PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 1985

H. E. PAGAN

This is our eighty-first anniversary meeting, which in itself sounds no great landmark in the history of our Society. But it was forty years ago this summer that the Second World War came to an end, and we have thus had exactly forty years of peace in which we have been able to advance the study of the coinage of these islands. They have been good years for our subject, and although we may not have achieved all the objectives which we have from time to time set ourselves, it has been through our Society that continuity in the study of the British coinage has been maintained and in the pages of our Journal that all the most significant discoveries in relation to it have been recorded. We have been fortunate that throughout these years we have been able to rely on the wisdom and experience of Christopher Blunt, who we elected President of the Society for the first time at our Anniversary Meeting this month forty years ago, and I am very pleased to see him here tonight.

This year’s list of deaths is a little longer than usual, but while such losses are naturally a cause for sadness, they also reflect the loyalty of these members to us until death itself, and in that we may take some consolation.

Dr James Davidson, who died in May at the age of eighty-nine, had been a member of the Society since 1937, and was for many years a well-known collector of Scottish coins, perfecting a collection begun by his father. In middle life he held the post of Director of the Metropolitan Police’s forensic laboratory at Hendon, and while at Hendon he was able to serve on our Council continuously from 1939 to 1947, being in fact the last survivor of the small group of our members who kept our Society going during the war years. After the war he returned to Scotland and we scarcely saw him, but I gather that he was glad to show his collection of alpine plants and his coins, in that order, to numismatic visitors.

Harry Pegge, who died on 24 March, a member since 1944, lived at Beeston in Nottinghamshire and had spent his working life as a pork butcher. He was for many years the leading figure in the Nottinghamshire Numismatic Society, which he had founded in 1948, and towards the end of his life he combined with Peter Preston-Morley to produce a thorough study of the seventeenth century tokens of Nottinghamshire which appeared in our Journal as well as being issued for separate sale. He also made a good general collection of coins which was dispersed in various sales by Spinks between 1980 and his death.

Howard Linecar, a member of the Society since February 1946, died on 13 June. He had worked for Spink and Son from 1935 to his death, and although he served the firm in several capacities, his chief contribution was to their publications. To the public at large he will be familiar as the author of a number of books on our subject, ranging from an introductory one for beginners to weightier ones on aspects of the English milled coinage and on the coinage of the British Commonwealth. For ourselves it was perhaps his anonymous role as editor of Spink’s Numismatic Circular that mattered most; it was under his editorship that the Circular appeared for over thirty years, and it was through the good relations that he maintained with numismatists of every kind that the Circular came to be regarded as one of the natural places to publish short notes of a scholarly character. I was both surprised and pleased to hear recently that he had named the Society as one of the residuary legates under his will.

Niel Cantan Ballingal, who died suddenly on 22 January, had been a member since 1955. He was the head of an old-established English trading firm in the Far East, which meant that we saw less of him than we would have liked, but he made a fine collection of coins of the Norman period, especially of Stephen’s reign, and he also collected coins of the Civil War period.

V. J. Newberry, an antique dealer at Hollingbourne in Kent, who died on 23 February at the age of seventy-five, had only belonged to the Society since 1982, but he had previously built up a large specialist collection of seventeenth century Kentish tokens, and he was knowledgeable about hop tokens.

I also have, unusually, to note the death of a junior member, A. P. Fuszard, whom we only elected last year. I leave to the end our saddest loss, the sudden death from a heart attack on 16 June of our Honorary Treasurer, Tom Stanton. He had only been our Hon. Treasurer since November 1983, but his combination of friendliness, efficiency and sound judgment made him an ideal colleague. I have written about him more fully in the obituary notice which is printed in this Journal, but he was unusual among our members in that he had come to numismatics via an interest in Victorian art, and his writings on eighteenth and nineteenth century medals and medallists were based on a deep knowledge of the sources for the art history of the period as well as of the medals themselves.

I should also refer to the death of David Spink, for many years chairman of the family firm, who, although no longer a member of the Society at the time of his death, had been a member for many years and served on our Council from 1950 to 1955. He was the only one of S. M. Spink’s many sons who kept up an interest in the coin
side of the firm's business, and it is curious, when one comes to think of it, that despite Messrs Spink's long history, the Spink family's own active participation in the coin trade should have lasted only two generations.

These deaths, five resignations and the loss of six members whom we have just amoved, have been exactly counterbalanced by the election of eighteen new members. As a result, our ordinary membership now stands at 487, of whom 365 are personal members and the rest institutions. We also have six junior members. We need more members than this, but I think that 1986 may well be a better year on the membership front, and there is no particular reason for concern, for whatever our membership position may be, our financial position is encouraging. As you have heard from our new Treasurer, our financial position was strong enough in 1984 that we were able to afford a volume of our Journal about one hundred pages longer than usual, and still to add a small sum to our reserves, and in 1985 our reserves have increased by a rather larger sum. In part, this is a result of general economic factors - high interest rates add to the income that we obtain from our capital, while a low rate of inflation keeps the printing costs of our Journal stable - but it also reflects the demand for back numbers of our Journal and the energy of our late Treasurer.

