I begin my report on the year on the subject of Vice Presidents. In July we learnt the sad news of Mr Doubleday’s ill health and his desire to resign. Naturally, Council respected his wishes but in doing so was unanimous in its view that his service to the Society as Secretary, Director and Vice President should continue to be recognised by nominating him to Honorary Membership. Earlier in the year it was with great pleasure that I wrote on your behalf a note of congratulations to Vice President Stewart on the occasion of his being knighted. Won deservedly for his service to politics, Ian’s honour none the less adds lustre to our membership. Peter Woodhead has continued his excellent work as Vice President by attending Council regularly and giving us the benefit of his wise advice. In gratefully acknowledging this I would also add a special note of thanks for the care he has taken over the numismatic affairs of our late President, John Brand. Through Peter’s good offices we have been able to arrange for notes and extracts from primary sources which John had built up over many years to be placed on permanent loan in the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, where interested students may consult them. He has also deposited some of John’s papers in the Society’s archive and taken an active interest in the possibility of publishing one of John’s academic theses. Vice President Lyon cannot be with us tonight, but his reasons are impeccable; he is attending celebrations in connection with the award to him yesterday of the gold medal of the Institute of Actuaries. It is a most fitting distinction, and rare. Since the current regulations for awarding the gold medal were introduced in 1964 only seven members have received it. I have written to him on your behalf. It is my pleasure to end this roll-call of Vice Presidents by warmly welcoming our latest additions, Mr Peter Mitchell, whose long service to numismatics in general and to our Society in particular needs no rehearsing here, and Mr Hugh Pagan, my predecessor as President.

This year has been a busy one for me, as I have tried to share, as all Presidents should, in the numismatic activities of the country as a whole. In April I was at Greenwich to lecture on ‘Sir Richard Martin’ at the annual Congress of the British Association of Numismatic Societies. In June I went, first, to York to lecture on ‘Minting in Late Medieval England’ to a joint meeting of the Yorkshire Numismatic Society and the Royal Numismatic Society, and then to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, where our Director had arranged a one-day conference on ‘Stephen and the Anarchy’. There were four numismatic papers, by our members Dr Metcalf, Dr Bateson, Miss Archibald and Mr Seaby; one on heraldry, by Mrs Beryl Platts; and two on history, by Dr David Crouch of the University College of North Riding, and Professor Edmund King of the University of Sheffield. We were particularly obliged to Professor King for stepping in once the programme had been arranged to replace Professor R.H.C. Davis who died on 12 March 1991. The large audience enjoyed a full and interesting day, whose proceedings were chaired by me in the morning and by Mr Boon in the afternoon.

The British Association of Numismatic Societies held its annual lecture course weekend at Mickleover in Derbyshire, from 30 August to 1 September. On the Saturday morning it was my pleasure to chair the first Royal Mint Lecture, ‘Sculpture in your Pocket’ given by Mary Milner Dickens. It was an important occasion, at once peculiarly delightful, by reason of our charming and eloquent speaker, and of general significance, by reason of the lecture’s connections with the Royal Mint. By agreeing to sponsor a lecture at this conference for three years, with the quite specific aims of encouraging both the Association itself and the study of modern British coins, the Royal Mint has once again demonstrated the esteem in which it holds both our science and our determination to know ever more about the history of coin output in these islands.

Because of this esteem and, as I recorded in my Address of 1989, the importance I attach to our having good relations with the Royal Mint, it was with great personal pleasure that in January of this year I accepted nomination to the Royal Mint Advisory Committee on the Design of Coins, Medals, Seals and Decorations. Naturally, I was personally flattered by the invitation but I took it also as a very real compliment to the Society of which I am proud to be President.

Between the 8th and 14th of September the Eleventh International Numismatic Congress was held in Brussels. I judged it to have been a great success and took the opportunity, following the Congress banquet, to present our membership medal, in silver, suitably inscribed to the Royal Belgian Numismatic Society, to honour its 150th anniversary and as a token of the appreciation of British delegates in general for all the hard work and thought which had gone into the Congress.

Finally, I betook myself in October to Glasgow, where I lectured on ‘The Coinage of Edward VI’ to the Glasgow and West of Scotland Numismatic Society. It was the occasion to repay in some small measure the splendid hospitality we all enjoyed at the BANS Congress last year and for me to see for the first time the superb collection of coins which our Director guards so carefully in the Hunter Collection.
These brief remarks about my six meetings out of Town lead me to the programme of lectures organised so well for us here by our Director. Two were particularly well attended: that given by Mr S. C. Coupland on the coinage of Charles the Bald, and that which was to have been given by Mr R. D. Van Arsdell, entitled 'Money supply and inter-tribal exchange in Celtic Britain'. I say 'was to have been given' because in fact our speaker was not present—a fact of which I was unaware until five minutes before our proceedings began—and his lecture was read by a plenipotentiary—Mr Christopher Going. I record here my thanks to Mr Going not simply for preventing the cancellation of the lecture but also for fielding some pretty tough questions from his audience afterwards. We had two enjoyable presentations on tokens—Mr Mays on 'The Character of a silver-token issuer' and Mr Whitmore on 'Table Tokens: nineteenth-century pieces for the card room'—and spent another evening musing with Mr Attwood on the rather limited career as a medallist of Kathleen Scott. We were grateful to Mr Moegaard for treading relatively unfamiliar ground in his 'Numismatic evidence from English occupied Normandy during the Hundred Years War', and to Dr Cook for sharing with us his analysis of 'Two sterling hoards from the Scottish Borders'. Last but not least, we listened to a paper or, more accurately, most of a paper, from Mr Pagan on 'Mints and Moneyers in Southern England, Edmund to Edgar'. As he himself confessed at the time, his analysis was not entirely complete but we hope that soon it will be and that we shall have the benefit of his important findings in print.

