C. E. BLUNT 1904–1987

CHRISTOPHER Evelyn Blunt, who died on 20 November, 1987, had for more than forty years been the leading figure in British numismatics, and in our Society in particular. None of its members can ever have been held in such universal affection and respect. He was President of the Society from 1946 to 1950, and of the Royal Numismatic Society from 1957 to 1961, and he received the medals of the two Societies in 1951 and 1969 respectively. He was the first person to become in turn President of both Societies, thus finally healing the rift which had led to the foundation of a separate society for the study of British numismatics in 1903. For almost half his life, from 1935 to 1971, he was the principal editor of our Journal and he was also the prime founder of the Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, of which some forty volumes had been produced under his guidance since 1958. Among the many honours which he received were election to the British Academy (1965) and the medal of the American Numismatic Society (1974), the first and only time it has been awarded for achievement in English numismatics.

A long and perceptive appreciation of Christopher Blunt’s career to 1974 was written by Derek Allen for vol. 42 of this Journal published in honour of his seventieth birthday, accompanied by a bibliography of his works compiled by R. H. Thompson which was updated ten years later (BNJ 1983). Mr Thompson has appended a third instalment to this notice. I shall not therefore repeat what has already been written about Christopher Blunt, but rather attempt to make an assessment of his numismatic career in retrospect and to say something of the personality and character which enabled him to achieve so much.

Blunt began to take a serious interest in coins as a schoolboy at Marlborough with the encouragement of John Shirley Fox, whose wonderful collection of later mediaeval English coins he was to inherit in 1939. The Fox brothers published their classic account of the Edwardian sterling coinage in the Journal in 1910–13, and it was in part Shirley Fox’s idea that Blunt should choose the related but distinct issues of the Berwick mint for his first significant numismatic undertaking, on which he read a paper to the Royal Numismatic Society in 1929. The first half of this century saw great activity in relation to English coinage from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, by scholars and collectors such as G. C. Brooke, L. A. Lawrence, F. A. Walters, the Foxes and Raymond Carlyon-Britton. After Berwick, Blunt turned his attention to the very rare issues of Henry IV and Edward V, and then to the longer and relatively neglected reign of Edward IV. Having bought Shirley Fox’s coins of Edward IV, he built this up into a very comprehensive student’s series of the reign as the basis of his joint work with C. A. Whitten which, after being held up by the war, eventually appeared in vol. 25 of the Journal (1946–8). Although he returned to later mediaeval subjects from time to time, his active work on this period was now largely complete.

The Grantley sale of 1943–5 released onto the market a considerable number of Anglo-Saxon coins and Blunt from this time increasingly directed his attention to collecting and working on English coinage during the two centuries from Offa to Edgar. His earliest publication on Anglo-Saxon coins was a brief item in the Numismatic Chronicle for 1943, followed by a trickle of notes in the following years before his first major paper appeared in
1953, a report on the 1950 Chester hoard of the tenth century written jointly with R. H. M. Dolley, who was to play an important part in the revival of interest in the Anglo-Saxon coinage in the fifties and sixties. For the next ten years Blunt concentrated mainly on the coinages of the late eighth and ninth centuries, with fundamental papers on Ecgberht (1957), Alfred (1959 and 1960 with Dolley), Offa (1960) and the Mercian, Kentish and West Saxon kings from 796 to 840 (1963 with Lyon and Stewart).

While Dolley's interests became increasingly concentrated on the coinages of Ethelred and Cnut, Blunt was turning towards the complex and difficult issues of the tenth century before Edgar's reform. For the most part unlovely to look at, with little variety of type and few mint names, the English coinage of this period had been generally neglected by both students and collectors. Blunt had been gradually compiling a card index of specimens since shortly after the war, and work on the Chester hoard, together with the new material available from the Tetney (1945) and Iona (1950) hoards, had convinced him that the whole series was in need of systematic attention. As soon as the 796–840 paper was completed he decided that the reign of Athelstan, the only one before the reform on which mint names generally occur, and conveniently positioned mid-way between Alfred and Edgar, should be his next priority. His monograph on Athelstan's coinage, one of the great landmarks in Anglo-Saxon numismatics, was eventually published in 1974. Already he was working on other areas of tenth-century coinage, with publications on the Viking St Edmund series (1969), the moneyers of Edgar (1971, with von Feilitzen), the origins of various individual mints such as Northampton, Hertford and Stafford (1971–3), and several relevant hoards. He had also written on the crowned bust coins of Edmund (1971) and after 'Athelstan' was completed he planned to deal with the main types of the subsequent kings. This quickly developed into a project to cover the whole of the remaining coinage between the death of Alfred in 899 and the reform of the coinage in the early 970s, late in the reign of Edgar. Fortunately and advisedly, the British Museum chose to make its collection from Athelstan to Edgar the subject of its first Sylloge volume devoted to the English coinage, and this splendid book, in which Blunt collaborated with Miss Archibald, was published in 1986. The main work, written jointly with Mr Lyon and myself, is in the press, the corrected proofs having been handed to me by its principal author less than two weeks before he died.

