The 1510 coins catalogued in the present volume, predominantly held either in the Institute of History of the Estonian Academy of Sciences or in the Estonian History Museum, span the period between the end of the tenth century and the middle of the fourteenth century. It is not necessary here to review the complicated history of these two institutional collections, except to note that the collection now held in the Institute of History incorporates coins from the former collections of the Gelehrte Estnische Gesellschaft, founded in 1838, and the Estnische Literarische Gesellschaft, founded in 1842, but what is clear is that all but a handful of the coins in the volume were found in Estonia. Of these, a few are grave finds, or single finds made in other circumstances, but the great mass derive from coin hoards discovered on Estonian territory between the early eleventh century and the present day.

The volume begins with one solitary coin of Aethelred II’s First Small Cross type, seven coins of his First Hand type, and eight of his Second Hand type, but the Crux type of Aethelred II is the first to be properly represented, with 107 coins of the type proper, and there is good representation of coins of subsequent types both of Aethelred II and of Cnut, providing much research material for the specialist. The coinage of the reign of Harold I is also relatively well represented, his Jewel Cross type by 29 coins (nos 937–65), and his Fleur-de-Lis type by 42 coins (nos 966–1007). Coins of Harthacnut, by contrast, number 9 only (nos. 1008–16), and the long reign of Edward the Confessor provides just 69 coins, predominantly of his first three types.

The individuality of the volume lies in what follows. Coins of the Norman period are customarily ill-represented in coin hoards found in Scandinavia and the Baltic region, for by the second half of the eleventh century no great sums of newly coined money were leaving England either as booty or in trade to the nearer parts of the Scandinavian world. It has however been known for some time that hoards from Estonia with deposition dates in the twelfth century customarily include a scatter of English coins struck in the reigns of William I, William II, Henry I and Stephen, and the publication of the present volume will enable numismatists to get a more precise idea of the number of coins involved and of the contribution that they make to our knowledge of the activities of mints and moneymakers under the Norman kings.

As regards the number of coins, the number actually catalogued here is only 87, but the authors demonstrate in their introduction that a remarkable parcel of Norman coins now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, published by Blunt and Elmore Jones in a past volume of this Journal, is a parcel once held in the Estonian Provincial Museum, and that it derives from a hoard deposited in the late twelfth century which was found at Vaida in Estonia in 1896. They also draw attention to coins of this nature with Estonian hoard provenances now held or probably held in the collections at Berlin and St Petersburg, and their review of the hoard evidence repays careful study.

Additionally, the Norman coins catalogued in the present volume include a surprising number that are novel and which add new moneyers or even new mints for types. They commence with a mule between William I’s Profile type and the Hammered Cross type of Edward the Confessor (no. 1086, London mint, moneyer Aelfweard). Nine specimens of William’s Profile Right type include a new moneyer for Bristol in the type (no. 1089) and the first known coin of Maldon for the type (no. 1093). There are no novelties among the coins of William’s PAXS type, but eight coins of William II’s Profile type include new moneyers in the type for Hereford and Oxford (nos 1116, 1117), and twenty-two coins of his Cross in Quatrefoil type include new moneyers in the type for Dorchester and Lincoln (nos 1126, 1128). More remarkably, the sixteen coins of various types of Henry I include eight that provide new mints or new moneyers for the relevant types. Those of new mints for the types are a coin of a moneyer Edward of the Profile/Cross Fleury type, with mint signature BIIR (Barnstaple or Peterborough?) (no. 1152), a coin of the moneyer Osmund of the Quatrefoil and Stars type, with a mint signature probably of Wallingford (no. 1157), and a coin of the Tamworth moneyer Henning for the LargeProfile/Cross and Annulets type (no. 1158), while the remaining coins provide new moneyers for types at London, Norwich, Nottingham, and Salisbury (nos 1153, 1154, 1159, 1163, 1164). There is also a new moneyer for Stephen’s Profile Left/Cross and Piles type (BMC vi), although the mint of the coin concerned is not clear (no. 1171).

This reflects the fact that our knowledge of the issues of the Norman kings remains extraordinarily patchy, and that it is only very gradually that the picture of these issues provided by older coin hoards from Britain is being filled out by the evidence of newer hoards, single finds and hoards discovered on the European continent.