Our programme during the year was both varied and interesting. At our April meeting we were glad to hear for the first time from Mr Michael Kenny, of the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin, who spoke on recent Viking-Age coin hoards from the Republic of Ireland. Our other two new speakers, Mr Stocker and Mr Eimer, both spoke (and spoke very well) on more modern subjects - Mr Stocker (with assistance from our Director) on the Jubilee coinage of 1887, and Mr Eimer on twentieth century British medals. The other major feature of our programme was the successful symposium on the coinage of the seventeenth century that our Director organised at the University of Aston at the beginning of this month; he arranged for no fewer than nine speakers to address us, which is evidence of the healthy state of seventeenth-century studies, and I was glad to see there a number of our members who are not normally able to get to our Tuesday meetings.

As usual, our Secretary, who celebrated his seventieth birthday during the year, has faithfully discharged the duties of his office. These include maintaining a correspondence with any of our members worldwide who may choose to write to him, and I know that Wilfrid was particularly pleased when a young American member of ours recently described him as a 'true friend'; which indeed he is of us all.

I also have to thank our Director, our Librarian and the editors of the Journal for their work during the year; our new Treasurer, Mr Webb Ware, for his contribution since he was appointed Treasurer at our June meeting; and members of Council generally for their help in dealing with the business that has come before us.

I have been representing the Society during the year on the organising committee for the International Numismatic Congress which will take place in London 8-12 September 1986. This will be the largest gathering of numismatists that has ever been held in Britain - we have so far had over 700 enquiries from would-be attenders - and the responsibility on our Society and the Royal Numismatic Society for making the occasion a success is an onerous one. We have already made a number of the necessary arrangements and I should report to you that our Society and the Royal Numismatic Society have entered into one specific financial commitment in connection with the Congress, which is to find between us, in agreed proportions, the sum of £5000 from our reserves to reduce the level of the registration fee that delegates to the Congress will have to pay. This sum, however, will only become payable when the books are balanced after the Congress, and if the Congress runs at a profit, as it may, the sum that our Society will have to provide will be a smaller one.

I should also report to you that the financial management of the Congress will be vested, for technical reasons, in a charitable trust called the U.K. Numismatic Trust, of which the trustees are Dr Kent, myself, Dr Carradice, Mr Rhodes and Mr Peter Mitchell. The objects of the U.K. Numismatic Trust are widely defined in the trust deed, which states that the trust exists 'for the encouragement support and development of numismatics in the United Kingdom of England Scotland Wales Northern Ireland the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man', and it seems to me that the trust could be of future utility as well as in the immediate context of the Congress.

I say this because if we are moving into an age when research and scholarly activity must increasingly be financed by commercial sponsorship, neither our Society nor the Royal Numismatic Society can be the sole channels through which this sponsorship flows, for although we can legitimately put money into our publications, as being of general benefit to our members, we cannot so easily justify expenditure on objects from which our members do not directly benefit, however desirable these objects may be.

It would be wrong of me not to take this opportunity to say one further word about commercial sponsorship. As a Society we have good reason for gratitude to the coin trade - and here I refer both to the major coin dealers and to the auction houses - for past and present acts of generosity towards us. By contrast, in the eighty-two years of our Society's existence, we have not received, as far as I am aware, one penny by way of assistance from the financial institutions of the City of London, beyond the Bank of England's own subscription as an institutional member, and I think that this is genuinely a matter for regret, for the fortunes of the City's institutions were founded on, and in the clearing banks' case still partly depend on, their dealings in the very coins which it is our Society's role to study. I am able to say this now merely in passing, for we stand in no urgent need of extra finance, but in saying it, as you will understand, I have an eye to the Society's future prosperity.
In 1967 our Vice-President, Herbert Schneider, gave us £250 to establish, or rather re-establish, a research fund from which we could finance the photography of specialist collections of British coins of which otherwise there would be no complete record. Since 1967 we have only drawn on the fund once, to photograph Gordon Doubleday's superb collection of coins of Edward III, but this year Peter Mitchell suggested to Council that we might appropriately do the same for the collection of silver coins of Edward IV made by our staunch friend and colleague Peggy Delme-Radcliffe, of which only a portion could be illustrated in the catalogue of the Glendining sale of 17 April in which the collection was dispersed. I am glad to be able to say that with eight sets of photographs still remaining, we have recovered our initial outlay, which we did not manage with the Doubleday photographs, and have gone a little way into profit. Indeed, the state of our research fund is rather better than it has been for some time, for Mrs Delme-Radcliffe has herself made a generous contribution to it, and Council has also earmarked for it a smaller but welcome donation that we have received from our long-standing American member, Mr John L. Dresser of New York.

Mrs Delme-Radcliffe's collection was not the only significant group of English coins to pass through the sale room during the year, and it is right that I should mention here the excellent catalogues of the first two portions of Mrs Norweb's English collection, sold by Spinks in June and November; the anonymous collection of coins of Sussex mints sold by Glendining on 14 October, which was in essence the residue of the collection formed by our late President Horace King; and the sale at Christies on 28 May of the hoard of fifteenth century gold coins found in 1983 at Pulham in Dorset. The catalogue of the Christie sale illustrated every coin found and it should, I understand, be regarded as the official publication of the hoard. Not everything about it was right - the weights of the coins somehow got omitted - but it was refreshing to have a hoard published so promptly, intelligibly and fully.