Blunt had a much wider knowledge of coinage outside his particular areas of specialisation than most students today. During the 1930s and 1940s, especially after the Grantley sales, he put together a substantial collection of European mediaeval coins, and although he wrote very little directly about continental coinage his familiarity with it informed his work. He was also interested in some of the general aspects of numismatics, writing on forgery (1955), early collecting (1947), manuscript evidence (1958, 1976), the historical dimension of Anglo-Saxon coinage (1969) and ecclesiastical coinage (1960–1). His Presidential addresses to the Royal Numismatic Society on Anglo-Saxon numismatics (1958–9) were a most valuable survey of the state of the subject in the early years of revived interest, while his later contributions to the periodic surveys published by the International Numismatic Congress are models of their kind (1972, 1978).

Blunt was one of the first to recognise the importance of a thorough reappraisal of hoard evidence, particularly for the Anglo-Saxon period, and he encouraged J. D. A. Thompson to produce his Inventory of British Coin Hoards (1955) which gave the whole subject a new impetus. He himself wrote extensively about the contents of Anglo-Saxon and other hoards, so many of the most important of which were found long ago and dispersed without proper record: most notably Hougham (1979), Sevington (1972), Dorking (1972), Trewiddle (1955, 1961), Alfred hoards (1959), Cuerdale (1983), Bangor (1954), Bossall (1983), St Peter hoards (1979), Bath and Kintbury (1975), Smarmore (1953), Douglas (1966), Oakham (1979), Shillington (1977), and various finds of the Stephen period
OBITUARIES

(1968–9). The run of early sale catalogues in his library gave him a unique opportunity to investigate the activities of collectors during the Antiquarian period of English numismatics, and his card index of coins from Offa to Edgar incorporates an enormous fund of information which he carefully assembled over the years, and drew on in his writing. With typical generosity, such information was made fully available to other students, and by this means Blunt’s own research contributed materially to almost everything of consequence that has been written on the early English penny coinage during the last thirty years and more. He was always ready to give time and thought to enquiries from those who approached him for comments or advice. Much of this was a natural extension of his work as editor of the Journal and as principal editor of the Sylloge. His thoroughness and attention to detail, coupled with the practical efficiency of a merchant banker accustomed to getting company prospectuses agreed and printed, equipped him ideally for these editorial tasks. When he took over the Journal in 1935 its publication was in arrears and its standards of scholarship shaky. Its revival as a serious academic periodical and the high quality of the post-war Sylloge series are in large part due to Blunt’s own foresight and determination, and they represent one of his most important achievements.

Blunt was one of relatively few personalities in English numismatics who had been active in the twenties and thirties and whose career extended well into the post-war period. His reminiscences of some of the key figures of the first half of the century, Shirley Fox, Walters, Lawrence, Brooke, Lockett, Grantley and others, published in vol. 46 of the Journal, make fascinating reading; and they are supplemented by his obituaries of several who are known to our generation only as names. It was Blunt above all who provided a strand of continuity between their world and ours, and who, as Editor, Director, President and Vice-President, guided the affairs of our Society out of the doldrums of the thirties into a new era of vigorous advance. He has fairly been described as the second founder of the British Numismatic Society. None of this would have been possible without his particular personal qualities. He was far-sighted in his plans and persistent in putting them into practice. In his dealings with others he was invariably tactful, courteous and diplomatic. Not the least of the reasons for our debt to him is the patience and stoicism with which he managed for so long to harness the energies of his creative but erratic colleague Michael Dolley, until that sadly became impossible even for him.