It would be wrong to conclude a review of this volume without also drawing attention to the astonishing fact that these Estonian institutional collections contain between them no fewer than three specimens of Aethelred II’s excessively rare Agnus Dei type (nos 563–5), of which two, respectively of the Leicester moneyer Aethelwi and of the Salisbury moneyer Goldus, are unique for the type.

HUGH PAGAN

Publication of private collections in sylloge form is relatively rare and confined to collections considered of such importance that their publication would benefit numismatic studies in both the short and long term. Authorship by owner is even more rare and, like Jeffrey North before him, Jeffrey Mass was the author of his. Professor Mass, an established author and lecturer on Japanese mediaeval history at Stanford University, decided to collect and study English coins of the same period: this sylloge is the result.

His principal study was of class la (see ‘Of dies, design changes and square lettering in the Opening Phase of the Short Cross Coinage’, BNJ 63, 20), but he determined to represent as much of the entire series as possible and, as those who knew him could testify, he was a very determined collector. He acquired a phenomenal representation of mints and moneyers for types, exceeding the holdings of Evans, Lawrence, Elmore Jones and Doubleday. Furthermore he had the great joy of discovering a coin of a previously unknown and still not fully identified moneyer (see 592 in sylloge), the first such discovery for over half a century. The few major gaps in the collection have been filled by the inclusion of coins from other sources. A lb of Rodbert F B of Oxford was at the top of his wants list. The Lainchbury specimen has not surfaced since its sale some thirty years ago, so the coin in the Ashmolean Museum (472) is illustrated. (I am sure Jeffrey looked at it every time he visited the Heberden Coin Room!)

The sylloge begins with an evaluation of the study of the series from the works of Evans and Lawrence, who like Mass was an American, through to the works of latter-day numismatists. The diagnostic features of the classes and sub-classes are meticulously detailed and well illustrated. Jeffrey Mass was quick to recognise the specialist studies of others and the sylloge has benefited from the contributions of Dr Martin Allen, in the form of a most erudite and informative chapter on chronology, mints and moneyers and a listing of Short Cross hoards, and of Lord Stewartby, who has written on imitations. The collection is then listed.

Omissions and errors are few, a remarkable feat in the listing of over two thousand coins. Numbers 1897 and 1898 are not listed under Canterbury in the index. Defects, such as piercings, cracks, edge chips and clippings, are mentioned but not always, 1149 being an example. The error mint signatures of 1526 and 1603 pose the question as to where the dies were made, but this is unanswered. Most of the illustrations are of good quality and bear scrutiny. The delight of this weighty tome, one of the largest in the series to date, is that it is intelligible to the layman and invaluable to the specialist – the hallmark of good authorship in my view.

Professor Mass sadly died before its publication and therefore never held a copy in his hands. This definitive work is his legacy to numismatists and scholars, both present and future. The cover illustration of a coin of Jefrei of Oxford, where he was a visiting professor, was chosen by his fellow numismatists with affection and as a tribute to his great work.

MICHAEL SHARP

The first volume of Peter Woodhead’s magnificent catalogue of the Schneider collection was reviewed in BNJ 1999. The second volume continues, with 674 coins from the reign of James I up to the present day (although there is not much more than a token representation of coins later than those of George III). It also presents twenty-three addenda to volume 1, acquired since that volume went to press: the Schneider collection is still growing.

The quality of the coins, notably the hammered coins, is amazingly high; Frank Purvey’s photography is, as ever, legendary; and Peter Woodhead’s exposition of the classification of the various series, their context in terms of bullion flows, and the mint records, is magisterial. As Lord Stewartby observes in a foreword to this volume (which is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Schneider and of his son John Schneider), no volume devoted specifically to English gold coins having been published since 1884, the present sylloge seems destined to serve as a standard work of reference.

