This book represents a brave attempt to provide a general survey of the history of coin manufacture, accessible to historians, engineers and the interested layman as well as numismatists. It is essentially divided chronologically into three sections: to AD 1500; 1500–1780 and 1780 to the present, corresponding to the periods of manual operations, early machine coinings and the modern industrial age. Within these the various processes of coin manufacture are generally discussed in separate chapters. The book’s main strengths lie in its readability and the number and range of the illustrations — the result partly of the author’s extensive travels, visiting European mints and examining the actual machines used in them. In bringing these to our attention alongside more familiar images the author has done a great service. Add his great practical knowledge of modern minting and the result should stand us in good stead for quite some time: it is already hailed as a ‘standard work’.

The second half, chapters 12–19, covering 1780–1939, and 20 (a coda on post-war minting) are, as may be expected, authoritative and full of information, though a case could be made for clearer explanatory diagrams, especially of presses such as Uhlhorn’s. It is in the earlier chapters, which deal with less well documented periods, that we encounter problems. In short, while there is much of value, there are too many vague, unsupported or incorrect statements which might mislead the unwary. To take a few of the more obvious, mainly British, examples:

- p. 17: endpiece: the mural in the House of the Vettii may be nothing to do with coining.
- p. 34: the ‘earliest surviving English trial plate’ of 1279 has recently been shown to be a fragment of a monetary ingot.
- pp. 41–2: Elizabeth I’s visit to ‘all her mynts’ means just that — Tower I, Tower II and Mestrell’s operation.
- p. 47: Briot’s main techniques at Edinburgh were Taschenwerk and the screw press, as correctly stated on pp. 65–6. Briot did use Walzenprägung for the ‘Stirling’ turners of the 1630s, which are not mentioned. (Briot’s work in Paris and London is treated very sketchily throughout);
- p. 54: there is no evidence from the coins that Mestrelle used a collar (quite the opposite) — the author’s reconstruction of his methods is distinctly implausible;
- p. 61: on cylindrical dies: ‘the engravings must have worn out rapidly in service . . .’ This is possible, but Moser and Tursky (Die Münzstätte Hall in Tirol 1477–1665, Innsbruck 1977, p. 128) tell us that high outputs, of 50,000 or more Marks of silver per set of dies, were achieved late in the sixteenth century. Flaws are regularly to be seen on the products of rotary coining, but these appear to be the result of the loss of small flakes of metal at an early stage, leaving damaged but serviceable and stable dies.

There is much to enjoy elsewhere: bas-reliefs (pp. 22–4), Klipwerk and tilt-hammers (pp. 74–8), for instance. Since no other is likely to appear, it will for a long time form the standard reference on the subject.
It is a considerable achievement, but readers should be aware of its shortcomings and accordingly cautious in using it.

EDWARD BESLY


This book is intended to replace R. P. Mack's The Coinage of Ancient Britain (1953, revised 1964 and 1975), which had in turn replaced John Evans's The Coins of the Ancient Britons (1864-90). It has four main sections. The first section provides some fifty pages of introductory material; the second is the catalogue, and runs to some 400 pages; it is followed by concordances, a list of hoards, maps, bibliography, etc. (150 pages); finally come the fifty-four plates, which group together in one place all the illustrations (mostly clear) which had also been printed in the body of the catalogue.

'The appearance of Bob Van Arsdell's Celtic Coinage of Britain is an event of considerable importance in Celtic coin studies... In bringing together an impressive battery of analytical techniques, he has placed the study on a new, and scientifically sound, footing... What is presented here is a well-ordered, well-dated series from which the clutter of old preconceptions has been totally stripped,' So the eminent author of the foreword. A review cannot, of course, look at every part of such a long book as this, and I wish here to consider only some aspects, to show how misplaced are the foreword's claims.

At its most basic level, a book such as this should provide a reliable listing of the material it covers. It should be complete, accurate and easy to use. VA is reasonably easy to use, although the actual catalogue is so long (only two or three coins per page!) that it is rather cumbersome. Indeed, for the identification of which group together in one place all the illustrations (mostly clear), which had also been printed in the body of the catalogue.

'The division of the coins into different varieties is mostly clear. Occasionally, distinct issues are lumped together, such as the Norfolk 'wolves' (British J A and J B), both catalogued under 610. More frequently, problems arise in the other direction, when a coinage has been sub-divided into many different varieties. An extreme instance is the 'potin' coinage, now in twenty-eight varieties, whose distinctions are not always obvious or easy to apply. Much the same could be said of the Iceniann silver coinage, where it is additionally confusing to have lumped the distinct ECE types (see next section) into one general section. VA includes a number of new types which were not known to Mack, and sometimes he has been able to improve on Mack's descriptions, as the result of examining new specimens. There are, of course, still some mistakes and omissions. For example, the coins of Amminus have the inscription AMMINVS, not AMMINIVS. A closely related silver coin of Cunobelin is omitted; it is, indeed, very rare but was known to Seaby's Coins of England (no. 219B). Its inclusion would have reinforced the link between the coinages of the two rulers, and perhaps prompted us to look for a mint for Amnion at somewhere called DNVN, or DVNO. The quarter-staters accompanying the 'Cherd-Chariton Transitional' state do not appear. There are other instances; and, indeed, in the few months since VA's book appeared several new types have been discovered. I cite these examples not to disparage VA's collection of material, but merely to illustrate how quickly our knowledge of Ancient British coinage is growing; even as a basic listing of material VA's book will rapidly need additions.

