TONIGHT we mark the ninety-seventh anniversary of the foundation of our Society and in accordance with what has long been established practice, I will divide my second address as your President into two parts, firstly reviewing the Society’s current state and then, continuing my theme of last year, offering some further observations on eighteenth-century token manufacture.

The past year has once more, I think, been a successful one and, encouragingly, our numbers have continued to increase. I must confess, though, to one small disappointment. Until a week or two ago I had hoped to have been able to announce tonight that we would be celebrating entry into the new millennium by having achieved a grand total of six hundred members. This has proved a vain ambition. For although twenty-seven new members have been elected over the session now ending, our losses, through death, resignation or amoval, leave our membership at only 587—seven honorary members, 473 ordinary members, one junior and 107 institutional.  

Perhaps next year the elusive target will be attained.

Bare numbers, in themselves, are, of course, not everything. What is important is the steady increase that has been maintained over the years. This is a much more faithful gauge of the vigour of a society as indeed is the remarkable—and vital—continuity in membership that the Society has always enjoyed. Looking back over the past three decades, for example, something like a quarter of those personal members listed in 1970 remain members today. This speaks volumes for the engagement of members and for the capacity of the Society to cater for their disparate interests. But there is never room for complacency and on one point at least I feel I must share my concern with you. It is something I have touched on before, as have my predecessors, but this year it is brought into stark reality. In 1970 we could boast 17 junior members of whom at least six are still members and active numismatists. Four of our six current Vice-Presidents were originally junior members. For some time, however, junior membership has hovered at no more than the three or four mark and today we can claim only one junior member. This is not good for our long-term development; it is crucial that young blood is continually injected into an organization such as ours and I would ask everyone to try to encourage suitable youngsters to apply for membership.

Our Treasurer has just reported on the continuing soundness of the Society’s finances. We have once more ended the year with a reasonable operational surplus and, in the light of this and the Treasurer’s future projections, your Council felt it again possible to recommend that the annual subscription should be kept at the level it has maintained for the past nine years. Most of our recurrent financial resources go into the Journal and recent escalations in its costs did give us pause for thought because for a society such as ours it is vital that the Journal’s style, range of contents and academic integrity are preserved. In the event we decided to change our publishers and printers with what I hope will prove to be a considerable reduction in our production costs yet without any diminution in the standard of the Journal; indeed the volume which you should all receive before the end of the year will be a bumper one. My thanks are due to our Editors, to Douglas Saville and to Tim Webb Ware for making all this possible. Tim Webb Ware has, incidentally, been the Society’s longest-serving Treasurer, having completed well over fifteen years in this office, and I am sure that you will all join with me in thanking him warmly for the care with which he has handled our finances throughout this period.

Every year the President’s review is overshadowed by the list of the deaths he has to report and on this occasion my duty is a particularly sad one since a number of esteemed friends have been

Subsequent to the meeting three members who had been included in the list of amovals renewed their subscriptions; as at 31 December 2000 the membership of the Society thus stood at 591: seven honorary members, 476 ordinary members, one junior and 107 institutional.
taken from us. In February David Dewar Mitchell – always known as ‘Douglas’ – died at the age of ninety three. He was the sole surviving grandson of A.H. Baldwin, founder of the family firm of numismatists for which he worked for sixty three years. He had joined the Society as long ago as 1932 and at the time of his death was the doyen of our membership having just exceeded the span of the late Horace King by a few months. ‘Douglas’ Mitchell’s knowledge of collectors and collections was encyclopaedic and his eye for a coin remarkably penetrating especially bearing in mind his long-standing sight disability. He was certain to be the first to make one welcome at the Adelphi and when opportunity could be found – and, more often than not, it was – he was always ready to share with one his seemingly limitless enthusiasm for plants and gardens. It is good to know that his family has made arrangements for him to be commemorated at his beloved Kew.

Mrs. Margaret Delmé-Radcliffe died in May at the age of eighty seven. Elected to membership in 1970 she had served as a member of Council and was, between 1974 and 1979, an Editor of the Journal concerning primarily with the technical side of its production. Although her own collections were wide-ranging, Peggy’s special area of interest for us lay in the English silver coinage of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of which, as Lord Stewartby stresses in Volume 70 of the Journal, she had close knowledge, and on which she lectured to the Society and contributed a number of notes to the Journal.