As a scholar, Blunt ranks with the foremost exponents of our subject. Only perhaps Lawrence, Brooke and Allen in this century can be compared with him for both range and quality. His work is characterised by the most careful attention to detail; by the thoroughness with which he assembled the available material; and by the control and balance with which he presented it and assessed it. His modesty sometimes led him to give greater weight to the views of others than they deserved and this reinforced his natural cautiousness of approach. He was not himself, and did not pretend to be, a great innovator of ideas, but he had the important and far from universal virtue of allowing the story to emerge from intensive study of the material rather than looking for evidence to sustain a theory. It was exactly the method that was needed to bring order out of the confused state that applied to the arrangement of the earlier Anglo-Saxon coinage when he began to disentangle it, and it was greatly strengthened by the way in which he opened up the subject by drawing on the resources of archaeologists, historians and philologists (and incidentally offering them much in return). How he managed to undertake so much editorial work in addition to his own research in the years before his own retirement from the City in 1964 is a mystery to me. I can only assume that it was a combination of immense application and a high degree of organisation. After his retirement his published and editorial output was even greater. Towards the end of his life these things became still more important to him, sustaining him in 1979 through the terrible shock of revelations about the activities of his younger brother Anthony, of whom he had been so proud, and
the death of his wife Elisabeth only a few months afterwards. He had always been happy in his home life and his family, and many numismatists, young and old, scholars and collectors, from home and abroad, can testify to the hospitality which Christopher and Elisabeth, and latterly Christopher alone, delighted to offer his guests at Ramsbury. By that means, as well as the great body of his own writing, the inspiration and encouragement that he extended to so many others will long endure.

IAN STEWART

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS OF
CHRISTOPHER EVELYN BLUNT
SUPPLEMENT

compiled by

R. H. THOMPSON


A. PUBLISHED BOOKS AND PAPERS

1983


1985


(b–c) ‘Was there an Anglo-Saxon mint at Neatishead in Norfolk?’, *NCirc* 93 no. 7 (Sep 1985), 223; correction, 93 no. 8 (Oct 1985), 260.

1986


1987


Forthcoming


(b) ‘Coins from the Winchester excavations of 1961–71’, by C. E. Blunt and Michael Dolley, in The Winchester mint and other numismatic studies, by Yvonne Harvey et al. (Winchester studies, 8).

(c) ‘The Cuerdale coins’, by Marion M. Archibald and C. E. Blunt, in The Cuerdale hoard and related Viking-Age silver from Britain and Ireland in the British Museum, by James Graham-Campbell.

(d) ‘A purse’ of six coins from the Thames, lost c.910’. [Completed?]

(e) ‘Some notes on the mints of Wilton and Salisbury’, by C. E. Blunt and C. S. S. Lyon.
ROY Neville Playfair Hawkins died peacefully at Rottingdean on Friday, 6 March 1987, in his seventieth year. After a heart attack in May 1986 he made a spectacular recovery to c. 1980 form and his sudden death was a sad shock for his family and friends.

The notice of his death in The Times for 10 March described him as a numismatist rather than as a retired civil servant. It is as a numismatist that he will be particularly remembered, as he contributed so much to that discipline and its devotees. In Dennis Vorley’s appreciation in Spink’s Numismatic Circular (September 1987, p.222) we get a feel for the breadth of Roy’s knowledge, his thirst for research, his erudition and his willingness to help the serious student.

Roy, who was born in Northampton (14 June 1917), first took an interest in coins as a schoolboy, and successive awards to him by Northampton (Town and County) School were Bramah’s Guide to English Regal Copper Coins, Kent’s Valuation of British Coins and Tokens, and Skelton’s 1862 Manual of Gold and Silver Coins of all Civilized Nations (Faulkner Prize, 1935). His first collection was donated to Northampton Museum. Unusually, at school he learned Dutch, and subsequently his linguistic skills helped many contributions in his particular fields. A translation by him on minting at Gorinchem, 1584–91, is in the British Museum, as is another from the Spanish of Fontecha y Sánchez (1968) on seventeenth-century Spanish countermarked copper. His interests covered French tokens and minor German coinages and he was happy to accept challenges from fellow numismatists such as reading a seventeenth-century Russian seal or a nineteenth-century Greek medallion! Other early influences were the issue (c. 1914–31) of a cardboard advertising token by his maternal grandfather, George Henry Eldridge, a Ramsgate grocer, and a copper check (by Sale of Birmingham) for the family firm (probably 1920s) of boot and shoe manufacturers and leather merchants. [Waukerz, brand name owned by G. T. Hawkins Ltd]

While it is as a numismatist that we shall remember Roy, his working life in the civil
service (1936–77) will have been a factor in moulding his thorough and detailed approach to his subject. Initially in the War Office, he was later concerned with such matters as the sale of airport land. During the Second World War he was in the Intelligence Corps at Bletchley Park, being a colleague of the late Stuart Rigold, with whom he went on ‘coin-hunting’ expeditions. He worked for several years in the same building as A. H. Baldwin, but only met him three or four times. Latterly he was at St George’s House, Waterloo Road.