I take this as an encouraging sign in relation to other treasure trove coin hoards yet to be published or yet to be properly published, and I hope that rather more hoard reports may be published in our Journal than has been the case in recent years; we have of course a natural fondness for our own Journal, but its format, the regularity with which it appears, and its editorial standards make it self-evidently suitable for the purpose, and I have no doubt that our editors would welcome such material.

I end this part of my address with a list of the current year’s crop of coin hoards. Dr David Caldwell tells me that he has eight Edwardian pence from a site near Ruthwell in Dumfriesshire, but is not yet convinced that he is dealing with a hoard rather than a scatter from an occupation site. Mr Boon informs me that there are no hoards this year from Wales. From England, Miss Archibald reports, the tally is as follows:

### Ancient British
- **Feb. 1985**
  - Southend-on-Sea, Essex (T.T.). 33 AV staters (Gallo-Belgic E), mid 1st century AD.
- **Apr. 1985**
- **Apr.–May 1985**
  - Wanborough, Surrey (T.T.). 200 AV and AR, 1st century AD (in Roman period) (additional coins from hoard reported last year).
- **1985**
  - Stonea, Cambs (T.T.). 8 AR (Iceni), mid 1st century AD (additional coins from hoard previously reported).
- **Oct. 1985**
  - Semley, Wilts. 88 AR (Durotriges), later 1st century BC.

### Roman
- **1983–4**
  - Norton-sub-Course, Norfolk (T.T.). 80 AR denarii to Claudius, c. 41 AD.
- **1985**
  - Bembridge, Isle of Wight. 26 AE Domitian to Commodus, c. 190 AD.
- **1985**
  - Westmeston, Sussex (T.T.). 9 AR denarii, to c. 140 AD.
- **1985**
  - Stonea, Cambs (T.T.: a different hoard to that listed above). 20 AR denarii, to c. 240 AD (additional portion of hoard previously reported).
- **c. 1985**
  - ‘North Dorset’. 1,275 AE, to 348 AD.

### Anglo-Saxon
- **1985**
  - Repton, Derbs. 5 pence, Burgred and Ælfred, c. 875.

### Medieval
- **No hoards**

### Civil War
- **Sept. 1985**
  - Breckenbrough, N. Yorks (T.T.). 30 AV, 1,550 AR, to 1644, including an important group of the York mint.
- **Sept. 1985**
  - Reftley, King's Lynn, Norfolk. 27 AR, Charles I.

### Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries
- **Oct. 1984**
- **Mar. 1985**
  - Newport Pagnell, Bucks (T.T.). 7 AV (4 sovereigns, 3 half sovereigns), to 1873.

(T.T. denotes a hoard declared Treasure Trove)
IN THE second part of my Presidential Address last year I spoke to you about Dr George Brooke. This year I am going back rather further in time and will be speaking about Rogers Ruding, the author of the *Annals of the Coinage of Britain*, which although published in its first edition as long ago as 1817 is still a starting point for almost any line of enquiry into English monetary history.

Ruding was born at Leicester on 9 August 1751 and baptised at St Martin’s, Leicester, on 19 September in the same year. He was the younger son of Rogers Ruding senior, who as a young man had been the Whig candidate for Leicester at parliamentary elections in 1734 and 1737, and who owned a substantial mansion called Westcotes on the outskirts of Leicester. Although the Ruding family had owned property in the area since the reign of Henry VIII, they belonged rather to the professional classes than to the landed gentry, and Ruding’s father’s main source of income from 1758 onwards seems to have been his official position as receiver-general of taxes for Leicestershire.

Nothing is known of Ruding’s childhood, but in June 1768, at the age of nearly seventeen, Rory, as his father called him, matriculated at Oxford University, as an undergraduate of Merton College, and from then onwards we have at least a skeleton outline of his career.

The Rudings had a family connection with Merton, for his uncle, Walter Ruding, had gone there as an undergraduate in the 1730s and by 1768 was one of the senior fellows of the college. Merton must also have been congenial to the Rudings politically, for it was a Whig college, not a Tory college, and at the general election of 1768 Walter Ruding and many of the fellows had voted fruitlessly for the most Whiggish and least successful of the candidates for the University seat, a young man called Charles Jenkinson, the future Lord Liverpool and himself later on a writer on coinage. Ruding took his B.A. degree in April 1772, but seems to have remained in residence after graduating, and was elected a probationer fellow of the college on 2 August 1774, becoming a fellow proper in 1775 after his probationary period. In Ruding’s very first year as fellow he served as sub-warden of the college, but no significance attaches to this, for the college had decided some years earlier that the college offices should rotate annually among all the fellows, however junior, and Ruding’s tenure of a variety of college positions in later years says nothing one way or the other about his competence as an administrator. The only year during his early years as a fellow in which he did not hold office was 1776, and this was no doubt because