As a footnote to my remarks on our programme of events I should add that in March I very much enjoyed welcoming the artist engravers, Robert Elderton and John Lobban and their wives to our meeting and entertaining them to dinner with other members afterwards. Many of you will recall that, respectively, they were responsible for the design of Wilfrid Slayter's medal and our membership medal and it was with an inscribed copy of the latter that I presented each of them in recognition of what they had done for us. As you will have gathered from the 1990/91 programme card, where his obverse appears as a logo, Mr Lobban has very kindly agreed to our making use of his obverse design as and when we wish on our literature and so on, and I was delighted to see on my recent visit to the Royal Mint that the Deputy Master's Christmas card for this year bears on its front in full colour part of the reverse design of the membership medal, depicting the magpie and the drawers of coins. Though Mr Lobban was perfectly free to rework his copyright design in this way we should be particularly pleased that he has done so because the Deputy Master duly acknowledges on his card that the origin of the design was our medal, and so with the Royal Mint's good wishes this year goes simultaneously a widening knowledge of our Society.

Thanks to our Director, Dr Bateson, for his adroitness in handling our programme are coupled with those to our Secretary, Graham Dyer, and Treasurer, Tim Webb Ware, for keeping affairs in their respective areas in meticulous order. Our librarian, Mr Robertson, has worked quietly and methodically away, accessioning new books, having existing ones rebound as necessary, and bringing the catalogue of our holdings to completion. It is particularly pleasing that by his agreeing to become librarian of the Royal, we have once again one person to plan and care for our joint library. Finally, a word of congratulations to our editors, Dr Cook and Mr Besly, for volume 59 of our Journal and a word of thanks for what they are presently doing to try and restore our accustomed production schedule.

The membership which our medal was designed to promote, and denote, stands as I speak, having made due allowance for amovals, at 537; 408 are ordinary members, 124 are institutional, and 5 are junior. Not every new member has availed himself of the opportunity of buying a medal but sales in general have been encouraging and it is particularly pleasing to note the demand for strikings in silver by those who have been in the Society for twenty-five years and more. The first striking in gold has been done for Mr Douglas Mitchell who has been a member since 1932.

During the year three members have died; Mr A. Camp, Mr W. Seaby and Mr Philip Greenall. Mr Camp, who joined the Society in 1984, was at first a collector of Anglo-Saxon coins, then of Greek. As a dedicated Latin master at St Christopher's School, Hove, he won the respect of staff and pupils alike and his death at an early age from cancer, on 29 December 1990, came as an unexpected and cruel blow. Mr Camp I never met; Philip Dalton Greenall I did, at Canterbury in 1976, where I had gone to lecture to the BANS Congress. In those days I knew very few people in the numismatic fraternity and so, quite naturally, aided by the kindness of Christopher Blunt and others, the Congress became the occasion for redressing this. After the Congress dinner a slight lull in the conversation amongst a group of people I had joined was the occasion for one of that group with whom I had not previously spoken—as striking in the baldness of his head as he was dapper in his dress— to step forward and introduce himself; 'Sir, I envy you your shirt and tie'. That was Philip. Whether it was the subtle match of the green of my silk tie with the green of my shirt, or whether it was the black and white spots which were cast randomly on the tie, which so attracted him he did not say; but through this one sentence his charm, his gentle humour (and obviously his excellent taste!) became indelibly printed on my mind. Subsequently, I met him on many occasions and became increasingly impressed by his many-faceted life. I shall not rehearse the full details; partly because they are set out in the 1990 edition of Debrett's Distinguished People of Today, and partly because we need only a few to have a feel of the man; he was a Fellow of the Statistical Society, a squadron leader in the RAF during the second world war, a senior civil servant, President of the London Numismatic Society, Chairman of the Camden Adult Education Institute, the recipient in 1990 of the
Labour Party National Executive Committee's Award of Merit. My shirt and tie have long since gone but the man, who died aged 76 on 21 May, lives on in our esteem. It gives me, as I know it does others, great personal pleasure to know that his charming widow, Stella, remains with us as a member.

Wilfred Arthur Seaby, known simply as Bill, was born 16 September 1910, the younger son of Professor A.W. Seaby, Head of the School of Art at Reading University. From an early age, he made his career in the museum world, first at Reading and then successively at Birmingham and Taunton Castle. In 1953 he was appointed Director of Belfast Museum and Art Gallery and finished his career as Director of the Ulster Museum which was established by Act of the Northern Ireland Parliament in 1962. The thread of numismatics ran throughout his life, as one might expect of someone who was the brother of Herbert Seaby, the founder of B.A. Seaby Ltd, and the uncle of our member Mr Peter Seaby. Bill Seaby joined the family firm in 1927 but was forced out in 1930 by the poor economic conditions of the day. His numismatic training, however, was to stand him in good stead throughout his life, not least when he was in Belfast to which he was able to attract Carlyon Britton’s important collection of Hiberno Norse and Anglo-Irish coins. This collection he published for the British Academy in two sylloge volumes, the first with Michael Dolley in 1968 and the second in 1984.

He joined our Society in 1967 and published in our Journal as late as volume 57 on the subject of the half-harps of Henry VIII. During his retirement he worked as a volunteer at the Warwickshire Museum in the capacity of Honorary Keeper of Numismatics. Although I corresponded with Bill Seaby, I never actually met him, and have therefore been unable to talk about him in the way I have just done of Philip Greenall. This in no way diminishes his stature; he was a member of one of the most important English numismatic families of this century and left his own clear imprint upon both our studies and our collections.