In August we also lost Richard Duncan Beresford-Jones at the age of ninety seven. Connoisseur, water-colourist, poet and man-of-letters, Duncan Beresford-Jones was elected to the Society in 1953 and had also served as a member of Council. As befitted someone of his artistic sensibility he was attracted particularly to the later hammered English and the Anglo-Gallic gold coinages. He formed prime collections of both series but his lasting numismatic memorial will be his seminal papers on the Civil War Oxford gold coinages in the Journal and his Manual of Anglo-Gallic Gold Coins (1964), still a work to be consulted. Our Vice-President Peter Woodhead, who provided Beresford-Jones’s nephew with a brief account of his uncle’s numismatic interests and achievements for inclusion in his address at the latter’s memorial service, contributes a fitting obituary to Volume 70 of the Journal.

All three members I have referred to were well advanced in years but there are two others who have died in their prime and their loss is therefore all the more poignant. Roger Shuttlewood had been a member for over thirty years when we also learnt of his death in August at the age of fifty nine. A stockbroker by profession, over time Roger Shuttlewood built up an extensive collection composed largely of the smaller denominations of the Tudor period. It was a true student’s cabinet and his knowledge of the series was substantial. Unhappily, although he was most generous in sharing his expertise with others – to take but one example, his important contributions to the last edition of the English Silver Coinage (1992) – he had little opportunity to publish himself and with his tragically sudden death much of his accumulated wisdom has perished too.

The death of Patrick Finn last month at the age of fifty eight is a grievous loss to the world of professional numismatics. He had been a member of the Society since 1966, a year after he had joined Spink and Son Ltd, but I knew him even before that when he was an assistant in the Coin Room of the British Museum. His initial years with Spink, under Douglas Liddell, were to be his really formative ones numismatically and his early production with Anthony Dowle of The Guide Book to the Coinage of Ireland in 1969 was a model of what such a book should be. By 1993 Patrick had become a director of the company but, following its take-over by Christie’s, he decided to strike out on his own, and, returning to his native Cumbria, he launched his own ‘mail order’ business from Kendal, producing informative pocket-book lists that were always a joy to receive. Patrick possessed a discerning and intuitive eye, a meticulous attention to detail, and, above all, absolute integrity. His rapport with both collector and scholar reflected his thorough professionalism and knowledge of his field: the many who attended Patrick’s Requiem Mass at the London Oratory bore witness to the affection and respect in which he was held; he will be sorely missed. Peter Mitchell, who of all of us, probably knew Patrick Finn the best, writes about him more personally in Volume 70 of the Journal.

A few days after the death of Patrick Finn came news that John Kent had also died at the age of 72. Although he had resigned from the Society on his retirement from the British Museum in 1990 his membership extended back to 1954 and spanned virtually his whole career at the Museum
where for his last seven years he was Keeper of Coins and Medals. John Kent served as a member of our Council from 1955 to 1965 and for six years during that time was our Librarian. His distinction as a numismatist was recognized by his election to the British Academy in 1986, his presidency of our sister society between 1984 and 1989, and the award to him of the Academy’s Derek Allen Prize and the Medals of both the Royal and the American Numismatic Societies. He will be remembered chiefly as a Romanist and his enduring monument will, of course, be his fundamental work on the coinages of the later Roman Empire. But he was a man of many parts and he devoted significant attention to numismatic subjects far removed from his chosen specialism, from Iron Age Britain, for instance, through the Anglo-Saxons, the Tudor and Stuart periods to Georgian England, to all of which he made notably perceptive contributions. Generous in sharing his expertise, John Kent was an accomplished speaker lecturing frequently to this Society, to BANS (of which he was President from 1974 to 1978), and to many other society and university audiences.

Finally, I must mention another Fellow of the British Academy who also died last month. Professor Henry Loy, although never a member of our Society, was a great friend and a warm advocate of the importance of numismatics to Anglo-Saxon and Norman historical scholarship. In this he was inspired by his mentors, Sir Frank Stenton and Professor Dorothy Whitelock, and was their obvious successor as Chairman of the Committee of the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* between 1979 and 1993. He was one of our most distinguished medieval historians and possessed an almost inherent appreciation of the significance of non-written evidence to one’s understanding of the period. Every time one met Henry Loy – and I knew him over many years – one could not fail to be freshly inspired by both the depth and the breadth of the scholarship of this retiring and gentle man. Very much, I am sure, the reaction of those of you who heard his memorable and eloquent Linecar Lecture in 1990.