---

1 The details of Ruding’s baptism derive from his ordination papers (Oxf. dioc. papers c. 193), ex inf. Miss S. J. Barnes, County Archivist for Oxfordshire.
3 J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (1811), IV (2), 567–69; *VCH Leics* IV (1958), 382–83; Westcotes was demolished in 1886 but there is an engraving of it in Nichols, facing p. 567.
4 Walter Ruding matriculated as an undergraduate of Merton on 10 Oct. 1734, aged seventeen, and took the degrees of B.A. 1738, M.A. 1741, B.Med. 1744 and D.Med. 1748. He lived to be the senior fellow of Merton and died on 4 Jan. 1789. Rory had also been preceded at Merton by his elder brother, another Walter, who had matriculated on 24 Nov. 1764.
5 The Warden and thirteen fellows of Merton voted at the general election of 1768 in the contest for the University seats: eleven, including the Warden, cast votes for Jenkinson and only two voted for Sir Roger Newdigate, the popular sitting Tory MP, who was re-elected at the head of the poll.
6 Mr Roger Highfield, librarian of Merton College, has very kindly supplied me with this and other information about Ruding’s college career.
7 Mr Highfield tells me that Ruding was sub-warden in 1775 and 1788, one of the college’s three bursars in 1777–81, 1783–87 and 1790–91, and one of the college’s three Deans in 1781–84 and 1787–89. Other internal college offices held by him were that of Grammar Lecturer (a sinecure) in 1775, Wylieott’s Bursar in 1779 and 1788, Chapell’s Chaplain in 1780–81 and 1783, Bickley’s Exhibitioner in 1781–82 and 1784–87, and Variator in 1781–82.
he was reading for holy orders, for he was ordained deacon in June that year by the bishop of Oxford. The Oxford diocesan papers do not reveal if he served a curacy, but when his proud father recorded his ordination as a priest the following summer, he noted that Rory 'read prayers twice at St Maries in Warwick' on the Sunday after his ordination, and it may be that Warwick, where the Rudings had family connections, was where Ruding's clerical career commenced. His career in other respects was slow to develop, and he spent the next eighteen years as a resident fellow of Merton. He does not appear to have had any tutorial responsibilities, and it is difficult to visualise how he occupied his time, although he did take the degree of bachelor of divinity in 1782 in addition to the normal M.A. degree. Shortly before Christmas 1780 his father got involved in unsatisfactory negotiations to purchase a living for Rory through a London agent; the negotiations cost Ruding senior seven guineas in fees, and he was only consoled by the fact that had the transaction gone through, the bill would have been 'as long as from here [London] to Derby'.

The reference to Derby is a pointer to the fact that Ruding's family life may not have been uneventful, for Ruding's father's diary shows that in the years 1773–81 Ruding senior was for some reason no longer living at Leicester, where he had made his house over to his elder son, but at Derby. The diary also shows that the major event in Ruding's father's year was an annual visit to London to have his accounts passed at the Exchequer, and these visits, recorded in a matter of fact way in his diary, may have their own significance for Ruding's biography. The notice on Ruding in the mid-nineteenth-century *Penny Encyclopaedia* records that when Ruding's father came to London he had to hand over the identical coins which he had received from Leicestershire taxpayers, and goes on to suggest, on the authority of one of Ruding's friends, that 'this primitive mode of transacting business may have contributed in some degree to direct the mind of his son to the subject of monetary transactions'.

There is obviously some over-simplification here, but it does seem to have been the case that receivers of taxes had to pay actual coin into the Exchequer, and if they lost financially by having these coins received by weight instead of by tale – Lowndes states that Lord Rochester had introduced such a reform when Lord Treasurer in 1685–87, and this may still have been the position a century later – the concern that Ruding shows in his writings for coin being of full weight may well stem from a recollection of difficulties experienced by his father.

In May 1788 Ruding was appointed to the college living of Wolford, between Moreton-in-Marsh and Shipston-on-Stour in the south-eastern corner of Warwickshire, but holding the living was compatible with remaining a fellow of Merton, and he continued to reside at Oxford. It was not until he received the richer college living of Maldon, Surrey, in March 1793, that he gave up his fellowship and became betrothed to his cousin, Charlotte Ruding, whom he married in May.

Maldon, where Ruding remained for the rest of his life, had two advantages for a scholar; it was within reach of London, and the clerical duties were light, there being in 1794 only seventeen houses in the parish. Ruding's income as vicar was variable, but in

---

8 Ruding was ordained deacon on 2 June 1776 and priest on 15 June 1777, on both occasions by the Bishop of Oxford.  
9 Ruding's brother-in-law, Charles Porter Packwood, was a prominent figure in the town, and Packwood's son Rogers Porter Packwood was successively a fellow of Merton and vicar of St Mary's, Warwick, early in the nineteenth century.  
11 *Penny Encyclopaedia* XX, 216–17.  
13 Ruding was appointed to the living of Great Wolford by Merton College on 7 Jan. 1788, but his official date of installation to Great Wolford was 5 May 1788 (*The State of the Bishopric of Worcester 1782–1808*, edited by Mary Ransome (1906. Worcestershire Hist. Soc. N.S.6), pp. 187–88).  
the early years of his incumbency money was not a problem, and although he may have started on the Annals just before leaving Oxford, it is clear that the move gave him the impetus to work seriously on the history of the English coinage. It may seem puzzling that a scholar should wait until he was over forty to embark on serious research, but he was not an absolute beginner at research, for the fellows of Merton, unusually for academics of that date, took a close interest in their college’s mediaeval history – bound up as it was with the history of the foundation of Oxford University – and Ruding had rummaged in the college archives to produce a list of the college’s wardens and fellows which is still preserved today in Merton College library. Indeed Walter de Merton, the college’s founder, remained an interest of Ruding’s throughout life, and his manuscript collections on Walter de Merton also survive.