You may have been surprised earlier in my Address to hear me say that certain of John Brand’s papers have been placed in the Society’s archive; surprised that is, not that our late President had papers worth keeping but that we as a Society had an archive to put them in. In the sense that we have a known repository with neatly accessioned and accessible records what I have just said was indeed a fiction. But in the sense that the Society does have some of its own records stretching back to its beginning, does have some of John’s papers, and does have some correspondence which I have obtained from our former secretary, Wilfrid Slayter, there is indeed already a small nucleus and it is my hope and determination that upon this we shall build. It is an axiom of life that we may not know the present without an understanding of the past; it is the justification for historians, and as an historian I urge you to look to the matter of an archive without delay. How shall we write the history of our Society without an archive, and how may we celebrate our centenary, as surely we must in the not too distant future, without such a history? Delve into your boxes and cupboards with a will and if you have worthwhile material relating either to the organisation and proceedings of the Society or to its members, please do not hesitate to let our Secretary have it. What is more, if you know, or suspect you know, where such material exists, please do not hesitate to let us know so that we may do our best to acquire it. Where the archive will be and what will be the rules governing access are secondary issues which may be decided at leisure once the archive is building and so safeguarding the records of the past for the benefit of the future. It is without hesitation, however, that I stress here and now that any such set of rules would automatically include safeguards of the kind normally respected throughout the academic world to ensure confidentiality for an agreed period of time.

Let me conclude this first part of my address with a word or two on money; money which we ourselves should supply to run the Society and money which we are given to enable us to do things beyond our normal budget. In supporting the Treasurer’s recommendation that there should be an increase in the rate of subscriptions, Council was unanimous in its view that the cost of our lecture programme, our administration and, above all, our publications must be met by our subscription income. Monies received from the sale of back numbers of our journal, from high interest rates, or as grants in aid of publication should be seen for what they were, windfalls, and as such unscore footings on which to base our financial strategy. Council was equally unanimous in believing that there should be no suggestion of our keeping the old rate through the stratagem of using money recently bequeathed to us to top-up our inadequate recurrent income. Such an action, giving each and every one of us a subsidy out of someone else’s hard won savings, would have been not only morally wrong but silly to boot. Our bequests are small in comparison with our running costs and it would have taken very few raids upon these before they would have been totally exhausted and the subscription rate would in any case have had to be raised.

With our increased costs covered by increased subscription income, our bequests are left free to benefit the Society in other ways. Although Miss Frizzell’s estate remains in administration that part of Mr Osborne’s which related to us does not; his coins have been sold and we have received our £50,000. After very careful consideration by a small committee established by Council and then by Council itself, it has been decided to use the money to fund a special series with a view to publishing works which by virtue of their size or complexity might not be publishable according to normal commercial criteria. It is intended that the series should be separate from, and additional to, our Journal and that, while each volume should draw upon our fund to help cover publication costs, the expectation would be that in each instance matching finance would be sought from elsewhere. The publishing world is one in which one must always walk with care but, with a fair wind and hard
work, I hope that by this time next year I shall have news of our first publication and a planned series thereafter.

These remarks conclude my report of our formal business and I go on to omit as I did at this point last year a listing of the hoards found during the year in the United Kingdom, once again accompanying that omission with the promise that such a listing will appear in the printed version of this Address.

[The list which follows was very kindly supplied by Dr Bateson, Mr Besly and Dr Cook]

**SCOTLAND**

Horsleyhill, Roxburghshire. 1991. 51 AR Edwardian silver, 3 Scottish pence and 2 Continental sterling, 1290s.

**WALES**


**ENGLAND**

*Celtic*

Somerton, Suffolk. October 1990. 31 AU, staters of Cunobelin.

*Roman*

Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts. September 1990. 29 AR denarii, AD 166.
Fenny Stratford, Bucks. July 1990. 2 coin dies and 3 pots containing blanks, c. AD 275 (?).

*Medieval and Modern*

‘Kent-Surrey borders’, c. 30 AR (fused group), Cnut, Short Cross.
‘Essex’, c. 72 AR (including fragments), Henry I-Stephen.
Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts. March–April 1991, c. 75 AR (including many fragments), Henry I, *BMC* x.
Bentley, Suffolk. September 1990. 48 AU, sovereigns and half-sovereigns, latest coin 1912.

In my two previous Addresses I focused on the early history of mechanised coining in England turning, first, to the apparatus of Eloy Mestrell in the reign of Elizabeth I and, second, to a metallurgical comparison of Mestrell’s coins with those struck contemporaneously by the hammer and those produced a century later by the machinery of Peter Blondeau. Of the two mechanised processes those of Blondeau have always been the better understood; even so, much remains to be learned and tonight I wish to add another small chapter of understanding by glancing at the career of Henry Slingsby, the master-worker who ran the mint at the time Blondeau’s machinery was installed.
Of both Slingsby and Blondeau I have said something in chapter 3 of *A New History of the Royal Mint*¹ but it so chances that what I wrote there was not informed by a knowledge of a small archive of material which descended from Slingsby through the female line into the hands of the Grahams of Norton Conyers in North Yorkshire. This omission on my part did not come through ignorance of the archive’s existence, for many years previously I had made detailed notes of its contents as listed in the printed report on Norton Conyers by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.² Nor did it stem from inaccessibility. Twenty-five years and more I have lived and worked but a small journey from that fine house and even before the untimely death of the present baronet's father, Sir Richard — a charming gentleman who I knew very slightly through his distinguished service as Pro-Chancellor of my own university — I had received ready agreement that I could see all that I wished. Omission, I must confess, came purely through my own preoccupation with the abundant evidence for this period in our national archives.