Turning to happier matters it was a particular pleasure for me to be able to present our premier award, the John Sanford Saltus Gold Medal, to Robert Thompson in May. Robert, a dedicated member of the Society for well over three decades, has put us so much in his debt through his authoritative enlargement of our understanding of seventeenth-century trade tokens. The text of my citation on that occasion and of Robert’s felicitous reply is published in Volume 70 of the *Journal*.

In repeating now my warm personal congratulations to Robert, I must also extend them, too, to Richard Doty who was awarded the Royal Numismatic Society’s Medal this year. And I must not omit either the names of Nicholas Mayhew and Nicholas Holmes who shared the Royal’s Lhotka Prize for 1999.

Nor must we pass by the achievements of Martin Allen, Kevin Clancy and Gareth Williams who have each been awarded a doctorate in their particular fields. As it so happens all three addressed us during the year: Martin Allen giving us a foretaste of some aspects of his forthcoming special publication on the *Durham Mint*, Gareth Williams sharing with us his preliminary assessment of the 1997 Appledore hoard of Confessor pennies, and Kevin Clancy illuminating the Mint reforms of William Wellesley Pole, an annate of his study of the Regency restoration of the coinage.

This eclecticism of subject was demonstrated throughout the session with Philip de Jersey’s critical examination of the silver coinage of Cunobelin – which I hope we will soon be able to read in the pages of *Britannia*,² Peter Woodhead’s thoughts on early Stuart coinage arising from his *Sylloge* editorship of the second Schneider volume, and Harry Maunville’s fluent command of the intricacies of Bank of England countermarked silver, a talk marked by the presence of a number of welcome overseas guests. And, indeed, by our two visiting speakers, Lorna Goldsmith and Christine Wiskin who opened up new tangential dimensions for us; introducing us, respectively, to the eighteenth-century delights of Vauxhall and Ranelagh through the entry passes to these gardens and to the importance of the lady banker Charlotte Matthews for the financing and distribution of Boulton’s ‘cartwheel coinage’ of 1797.

Our Director’s skill in arranging such an enjoyable and varied programme was borne out not only by the high attendances at our meetings but also by the informed discussions that followed

² Volume 32 (2001), 1–44.
each lecture, themselves a reflection of the wide-ranging expertise and interest that characterize our Society. What is disappointing though, is that the custom of presenting exhibits at meetings seems to have fallen by the wayside. Time was when pretty well every meeting would be marked by exhibits, often germane to the subject of the lecture but not always so and sometimes provocative of spirited debate. This year there was only one and I hope that members will give some thought to a revival of this practice next session.

The theme of this year’s ‘out-of-town’ meeting in Colchester was ‘Eastern Counties Numismatics’ and, as usual on these occasions, it encompassed, in a local context, a diversity of papers extending from the Iron Age to modern times, the high point being a stimulating revisit to the Colchester Hoard by Marion Archibald. Thanks are due to Philip Wise and the Colchester Museum Service for their hospitality and for their organization with our Director of a Saturday really well spent. Already Edward Besly’s plans for next year’s meeting in Birmingham under the broad topic of ‘Colonial and Overseas Coinages’ are well advanced and I do hope that as many members as possible will be able to take part in the exploration of a theme the Society has not reviewed in broad terms for a considerable time.

Our meetings are one of the three essential benefits of membership of what is justly considered to be a learned society. They bring members together in comparatively informal gatherings to hear and to discuss original contributions to numismatic research. Unfortunately, in a society that is national, indeed international in the scope of its membership, only a minority of our members can regularly attend our meetings and this is where the Journal, the second of our benefits, plays such a vital role since it is the one advantage of membership that everyone can enjoy. But it is much more than this because it sets the standard by which the society is judged in the academic community overall and we owe much to our successive Editors – now Nicholas Holmes and Gareth Williams – whose onerous task it has been – and is – to maintain the integrity of the Journal.

