice is printed in volume 52 of our Journal, and so I will not say more tonight.

Dolley died at a comparatively young age; only fifty-seven. Georg Galster, another of our Honorary Members, died in September at the advanced age of ninety-four. Officially he retired many years ago from his post as Keeper of the Royal Danish Coin Cabinet, but he continued working in the Cabinet full time until his death, retaining all his faculties and publishing numismatic studies of the highest order. A productive professional career of some seventy-three years is quite remarkable, and cannot be summed up adequately in a few sentences. His death is a great loss to all numismatists, everywhere.

Henry Norweb was not known to me personally. He did not, I am told, publish anything on numismatics himself, but his generous practical assistance to others has been of great value in furthering numismatic research. Nor was Mr Kaplan, senior, known to me personally, but he was a respected dealer in South Africa.

I do apologise for an unfortunate error which crept into my published Address last year. It was Mr Reginald Lubbock who died in December 1981: Mr Richard Lubbock, his son, is alive and well and continues to be a valued member.

During the year we elected three Honorary Members. In February it was our Honorary Secretary, Wilfrid Slayter, for his great services to this Society and to British numismatics in general. In June we elected Mrs Joan E. L. Murray and Colonel J. K. R. Murray. Both of them for their distinguished contributions to Scottish numismatics, yet in different aspects of the subject.

Mr Christopher Blunt has received every honour which is in our power to bestow, so we were in some difficulty when, last February, we sought a fitting commemoration not just of the fiftieth anniversary of his election to this Society, but of fifty years of his continuous service, in one capacity or another, to the Society. Countless times in the last half century Mr Blunt has resolved our problems for us: so again he came to our rescue on this occasion, and he entertained us with a delightful paper on the numismatic activities of John Ruskin. What could have been more fitting, than for us to sit once more at the feet of our doyen!

Finance

After membership comes finance. Our Honorary Treasurer has earlier this evening reported to you on the state of our finances, which are quite remarkably buoyant compared with our struggles over the last few years. Partly this is due to the increased level of subscriptions introduced three years ago, partly due to the great savings made by our new method of producing the British Numismatic Journal, and partly due to the vigilance of Robin Davis in looking after our affairs.

We are now in the happy position of having funds sufficient not only to publish the Journal nominally for 1983 but — to use a simile for effect — more than enough to publish an additional volume of equal size. Not that we intend to do so, but it gives an indication of the options open to us. Inflation is not currently such a problem as it was in the recent past, but inflation is still with us and so, for a Society like ours, there is little real benefit to be gained by simply building up substantial reserves. We need to keep some in hand, but the remainder is better spent than saved: so long as it is spent wisely on things of enduring value. Council has and is considering a number of projects. Last year and this we have spent some money on purchases of books for our library, and we have allocated money for this purpose next
year. We have increased the size of *BNJ* by fifty per cent, and are able to increase it further if sufficient articles of the right quality are received. We are considering whether texts which are really too long for articles in *BNJ* could be published by us as supplements in book form. Other ideas are also being considered. All of them matters which will help to advance the study of British numismatics.

Tonight our Honorary Treasurer, Robin Davis, retires from that Office. Remarkably, for such an onerous post, he is sorry to relinquish the position, but a change in his personal circumstances means that he no longer has sufficient free time to look after our finances in the way he would wish to do. We do thank Mr Davis very much indeed for seeing us through a very difficult period, and for all the time he has devoted to our affairs to the detriment of his own numismatic researches.

The Journal

Our primary purpose as a Society is to publish the *British Numismatic Journal*. Volume 51, of which an advance copy was available at the last Anniversary Meeting, was posted to all paid-up members before last Christmas. Volume 52 is available in advance copies here tonight, and is on schedule to be in members' hands before Christmas this year. These are the first two in our new format, by our new method of producing camera ready copy for the printer on our own electronic Olivetti typewriter. Reaction to the new format has generally been favourable in the circumstances that we are thereby enabled to print many more pages than by traditional setting methods, yet still have approximately the same number of words to a page. Volume 51 was bigger by a half in page numbers than we would otherwise have been able to publish, volume 52 is twenty-four pages bigger than volume 51, and each has cost far less than an old-style smaller volume would have done. Naturally, processing many more pages throws an additional burden on our Honorary Editor, Christopher Challis: a burden which was already heavy. But it is a task which he gladly carries out, and we are very grateful to him.

Whereas only a couple of years ago Dr Challis was in the position of having to refuse high quality contributions simply for lack of space, now, with much more room at his disposal, he is able to shape the contents to a more balanced view of the many and various aspects of British numismatics. An ideal balance can never quite be attained, because he can only include papers which are actually written, but volume 52 in particular is a welcome demonstration of how more pages means more variety.

The new production method itself throws a much heavier workload on the Editors than before. Preparation of camera ready copy involves many more tasks than does the delivery of a pile of variegated typescripts to the printer. To get production under way, I undertook that part myself, and was much helped in the early stages by engaging the professional skills of our member Mrs Crowley, who herself typed the text of more than half of volume 51 and introduced me to her colleague Mrs Wood, who typed the rest of that volume and effectively the whole of volume 52. We are very fortunate to have had the services of two such excellent ladies. Such imperfections as remain in the printed versions are my responsibility.

The flexibility that the new system gives us does, however, bring technical problems. Some of these can be overcome by the Production Editor simply spending a great many hours of his own time on tedious tasks. One particularly difficult problem was solved in volume 52 by reverting to our early custom of binding plates next to the text to which they relate. That practice had been abandoned many years ago on cost grounds, as it was then much less expensive to group all the plates together at the back of the volume. Now, however, there is a very slight cost saving to be made by including the plates at the appropriate points in the volume, and it is more convenient to the reader as well as to the Editors.