To be effective, of course, every confession must be accompanied by visible signs of an emended way of life and I trust that in my case you will see evidence of this when I tell you that, aided by a gentle prod from my predecessor who also knew of the Slingsby papers, I have not only now been to Norton Conyers but have come here tonight to tell you of my findings. Let me say at once that they do not change the shape of the picture which emerged from my earlier analysis, for there is nothing to alter materially what I said previously either of Slingsby’s suspension and then dismissal from office, or of the broad outline of the installation and operation of the new plant. Rather, they fill out the detail, and add depth, and definition. These important improvements are made possible by the pens of a number of correspondents who wrote to Slingsby during two periods of absence from the mint in the 1660s, but before I expand further, a word or two on the man and his career.

The second son of Sir William Slingsby, of Kippax in what was then the West Riding of Yorkshire, Henry Slingsby matriculated at Oxford in 1635 and went on at the Restoration to build for himself a life of some importance and style. His principal achievement was at the mint, of which he was successively deputy to Master-worker Sir Ralph Freeman, joint patentee as master-worker with Sir Ralph, and then, upon the latter’s death in 1666, master-worker alone for a further twenty years. In 1661 he became a member of the Philosphical Society, being a member of its council at the time it became the Royal Society; on 27 August 1666 he went with John Evelyn, the diarist, Sir Christopher Wren and others to examine proposals for repairing St Paul’s Cathedral; and between 1660 and 1674 served on various councils for trade, notably as secretary and treasurer of the Council for Foreign Plantations.³ Samuel Pepys and he were well acquainted, meeting at Court or at the Tower, and it is because of this acquaintance that Pepys has so much to tell us about the new minting processes. In 1665 he described Slingsby as ‘a very ingenious person’ with whom he had had many ‘fine discourses’ on issues such as the size of the circulating medium and the law prohibiting the export of bullion.⁴

Whether Pepys truly befriended Slingsby is hard to tell but we may say with some confidence that Evelyn did. In 1674 he epitomised Slingsby as ‘my worthy friend and great lover of music’ and five years later described dining at his house where four of the most renowned musicians of the day performed. A Frenchman played the lute, an Italian the

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harpsichord, the ‘famous’ Nicholas his violin, and a German the viol d’amore. ‘Mr Slingsby ... (whose son and daughter played skillfully), commented Evelyn, ‘being exceedingly delighted with this diversion, had these meetings frequently in his house.’ Several years earlier we catch sight of Evelyn with Slingsby again, this time in a coach and six with Sir Robert Moray, bowling along to a property in Borough Green, Cambridgeshire, which he had acquired through his wife Ann, daughter of Sir Anthony Cage. Slingsby was determined to build a new house there and wanted his friend’s advice on how best it should stand. On the way they dined near Royston with Mrs Turner ‘where we found a very noble dinner, venison, music and a circle of country ladies and their gallants’. Several years earlier still we find Evelyn suggesting to Slingsby the words ‘Decus et Tutamen’ with which to edgemark the new milled coins. To Evelyn’s credit this friendship held good despite Slingsby’s expulsion in 1675 from the Royal Society for non-payment of his dues, despite Slingsby’s suspension from office at the mint in 1680, and despite Slingsby’s ultimate dismissal in 1686. From time to time, the two men continued to dine together; in 1684 Evelyn took Slingsby to see ‘Mr Sheldon’s collection of medals’; and in 1688, when the former master-worker was in ‘deplorable circumstances’, Evelyn betook himself to the lords of the Treasury to ask them ‘to be favourable to him’.

Man of parts and of ability though Slingsby undoubtedly was one thing he could not do was keep his accounts straight for the management of the mint. Not until 1675 did either he or Warden St Leger make any account for the offices they had held since the Restoration and only then for the period 1666 to 1670. The commission of enquiry which was set up on 23 September 1677 to look into these irregularities tried to establish the position on three broad fronts; first, how had the mint been managed under James I and Charles I, and at what profit; secondly, what had been the position during the Interregnum and what money and equipment had been handed on in 1660, and to whom; and, thirdly, what had happened since 1660. During November and December the commissioners met the senior mint officials no less than seven times but, although St Leger’s deputy, his son, did produce two of Sir William Parkhurst’s books and some other accounts, the commissioners could make no real headway because both Slingsby and Hoare simply refused to cooperate. Slingsby would produce nothing, ‘saying it was contrary to law for an accountant to charge himself, and for the books of accounts, he said they were his private books and therefore would not produce them’. When pressed further, both Slingsby and Hoare let it be known that they would answer further only through their lawyers.

Despite this obstruction the commission of enquiry was left with the clear impression that all was far from well. Quite apart from the missing accounts for the mint’s normal activities, no account had been made for the Dunkirk money and there were serious allegations that neither the pyx nor the ledgers were properly kept, that the Crown had paid more than was necessary for copper used to make farthings and halfpence, and that the gold and silver coin was worse than standard. Moreover, it had been revealed that for some years the mint officers had bought up old gold to melt it down at a profit.

On 30 January 1678 Lord Treasurer Danby instructed the auditors to require Slingsby and St Leger to make their accounts without delay and as the wheels turned slowly throughout that year and the next Slingsby’s fitness to stay in office fell openly in question. By early 1680 his credit had sunk so low that when a warrant was issued to him to receive £600 out of the coinage money in the Exchequer it was specifically stated that, unless payment was actually made in the presence of the moneyers to whom the money was then to be paid as part of the total sum which Slingsby owed them, nothing was to be done.