The book, then, provides an up-to-date description of the material, though it is unnecessarily bulky. But how good is the classification? How does this book advance our understanding of Ancient British coinage? Can we be sure of VA's attributions and dates?

To answer these questions we must look at some of the detailed classifications made by VA and the methods he uses. First, some methodological problems. A major criticism of the book is that VA does not give the evidence for many of his views. For example, his main method of classification is to use the weight and fineness of the coins (p. 56). He gives information about weights, but details of alloy are not given. A few analyses are listed on pp. 508-12, but more often no information is given or vague remarks such as 'very base metal' (p. 291) are offered. The evidence should have been given. Similar problems arise with another method used by VA, stylistic development. The difficulties are most obvious in his treatment of the inscribed or dynastic coinages. These are sometimes divided up, for example, into Verica's or Cunobelin's 'first coinage', 'second coinage' and so on. The reasons for such divisions are often not explained or arbitrary. VA may tell us why he has divided Verica's staters into three groups, but not why he has assigned the smaller gold and silver pieces to each coinage when they do not share the characteristics of the staters. As for Cunobelin, we are simply told that the sequence of the silver and bronze issues has been determined by style. Of course, VA must be right in his view that these coinages should fall into different groups, but unless we have been offered some concrete explanation, there is no reason to accept his divisions as other than arbitrary. The same applies to the sequence he places them in.

VA uses stylistic or typological arguments in other unsatisfactory ways. For instance, we are told (p. 236)
that 'the first silver coins [of the Corieltauvi] carry an obverse type copied directly from the Roman Republican denarius of C. f. Hostidius Geta. The Roman prototypes are dated to about 60 BC, and thus the introduction of silver coinage coincides with 55 BC.' VA is not at home with Republican moneyers, whose names are regularly incorrectly given, as here (C Hostidius C f Geta; the unfortunate spelling 'Hostidius' recurs throughout the book). There are other objections. Is the Roman denarius really a prototype? This seems far from clear to me (here and elsewhere), the large areas of empty space in the catalogue could have usefully been filled with illustrations of the alleged prototypes; and even if it were, the conclusion would not follow, any more than it does in the case of Cunobelin's coins which copy much earlier Republican prototypes.

Other aspects of methodology are, to me, completely baffling. An example is the so-called coinage of Boudicca, which has been identified via a statistical study of coin hoards deposited during the Icenian rebellion of 54 AD. The coins are the second most common type in the hoards and are virtually unworn. The average degree of wear is less than on the ECEN types, indicating that they are of later date. All published finds of single coins date after the rebellion, into Flavian times'. The use of the term 'statistical study' gives this passage a superficial plausibility, but the conclusion is hardly credible. It does not seem likely that the coins in question are much removed in date from the other similar Icenian pieces, and it is certainly very unlikely that they should be later than the pieces inscribed FRANTIO, whose Romanised appearance and inscription suggest very strongly that they are the latest issues. Additionally, the relative wear of the Icenian coins in the mixed hoards of Roman and Icenian coins seems to suggest that it is as reasonable to think that Icenian silver coinage may have stopped with the invasion of 43. Moreover, the whole question of the sequence of Icenian coinage, and particularly the relationship of the gold to the silver, has been thrown open by the recent finds from Snettisham.

These general considerations indicate the sort of problems one encounters in this book, a lack of argument, an absence of evidence, conclusions presented with more enthusiasm than cogency. Moreover, the feeling that much of the classification is arbitrary is reinforced when one considers VA's general approach to chronology and attribution. Every coin is given a precise tribal attribution, and a precise date (usually to a period of as little as five years, sometimes even more precisely). Here I do not wish to discuss the detailed chronologies VA presents for individual issues or for his 'second coinages' of Verica or Cunobelin or so on, but to subsume these questions to the more general issue of the extent to which we can ever hope to date any Ancient British coins. For the early uninscribed issues, we must rely on hoard evidence and the dating of the continental (Gallo-Belic) coins which are found in Britain. Much of this is very uncertain, though there has recently been some helpful evidence from Whitchurch in Hampshire (see BNJ 58 (1989), 3-10). Yet it needs to be stressed that the dating of all these early coinages rests fundamentally on the broad acceptance of Scheers's attribution of Gallo-Belic E to the period of Caesar's Gallic Wars. This attribution is indeed very plausible, but its basis is relatively fragile, and the uncertainty of the chronology must be accepted and stressed.