Of course the Journal is no longer our only publication. As you all know, thanks to the munificence of the late Roy Osborne we have been able to launch, successfully, the publication of a programme of extended monographs that it would not normally be possible to contain within the ambit of the Journal or might not be feasible commercial propositions. The third volume in this series will be Harry Manville’s Tokens of the Industrial Revolution: Foreign Silver Coins Countermarked for Use in Great Britain c.1787–1828. The text has been approved and is about to go to the printers with a publication date set for the spring of next year. It will be the authoritative work on these complex issues and I am confident that it will do well.

The third benefit of membership is the library. The death of John Kent reminds me that it was due to his initiative that our library and that of the Royal Numismatic Society were consolidated as one joint resource. It is a resource that continues to grow under the able custodianship of our present Librarian, Tony Holmes, who has put so much effort over the past two years into its reordering in new accommodation in the Warburg Institute and so much thought into modernizing its cataloguing. We must all share his dismay, therefore at the discovery of what seem to be more depredations of the kind that I referred to last year. The clear abuse of a facility so central to the interests of our members has already resulted in the introduction of security measures that not long ago we would never have contemplated. Now a joint committee of the Councils of the Royal and this Society has been set up to consider the problem in even greater depth; it is a salutary thought that its deliberations may well lead to further limitations on the open access that members have enjoyed for so many years. But sadly we are living in a real world that, I fear, is also a very selfish one.

Since my last address the reality of the Society has reached out to another dimension; we have entered cyber-space and now we have our own web site on the Internet. It is all beyond me but I am told that by conjuring up www.britnumsoc.org on one’s computer one will be ‘online’ with the Society. What we all hope, of course, is that this facility will not only provide an additional means of communication with members but will also increase international awareness of the Society and be a way of attracting a wider membership. It is all early days and the Secretary will welcome any improvements you may wish to suggest.

My own activities this year began the day after our last Anniversary Meeting when, as your President, I was privileged to attend a luncheon at St James’s Palace to mark the retirement of
HRH the Duke of Edinburgh after forty-seven years as President of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee on the Design of Coins, Medals, Seals and Decorations. Among an impressive gathering of past and present members of the Committee, leading numismatic artists and a skein of seven former Chancellors of the Exchequer as Masters of the Mint, I am glad to say that I was far from being the only member of our Society present. Indeed, the health of Prince Philip was proposed by John Porteous, the longest-serving member of the Committee after the Duke, in what was a tour de force performance, the record of which appears in the *Journal* that carries this address. In April I was present, with other members of the Society, at a reception to celebrate the opening of Spink’s new premises here in Bloomsbury. It was a very happy occasion although I have to say that I had personally viewed the move from St James’s with some misgiving. The transition, however, has been a successful one, the new quarters are impressive and everyone in the firm I have spoken to seems to be more than content with the move. I had hoped to attend a pre-view of the new Queen Elizabeth II Great Court at the British Museum last week to which I had been invited as your President. This was not possible but I am glad to be able to say that, in my absence, our Vice-President Hugh Pagan was able to represent the Society and to cast his informed eye over this new monument to architectural ingenuity.

In case you should think that it has all been a life of junketing I have also delivered a number of lectures. I will mention two: one to the South Wales and Monmouthshire Numismatic Society in Newport in June and the other to the Token Congress at its annual meeting in Cardiff in September. I refer to these, in particular, because my hosts were Alan and Noel Cox, twin brothers who have done so much to encourage local coin studies and paranumismatics in particular. It has pleased me immensely that tonight you have seen fit to elect Alan Cox to membership of this Society.

It is customary for the President to conclude this part of his report by thanking the Officers, members of Council and indeed the membership of the Society as a whole for their support and encouragement over the year gone by. For me this is no empty formula and my appreciation of the sage advice and unfailing goodwill I have received is a heartfelt one. I thank you all but, in doing so, I would like to make special mention of Charles Farthing for his efficiency, enterprise and equanimity as our administrative anchor.

I hope that you will join me later in toasting the health of the Society, a gesture made possible this evening through the generosity of Peter Mitchell, Tim Webb Ware and another of our members. It will also be an opportunity to remember those who have passed away this year and in particular Patrick Finn. Before that, however, the second part of my address.

(The President then delivered a paper entitled ‘The Tokens of Thomas Mynd’, the text of which is published at pages 90–102, above).