5 The Diary of John Evelyn, entries for 18 and 19 July 1670, 1 December 1674, 25 September and 20 November 1679, 3 December 1684, 1 October 1685, 12 January 1688.
6 This and the next two paragraphs are taken from A New History of the Royal Mint, pp. 354-5.
Slingsby hardly helped his cause by combining with the other officers to keep out of the mint William Taylor, the man who had served as clerk to the commissioners of enquiry and who had successfully petitioned in 1679 for the post of chief clerk. In July 1680 Slingsby was suspended on full pay and a triumvirate appointed to exercise his office; John Buckworth, Charles Duncombe and James Hoare. Momentarily, Slingsby resisted still by refusing to give up his keys of office; but, with his property confiscated and the auditors relentlessly demanding their pound of flesh, capitulation was inevitable. Slingsby was a ruined man. For a decade he fought his private creditors, including the moneyers who in 1685 claimed that they had received only £8,542 out of £16,109 which was due to them in respect of the gold and silver coinage between 1673 and the date of Slingsby’s suspension, 22 July 1680. As far as the Crown was concerned, it was not until May 1690, after he was dead, that a settlement was finally agreed. Even then, it was only possible because Slingsby’s executrix Ann, ‘the best of women’, as he described her in his will, was allowed to claim for the period of his suspension, first, the fees for himself, his assayer, and his purveyor; secondly, part of the engineer’s salary and allowance; and, thirdly, some of the master-worker’s fee for coining gold and silver. These amounts totalled some £13,451, the greater part of the £22,621 in which he finally stood indebted to the Crown for the mint and other government services.

So much for the man. Let us now return to his letters at Norton Conyers and look in the first instance at those which relate to his first absence from the mint in September/October 1663. Slingsby must have left for Kippax in the second week of September because William Le Blanc, who served Slingsby in some un-named capacity at the mint, was able to write on the 17th of his delight at the news of Slingsby’s safe arrival in the country. He probably returned shortly after James Hoare’s last letter to him on 10 October, in which Hoare, who was comptroller at the mint, expressed the hope that he would be at the Tower the following week. When he did return it must have been to his house in the Strand; at least it was to that address that correspondence concerning a proposed issue of farthing tokens was sent in December 1663, and it was from there that he replied.

This house, known appropriately enough as Slingsby House, stood near the Savoy and had come to Slingsby from his father, Sir William. An undated inventory of its contents shows it to have been a house of some pretensions; one which one can quite imagine Sir William’s wife, Elizabeth, would wish to cling on to once she became widowed. That this is precisely what did happen comes out with amusing force from a document which, though undated and unsigned, I take to have been penned by the young Henry shortly after he succeeded his father.

Now she has got my estate into her power she will neither remove into Yorkshire nor retire into any country at a good distance from London to live more privately at easier charges in housekeeping and

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7 Ruined though he was Slingsby made plain in his will, dated 16 May 1688, that he still hoped to come out on the right side. He left his lands in Kippax, together with all mines or quarries there for coal or stone to his son, Henry. The manors of Burrough Green and Croydon were to go to Ann, his widow, who was to sell all other properties which had come to her and Slingsby in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire through the will of her father, using the proceeds to settle any outstanding debts on the same and to pay £2,000 to her daughter, Elizabeth, and £500 to her younger son, Anthony. Slingsby expressed the hope that the large (though unspecified) sums of money owed to him in respect of his public offices would be paid to Ann to enable her to clear the debts he had incurred during his service. If not, Burrough Green was also to be sold. Slingsby died in 1690, as did his son, Henry, in 1695. Kippax then descended, first, to his brother Anthony and then, on Anthony’s death in 1697, to Elizabeth. PRO. Prob. 11/399 (will of Henry Slingsby, senior), 11/437 (will of Anthony Slingsby); The Diary of Sir Henry Slingsby, edited by D. Parsons (1836), p. 404.

8 For Le Blanc and the other officials mentioned subsequently, see ‘Mint Officials and Moneyers of the Stuart Period’.

9 When Slingsby’s house was confiscated in August 1680 it was said to be in Suffolk Street, which is much nearer to Charing Cross than the Savoy; so, in the interval, he may well have moved. Calendar of State Papers Domestic (hereafter CSPD), 1679–80, 610.
extraordinaries. She will live near London, continuing great expenses in musicians... She has gotten into my house in the Strand... There I lived with her until, with her proud and insufferable usage, I was chased out of doors.

Clearly, widow Slingsby was a formidable lady and it comes as no surprise that in the 1640s Henry had to enter into litigation with her over income from coal mining which at the time he claimed was his ‘chief subsistence’. Incidentally, her daughter, Henry’s sister, also named Elizabeth, took as her second husband Sir John Villiers, Viscount Purbeck, older brother of the duke of Buckingham, and it was as Viscountess Purbeck that in 1679 she dedicated a communion cup to her native parish of Kippax, where it still survives.

Well, his mother notwithstanding, Henry did regain his house and it was, as I have said, his temporary absence from there which was the occasion for the letters to which I have already alluded. There are nine in all, two from Le Blanc, written in French, and the rest from Comptroller Hoare. Their importance is that they report events in the critical period when the plant for mechanised coining was being installed and enable us to see, first, the good relations which existed at that time between the master-worker and other mint personnel; second, the common enthusiasm with which the new enterprise was approached; third, the very central role which Slingsby himself had in finalising arrangements; fourth, the order in which Blondeau and Roettier proceeded; and, finally, the type of working tools which the Roettiers prepared.

What I have just said about good relations and team spirit may come as something of a surprise to anyone who is familiar only with the bitter relations of later years when Slingsby and the moneyers fell into acrimonious dispute and he was to protest in sorrow to his former clerk and deputy, Corney Frowde, that he had always carried himself ‘with that love and kindness’ to Hoare and had shown such a ‘readiness to serve him and his family upon all occasions’ that he could only marvel at Hoare’s ‘usage of your assured loving friend’. At first sight, the notion of harmony also accords ill with the evidence that originally Slingsby had been no more in favour than Blondeau and Thomas Simon of the Roettiers being employed at the mint. This important admission comes in a document of later date, one of many written by Slingsby to show what payments he had made in the past and thus what he should be allowed in the discharge of his accounts.

