
The struggle between the dispossessed Stuarts and the Orange, protestant Stuart and Hanoverian ‘usurpers’ of their thrones between 1688 and 1807 can be followed through medals in a manner matched by few other historical media. It tends to be forgotten that this was no one-sided contest even if the Jacobite medals are now better-known. The viewpoints of William III, Anne and the Hanoverians were also represented on medals, even if most of these were minted not in the Tower of London but as speculations by sharp-witted Dutch, German and, from the 1740s, even some English medallists. As the author says in his introduction, ‘more than forty medallists were involved in half-a-dozen or more European countries when the striking of medals was at its height and they were being avidly collected’. While virtually all of the medals were described and illustrated in Medallic Illustrations and British Historical Medals, there has been a considerable supplementary specialist literature (not least in this journal) on particular aspects of the medals, and earlier authors such as van Loon have also said much that was interesting. Yet several puzzles remain, relating to the people responsible for particular medals, the precise reasons for their appearance (especially in the case of the Jacobite medals) and the manner in which they were diffused. Mr Woolf was correct in thinking that the time had come for the medals to be re-examined as a group.

The book embraces Jacobite and anti-Jacobite medals. It is chronologically arranged, partly under topic and partly under medallic type. Each medal is illustrated and each relevant example is numbered. At the end the medals are collated against references to them in a selection of earlier works. There is an index of legends, short biographical notes on medallists (with useful, simplified genealogical tables of the Roettier and Hamerani dynasties who were responsible for most of the pro-Jacobite medals), a bibliography and a Stuart-Hanover family tree.

The technical numismatic information is well presented and the quality of the illustrations is excellent. Several traditional assumptions have been looked at afresh and questioned. Close examination of the ‘Reddite’ series, containing maps of Britain on the reverse and a portrait of the Old Pretender on the obverse, reveals not simply differing portrayals but an evolving portrait. Woolf is surely correct in suggesting that they were issued over a period of years, not only to accompany the failed Jacobite attempt to recover the British thrones in 1708 (the hitherto accepted explanation), but on a number of occasions between then and 1713. The precise occasions are more difficult to pin down. Woolf quotes Abel Boyer, a contemporary Huguenot pamphleteer, who mentioned the abortive Anglo-French peace negotiations at Gertruydenberg in the context of an issue in 1710, but the more probable reason was surely the upsurge of High Anglican pro-Tory feeling inside England at the same period in the wake of a provocative sermon given by Dr Sacheverell, which might reasonably have been expected to create a ready market for such medals among the disaffected. For the medals were issued in considerable numbers: far more than would have been needed to satisfy the demands of plenipotentiaries in Holland (who in any case would have been bound by instructions from their governments). In a similar vein Woolf has questioned the dating of the ‘Amor et Spes’ medals dated 1745 and found that they would have to date from after 1746 since the portrait of Bonnie Prince Charlie is derived from a portrait bust of 1746. It is only just that recent sale catalogues have given the Jacobite material ‘Woolf’ numbers.

The catalogue is, however, in the final analysis, disappointing because in some respects the author has not done enough and in other respects he has been too ambitious. While the individual medals are technically well described and considerable effort has been expended in explaining the context of each type, there is no over-view of the medals as a whole or any real questioning of their intended purpose and market. No attempt is made to discover the actual extent of their circulation, the means (and price at which) they circulated and so on. What is the significance of the fact that thousands of 1697 medalets were concealed as hoards in London, presumably shortly after their arrival in England, only to be discovered in the 1860s? Who was responsible for certain leitmotivs in the Jacobite medals – the use of maps of Britain, the cryptic messages (‘Whose is this?’ (1708–13) ‘The only salvation’ (1721)) and so on. In short, what do the medals tell us of their sponsors and of the society which saw their creation? Can they contribute something to the heated debate over the actual strength and nature of the Jacobite movement at particular moments in the eighteenth century?

Unfortunately, the author avoids such probing analysis. Instead he attempts to combine a scholarly medallic catalogue with a popular, general history of the Jacobite movement through medals and other propaganda material. Here the book falls down. It will be difficult for future scholars to refer to the text of the catalogue because of Mr. Woolf’s repeated failure to give precise references for his statements or for the documents that he quotes (usually in unreliable translation) even if a search through the bibliography may sometimes suggest them. There is little sign of any fresh research in the broader context of
Jacobitism. The text and bibliography betray little awareness of the serious historical literature on Jacobitism that has appeared since 1960 from the pens of professional historians writers such as John Kenyon, Jeremy Black, Evelyn Cruikshanks, Bruce Lenman, Bart Smith and Edward Gregg. These would have modified certain of the author's statements as well as supplying information, such as on the strength of Jacobitism at certain periods and the Jacobites' changing tactics, which could have made more sense of certain medallic issues, such as those of the 1750s. Furthermore, the admixture of political cartoons, playing cards and songs serves only to weaken the impact of the medallic catalogue.

The principal criticisms must, however, attach not to the author but to the publishers. The text seems to have been untouched by an editor, a designer or a proof reader's hand. Incidents having no medallic significance, such as the Eliebank Plot of 1752, are discussed in some detail (p. 120). Supposedly Jacobite songs are transcribed for no apparent reason. Such is the lack of design that in places the continuations of the text are difficult to track down, while there are numerous misprints on virtually every page.

This book is, then, excellent in its technical treatment of individual medals. It is good to have the medals treated as a group. But there is still room for a more analytical and weightier catalogue.

PETER BARBER


The 1985 publication of the first Acquisitions of Medals by Mark Jones, set a precedent and whilst the text has been maintained. The book's A4 size and soft card covers are in line with the BM series of Occasional Papers.