Ruding’s Annals is a composite work, based partly on the evidence of coins, partly on printed sources and partly on official records. It took Ruding over twenty years to get it into the form in which it was finally published, and it is inevitable that it went through a process of gradual evolution. One of the noticeable features about the completed book is that although the bulk of it is, as one would expect, Ruding’s own work, the plates, and the explanatory text to them, have little to do with him; the plates of English mediaeval coins had been produced originally for Martin Ffolkes, and had been added to by the Society of Antiquaries for their 1763 edition of Ffolkes’s writings on the English coinage, while the plates of Anglo-Saxon coins had been engraved independently for Dr Charles Combe and Taylor Combe and were only purchased by Ruding when his book was nearing completion. Behind this lies the simple fact that Ruding was not a numismatist, as we would understand the word today, but a scholar who preferred to work from documentary evidence and regarded coins themselves as of secondary importance. But was this bias towards documentary evidence what he intended when his research began?

The best evidence that we have for the earliest stages of Ruding’s research is a small quarto notebook kept with Ruding’s papers in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Library. When it was first referred to in 1961 by Mrs Joan Martin she correctly stated that it provides a catalogue of the collection of Anglo-Saxon coins formed by the Rev. Richard Southgate, subsequently purchased as a whole by Samuel Tyssen and acquired with Tyssen’s other Anglo-Saxon coins by the British Museum in 1802. What she did not say, because it was not relevant to her immediate purposes, was that the volume also provides what is, more or less, a complete catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon silver pennies in the British Museum, and, for that matter, a catalogue of those in the Bodleian Library.
The notebook is in Ruding’s hand throughout, and as well as providing legends, weights and types for the coins in these collections, it illustrates most of them by drawings. All in all it is a remarkable piece of numismatic work. Although we do not know exactly when Ruding compiled it, Southgate’s coins are shown as Southgate’s, not as Tyssen’s, which shows that Ruding took these details of them before Tyssen purchased the coins in April 1795, and one can work out from the acknowledgements in Ruding’s preface to the Annals that the drawings of the British Museum coins were made while the Museum collection was under the supervision of Joseph Planta, i.e. before Planta’s promotion in 1799 to the rank of Principal Librarian from his previous post of Keeper of Manuscripts (which then carried with it responsibility for the Museum coins). It is obvious from the layout of the volume that the Southgate and British Museum coins were entered into it simultaneously, and I conclude that this was done before Southgate’s death in January 1795, and that it was only after that that Ruding changed the direction of his research to concentrate on documentary evidence.22

Southgate’s influence on Ruding in the 1790s went beyond just allowing Ruding to take notes of his coins, for Ruding explicitly states in his preface that it was from Southgate’s collection that he ‘first derived a practical knowledge’ of the English coinage; that Southgate’s ‘entertaining and instructive conversations’ led him to study English coins historically; and that it was by Southgate’s encouragement that he, Ruding, ‘was induced to prepare my collections for the public eye’.23 In the first draft of the manuscript of the Annals Ruding acknowledged this debt to Southgate explicitly by dedicating the book to him, but later on the original dedication to Southgate was superseded first by one to the Society of Antiquaries and eventually by the one to the Prince Regent that appears in the published work.

One final point to make in this connection is that the lists of Anglo-Saxon and Norman mints and moneyers in the Annals essentially derive from Southgate’s manuscript notes. As those who use the Annals will know, these lists of mints and moneyers are almost useless in their published form, because Ruding lists mint names and moneyers’ names separately, and does not indicate which mint names and moneyer names belong together. But I was surprised to discover, when looking at Ruding’s first draft of his manuscript, that the draft includes a long and well organised list of coins by reign and type, copied by Ruding from Southgate’s notes, giving each coin’s full reverse legend and noting the twenty-two collections in which they then were. We shall have to see how useful this list is for coin provenances – some of the collections are minor and the coins in them of little consequence – but one obviously helpful feature of it is that it lists Samuel Tyssen’s collection as it was before Tyssen acquired Southgate’s collection. This is a more

---

22 A further note on the first leaf of Ruding’s notebook reading ‘Mr Southgate. Legends from his books in which he entered the coins which he purchased in each year from 1786 to 1795 both inclusive’ seems to have led Mrs Martin both to the erroneous conclusion that the Southgate coins listed in the notebook represent that portion of Southgate’s collection acquired by him from 1786 onwards, and to the unexpressed but implicit conclusion that Ruding took details of Southgate’s coins retrospectively after Southgate’s death. In reality, the note in question was added by Ruding in a different ink after the rest of the entries on the leaf, and it does not relate to the Southgate coins drawn and described in the notebook as originally compiled, but to some rather scrappy transcriptions of coin legends inserted by Ruding as an afterthought. What must presumably have happened is that after Southgate’s death Ruding came by these notebooks of Southgate’s and entered into his own notebook any data he had missed earlier.