When Monsieur Roettier and his two brothers were sent for over in the year 1661, and Mr Johnson likewise, they came [he wrote] in opposition to me, Blondeau and Simon, but finding the Roettiers’s way of engraving only fit to carry on the new way of coining I turned their friend’, and prevailed with the chancellor of the Exchequer to pay them. Since I have argued from other evidence in the past that the Roettiers established themselves at the mint through the superiority of their skills rather than through any animus shown towards Simon, it is now very welcome indeed to find a clear substantive statement to this effect from no less an authority than the master of the mint himself.

In 1663 these initial doubts were over and future recriminations lay far off. On 17

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10 Norton Conyers. File ‘Slingsby Family. Letters to and from the Family, 1634–1669’. Not calendared by HMC. The inventory and the coal mining dispute are in this file as is the complaint against the Lady Elizabeth, the latter being written on the back of a copy letter of 17 August 1637.

11 T.N. Fallow and H.B. McCall, Yorkshire Church Plate, II (Leeds, 1915), p. 140.


13 Norton Conyers. File ‘Slingsby Mint Papers’ – calendared by HMC. Slingsby to Mr Frowde, Wednesday morning, n.d. Letter relating to Dunkirk accounts. Hoare was one of the three people proposed by Slingsby for the Royal Society. After his election in 1664, however, Hoare was inactive, paid his dues irregularly, and was expelled in 1682. M. Hunter, The Royal Society and its Fellows, 1660–1700 (1982), pp. 190–1.

14 Norton Conyers. File ‘Slingsby Mint Papers’ – not calendared by HMC. n.d. Claim made by Slingsby in respect of £831 13s said to have been paid to the Roettiers.

September Hoare wrote of his having received Slingsby’s letters of the 11th from the hands of Lady Slingsby herself who, Hoare says, ‘I had the favour of seeing at my house upon the christening of my daughter’. The good wishes with which he concluded, from Blondeau, Roettier and Le Blanc as well as from himself, were joined with those of the moneyers; ‘Sir, this day the moneyers would needs get me forth to a glass of wine. A great motive was to do a respects to yourself which, I assure [you], was done with a hearty service from them, and their humble thanks for your kind remembrances’. This letter of the 17th was accompanied by a news book, as was a subsequent despatch on the 24th. On this second occasion, Hoare confessed himself to be ‘a great stranger to the other end of Town [i.e. the Court] and Sir Anthony St Leger here yesterday, and empty. Therefore, I conclude there’s little stirring’. Sir William Parkhurst and Mr Woodward, the assay-master, sent their respects to Slingsby, as did Hoare’s sons and Le Blanc. Let me know, he concluded, when to expect your return, so that I may ‘wait of you at Barnet according to promise’. On the 26th Hoare had no Court news because, he said, ‘we had neither Sir Ralph [Freeman] nor Sir Anthony [St Leger] this day’. Nevertheless, ‘all friends here present’ sent their respects. On the 29th another news book went north together with an intimation that the lord mayor of London had put off inviting the rest of the mint officers to dine with him, upon expectation of Slingsby’s return. On 6 October in the second of his two letters, Le Blanc coupled his respects with those of Blondeau, Roettier and Mr Mason (Slingsby’s melter). And, finally, two days later Hoare sent another news book to Kippax; some compensation, perhaps, for the accompanying news that Slingsby had lost his City banquet; ‘my lord mayor has stayed in hopes of having your company so long as well he could. But now has made his invite. And tomorrow we dine there, where I am sure you will be remembered’.

Brief though these statements are they are clear; as, indeed, are those relating to the keenness of officials and others. Le Blanc and Hoare are as one in describing men ‘close at their work’, doing their jobs as best they could be done. Blondeau is in ‘very good forwardness’ with his machinery, Roettier is painstaking and swift in preparing puncheons, his brothers sink dies from the puncheons already made while he goes on to make more, the moneyers are pleased with their efforts at melting, the moulders have a ‘hard day’s labour’ making their sand ready to receive the molten metal to make ingots. True, the mint was no more proof then than it is today from the hapless ways of builders and the setbacks caused by manufacturing error, and we must not ignore either the delays to the new building caused by lack of foundations or the hiccup in die preparation through failure of puncheons for the harp and some of the small letters. Nevertheless, progress was pleasing and could have been better if only Slingsby had been able to be present.

Until his return and his mind was known, Hoare was reluctant to proceed with melting the moneyers’s silver and Roettier was held up in his preparation of the reverses of the gold coins. ‘If you would have us go on to coin’, wrote Hoare on 29 September, ‘pray a line to that purpose, for by the beginning of next week the moneyers will be in a good forwardness for plate.’ But Slingsby continued to delay so that when, on 7 October, the duke of York asked Hoare what state of readiness the mint was in, all the comptroller could manage by way of a reply was that ‘we can but prepare until we have you [i.e. Slingsby] here’. Three days later Hoare’s desperation was beyond doubt; ‘Sir, your presence or advice is suddenly desired . . . Sir, without your directions or presence we can ill prepare for the press. The dies cannot be done without some charge from you in writing or your presence – pray advise what shall be done’. None of the design problems over which Slingsby was required to arbitrate was more charming than the little emblem which was to be placed on the issue made from the gold brought in by the Royal Africa Company. ‘The elephant’, wrote Hoare on 10 October, ‘is likewise to be considered. [it being] not yet made. How made for bigness, and where to be placed. And which way the head of it to stand: if under the king’s head, whether the head coming towards him or going from him.’
In turning to examine what the correspondence of 1663 has to tell us about Blondeau and the Roettiers, we may conveniently begin with the former who had received letters patent on 1 November 1662 granting him, in addition to an annuity of £100, 3d per lb on all silver coin made by the new way and 12d per lb on gold. This grant was to run for twenty-one years, during which time all mint officers were to be sworn not to reveal to anyone the secrets of the edge-marking process. By the same grant it was also determined that, first, for fourteen years none but Blondeau should use the new edge-marking process in issuing small change such as base-metal farthings or in making coin weights; second, Blondeau was to enjoy all the rooms, gardens and workshops formerly occupied by David Ramage in the Irish mint in the Tower; and third, Blondeau’s piece rates would be reduced to 2d and 8d if coins were not marked, or to 1d and 4d if they were struck by the hammer. This last was certainly a rational provision, showing as it did that Blondeau’s level of remuneration declined hand-in-hand with responsibility for the various stages of coining; but it looks, too, like something of an insurance policy. Despite the excellence of the coins produced by his machinery under Oliver Cromwell, Blondeau had failed to secure permanent employment at the mint and there seems to be just more than a possibility that, by obtaining from the Crown a sliding-scale of charges which guaranteed him an income even if the hammer once more rose phoenix-like into the ascendent, Blondeau was ensuring, once and for all, a secure future.