For the later coinages we have the names of the rulers some of which we (may) know from other sources, and which thus seem to give some sort of chronological structure to the period of Ancient British coinage. We know about Commius, who aided Caesar in 54 BC and who sometimes subsequently fled to Britain. Three British rulers call themselves his son (Commius): Tintomaris, Eppillus and Verica. Tintomaris is usually identified with the British king Tim[...], who is mentioned in Augustus's Res Gestae as having fled to his court as a suppliant. Verica has been, rather more plausibly, identified as the Berikos, who, according to Dio, fled to Claudius on the eve of the invasion of 43. But can this Commius, who had a son alive in AD 43, really be the same Commius who was active a hundred years earlier?! This seems very unlikely. There are two ways out of this difficulty. Either we can believe in two Commius, or we can suppose that 'son' does not mean what it says. But whichever alternative we choose means that we can have lost any overall chronological structure: if Tintomarius and the others are the sons of another Commius, or not his sons at all, then we can have no very good idea when they reigned. The corollary of this argument is that one should avoid giving even regnal dates for the British rulers, and a foriarii specific dates for individual coin issues. This is especially so when they are as impossibly precise as VA sometimes gives (40-37 BC for his 1605, 57-55 BC for his 1215 or even 58-57 BC for his 1210!). These are meaningless. Even a commonly used date such as c.AD 10-40 for Cunobelin's reign should be avoided, in favour of some vaguer period, such as 'early first century AD'.

If our ignorance of the chronology of the period is impressive, the same is even more true of tribal units. A second fundamental problem with VA's book arises from the way he gives nearly every issue a tribal attribution. But our knowledge of such tribal entities and groupings is all late; even then we sometimes are not even sure of the names of the tribes. In the last ten years we have perhaps managed to learn to call the Coritani the Corieltauvii, and now we must remember to call the Cantii the Cantuci [Antiquaries Journal 1988, p. 306].

But if we know so little of Britain at the very end of the Iron Age, what do we know about the people responsible for all the earlier British coinages, in the period of Caesar's invasions? Very little. This is why the traditional language of ancient British coin names have much to commend them, even though they are initially terribly confusing. The confusion is unfortunately compounded nowadays by the fact that there
are several languages, those of Evans, Allen and recently of Haselgrove. Each system has adopted a different way of referring to the coins, but they all have the merit of trying to be neutral about attribution. This is not just a bit of axe-grinding by archaeological theorists, but reflects a genuine difficulty. A hundred years ago Evans observed (pp. 130–1), 'The various divisions of Britain to which distinct coinage may be referred I have classified as 'districts' [western, south-eastern, Kentish, Central, Eastern and Yorkshire]. A classification of the coins under the names of the British tribes mentioned in history, would ... have been more satisfactory. Unfortunately, however, it is now almost, if not quite impossible to ascertain the extent and position of the territory of the different tribes at the time these coins were struck ... there was probably a considerable alteration in the territorial division of the country under the different regni [from Caesar to Claudius]. In fact there are some tribes mentioned by Caesar, such as the Ancilites and the Bibroci, who are not enumerated among those who occupied territory in Britain in the time of Ptolemy.' And so on. What Evans said was repeated by Allen (in Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain, edited by S. S. Frere, p. 125), 'it is, I suggest, misleading to project backwards the static tribal divisions of Roman Britain'. Indeed we have little knowledge about Britain in Caesar's days, and what we do have is perhaps rather unexpected. The tales of a king called Cæsivellaunus: he doesn't give him any tribal affiliation, though he does perhaps imply his tribe lay north of the Thames, and that it was distinct from the Trinovantes, whose leader Mandubracius had appealed to Caesar for protection against Cassivellaunus. We hear incidentally of tribes called the Cenomani, Segontiaci, Ancilites, Bibroces and Cassi, but we only hear of them because they happened to submit to Caesar. Elsewhere we hear of four kings in Kent, the splendidly named Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagnus and Segovax. But we can hardly begin to relate these to tribes known later, let alone associate them with any particular coinages.

Thus if we are correct in dating the early native coinages to Caesar's period, we have to face up to the realisation that it would be quite wrong to give them tribal attributions. Not just that, but we do not even know if each distinct coin type reflects in any way any sort of political grouping; we may suspect that British D (VA 1215) represents some kinglet in Cheriton or we might want to think that British A (VA 200) represents Cassivellaunus, but they might not. One only has to look for instance at the coinage of the Roman world to see how a single political unit might embrace a large diversity of superficially incompatible coinage systems; conversely, the attempt to plot political boundaries on the basis of coin provenances is notoriously unreliable (did the English kings rule Norway?). In the case of VA's book the reduction ad absurdum of his tribal attributions can be seen in his description of the new Snettisham finds (pp. 348–9).

These coins, many of previously unknown type, were clearly small issues all made locally in Norfolk, yet, for VA, they are coins of the Iceni, of the Atrebates and of the Trinovantes.

Thus, as a chronological and tribal reconstruction of Ancient British coinage, this book seems to me to have serious misconceptions, which only add to the difficulties caused by its methodological problems. For such reasons, the historical 'reconstruction' of pre-Roman Britain given in the introduction will hardly attract serious attention. This is a shame, since the study of coinage will be discredited in archaeological and historical circles for a long time. Coinage can contribute to our understanding of pre-Roman Britain, but only when the limitations of the material are more generally recognised. The main obstacle to this seems to me to be the difficulty of accepting the wide degree of uncertainty implicit in any attribution, any chronology or any interpretation, and this uncertainty should be stressed, especially in standard reference works. Despite all the progress that has been made, notably by Evans and Allen, we should still acknowledge, as Camden wrote four hundred years ago, that to talk of ancient British coins is 'to walke in a mirke and mistie night of ignorance'.