For this journal, it is with the medallic art of Great Britain that this reviewer concentrates his comments. The familiar title of Hawkine's Medallic Illustrations is now over a hundred years old, and for medals of the 1760–1901 period Laurence Brown's British Historical Medals completes the picture, leaving just the present century. But one would be wrong to assume from these studies that the national collection must therefore have everything, and the range and scope of the acquisitions very much bear the personal stamp of Mark Jones’s Assistant Keepership. Acquisitions of the Thatcher years these might well be, but the good lady appears on only one unsigned medal, the reverse copied from the early Victorian five-pound piece, showing her as Una and the Lion. She does make another appearance in the book, under Argentina, a crude but jolly souvenir of the Falklands War.

The National Art-Collections Fund presented gold coronation medals of William and Mary, Anne, George IV, William IV, George VI, and the Jubilee medal of George V (did the Museum not have these?), but they also presented their own 1987 Benefactors Medal, by Nicola Moss. It is with the representation of modern medallists that one can appreciate the effect that the British Art Medal Society has had on the medals and medal design, and the author is able to list 27 medals by Ronald Searle, a name more familiar to some as a cartoonist. Ron Dutton, another pioneer medallist, has 21 medals listed, against a single medal by Lynn Chadwick. Raphael Maklouf, who is responsible for the portrait of the Queen on our coinage, has presented works – commercial medals perhaps – produced by his company, The Tower Mint (not to be confused with the Royal Mint). There are sporting medals, club medals of all sorts, from dogs to sweet peas, poetry medals, the National Trust, Thames Barrier, London Electric Supply Corporation, and many Royal medals. The medals are listed in gold, silver, bronze, white metal and aluminium, whilst there is a wax portrait of Thomas Wyon, the elder, by his son, and two other waxes, these by William Wyon, one of Homer and one Peter Wyon. The listings fill some 42 pages, with the contents divided under general headings, seventeenth century (only two listings), 1700–1814, 1815–1879, 1880–1919, 1920–1987. Each of these sections lists the medals numbering from 1, and the description is limited to a title, the metal and size, the BM acquisition number, and if presented, the source. Almost every entry for a medallist is preceded by a two or three line biographical note.

The British medals are illustrated on plates 69–88, and include some surprises and some old friends. Alphonse Legros' self portrait plaque, cannot be said to be his best work, but a medal by a pupil, Gustav Natorp’s portrait of Robert Browning, is stunning. Christopher Blunt’s eightieth birthday medal by Annabel Eley is, quite rightly, illustrated, as is the late Fred Kormis’ 1984 portrait of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

The book must serve primarily as a listing, and when used in conjunction with the earlier volume, will
cover a host of previously un-published or little known pieces. Perhaps the plentiful Anonymous list-ings that come at the end of each section, could be worked on, for one feels sure that especially with modern pieces, many of the medallists must be known. Since the publication of this book the author’s duties within the Department of Coins and Medals have turned towards the former rather than the latter, and Mark Jones, who has done so much to establish the interest in all things medallic, has moved through a short spell as Keeper, to an outside appointment. In congratulating both, the reviewer hopes that the pressure in forming and publishing the medal collection, will be maintained, especially as 1992 will mark the end of another five year span.

DANIEL FEARON


The button badge, first produced in the United States in the 1890s, is a relatively recent invention. But it is also, in a very real sense, the direct descendant of the advertising check and of the numerous, cheap, white metal badges of the nineteenth century. The modern badge frequently endorses a named brand or product and the wearer of any badge is, like his or her medal-wearing ancestors, making an explicit statement about their own loyalties, abilities or interests. The study of checks and medals has long been regarded as appropriate pursuits for the numismatist and it is therefore wholly appropriate that the British Museum should take an active interest in the collection and documentation of these fascinating historical documents.

This is in fact the second catalogue of badge acquisitions to be compiled by the author, the previous volume, Acquisitions of Badges (1978–1982), being published by the British Museum Press in 1985 as Occasional Paper 55. Some five hundred badges were listed and described therein, with only some sixty-three being illustrated on the four plates. The new volume covers some 3,900 items, of which a far larger proportion, amounting to about seven hundred badges, are illustrated on forty-four plates. This rise reflects the vigour of the Museum’s collecting policy and also the increasing popularity of badge collecting in general, as evidenced by the vigour of the Badge Collectors Circle, which has produced a regular newsletter, The Badger, for distribution to its members since 1980.

Readers who wish to learn something of the history of the button-badge will find little to inform them in this volume, for that topic, which was summarised with admirable brevity by Attwood in his earlier volume, is not re-covered here. Instead Attwood adheres to a straight listing, liberally sprinkled with snippets of information about many of the badges and their publishers which might easily have been lost but are now thankfully preserved in print.

Nor is it a particularly difficult work to use. The indices are more than adequate to allow most badges to be readily identified on the basis of their subject matter or legend and the illustrations, whilst not of the highest quality, serve their purpose well. The numbering system adopted to deal with the large quantity of British and US material seems a little daunting at first, but becomes markedly less so with practice. It would nevertheless have been of assistance to the reader if the pages of text had been provided with headings of the type used on the plates, for it can be difficult to work back from the plates to the text.

These slight reservations notwithstanding, this is a worthy book. Little serious effort has gone hitherto into the study of modern badges and whilst, as the author acknowledges, this work cannot claim to be either comprehensive or indeed necessarily representative in its scope, it is nevertheless probably as detailed a work as we can reasonably expect to see produced for many years to come. As such this volume, and its predecessor, will prove invaluable tools to future generations of numismatists and social historians.

C.P. BARCLAY