HOWARD W. A. LINECAR

HOWARD Linecar, who died while on holiday on 13 June 1985 aged 73 was one of the best known figures in the world of numismatics since the war.

Probably more than anyone else he opened up the study of coinage in all its aspects to an audience far wider than pre-war numismatists would have thought possible. His Beginners and Advanced Guides whet the appetites of a generation of newcomers. Many of them are now in middle age (and some are even older) and many who had no more thought for the coins in their pockets than to spend them followed the guidance he expressed in these two books and have progressed to becoming authorities in their own right.

He was a modest man and would never acknowledge his important role towards the present generation of those who follow the gentle pastime of the study of coinage, be they historians, investors, dealers or collectors.

There can be few readers of this obituary who have not been regular readers of Spink's Numismatic Circular which he edited for more than thirty years. He occasionally remarked to me that it edited itself. I never believed him, because I knew the care and attention he gave to the Editorship in his unhurried way.

He was educated at Haberdashers' Aske's School and the William Ellis Endowed School at Hampstead and had worked in Serjeant's Inn and as a journalist before joining Spink and Son in 1935. Since he was still editing and producing their Circular at the time of his death, he gave them half a century of service. In the Second World War he was a Fire Officer in London: the only break in his long numismatic career.

His knowledge of numismatics was widely based, although he tended to specialise in British and Commonwealth coinage. He was more concerned with the reasons for, and events leading up to, a particular coinage issue than with the minute die varieties which in his view attracted a disproportionate amount of interest in machine-made coinage. The methods of mass production, the machinery and the metallurgical characteristics of coins interested him immensely. As an engineer myself I had many discussions with him on these and similar matters and I am sure that, had he made his career in technology instead of numismatics, he would have risen to equal eminence. His interest in and knowledge of technological processes was that of an informed layman: so much so that he had a deep interest in railway engineering and had written books and articles on the subject. (I first came across his name in the immediate post-war era as the author of British Electric Trains, the only book until then that presented a general overall view of the subject for the interested amateur.) His carefully assembled collection of railway tokens and medals was auctioned anonymously a few years ago.

Besides editing the Numismatic Circular he wrote a very substantial number of articles for it and was author of several books other than the Guides, of which The Crown Pieces of Britain and the Commonwealth and Pattern and Proof of Crown Sized Pieces are standard works. I had the privilege of working with him on the second of these and thus have first-hand knowledge of his painstaking care and attention to detail.

He was responsible for building up the publishing side of Spink's numismatic business and in particular was very much involved with some of the earlier volumes of Roman Imperial Coinage and, between 1960 and 1980, with Fred Pridmore's series of books on Coins of the British Commonwealth of Nations.
Howard Linecar was an accomplished lecturer, easy to listen to, as many members of numismatic societies throughout the country will testify. He was a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society, and a Member both of the British Numismatic Society and of the London Numismatic Club. He served with distinction as President of the British Association of Numismatic Societies. There was another distinction which gave him considerable delight: that of being the first person to pay — on behalf of a client — a thousand pounds at auction for a coin, when bidding for Spinks at the Cockayne sale in 1946.

His wife Rhoda was already working in the picture department of Spinks when Howard joined the Company in 1935. We numismatists mourn our loss and express our profound sorrow to her and their daughter Dawn. A few close friends and colleagues attended his funeral service, amongst whom was the compiler of this obituary, to whom ‘HL’ had been a staunch friend for more than a quarter of a century.

ALEX G. STONE

THOMAS STANTON

THOMAS Stainton, Honorary Treasurer of the British Numismatic Society since November 1983, died suddenly at his home of a heart attack on 16 June 1985. Born on 23 November 1918, son of Evelyn Stainton, of Barham Court, near Canterbury, Kent, he was educated at Winchester and Christ Church, Oxford, but his university studies were interrupted by the war, and in 1940 he was commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment, serving with it in Egypt, Iran, Italy and Austria. Returning to civilian life after the war, he formed, with Herbert Deacon, the firm of H. G. Deacon Ltd, heating and ventilating engineers.

It was in the 1950s that he first became interested in commemorative medals, and he was led by his sister Lavinia Handley-Read’s parallel researches into the work of the Victorian sculptor Alfred Gilbert to take a particular interest in sculptural aspects of mid-nineteenth-century medal engraving. By 1967, as was noted in *BNJ* at the time, he had assembled the only complete set then extant of the medals issued by the Art Union of London, as well as a nearly complete set of those issued by the Corporation of London, and these were the basis of the section devoted to medals in the exhibition *British Sculpture 1850–1914*, put on by the Fine Art Society in the autumn of 1968; the exhibition was very much a family affair, for in addition to his own role in loaning medals and writing the relevant part (pp. 38-46) of the exhibition catalogue, his sister wrote the introduction to the catalogue as a whole, and she and her husband Charles did much in other ways for the exhibition. For the Royal Academy’s bicentenary exhibition the same winter he was again responsible for the selection and the display of the medal exhibits. In 1971 the untimely deaths in quick succession of his brother-in-law and sister brought upon him the very considerable responsibility of disposing of their unrivalled collection of Victorian works of art, furniture, ceramics, and so on, in a manner of which they would have approved. How onerous the task was can be discerned from the catalogue of the exhibition of *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Art, The Handley-Read Collection*, held at the Royal Academy in 1972. As a result, he retired from active participation in the affairs of his firm, although he remained for some years an adviser to it.

Although he had been a member of our Society since 1967, his primary interest in the early years of his retirement was in Egyptology, and his continuing scholarly involvement with medals only became apparent to us with the publication of reviews by him in *BNJ* of books on commemorative medals by Dr Jeremy Taylor (*BNJ* 1978, 129–32), R. C. Bell (*BNJ* 1980, 142), and L. A. Brown (*BNJ* 1981, 205–7). These were followed by a short paper on ‘The proposed Royal Academy Medal of 1793’, *BNJ* 1982, 187–97, and a more
substantial paper on ‘John Milton, medallist, 1759–1805’, _BNJ_ 1983, 133–59, which revealed how profound his knowledge of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century medals and medallists, and of the printed and manuscript evidence for them, had now become.

He served on our Council for the year 1983 and succeeded Robin Davis as our Honorary Treasurer with effect from our anniversary meeting in November that year. As an officer of the Society he proved an ideal colleague, pleasant, helpful, judicious, and in the actual discharge of his duties in the happy position for an incoming Treasurer – as I now discover, for he was modest about himself – in having found mathematics an absorbing relaxation throughout life. He will be much missed by all those who came into contact with him and particularly by myself. He leaves a widow, Bridget, and three sons.

H. E. PAGAN