ANDREW BURNETT


BLUNT, STEWART and LYONCOINAGE IN TENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND brings to fruition a campaign of research commenced as such by Christopher Blunt in the mid 1960s but founded on the unrivalled card index of surviving coins of the period which he first began to assemble around 1950. CTCE is thus in a real sense the culmination of one very definite phase in the history of the study of the Anglo-Saxon coinage, and it is very appropriate that Blunt’s name should be joined on its title leaf by those of Ian Stewart and Stewart Lyon who have played so major a role alongside him in unravelling the problems presented by the coinages of the ninth and tenth century England.

It will be evident merely from the names of the authors that CTCE, which is the first considered account as a whole of the coinages struck in England from the accession of Edward the Elder in 899 to the recoinage carried out under Edgar in the early 970s, is, and will remain, indispensable to any serious student of the subject, and it will be apparent from what follows here that it provides the clearest account yet of the types, geographical pattern and dating of the coinages of the period.

It is however important to note at the outset that the authors intend that it should be used in active conjunction both with Blunt and Marion Archibald’s recent
The history of the coinage of Anglo-Saxon England between the introduction of a reformed penny coinage under Alfred in the late 870s and the full-blooded reform carried out under his great-grandson Eadgar in the early 970s is one of transition from a coinage struck at a handful of major towns in the south and south-east of the country to a coinage struck at a network of towns and boroughs extending widely over English-rulled territory south of the Humber. In Northumbria, where Scandinavian settlers and their descendants resisted administrative and cultural absorption from the south, coin production remained centralised at the capital city of York, and York coin types remained until 927 independent of those found elsewhere, but from 927 onwards the products of York moneys were increasingly interlocked with those of moneys in the rest of England, even during periods when Northumbria had independent Viking rulers, and after 954 the coinage struck at York is no more distinctively regional than that struck by moneys in the East Midlands, East Anglia or North-Western Mercia.

As Stewart Lyon demonstrates here in his lengthy and splendidly lucid account of the coinages of Edward the Elder and Archbishop Plegmund, the real moment of transition from a coinage produced at a few major towns to a coinage of which a good proportion was struck by moneys at a more local level occurred shortly after c.915, when the number of moneys working south of the Thames becomes such that it may be presumed that the borough-based framework for coin production evidenced a few years later by Æthelstan's Gratelye laws was then put into place. It was also after c.915 that a coinage in Edward the Elder's name was first struck by moneys working in the newly reconquered Eastern Danelaw.

A reviewer can scarcely do more than glance at the wealth of material and issues with which the reader of CTCE is confronted, but it may be helpful to direct attention first to some of the detail of Lyon's chapter on Edward the Elder and after that to the geographical pattern of the coinage as a whole.

The beginnings of Edward the Elder's coinage are clearly evidenced by the 54 identified coins of the reign present in the famous Cuerdale hoard of 840, of which the deposit is now dated by Lyon to c.905, and by a group of five coins die-linking with those from Cuerdale which belong to that part of the 958 Morley St Peter hoard which can be seen to have been put together c.903. These reveal that minting in southern and south-eastern England in the first years of the reign was controlled from Winchester, where the dies for the coins were engraved and where the majority of the moneys active were based. And, surprisingly, that there was no significant die-graving at, or coin production from, the older minting towns of Canterbury and London for nearly five years into the reign. Elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon controlled territory there was at this stage only a coinage by five moneys...
in West Mercia who had previously worked there in Alfred's reign: Lyon shows that there is good reason to believe that both this coinage and the more ambitious West Mercian coinage, with 'exceptional reverse types' that followed it in the period up to the death of Æthelflæd. Lady of the Mercians, in 918, were coinages predominantly produced by moneyers working at Chester and Shrewsbury rather than at more southerly towns in the West Midlands, and historians must weigh the significance of this for the political and economic history of Mercia both in Edward's reign and in the last years of Alfred's reign. Lyon's concurrent demonstration that the series of coins with 'exceptional reverse types' – the reverses portraying such varied objects as a church tower, a city gate, a flower, a bird and the Hand of God – were solely struck in West Mercia is in itself striking new evidence for the individuality of the region while Æthelflæd lived.

In the period between 905 and 915 the pattern of coinage in southern England saw some alteration. Canterbury joining Winchester as a centre for die-engraving, and both Canterbury and London re-emerging as mints, while there is also evidence for coin production on a smaller scale at Oxford, Southampton and perhaps two or three other as yet unidentifiable towns in the south and south-east. It was not however until after c.915 that a substantial expansion of minting is noticeable. Lyon being able to identify some 67 moneyers working in southern England between then and Edward's death, whereas no more than 28 can be identified as working in the same part of England over the whole of the period 899–915. Lyon is also able to point to greatly increased coinage activity at London, where the moneyers become more numerous and produce coins of a Bust Diademed type scarcely known from other southern mints, and it can now be seen that the prominent role occupied by London in the organisational structure for minting specified in Æthelstan's Gratelaye laws – London is there assigned eight moneyers – was not just a formal recognition of London's historic position as a centre for coin production but was a direct reflection of London's post-915 coinage output.

