ScbI 35 is the first volume in the series devoted to Scottish coins and covers the two best public collections outside the National Museum, Edinburgh, and the British Museum. More than 1800 coins are illustrated, a substantially greater number than in Burns's Coinage of Scotland.

Dr Bateson of the Hunterian cabinet has been responsible for the record of the 670 coins in his care, and Mr Mayhew of the Ashmolean for the 1168 coins at Oxford. Neither can be described as a systematic collection by modern standards, but the sensible decision to amalgamate the two into a single series for publication has produced a reasonably comprehensive, if somewhat uneven, coverage of most of the coinage. 417 of the Glasgow coins go back to the collection of William Hunter himself, and are an interesting illustration of what was available in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Oxford collection, on the other hand, is largely a twentieth century compilation, incorporating a splendid select series of 327 coins, half of them in gold, presented by Alderman Horace Hird of Bradford in 1953.

Hunter also had, from today's perspective, a relatively high proportion of gold, and the combined series in this metal is accordingly of exceptional richness. Thus, to mention only a few of the most outstanding items, the Sylloge includes two of the four known nobles of David II, a treasure half-crown of Robert III, a half-crown of James II, a left-facing rider of James III, a crown and half-crown of James IV, two one-third ducats and the unique late crown of James V with a small crown above the shield as on Mary's abbey crowns, a 1558 ryal of Mary, three lion nobles of James VI, and a first coinage crown and Falconer double-crown of Charles I. The silver is relatively less dazzling, but still contains a considerable number of exceptionally rare pieces: for example, a splendid penny of Malcolm IV, five of Alexander II, the unique short-cross Alexander sterling of Glasgow (on which this reviewer has contributed a detailed discussion in an appendix), three farthings each of Alexander III and Robert I, a Dundee halfpenny of Robert II, two Dumbarton groats of Robert III, a group II Linlithgow fleur-de-lis groat of James I, a (billon) Stirling penny of James II, a crown groat of James IV, the unique thirty-shilling piece dated 1581 (surely an error date rather than an issue of the year before the coinage began), and the six-shilling piece of 1609.

There are useful runs of several of the commoner series, some of which have already proved their value for research – the Alexander III single cross sterlings (many from the Renfrew hoard) for Mr North and myself, for a paper published elsewhere in this Journal, the James I groats for Mrs Murray's current work, and the James V groats and bawbees of James V and Mary for papers in preparation by Dr Robert Stevenson. The 82 specimens of Alexander III's long voided cross sterlings, many from the Brussels hoard of 1908, provide a valuable supplement to the rather limited representation of this series available to Burns at a time when they were rare, and a convenient basis for setting out the classification worked out by A.H. Baldwin from the Brussels material. Note, however, that two of the coins listed under type VII (148 and 153) are really of type VIII, and one (147) is of a post-Brussels type.

The coins are described by reference to Burns, Lockett and various other modern sources. A number (but far from all) of the die-identities within the collections, and with other published coins, are noted in the lists. A useful introduction includes an account of the coinage reign by reign, and references to the basis of classification currently in use, especially where this differs from or modifies that of Burns. The combination of this text with such a rich series of illustrated coins will make the Ashmolean and Hunterian Sylloge an essential work of reference, and one which, since Burns is now scarce and expensive, will no doubt be used by many as the most conveniently available repertoire of material for the Scottish series.

IAN STEWART


The author's name will be familiar to most collectors of commemorative medals, both British and foreign, not only as a reputable dealer in such objects, but as a knowledgeable one as well. His enthusiasm for his subject is such that having been a professional for many years he is the only dealer to have for a time maintained a gallery entirely devoted to medals. Sadly, the gallery is no longer extant, but Christopher Eimer's enthusiasm is undiminished and it shines through the text of his latest work on the subject.

His previous book1 was well received and has proved of value to collector and dealer alike. The present work will certainly be read by people in both of those categories but, more specifically, it aims at the novice collector of medals or one who has not yet succumbed to the delights of the medal.
Within its slim compass there are chapters on the development of the medal in Europe and Britain, the subject matter of medals and a brief discussion on collecting medals today. This latter notes the various public institutions in Britain which have notable medallic collections and the learned societies, particularly the British Art Medal Society, which specifically encourage the study of the medal. An unusual feature of the book, one which will be welcomed by the aspirant collector, are the few pages which list the suggested values of those medals that are illustrated. Offhand I can think of no other beginners' book on numismatics which has this feature and yet 'What is it worth?' or 'How much will it cost me?' are questions which would spring early to the mind of someone dipping into untried waters. Whether or not these values are accurate is, perhaps, not within the reviewer's brief and the author makes a point of stating that they are 'an approximate and comparative guide as to what a collector might expect to pay'. However, a study of them by the reviewer leads one to think that overall they are not unreasonable given the difficulty of finding the items in the stated extremely fine condition.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the book is the uniform excellence of the plates. Not only are they well laid out, but they are a pleasure to look at, which is a considerable achievement for both photographer and printer alike. The reviewer searched in vain for an acknowledgement to the photographer. Did the author wish to keep the name of this genius hidden from us in case we steal his services, or is the author too shy to acknowledge the fact that he, himself, took them?

There are very few areas in this book which warrant genuine adverse criticism and it would be churlish in the extreme to try to find factual errors, but for the record I have a feeling that B.A. Seaby Ltd. did not 'produce' the Edward VIII bakelite abdication medal as the author states on p. 9. Seaby certainly offered these objects for sale but probably after having acquired a quantity from the manufacturers. Perhaps the author could check his source for this statement?