The letters patent began with a grant making Blondeau a free denizen and ended with an inventory of the tools and machinery he had agreed to supply for £1,000:

(1) Building furnaces, supplying bellows, melting pots and things necessary for melting gold and silver £40
(2) Sixty ‘shassies’ or frames for casting gold and silver plates £20
(3) One horse mill with three pairs of rollers, the mill worth £35 and each set of rollers £35 £140
(4) Seven pairs of cutters: one each for the crown (£10), the half-crown (£8), the shilling (£6 15s), sixpence (£5 5s), the £5 in gold (£8), the 20s in gold (£6 15s), and the 10s (£5 5s) £50
(5) Seven instruments to flatten the blanks when cut: one each for the crown (£24), the half-crown (£20), the shilling (£16), the sixpence (£12), the £5 in gold (£20), the 20s in gold (£16), and the 10s (£12) £120
(6) Seven dozen instruments to adjust or size the pieces £20
(7) Making ovens, furnaces and so on for annealing and blanching £30
(8) Fourteen instruments to mark the edges £230
(9) Seven presses to coin: one each for the seven denominations previously mentioned – the crown (£80), the half-crown (£60), the shilling (£45), the sixpence (£30), the £5 (£60), the 20s (£45), and the 10s (£30) £350

The letters patent tell us what in theory was to happen. The Slingsby correspondence tells us what happened in practice, at least in the first instance: that is to say, that Blondeau’s thoughts on denominations turned, or were turned for him, onto first the shilling, then the twenty-shillings in gold, and then the sixpence. His pattern from which

16 PRO. C66/3004.
the sand mould for the shilling was to be made was ready by Friday, 17 September, and on the following Tuesday and Wednesday he had the satisfaction of seeing above 2,600 lb well cast. Those familiar with Pepys’s *Diary* will know that Blondeau put his cast ingots or strips through two mills; the first, or disgrossing mill, to smooth away the rougher imperfections, and the second, or finishing mill, to bring the metal to final gauge. What only the Slingsby papers tell us, however, is that ‘Blondeau has fitted his mill so that the moneyers may pass 2 plates at one time both for the disgressing and adjusting, if they please. They think [continued Hoare] it is hard labour for 3 horses, but I am not of their opinion’. According to Le Blanc, the arrangement worked so well that he remained uncertain as to whether the moneyers would work continuously. Le Blanc is also our authority both for there being first four and then five cutters to produce blanks from the finished strip, and for the statement that two operatives could only edge-mark sixteen journeys of shillings per day. Hoare speaks of there being only two edge-marking machines and, confirming Pepys, of the marking being done before the blanks were struck into coins. In his final letter, on Sunday, 10 October, Hoare announced that this striking had begun: ‘this afternoon we have pressed some few pieces to see how they should come off, which are indifferent good. On Monday 2 presses go to work and then some fair ones to show his majesty. Tuesday, I hope 3 presses will be very close at it’.

As far as the Roettiers are concerned, I have already intimated that it was John who was doing the engraving of puncheons and his brothers the sinking of the dies, or at least some of the dies, from those puncheons. Some of his puncheons failed; and that for the bust on silver, at any rate, proved [according to Hoare] to be ‘a little too soft in that part where it receives the stroke’. It had already sunk ‘near 40 heads’ and his hope that it would ‘yet do well’ seems to have been answered because it seemingly still survives with a slightly flaking end in the Royal Mint Collection. We have already seen that the design of the reverse for the gold was referred to Slingsby’s judgement and we should note too that the obverses also gave some cause for hesitation. ‘Roettier [says Hoare] has made all the small puncheons for the gold but they are less in size than the gold was first intended; he hath made them to the wideness of the shilling which is somewhat less than the 20s piece of gold. I hope they will be to your liking.’ Slingsby also seems to have been the final arbiter on the obverse of the farthing. The head was ready by 26 September and that, Hoare told Slingsby, Roettier would ‘make somewhat less and sweeten the face of it. But if that do not please he will make you another’. Since no farthings have yet been identified for this date possibly this die was either entirely discarded or simply laid aside until the trial strikings of 1665.

One final reference in the Slingsby papers to the engraving of John Roettier of which we should take note comes in Hoare’s letter of 24 September in which he says that Roettier has already hardened a ‘matris’, by which I take it he means matrix, for the reverse of the shilling. That the Roettiers did use matrices is evidenced by their sending working tools of this type north to the Edinburgh mint in 1675 but, so far as we know, not a single English matrix survives in the present-day Royal Mint Collection. This is particularly puzzling because Messrs Dyer and Gaspar have convincingly argued that all the working tools which were inventoried on Slingsby’s suspension in 1680 have indeed survived.