In the rest of Edward's kingdom the coinage of the final years of the reign is nearly all of the non-portrait Horizontal type (the type that numismatists have previously called 'Two Line type'), except for a local East Anglian coinage which in copying both the type and the inscriptions of the London Bust Diademed series is further testimony to London's impact on the monetary scene at this date, but which also serves to show, taken together with two identifiably East Midland groupings of coins of Horizontal type, that the needs of coin users in the reconquered Danelaw were not directly met from London but were met in large part by local minting operations. The evidence for these is patchy, but Edward's new Danelaw moneyers seem to have included individuals who had previously struck coins of St Eadmund type for Viking chieftains and it may well be that Edward simply inherited existing arrangements for coin manufacture at such places as Norwich, Northampton and Stamford. If the moneyers concerned were already in place when required to coin in Edward's name and in Edward's types, rather than being new men owing their positions to Edward, one can go on to conjecture that they retained a certain independence that enabled them to operate in this and subsequent reigns without having to make the changes in the type of the coins prescribed for moneyers further to the south.

Lyon's account of the coinage of Edward the Elder and Ian Stewart's business-like summary of the contemporary coinages struck in Northumbria and Lindsey carry the reader a little past the actual date of Æthelstan's accession, for Lyon's progress with the coinage of Edward the Elder enables him to offer some useful guidance on the interpretation of the coinage of Horizontal type struck for Æthelstan in Southern England, and the West Midlands up to c.927.

From that point onwards the numismatic terrain is more familiar, and CTCE's role is as the latest and most authoritative addition to a literature which includes, as well as the publications of 1974 and 1986 to which it is related, Kenneth Jonsson's recent The New Era, the Reformation of the late Anglo-Saxon Coinage. (Stockholm and London, 1987). It is pertinent to cite Jonsson's book here not simply because readers need to be alerted that despite its title it has a great deal to say about the coinage of Eadgar's reign before Eadgar's reform, but also because its discussion of the coinage of that period is set out under geographical sub-headings which enable the student to see easily what the evidence is for coin production at that point in a region such as the South-East Midlands.

For CTCE, with its wider canvas and with the priority given by its authors to classification by type, so explicitly geographically a presentation of the coin evidence can scarcely have been feasible, but the author's approach does mean that the reader of CTCE must have all his wits about him when confronted, as on pp. 161–2, with a stretch of text under the successive headings HT1 Uncertain location, including Midlands, and HC1 and HT1, which is the place where Blunt records the remarkable fact that among the very numerous surviving coins of Eadgar of Horizontal type there are scarcely any attributable to mints in southern England (a fact made more remarkable because there is sufficient evidence to show that coins of this type were struck in the region at this time, and thus that their rarity is not due to the fact that Horizontal coins of Eadgar from southern mints should not exist).

Coins of Horizontal type struck at southern mints after 939 need indeed consistent alertness on the reader's part, for although there is only the most minimal mention of them in CTCE's narrative text, accompanying summary lists of surviving specimens show that such coins formed a very major element in English currency in the 940s, 950s and perhaps 960s. Nor, for that matter, is it particularly helpful to an overall understanding of the coinage of the network
of southern English mints revealed by mint-signed coins of Æthelstan is not made clear to the reader of the present volume until the reader comes to a table of 'named mints by reigns' on pp. 256–7, and it is necessary even then to do some further research to discover which mints are recorded in Æthelstan's Circumscription type and which are recorded in his Bust Crowned type.

Such remarks should however be taken, as they are offered, as guidance for the reader rather than as criticism of the authors, for what may appear imbalance in their treatment of the coinage of different parts of the country only arises because of the substantial progress that they have made with the issues of such mints as Chester, Derby and York. It is also now possible to see, with a clarity that would have astonished Blunt himself when he first tackled the series, that the pattern of coin production in the middle years of the century is actually quite simple, in the sense that the coinage struck in most parts of England has its own definite character and coherence, and that those places for which the surviving coin evidence is most complicated, e.g. Derby, owe this to their position on political and monetary frontiers.

Thus, moneyers working at towns or boroughs on or south of a line drawn from London to Gloucester, having struck coins successively of Circumscription Cross type and Bust Crowned type for Æthelstan, reverted in 939 to striking coins of Horizontal type and struck it continuously through the reigns of Eadmund, Eadred and Eadwig into the early years of the reign of Edgar. The only breaks in this pattern occur in Eadwig's reign, and these, a strictly localised coinage of Circumscription Cross type from mints in the extreme south-west and a coinage of Bust Crowned type represented by a single surviving coin by a London moneyer, do not detract from the overwhelmingly uniform character of the coinage of the region.

Similarly, moneyers at Norwich, for much of the time the only operating mint in East Anglia proper, began to strike coins of Bust Crowned type under Æthelstan, and seem to have struck coins only of this type right down to c.973 (see table 7 on p. 192).