A sensitive man, easily hurt, and not one to push himself forward, he was slow to join other than his local numismatic societies. In 1947 he helped to found the London Numismatic Club, to whose proceedings he actively contributed for a quarter of a century. He terminated his membership in 1975 following a disagreement over the suitability for a mixed audience of Dionysiac scenes on Greek coins and vases. He was a member from the beginning of the Surrey Numismatic Society (1961), subsequently becoming President. Although he had exhibited at a meeting of this society in 1957, when Dr Kent read a paper on ‘Medley Halfpence’, and contributed to the 1960 British Numismatic Journal, he did not apply for membership until 1965. He served as a member of the Council from 1973 to 1976, and 1980 to 1983. Similarly, although he published his first major paper in the 1959 Numismatic Chronicle, it was not until 1983 that he became a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society. At the end of 1986 he joined the Crystal Palace Foundation, highly appropriate for one so knowledgeable about the numismatic by-products of the 1851 and 1862 exhibitions.

His Catholic faith was important to him. He kept in regular contact with his local historically-minded curate and assembled a group of Catholic medals associated with schools he knew or with which he had some connection.

As with his work, his faith may have contributed to the complexity of his character. It ought to be mentioned, in case it led to omissions in what he published, that, after the murder of Lord Mountbatten, he felt compelled to sever relations with all Irish people.

He could take strong views – he was worried about Puritans and refused to acquire a medal because the restaurant depicted catered for freemasons; fulsome in his encouragement of the publication of research if matching his own high standards even if, necessarily, it was incomplete, he was scathing of superficiality, or lack of acknowledgement of, or knowledge of, existing studies.

Roy lived in South Croydon until 1982, when he moved to Rottingdean. To those who could not visit him he was readily accessible by pen or telephone. To visitors, telephone callers and correspondents, his intimate knowledge of his sources and remarkable student’s library were impressive. His books, notes, and, more important, the relevant material to the specific query were always immediately to hand.

Roy probably pioneered for numismatics the disciplined exploitation of local directories, use of registered designs and other nineteenth-century sources. Hence the immense labour and detail of his works such as ‘To Hanover’ medalets (1959), ‘Minor products of British nineteenth-century diesinking’ (1960), ‘Advertisement imitations of “Spade” guineas’ (1963 et seq), ‘Four Studies of British metallic tickets’ (1975) and ‘Birmingham public houses which issued checks’ (1978). His meticulous and major investigation of nineteenth-century makers (1960 et seq) is, happily, to be published in one accessible volume.

His contributions are much greater than his principal articles and books, as will be seen from the bibliography below. Those who acknowledged the assistance of Roy Hawkins range from Fred Pridmore on British Commonwealth Coinage, George Fuld and Russell Rulau on United States tokens, Robert Bell on Unofficial Farthings, Granvyl Hulse on Lebanese and Ethiopian coinage, and even Christopher Blunt on Cuerdale.

Less tangible but no less valuable are the files of correspondence and notes of telephone conversations held by his many friends and fellow numismatists, not to mention the
unrecorded conversations in the pub after British Numismatic Society meetings. So many found him an obvious source for such a wide span of information, ranging from minor European coinages to French mining tickets, railway history, Latin American tokens and latterly, the paranumismatica of Brighton. His correspondence was immense, and disciplined – his normal practice was to reply by return. Closer examination of this correspondence, full of footnotes and postscripts, packed with information and impossible to file other than by author, shows his love of languages and of words. The latter he indulged daily in The Times crossword and, more generally one remembers his concern at the mis-spelling or mis-use of words, even in The Times! Coupled with his whimsical humour, this led to gems such as the free translation of a well-known American dealer’s name as a ‘well-heeled Dook’ (Rich Hartzog). He could not resist challenges such as nineteenth-century discs bearing initials – telephone calls were often of a ‘Eureka’ nature, proudly proclaiming a solution, seeking views on a solution, or posing further problems.