23 R. Ruding, Annals of the Coinage of Britain (1817), 1, xix.
interesting discovery than one might think, for although the British Museum purchased all Tyssen's Anglo-Saxon coins later on, no list as such of those owned by him before 1795 was previously known to exist, and this list will provide Tyssen provenances for various coins in the British Museum which at present only have pre-1838 provenances. Taken in conjunction with the evidence for the contents of the British Museum collection around 1795 provided by Ruding's notebook, this will involve a slight but definite rethink of the history of the British Museum's collection of Anglo-Saxon coins, for it was clearly larger at this date than was previously supposed, and Taylor Combe, who only arrived at the British Museum in 1803, will have played less of a part in its development.\textsuperscript{24}

Southgate and Ruding no doubt found each other congenial in that beyond their shared interest in coins both were clergymen and had East Midland backgrounds. After Southgate's death the scholars with whom Ruding came into contact had other interests and backgrounds, and I conclude that it was this that insensibly changed the direction of Ruding's research. It is not necessary to trace all the stages through which the book progressed, but by 1798 Ruding had obtained access to the records of the Exchequer and had written the first of a long series of contributions to the Gentleman's Magazine on coinage matters;\textsuperscript{25} in 1804 he was provided by his friend and editor John Nichols with an introduction to Samuel Lysons, Keeper of the Records in the Tower of London, and got to work on a great mass of previously untapped mediaeval documentation;\textsuperscript{26} and in the winter of 1812 he finally issued printed proposals for publishing the Annals by subscription.

Ruding's application to his research seems to have been constant throughout, although he had his share of domestic sorrows, and after the spring of 1805, when he was forced to borrow a large sum of money from Nichols,\textsuperscript{27} he was permanently in debt. He does not seem to have been an entirely easy personality, but some of the prickliness which occasionally surfaces in his contributions to the Gentleman's Magazine and in his correspondence with Nichols can be accounted for by the fact that at Maldon he was, although within reach of London, rather isolated from daily contact with people of his own status.\textsuperscript{28} It is noticeable that although in reviews and ephemeral writings he writes with unnecessary scorn about such people as Matthew Boulton, Lord Liverpool, Magens Dorrien Magens and William Stukeley, he shows in his more considered work perfectly sound judgment as to how and when to accord praise and blame.

As you will know, the Annals comprises introductory sections on such matters as the

\textsuperscript{24} It must be remembered that when Dolley and Mrs Martin (then Strudwick) compiled information on the provenances of the Anglo-Saxon coins acquired by the British Museum before proper registration of accessions began in 1838, they did so without knowledge of much manuscript material that came to light soon afterwards, and although Mrs Martin took account of this material in an appendix to her paper in Anglo-Saxon Coins cited above, there are still a number of further corrections necessary to the provenances suggested for pre-1838 acquisitions by Dolley and herself in BNJ 28 (1955-57), 26-59.

\textsuperscript{25} Ruding's first contribution to GM on a numismatic subject appears to have been a letter dated 11 July 1796 printed GM LXVI, pt ii (1796), 639-40, with an accompanying plate, and referring to two sterlings of John the Blind found in digging the foundations of Oxford Town Hall in 1751, coins of Stephen and Richard III in Southgate's collection, etc. This and a number of other contributions by him to GM are signed 'R.' or 'R.R.' rather than printed under his full name, and a definitive list of Ruding's published pieces in GM remains to be compiled. Ruding's surviving correspondence with John Nichols, cited below, shows that in addition to signed articles he was responsible for reviews of an 1804 pamphlet by Magens Dorrien Magens and of Lord Liverpool's 1805 book on the coinage. He may also have been the author of a letter signed by the pseudonym 'No Money' printed GM LXXIV, pt i (1804), 516-17: the views expressed in it are views critical of Matthew Boulton which Ruding is known to have held, and although the tone of the letter is stronger than that of similar letters printed under Ruding's initials later in the same year, that may well explain why it appeared pseudonymously.

\textsuperscript{26} See Ruding to Nichols, 7 May 1804, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. lett. c. 364, ff. 96-97.


\textsuperscript{28} Sixty-six letters from Ruding to Nichols, dating between 5 Jan 1791 and 13 May 1819, survive among a volume of Nichols's papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. lett. c. 364, ff. 82-201. Two further letters of less significance are in MS. Eng. lett. c. 372, f. 186, and MS. Eng. lett. h. 19, while one other letter (see note 27 above) is in MS. Don. d. 90, ff. 46-47.
history of money, the constitution of the Mint, and the denominations and fineness of the coinage, and Ruding then embarks not on a narrative history of the coinage, but on a reign-by-reign account of it, in which the events of each reign relevant to the coinage are arranged in chronological order by year. This gives his book, as Dr Challis has observed to me, rather the appearance of a mediaeval chronicle, but if it looks like a mediaeval chronicle it is not particularly because Ruding wanted it to look like a chronicle. At one level, it looks as it does simply because Ruding did not possess the literary and historical skills to string his material together into a continuous narrative. At another level, the book's arrangement probably owes something to the enthusiasm of Ruding's contemporaries for the compilation of county histories; the way in which Ruding's book begins with general introductory remarks subdivided by subject, and proceeds to sections on each reign and ultimately to sections on the mints of each county, is not dissimilar to the arrangement of a county history – general remarks first, then separate sections on each hundred and each parish – and it is relevant that Ruding's closest antiquarian friends – Nichols, William Bray, Richard Gough, Samuel Lysons – were all county historians or topographical writers. I note in passing that it was William Bray, Samuel Lysons and Craven Ord of the Exchequer who put Ruding up for the Society of Antiquaries, to which he was elected on 11 June 1807.\textsuperscript{29}

We can reconstruct in some detail from Ruding's surviving manuscripts and from the text of the \textit{Annals} itself the way in which Ruding put his book together. Some of the sources that he used were readily accessible ones – the Harleian and Lansdowne MSS in the British Museum, the collection of Tudor proclamations in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, the existing printed literature on the history of the coinage – but it was not easy for a scholar at that date to work on the mediaeval records kept in the Exchequer Office, the chapter house of Westminster Abbey or the Tower of London, and Ruding's achievement in winning the confidence of the relevant officials and extracting from these records as much as he did deserves every praise.