Their neighbours in the Danish shires of the East Midlands display comparable consistency in striking coins of Horizontal type only from Edward the Elder's reign to a point in Eadred's reign when, after a brief phase in which they may all have struck coins of Bust Crowned type akin to those of Norwich, they divide into a predominantly Lincoln group of moneyers who strike coins of Horizontal type only down to c.973, and a more southerly group of moneyers who in Edgar's reign strike a Circumscription Cross type and a Bust Crowned type; and here the division, when it occurs, must reflect not a mere hiccup in monetary administration but changing political reality, such towns as Bedford, Huntingdon and Northampton no longer having real links with the areas of heavier Danish settlement further north.

On the other side of the country, the coinage has no less clear a character, the issues of moneys working at Chester and at smaller places in the West Midlands as far south as Hereford and Warwick being consistently distinguished by the use of rosettes of pellets as central features or as ornaments. In this area coins of Circumscription types struck in Æthelstan's reign gave way on Eadmund's accession to a coinage of Horizontal type, and, as in southern England, this held the field until early in Edgar's reign when it was temporarily superseded by Circumscription types. The West Midlands Horizontal Rosette type runs to more sub-varieties than the similar type without rosettes struck in southern and eastern England, but these varieties are not impossibly complicated, and the classificatory system adopted in CTCE, taken together with the authors' comments on individual coins or clusters of coins, enables the reader to appreciate the nature of such varieties and the essential family relationship of the issues of West Midland mints.

There is certainly much about tenth century coinage that has still to be discovered or properly understood, and it is unrealistic to suppose that the pre-973 issues of individual mints or moneyers will ever fall into as neat a pattern as that imposed by Edgar's reform on mints and moneyers operating after c.973. Yet, as CTCE triumphantly demonstrates, the coinage of the period has an underlying structure plain for all to see once properly explained as here by Blunt, Stewart and Lyon. No such full explanation of this coinage has been attempted in the thousand years of human history that have elapsed since Edgar's death, and not just numismatists but all those interested in the history of England in the Anglo-Saxon period owe the three joint authors of CTCE a great debt of gratitude.

H. E. PAGAN


This is an extremely handsome volume which all Edward penny specialists will have to have. The plates are excellent, and the text, as far as I can see, faultless. This is very much the 'state of the art' of Edwardian numismatics. It embodies the very latest detailed research by the leading exponents in the field, presented in an exemplary manner. Groats, halfpennies and farthings are also covered. The volume is clearly a contribution to a lifetime's collection and study, but it is also the fruit of a century's collective work in the best British numismatic tradition.

It is thus fitting that the introduction should contain additional essays by Stewart, Wood, and Woodhead, for many years leading researchers in this field. Woodhead's study of the early coinage of Edward III is particularly accomplished, successfully marrying coins and documentary evidence in a pleasing synthet-
s. Indeed, if North is to be criticised it could perhaps be on the grounds that the documentary evidence, especially the mint accounts, could have been usefully pressed into service more often. North tells us that the chronology of class 10 is based on proportions of coins and known output but he does not show us how his working at this point. Moreover, some at least of the missing figures for 1310 and 1311 have been found by Brand. Other documentary evidence, well known to the Foxes, is often the foundation of the dating suggested for certain classes, but this evidence, though clearly known and used, is not set out. To my mind, the dating of classes (only appearing in small print in the body of the catalogue), and the evidence on which it is based, could both have been given a higher profile.

The establishment of a chronology for the coinage of the first three Edwards has been a major achievement of which British numismatics may feel justly proud. It has been achieved by a combination of detailed numismatic work of the most minute kind on the coins themselves, combined with an analysis of the hoard record, and a rigorous search of the documentary sources. As a result, the numismatist's understanding of the chronology is now so accurate that he is in a strong position to contribute his knowledge to the wider fields of medieval archaeology and history. However, the application of numismatics to history is not within the remit of this volume, and it would be wrong to criticize the work for not being something it never attempted to be. This is numismatics pure, but not particularly simple.

The detail with which this large coinage has been studied is at times breath-taking. Where there was once IIIg and IVa, there is now 3g1-3 and 4a1-4. There are now over twenty sub-groups within class 10. To play devil's advocate, it could perhaps be argued that analysis and classification on this scale serves little purpose, and may do harm if it deters a wider public from exploring this coinage. However, if the purpose of classification is to identify differing types with a view to understanding their sequence in order to establish their chronology, then the refinement of that classification can only strengthen the chronological framework. Thus to assert that Y follows X is not as good as to demonstrate the succession of punches through a range of sub-types from earliest X to latest Y. Detailed classification of an undated series does therefore unquestionably serve a purpose. Even so, it may still perhaps deter students looking for a wider application for their studies.

The answer to this problem could be that although detailed work of this kind strengthens numismatic analysis, it is not necessarily required of all students that they should choose to operate on this level. The non-numismatist museum curator would do quite well enough if he identified his local stray-finds according to old-style Fox. The historian of money supply needs only to satisfy himself that the chronological sequence can be objectively demonstrated, without necessarily being able to do so himself. The general English collector need surely lose no sleep if he is unable to find a 10ab6: after all less than one per cent of all class 10 fall into this particular pigeon-hole. Even the specialist may sometimes find it difficult to master the finer points of, say, 10cf3(a3).