Fortunately, Roy’s research notes and correspondence are destined for Birmingham City Museum, so this wealth of material will be available to a wider audience.

At our March 1987 meeting, our president Hugh Pagan said that Roy Hawkins would be missed as a friend and as a scholar. Long after his friends have passed on, his work will guide generations of numismatists to come. His masterpiece now in preparation for publication will be a most fitting memorial; it is tragic that he did not live to see it on the bookshelves.

J. G. SCOTT
R. H. THOMPSON

PUBLICATIONS OF R. N. P. HAWKINS

It is hoped that the main publications have been found; but there might have been more, for example, than the one letter in Coins and Medals. They are divided into A, Primary publications; B, Exhibitions, letters, notes and queries, identified contributions to the work of others; and C, Reviews. The following additional abbreviations are employed:

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>LNCNL</td>
<td>News Letter – London Numismatic Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCSGB</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Pub Check Study Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAMSI</td>
<td>Journal of the Token and Medal Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCSB</td>
<td>Bulletin – Token Corresponding Society</td>
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A. PRIMARY PUBLICATIONS

‘Ferdinand de Bourbon [king of the Two Sicilies 1759–1825]’, LNCNL 1(9), June 1950, 87–9.
‘Frozen dates, etc.’, LNCNL 2(9), Sept. 1955, 134–5.
‘This and that: [broad rimmed copper, and groups of long reigns]’, LNCNL 2(13), Sept. 1956, 188–90.
‘To Hanover’ 1837 and similar card counters’, LNCNL 2(17), Sept. 1957, 257–60. [See also NC 1959].

‘Minor products of British 19th-century diesinking’, LNCNL 3(4), June 1959, 63–9. [See also BNJ 1960].
‘Another bird countermark’, NCirc 68 (1960), 238.


-- Some corrections, SCMB (1965), 334–5.
Four studies of British metallic tickets and commercial checks of the 19th–20th centuries, Doris Stockwell memorial papers, 2 (London, 1975), [3], 62pp. [School counters for marks of merit; Tickets of a shipbuilding firm at London Docks; Birmingham-made bagatelle tables depicted on checks of public houses; Accounting checks used in barbers' saloons.]

— Amendment list no. 1, TCSB 2(12), Dec. 1976, 229–32.

Guide list of public houses and beer shops and their proprietors featured on metallic checks issued within 1830–1910 in Birmingham and Smethwick (Birmingham 1978 i.e. 1979). 129pp. [Cover title 'Public house checks of Birmingham and Smethwick.]


— Correction, SCMB (1985) 277.

— Catalogue of Leicestershire tickets, checks and passes [i.e. Leicestershire Museums, Catalogue of the collection of tickets, checks and passes . . . by Antony Gunstone]: attributions and corrections, compiled from collectors' advice, PCSGB no. 9, June 1986, 29–31.

— Further comments on the Leicester catalogue, PCSGB no. 10, Sept. 1986, 18–19.


— A mould for counterfeit George III shillings, SCMB (1986), 171.


— Signed English calendar medals, SCMB (1987), 7–8.

B. EXHIBITIONS, LETTERS, NOTES AND QUERIES, IDENTIFIED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORK OF OTHERS

— A good Euro[pean], LNCNL 1(3), Nov. 1948, 24–5. [On post-medieval European copper coins.]

— Colonial fractions of dollar, SCMB (1949), 14.

— A box taler, LNCNL 1(11), Dec. 1950, 121.

— Marks on cupro-nickel coins, SCMB (1951), 195.

— Czechoslovakian coins, SCMB (1953), 455.

— [Portus et ara tuis' medal by Halliday unidentified], NCirc 63 (1955), col. 476.

— "Portus et ara tuis" [medal to commemorate Plymouth Dock being renamed Devonport, 1824], NCirc 94 (1956), col. 12.

— [Public-house checks of the Phoenix, Smith Street, Chelsea], LNCNL 3(17), Sept. 1962, 250.
C. REVIEWS

New illustrated manual of the current gold and silver coins of all civilized nations of the globe, by H.P. Skelton, c.1862, LNCNL 1(17), June 1952, 205–6.

Histoire monétaire et numismatique contemporaine, 1, by Jean Mazard, NC 7th ser. 5 (1965), 270–5.