A further amplification of the circumstances of the R.S.A. medals bursary mentioned by the author on p. 55 might also be appropriate to ensure that due credit for this innovation is laid at the correct door. The idea of a prize for new medallic work was originally that of Peter Seaby, who, with the help of Seaby's company publicity agent Harry Dickens, conceived it as a purely private venture with an eminent person as chairman of the Award Committee. Subsequently, for various reasons, the private nature of the scheme was abandoned and the proposal that the award be part of the R.S.A. bursary scheme put to that body who eventually adopted it.

Such points as those came to mind whilst the reviewer had the pleasure of re-reading the book, for it is a book that one can re-read and dip into at leisure. It is interesting, well written, well produced and modestly priced and it should be required reading for any aspiring collector of the historical medal.

LAURENCE BROWN

1 British Commemorative Medals and their Values, B.A. Seaby Ltd. (London, 1987).


This book is in three parts. A short introductory chapter sets the nineteenth century silver token series in its general historical context. A detailed look at the tokens follows in the main body of the book, organised on a regional basis and interspersed with illustrations of tokens, makers, issuers and contemporary scenes. This sets the tokens in their local historical contexts and supplies details of issuers, makers, motifs on the tokens and other information. The third part is the appendices which comprise a complete reprint of Richard Dalton's 1922 catalogue of the nineteenth century silver token series with addenda of previously unrecorded tokens, transcriptions of contemporary documents relating to the series and an account of Francis Cockayne, a notable collector of the series. The book is written in a lively, journalistic style, with text broken up into manageable chunks using illustrations and sub-headings ('Alford's Woman Token Issuer', 'Henry Morgan Again?', 'A royal personage little respected'). The splendid overall quality of the book and the range of illustrations may attract the general historical reader though inevitably it has added to the price.

Few numismatists take on the challenge of setting tokens in their historical context, and it is always encouraging to read a work that is more than a simple catalogue. The role of token catalogues, as well as being works of reference for private and public collections, should be as a basis for examining fundamental questions about a series: who issued the tokens and why?; what is the social and economic context of their issue?; does their geographical distribution tell us anything?; what can they tell us about contemporary trade or token production and marketing? In Tokens of Those Trying Times some aspects such as the distribution and production of the tokens are not examined, though the author rightly draws attention to the connection between the Birmingham stamped metal industry and token manufacture. One can also quarrel with some of the general historical comments: to claim that the tokens had a pacifying influence on a militant populace is a shade extravagant for instance. James Mays is not an academic historian however, sensibly citing secondary historical works rather than attempting his own analysis of, for example, contemporary social unrest. His purpose in preparing the book is quite clear – to place the silver token series in its contemporary context and to make the tokens
'come alive' – and on the whole he has succeeded. The reprint and update of Dalton alone would secure the book a place in the libraries of token specialists, but the main body of text and the appendices contain much useful and interesting information culled from widely scattered (and handsomely acknowledged) sources, and there is a full bibliography and index.

Y.C. STANTON-COURTNEY


Work on hop tokens has previously been dispersed, much of it appearing in publications difficult to obtain outside Kent and Sussex. Alan Henderson has done a great service in concentrating information into one volume as well as placing on record and illustrating many pieces for the first time. This is essentially a work for specialists in the series, dealers and curators, though regional historians of Kent and Sussex may also find it interesting. The catalogue is based on a collation of lists compiled by Rev. R.W.H. Acworth and E.H. Clark together with records of recent collectors. This is prefaced by sections on the use of hop tokens, metals used, makers, designs and shapes and values. Appendices include a list of issuers by village and family trees of issuers. Selections of fruit and vegetable pickers tokens and Herefordshire and Worcestershire hop tokens are also illustrated.

Many hop tokens were cast in lead or lead alloys by local smiths and handymen. Tokens used for other purposes were often made in the same way. This means that problems of identification and attribution, especially if only the initials of the issuer appear, can be considerable and are often insurmountable. A good instance of this is pieces which turned out to be Exeter-made pub checks but which were (quite understandably) thought to be hop tokens by both V.J. Newbery and R.N.P. Hawkins. Henderson's preface honestly states that it was impossible to check identifications of the tokens in his catalogue culled from past records. In this connection it is worth stressing to collectors and dealers the importance of recording findspot data, sometimes the only means of establishing the likelihood of suggested identifications and attributions and invaluable when examining distributional evidence.

As Henderson notes, the earliest attributable dated hop token is that of John Toke of Godington with a date of 1767. However he appears also to accept uncritically Bridge's suggestion, made in Archaeologia Cantiana in 1953, that medieval merchant's tokens were possibly used as hop tokens. In fact the tokens he has used to illustrate this statement with the caption 'hop tokens similar to medieval merchant's tokens' are of the type now usually dated to the later seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries on the evidence of the Evesham hoard published by Marion Archibald in Coin Hoards 5 (1979). There is still no evidence to connect these pieces with hop-picking and their general distribution argues against any specific association.

In an appendix on restoration and preservation of hop tokens Henderson rightly observes that 'PVC is harmful' but omits the fundamental information that it is acid vapour that attacks lead or lead-based alloys. This may come from wood or paper in storage materials or from PVA and PVC plastics. Adhesives used in wooden trays and cabinets, and chemicals in felt can also corrode lead objects (see Hannah Lane 'The conservation and storage of lead coins' in Recent Advances in the Conservation and Analysis of Artefacts, edited by James Black 1987). Thus storage in metal or stable plastic materials (eg. perspex) is recommended.

However, despite these minor reservations, this work can be recommended as a well illustrated and comprehensive catalogue. It will make available to a wider audience much previously inaccessible research.

Y.C. STANTON-COURTNEY