In writing the more recent history of the coinage, Ruding was under the disadvantage that he never obtained access to the Mint's own records; this was not really his or the Mint's fault, for he clearly could not have been given access to the Mint's very recent records, and there was no administrative division within the Mint's archives between modern and not so modern material. But Martin Ffolkes, writing on the English coinage half a century earlier, had done rather better, for Ffolkes had had friends at the Mint,\textsuperscript{30} and although Ffolkes's account of the coinage of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is less full than Ruding's, Ffolkes's narrative is a more coherent one. That said, Ruding managed to find a mass of information about the coinage here and there in the literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and his citations from this literature – more familiar to him and to his contemporaries than it is to us today – are of lasting value. In ferreting out obscure pieces of information from published sources, Ruding's principal encouragement seems to have come from Richard Gough, until shortly before Director of the Society of Antiquaries and still the dominating figure in the correspondence columns of the \textit{Gentleman's Magazine}, who appears to have visited Ruding at Maldon on one eagerly anticipated day in September 1798, and whom Ruding thanks in the \textit{Annals} for 'uninterrupted acts of friendship from the first moment of my acquaintance with him'.\textsuperscript{31} Indeed, if any one scholar influenced Ruding most after

\textsuperscript{29} I owe this date to the kindness of Mr J. H. Hopkins, librarian of the Society of Antiquaries. Ruding had been nominated for election on 30 April 1807.

\textsuperscript{30} M. Ffolkes, \textit{A Table of English Silver Coins from the Norman Conquest to the Present Time} (1745), p. 112.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Annals}, I, xx.
Southgate’s death, it was no doubt Gough, whose historical and topographical publications concentrate, like Ruding’s, on the accurate recording of information.  

Ruding was capable of bringing critical analysis to bear on the information that he collected, and here and there in the Annals one can see that he was stimulated into thinking a problem through, usually because a previous writer had interpreted the evidence wrongly. More often, though, he contents himself with citing a piece of evidence, expressing some mild degree of doubt about it, and then moving on to the next fact that he had come by: for the function of the Annals was to record, as Ruding puts it, ‘the nummary transactions in each reign’, and the mere task of arranging facts about the coinage under their proper reign and year was enough for any scholar to grapple with.

Although Ruding does not express a general philosophy of history, he does cite from Hume’s History of England the dictum, borrowed by Hume from the standard history of the Council of Trent, that ‘every book should be as compleat as possible within itself, & should never refer, for anything material, to other books’, as a justification for the length of the Annals, and he shows himself fully aware of the need for a scholar to give references for his statements; the two unnamed individuals whom he castigates in the Annals for ‘ungentlemanlike and illiberal conduct’ were two county historians who had made loose statements about the coinage, and had failed to reply to Ruding’s letters asking them what the evidence was upon which their statements were founded.

He also shows himself a proper historian in the impartiality which he brings to the discussion of controversial historical topics; his account of the coinage of the English Civil War and Commonwealth period is quite admirable in this respect. He does let himself go a little over the later Stuart kings – it is understandable enough that he should have taken a negative view of James II, but surprising that he should also have taken a negative view of Charles II – and here it is no doubt relevant that the Ruding family was a Whig family and that while Rogers Ruding was writing the Annals his elder brother Walter was putting up the money for the local Radical newspaper at Leicester and carrying on the family tradition of losing parliamentary elections as the Whig candidate there. How long Rogers remained a Whig in the party sense is open to question – in February 1804, when George III had recently gone mad again, Ruding was Tory enough to think it ‘truly alarming’ that the king had been ‘taken from us at this awful crisis’ – but Ruding’s Whig upbringing evidently invested him with what we would nowadays call a social conscience, and no doubt accounts for one surprising feature of the Annals.

I have mentioned earlier on the suggestion in the Penny Encyclopaedia that Ruding was led to write the Annals as a consequence of his early memories of his father’s dealings with the Exchequer, and I have indicated that there may be some grain of truth in that. What is certain is that later on Ruding hit upon a deeper justification for writing the Annals. Although this is hinted at on the title page of the first volume of the Annals, more explicitly referred to in the dedication of the Annals, and signalled at some length in the preface to the Annals, what Ruding precisely had in mind is not explained until the reader gets to a section headed ‘Conclusion’ at the end of his second volume, and even there he does not set out his ideas very clearly. To understand what he is driving at, it is necessary to turn to

32 Gough was himself interested in numismatics, publishing an account of the 1772 Caldale hoard of coins of Cnut referred to earlier, and forming a respectable collection of coins which was part of a sale by Leigh and Sotheby of his possessions 19-21 July 1810. Gough’s copy of the Society of Antiquaries’ 1763 edition of Ffolkes’s writings on the coinage is in the present writer’s possession, and carries a number of annotations in Gough’s hand.