Thus while hailing the achievement which this volume represents, it seems to me that there may be a case for some numismatists to continue to opt for the more general Fox system, rather than be frightened away from the whole subject by the complexity of the classification. In this connection the use of Arabic numerals in the North classification is particularly helpful. By choosing Arabic (North) or Roman (Fox) numerals any author could signal the level of detail to which his classification aspires. Just as North has legitimately chosen not to set this coinage in its historical and economic context, other students might prefer to leave the finer points of classification in the hands of the specialists. And for accuracy, reliability, sound judgement, and sheer organisational power and thoroughness, there can be few specialists to rival North. Moreover, for those who do wish to use the latest, most detailed classification, this volume will be of the greatest value, as it provides an authoritative statement of current thought, much of it hitherto unpublished. My own recent work on two large new hoards from Aberdeen would have been greatly helped if this Sylloge had been to hand.

In short, this is a detailed numismatic study of the highest quality. It is not really a book for the beginner, despite the pointers for classification helpfully supplied, and the mass of comparative illustrations. The beginner would do well to get hold of a copy of North's old 1964 pamphlet, with its useful enlarged photos, only graduating to the Sylloge when he feels at home with the pamphlet. Nor, it must be admitted, is this a book for the historian. However, what it does do is to establish the detailed chronology of the English coinage from 1279 to 1351, and as such is a rock on which further monetary contributions which are of interest to historians, can be built. It is unquestionably a major contribution to English numismatics.

N. J. MAYHEW


In this short but wide-ranging essay, Christopher Challis brings to bear the wisdom distilled from his study of the Tudor and early Stuart currencies over the past quarter of a century: he has laboured long and hard in this specialised field and has advanced substantially our knowledge of this most baffling of subjects. But this is not an introduction suitable for the beginner, although the format of the booklet indicates otherwise. It is a detailed and sophisticated discussion of changes in the currency and in the economy in general, and suggests new and exciting ways of looking at the process of economic development.
At the heart of the analysis is a discussion of variations in the level of mint output, which was attributable mostly to government actions, and an attempt to estimate the levels of currency in circulation at different points in time. He estimates the circulating medium at £1.67 million in 1526 which, assuming that the stock of currency at any point in time was the product of the output of the previous thirty years, approached doubled by the end of the century, and had risen again four-fold by 1649. This occurred at a time of substantial population growth and urbanisation, rising commodity prices and more moderately rising wage rates, and the spread of wage labour; hence, the eight-fold overall increase in the size of the circulating medium was "broadly in line with what one might have expected, if the early Stuart economy was to have been as well stored with minted coin as had that of a century or so earlier".

But the increase in the money supply was not the only lubricant in this story of economic expansion. There may have been a rise in the velocity of circulation, and the period was also marked by a significant increase in the production and use of tokens. Moreover, while many transactions were underpinned by the widespread availability of petty credit, others came into the category of "offsetting, barter, and exchange".

The expression "sovereign" died out during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and, as Graham Dyer points out in "The modern sovereign" the name was revived for the new coinage of 1817 under antiquarian influence. Pure mediaevalisms unrelated to the reality of coinage, such as "bezant" (=2s), "noble" (=6s 8d) and "angel" (=10s), were more or less extinct by 1700. However, reckoning by pounds of twenty shillings remained customary, and this simple, well-documented usage was reflected in the denominations of eighteenth century bank-notes as well as contemporary literature. Public opinion eventually compelled the replacement of the 21s guinea by the 20s sovereign, and although it took several years before the new coinage came into general circulation, the sovereign, once established, became deeply engrained on the popular mind. The influence of fashionable neoclassicism kept St George heroically naked, but no amount of subsequent artistic ridicule has been able to detract from the appeal of this noble and vigorous image. Recoinages in the mid 1840s and early 1890s maintained the sovereign's integrity. In view of the import of gold coin from Portugal in the eighteenth century, it is interesting to observe that in the nineteenth century, sovereigns were widely current in Portugal and Brazil. Dyer makes the significant observation that as early as 1884 the move to replace gold coin by notes or tokens was already under way. The effective abandonment of a gold currency is shown to


The five hundredth anniversary of the first English coinage of sovereigns of twenty shillings has been celebrated by the Royal Mint in two ways: by the coining of a set of four commemorative gold coins (five pounds to half sovereign); and by the publication of this book. Various aspects of the sovereign, historical, typological and technical, are discussed in five essays by different authors, and the work as a whole presents an authoritative and readable treatment of the subject.

The first of these essays, entitled "A fifteenth-century revival" - surely it should have been called "A twentieth-century revival" - is by John Porteous, here wearing the hat of a member of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee on . . . Design etc. For the most part it summarises what may be read in greater detail later in the book, but it does include an interesting account of the Advisory Committee at work, reminding us of the legal and constitutional pitfalls that lie in wait, let alone the technical problems. Interesting anecdotes illustrate the way in which Pissarro's St George and the Dragon almost achieved the status of a national emblem, and Porteous finally poses the problem as to whether in the age of one-ounce bullion 'coins' the sovereign can survive as anything more than a pseudo-coin for specialised, indeed blinkered collectors.