The correspondence which relates to Slingsby’s later absence from the mint stretches over a period of eight months, from 22 August 1665 to 28 April 1666. The explanation of this extended sojourn lies in part in the particular demands which Yorkshire made on him at that time: there was the social round which took him in January 1666 to the Ingrams at

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17 The Diary of Samuel Pepys, 19 May 1663.
their stately home of Temple Newsam, near Leeds; there was the birth of his son at Kippax in the following month; and there was his flooded coal workings which he wished to drain and make operative. At the same time as Yorkshire tugged, however, London pushed him away from the mint. From the summer of 1665 plague ravaged the streets of London, cutting down before it was done close on 56,000 souls. Commonsense told Slingsby to be gone; besides, what point was there being at the mint when trade was at a stand and there was no bullion to coin?

The picture which emerges from this second batch of letters, sixty and more, is painted by a number of correspondents who speak of affairs of state in Holland and at the English Court, and who afford us glimpses of a civilised gentleman, at one time being commissioned to buy a horse, on another lending books to someone who valued his connection with the Royal Society, on another being solicited by courtiers for grafts of Yorkshire pear trees. Only two correspondents are from the mint, Hoare, who tells us nothing of its workings, and Le Blanc, who again writes twice, in French. We hear on 6 January of the moneyers’s bitter complaint of being obliged to keep horses without having work for them to do, and on 12 April of Blondeau and the Roettiers. The former and his family are well but he is getting old and not as vigilant as once he was. He has no other help but his apprentice who as yet is insufficiently skilled to run the mill entirely by himself. John Roettier is absent (he does not say why or where) and his brothers are at work on the puncheons for gold which the comptroller has had forged by Blondeau. ‘We hear no more talk of Mr Janson’, says Le Blanc cryptically, but leaves us unfortunately without any clue as to his meaning.

Besides Le Blanc there are two others who write of matter pertaining to the mint: Sir Robert Moray and Slingsby’s cousin, George Walshe. What the latter has to tell us concerning the Restoration mint comes in a report which he made to Slingsby on the conversation which he had had at Court on 16 April 1666 with Sir Paul Neile. To Walshe’s assertion that Slingsby was wise to stay away from the mint, Sir Paul replied ‘but when you [Slingsby] had interested all your friends to obtain your office in the mint and had undertaken to the king to officiate gratis during Sir Ralph Freeman’s life, upon promise of the reversion after his death, how then could you answer to the king and to such assisting friends the absenting [of] yourself from the whole affair?’ Here is the clearest indication yet of how Slingsby got into the mint and when Sir Paul adds later on that the friends just referred to were lords Ashley and Lauderdale we realise just how powerful Slingsby’s backers were. Having made his protest over the master-worker’s absence, Sir Paul went on to concede that, while the war (and therefore disrupted mint supply) continued, it would be sufficient in order to give satisfaction at Court for Slingsby, having settled his family in the country and let his Town house, to reside in his lodgings in the Tower for no more than a month or two in the year.

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20 Norton Conyers. File 2. The letters containing information on the mint are: Sir Robert Moray to Slingsby, 22 August and 9 September 1665, 5 and 14 April 1666; George Walshe to Slingsby, 17 April 1666; and Le Blanc to Slingsby, 6 January and 12 April 1666. Books are mentioned in Dr N. Johnson to Slingsby 29 December 1665 and 20 January 1666; horses in Sir Paul Neile to Slingsby, 20 January 1666; Temple Newsam in Charles Walshe to Slingsby, 29 January 1666; his son in (1) Sir Paul Neile and (2) James Hoare to Slingsby, 1 March 1666; and pear trees in Sir Paul Neile to Slingsby, 1 March 1666.

21 Sir Robert Moray, privy counsellor and lord of the Exchequer for Scotland, was an intimate friend of Charles II. He and Sir Paul Neile petitioned the king in 1661 to incorporate the Philosophical Society as the Royal Society. He, Neile, John Evelyn and Henry Slingsby were members of the first council of the incorporated society. Sir Paul was an astronomer who, as a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, also enjoyed close connections with the king. The Royal Society, its Origins and Founders, edited by Sir Harold Hartley (1960), has entries on Moray and Neile; Hunter, The Royal Society, pp. 160–3.

22 The Second Dutch War (1665–7) which Pepys tells us, was proclaimed in the City on 4 March 1665.
In his letters, Sir Robert Moray adverts to three officials: John Reynolds, the deputy assay-master, who is dying; John Brattle, who was to succeed as assay-master; and Thomas Simon, who died late in 1665. The essential facts concerning the careers of these men are already well established and so Sir Robert has nothing new for us here. What is of value, however, is the clarity with which he lets us see, first, how Slingsby is using him to represent the master-worker’s interests at Court; and, second, how successful that representation was: no other than the king agreed to what Slingsby proposed concerning the assay-master’s and the engraver’s posts in August 1665, and it was the king who promised, while Reynolds lay dying, that nothing should be done concerning his post until Slingsby returned to Town.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to draw my address to a close with Henry Slingsby in his hey-day, running a newly mechanised mint and enjoying the confidence of the highest in the land is appropriate enough, for it is his achievement in minting rather than his failure in finance which is of particular interest to us. But the last word goes not to him or to his papers but to those who have helped perpetuate his name through the safekeeping of those papers, the Grahams of Norton Conyers. To Sir James, who so kindly afforded me access, and to Lady Beatrice, his mother, who so graciously attended to my every need, I have a real debt of gratitude and it is my very great pleasure now to make public acknowledgment of that.

[It is with deep sadness that I record subsequently the death of Lady Graham on 26 April 1992]