33 Annals, I, v.

34 Annals, I, vi.

35 At Annals, II, 336, he refers unfavourably to Charles II’s ‘indulgence in licentious excesses’.

36 VCH Leics IV, 136, 139.


38 Annals, II, 527-32.
a pamphlet which he published at his own expense in 1798 under the title *A proposal for restoring the antient constitution of the Mint so far as relates to the expense of coinage, together with a plan for the improvement of money, and for increasing the difficulties of counterfeiting.*

The immediate cause for this pamphlet was as a response to a pamphlet by the banker Magens Dorriens Magens – both he and his pamphlet are discussed in an excellent paper by our Director and Professor Gaspar in our *Journal* for 1982 – and part of the pamphlet is merely devoted to detailed criticism by Ruding of Magens's scheme for a silver recoinage. More constructively, Ruding argues for the reimposition by the Mint of a charge for converting bullion into coin, since that would produce a substantial revenue for the state and would incidentally do away with one of the disadvantages of free coinage, which was that since the state derived no financial benefit from the coining operation, "it was not very probable that it would adopt vigorous measures to prevent a want of circulating cash until the pressure of that want should be extreme". In the final pages of the pamphlet he turns to his own plan for a silver recoinage, and this has four elements. First, it should be on the existing standard of fineness. Secondly, the weight of the coins should be reduced by about 2½ per cent to pay for the expense of coining them. Thirdly, "the breadth of the shilling should be considerably reduced and thus brought to a nearer resemblance in form to the Roman denarius; by which at least one-third of the loss by rubbing will be saved. . . . the head shall have a considerable relief. . . . and. . . . the reverse shall be made. . . . somewhat concave, in order to preserve the impress thereon". Lastly, he argues that the best defence against counterfeiting is "superiority of execution" and that an effort must be made to improve on the "wretched workmanship" of the present coinage. These ideas of Ruding's may sound somewhat simplistic, but by the time that he wrote the *Annals* he had convinced himself that if the *Annals* convinced his readership that the key to the prevention of counterfeiting was not the punishment of counterfeiters but the prevention of the act of counterfeiting by coinage reforms such as he had favoured in 1798, "I shall then think that I have not lived nor laboured in vain, since I shall have removed some portion of temptation to evil, and thereby shall have preserved many of my fellow creatures from the commision of crime". In the same passage he expresses the general proposition that it is "the duty of every legislature to attend to the prevention, rather than the punishment of offences". I leave this discussion of the *Annals* on that very humanitarian note.

It remains to say that the *Annals* finally came out in four quarto volumes, three of text and one of plates, in the summer of 1817. Although they sold well, and quickly went out of print, Ruding had already spent the subscription money that had been coming in since 1812, and the state of his finances took away some of the pleasure that he must have felt at the public's warm reception of his book. He set to work undaunted on a new edition, published in the following year, and brought right up to date with details of the silver recoinage of 1817; but this edition was issued in a cheaper format by a consortium of commercial publishers, and Ruding's financial returns from it cannot have been large. By then Ruding had lost both his sons in tragic circumstances – his son Clifton had died in a domestic accident at the age of three and his remaining son Skrymsher was drowned in the
Thames at Oxford when an undergraduate there—it and that perhaps made it of less consequence that when he died after a short illness on 16 February 1820 he was deeply in debt.

The most substantial asset in the estate was his library, which his executors were compelled to sell to the booksellers Payne and Foss by private treaty; this in itself makes a melancholy footnote to Ruding’s biography, for we have a vivid glimpse of him in happier days walking up and down with Richard Gough in Gough’s garden at Enfield and discussing the ultimate fate of their libraries in more expansive terms. But although Ruding’s library had to be sold, and did not even achieve the distinction of being listed in an auction sale catalogue, Payne and Foss did pay £775 for it, and this and other expedients enabled Ruding’s executors to pay Ruding’s secured creditors in full, and to pay 3s. in the pound to his unsecured ones.

Ruding is not entirely without his memorials today—his portrait still hangs in the warden’s residence at Merton, and his collection of working papers for the Annals, kept back at first by the family when the rest of his library was sold, has been in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum since 1850—but the only memorial of him that really counts is the Annals, and whether you read it in the first edition, the second edition, in the third edition edited by J. Y. Akerman and published in 1840, remember Rogers Ruding as you do so.

---

42 For the circumstances of Clifton Ruding’s death see Ruding to Nichols, 26 Mar. 1805 (cited above, note 27) and for Skrymsher Ruding’s death see Ruding to Nichols, 15 Jun. 1816, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. lett. c. 364, f. 198. Ruding had two daughters, Charlotte and Harriet, both living unmarried at his death; Harriet subsequently married her cousin John Ruding Stephens, who died in 1852 without leaving issue.


45 It is listed as item 172 on p. 84 of Illustrated Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Portraits of English Historical Personages who Died between 1714 and 1837. Exhibited in the Examination Schools, Oxford April and May, MDCCCCVI (Oxford, 1906), and illustrated on plate xix.

46 For discussion over the proper destination of Ruding’s manuscript collections for the Annals see J. C. Ruding to Nichols, 30 Nov. 1821, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Eng. lett. c. 364, f. 79. An accompanying list of them is at f.78.