The early story, by the Society's President Christopher Challis, is a characteristically detailed and well documented account of the sovereign of Tudor times. Quotation from contemporary sources, both literary and archival, shows a comprehensive grasp of the intricacies of economics and politics that provided a context for the new coin. The curious verbal habit of referring to the half-sovereign as a 'sovereign' seems to stem from the enthroned monarch type of the numerically dominant base half-sovereign of Henry VIII, and is illustrated from a variety of later sixteenth century sources. Perhaps the most interesting is the memorandum attached to a will proved in February 1600, which lists ryal, 'old' and 'new', 'old' and 'new', English and French crowns; 'new' ryal were equated with sovereigns, and valued at ten shillings. Continental valuation books for merchants adopt the same usage.

The Royal Mint 1989; 99pp + numerous illustrations in text. ISBN 1 869917 03 0.

The author of this major contribution to the literature of numismatics is remembered with affection by many, as his obituary in BNJ 57 testifies. They will appreciate the portrait frontispiece to his magnum opus: but here it must be assessed as a work of reference.

The title and introduction indicate its contents precisely as makers identified from their signed checks. Other medallists who could be found in precisely as makers identified from their signed trial-plate, and reveals that not until 1851/2 did sovereigns actually achieve the standard laid down for them. Newman writes with a refreshing and justified enthusiasm for the process of on-going improvement in accuracy of weight and fineness that has continued down to the present day.

This book is far more than a nostalgic souvenir. It will be read and re-read with interest and profit, particularly its later sections, as an authoritative account of the working of a great public service and of the practicalities hedging the coining of precious metal in all ages. It is written with affection, too.

Truly our Royal Mint is something of which we may be proud.

J. P. C. KENT
same dates in the volume). There is no explanation either of his peculiar habit of putting in brackets dates tried in vain, e.g. '(1808--) 11–44' to mean that while the maker is listed from 1811 to 1844 he does not appear in the 1808 [i.e. 1809] directory.

Part I, covering Birmingham and London makers from 1788 to 1820, is new, and how welcome are the documented accounts of such as James Kempson, Kettle, Kirk, Lutwyche, Philip, Powell, Skidmore, and Thomas Wyon. (For Thomas Williams Mr Hawkins needed to make the acquaintance of J. R. Harris, The Copper King, 1964.) How interesting that T. J. Wells, fl. 1811–21, may be identical with T. W. Ingram, fl. 1822–44. Many of the names in Parts II to IV are familiar, but so much more accessible than dispersed over seventeen years of SCMB, and the extent of the revision may be judged from the 44 pages on Heaton and the Birmingham Mint, the 46 pages on W. J. Taylor, Boulton and the Soho mint are omitted on the grounds that they would fill a whole volume; Fattorini is available as a separate monograph of [5] plus xiv pages. Students of other fields should not overlook the accounts to be found here of Spink & Son, and in Part V of J. Henry, Hyams, Maudslay, and of Henry and Matthew Young.

In one of the fifteen appendices is at last published an abstract of Dr Kent’s 1957 paper on medley halfpence or evasions, in researching which Roy Hawkins assisted, and to which he adds both an introduction and notes on the names appearing on the pieces. In other appendices is the account (elusive in SCMB) of the charlatan C. O. Groom Napier, ‘Prince of Mantua and Montferrat’, and a police report on To Hanover ‘Sovereigns’. The bibliography is extensive but poorly arranged, and difficult to consult for works cited in the text by an abbreviation. In fact one looks in vain for ‘L&S’, which stands for H. W. A. Linecar and A. G. Stone, English Proof and Pattern Crown-size Pieces (1968).

The plates are sometimes rather dark, but welcome nonetheless. They are representative of the makers’ work, except that pls 7–13, their key, and appendices 3–4 give detailed coverage of Queen Victoria and other linked dies. These will merit close study, and point up the fact that many of the investigations published here are based on readings, so that there is more die-study which could be undertaken. Whatever led the author to suggest (p. 316) that pl. 17, figs. 12 and 13 are from the same portrait punch? Enlargements intended for plate 16 have been omitted. On pl. 30, figs. 8 and 9 have been transposed, and the caption to the last item has to be supplied from p. 803. How pleasant to find portraits of four makers on pls 31–2.

In addition to the makers, many of the issuers and subjects of items mentioned have been researched, and the range of precise information in this volume is quite astonishing. Here are corrections to earlier accounts of the Heaton and Watt mints, to Bell’s unquestioning identification of Battlebridge, to Elvin’s Handbook of Mottoes (p. 242). Even where results are negative, as with Southee’s practical system of book-keeping, Mr Hawkins’s conclusions are worth having. Now that his work can be seen as a whole, the trees coalesce into a wood which is hardly less than the business biography of the brummagem industry, an industry which in the nineteenth century belied the enormous condescension of posterity and became an exporter to the world. Here are contributions to the monetary and commercial operations of North, Central and South America, Africa, Australasia, and the Far East, Egypt, Turkey, and the Balkans, Italy, Portugal, and France. Mr Hawkins has posthumously provided the essential structure of this industry.

R. H. THOMPSON