For volume 53 Mr Mark Blackburn will replace me as the Production Editor, and I wish him well.

I should not leave the subject of publications without noting that the long paper in volume 51 by Mr Preston-Morley and Mr Pegg, *A Revised Survey of the Seventeenth Century Tokens of Nottinghamshire*, has been issued this last summer as a separate book.

Meetings

If publication is our major function, our monthly evening meetings are an added bonus for those of us who are able to attend. Our Director, Graham Dyer, again arranged an excellent programme of speakers, on a wide variety of topics. Miss Archibald started our programme in January with a review of the evidence for dating the first issue of Stephen, and favoured a span much shorter than was proposed by Mr Seaman a few years ago. In February, as I have already mentioned, Mr Blunt gave us an entertaining account of the numismatic activities of John Ruskin. Three members read shorter papers in March: Mr Martin Allen on some Short Cross pennies, Mr Bishpham on base shillings of Edward VI, and Mr Mernick on a hoard found in London composed of forgeries of Scottish coins. Mr Pagan in April gave us a comprehensive account of the organisation of the Tower mint between 1660 and 1750: a peculiar structure which helps explain some of the curious mint policies in that period. At our Sherry Party evening in May, the speaker was Mr Stainton, who entertained and instructed us on John Milton, medallist. In June we had four short papers: by Mr Robert Thompson on two tokens of the seventeenth century, Mr Sommerville about overdates on shillings, Mr Mountain (read for him by Mr Dyer) on the problems of the slight changes in design of the half-sovereigns...
of 1870 to 1872, and Mr Wager on Pub Checks. The last arose out of the colloquium arranged by the Society on that subject in 1982, and a joint paper by Mr Wager and Mr Thompson appeared in *BNJ* 52. After the summer break, we recommenced in September with Dr Freeman on Edward the Confessor's mints and moneyers: an original approach to an often studied period, which brought out many new points of great interest. And last month Mr Manville gave us a comprehensive review of the types of mis-strikes which occurred in the early milled period, and drew from them clues as to the methods of machining which could have given rise to them.

In July, for the second year running, we held a special meeting on a Saturday afternoon; by the kind permission of the British Museum, in their lecture theatre. We heard two papers. The first, by Mr Blackburn, on Irish Sea imitations of the Quatrefoil type of Canute, and the second by Professor Gaspar and Mr Dyer (read by Professor Gaspar) on the Vigo coinage of Queen Anne. Both papers were exceedingly interesting, bringing out new facts. The audience, though enthusiastic, was small, and mostly consisted of people we see regularly on Tuesday evenings. Council has decided not to repeat the experiment of a Saturday afternoon meeting next year, but a different format may be more suitable.

In October we arranged a symposium in Birmingham on the subject of Matthew Boulton and the Soho Mint. Five speakers, Mr Davies of Birmingham Museum, Dr Tann of Aston University, Dr Doty, Mr Wager, and Mr Pollard, gave papers on a variety of aspects of Boulton and his work, and there was a lively discussion period. It was, I believe, the first time this Society has arranged a function at a venue outside London, and the response was such that Council will consider holding special meetings in Birmingham on occasion. The format of a whole day meeting on a single theme is also one which warrants repetition as and when suitable topics arise. Next year, in fact, we are arranging a whole day colloquium, in London, on a Saturday in November, on the subject of the coinages of Carausius and Allectus.

Our Director has had a particularly busy year on our behalf, and we are fortunate that Mr Dyer is still willing to give his time and energy to our communal good.

**Library**

Our library is the third service we provide for members. Hugh Pagan, our Honorary Librarian, and Peter Donald, our Honorary Assistant Librarian, together with some help from myself, have laboured throughout the year on improving the facilities. There is still much to do, and further volunteer help would be greatly appreciated. In the financial year just ended we have spent about £300 on purchase of books to fill just a few of the many gaps in our holdings. Borrowings by members were at a similar level to that of the previous year, but there were no statistics of members, and others, who use the library for reference purposes only, although it is known that considerable use is made of it in that way.

Our Honorary Librarian also retires tonight, but only because he takes on the higher responsibilities of the Presidency. His term of office has been comparatively short, but very productive in improving the facilities available to us all in the library downstairs. I do trust that he will continue to keep a close interest in the affairs of our library, and thus smooth the path of his successor. We are fortunate, too, in that Mr Donald will continue to work for us in the library, and give us continuity.

**The Presidency**

You are all aware that tonight I relinquish the position of President. I have served three years in the post, which is rather less than customary: most, but not all, of my predecessors have served the maximum of five years allowed under our constitution. Five years is, however, the maximum — not the norm — and it may not always be in the best interests of the Society for one person to serve five years at a stretch. Three years ago it was necessary to choose as President someone with particular knowledge and skills in financial management. Now, that crisis has passed, and for the time being we are relieved of day to day worry about the very survival of the Society. My specific task has been accomplished, and I came to the conclusion that, as the fundamental reason for my election had disappeared, there was no real justification in my continuing.

In my three years as President I did, however, not confine myself just to financial aspects. It has been an interesting — at times even enjoyable — period. I like to think that my influence has helped the Society progress in a number of ways, and I feel sure that under my successor the Society will progress still further.

In this, the last of my reviews, I should thank many people for the support I have received. The Officers, of course, who have been mentioned by name earlier. The Vice-Presidents and Councillors, from whom I would specially like to mention Mr Woodhead who has given practical assistance as well as good advice. Miss Archibald and Mr Seaman each year arrange the Sherry Party, which is much appreciated by all. Many members, too numerous to name, at meetings and in correspondence. Last, but most, our Honorary Secretary, Wilfrid Slayter.

[The President then read a paper entitled 'Periodic change of type in the late Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods. Part 2'.]