There is a double paradox in the appearance of the gold coins. First, although their types are very traditional, one could even say unadventurous (e.g. crowned portrait/royal coat of arms), the quality of workmanship and detail in the dies is high – and the quality of striking is, in general, higher than it is for silver. The gold coins are, in short, sumptuous (in the proper meaning of that word). It is curious that, at a time whenmedallic art was increasingly exploring the effectiveness of significant images, the coins should have been pictorially so austere. Secondly, although the pictorial element is unadventurous, it is accompanied by mottoes, some of which are highly political and even confrontational. Today, in an age of photography in newprint and on television, the spoken or written word no longer has the monoply it once had on our imaginations. In order fully to appreciate the coins of the seventeenth century, we need to make a mental adjustment, and to recognize the extent to which they are bookish. Schneider’s beautiful gold coins carry us back into a thought-world where multi-cultural tolerance was no virtue, and which (for us) is best brought to life by, for example, historical novels such as Sir Walter Scott’s Old Mortality – a world in which piety and texts drawn from scripture were energetically used in the promotion of civil conflicts. Divine providence was seen interwoven everywhere in human affairs. Factum eos in gentem inanem (Ezekiel 37:22), say the coins of James VI and I. And, more aggressively, Exurgat Deus, dissipentur inimici (Ps 68:1). And, to validate political events, A Domino factum est istud et est mirabile in oculis nostris. Royal ‘spin’ is not a twentieth-century invention. There are secular mottoes, too, which reflect the ‘new learning’ of the renaissance: Amor populi praecidium regis, and of course (still with us), the Virgilian Decus et tutamen. Nowhere are the coins more overtly political, one could say ‘in your face’, than on the reverse of the Oxford triple unites (of which Schneider had no fewer than 21!), with their manifesto, RELIG. PROT., LEG. ANG., LIBER. PAR. Even the Commonwealth, in much plainer style, and eschewing...
Latin, belongs to this same thought-world: GOD WITH US.

It is not the task of a syllogizer to explore general themes: fresh meat, rather than an instant banquet, to quote Stanley Robinson. Peter Woodhead quite properly keeps to his role; but for the rest of us, the availability of all this splendid material should serve to turn our thoughts to wider considerations, and to a renewed awareness of the ways in which 'the past is a foreign country'.

D. M. METCALF


Hot on the heels of the inaugural volume in the Small Change series have come volumes II and III, covering the issues of Edward III, Richard II and the Lancastrians. One can only commend the indefatigable vigour and zeal of Paul and Bente Withers on their progress with this entirely admirable enterprise.

The latest volumes continue the pattern established in the first. A preface briefly indicates the problems of the series and the approach taken by the authors. It also pays tribute to the creators of the principal collections used by them, above all that of the late David Rogers. Then comes a tribute to and memorial of David, bolstered in vol. III by a list of his published work. Next is a brief historical note to set the scene for the coinage. A 'Quick Identifier' is provided, to give assistance in entering the classification systems, and in vol. II there is also a discussion of the new classification system being applied. At the back of each volume is a bibliography and a concordance for vol. II.

Then of course the detailed classifications are provided, the heart of the volumes, illuminated by the usual Galata hallmark of excellent enlarged photographs. In vol. II the approach taken by the authors to the classification of the coins of Edward III and Richard II is that employed in vol. I: to use the sequence of portraits and crowns as the backbone for the system. The halfpennies and farthings of each reign are each listed in a series of numbered Types, Types 1 to 17 of halfpennies of Edward III, for example, running from the Star-marked coinage to the Treaty period, and ten types of farthings.

Following the logic of their approach of using the sequence of portraits and crowns, they amend, for example, Woodhead's recent classification of the Star-marked halfpennies, reversing the sequence of his types 2 and 3, and adding a fifth type, fitting in before his type 4. The Fiorin coinage is given eight types (some subdivided), but splitting into two broad groups defined by their obverse legends. Group 1 with EDWARD REX (Withers Types 6-10) or Group 2 with EDWARD REX A (Withers Types 11-13) (N.B. the description of these groups is to be found in the classification discussion (p. 15), not in the detailed type catalogue). The authors quite rightly rebuff firmly the suggestion that the latter group be detached from the Third Coinage and shifted to fill the halfpenny vacancy in the Fourth Coinage, post-Treaty period (p. 14).

For the Fourth Coinage of Edward III, the new approach does relatively little to disturb the traditional classifications, beyond absorbing them into the new system. Several new varieties are noted for halfpennies of Withers Type 17 (the Treaty period), and it is suggested that the apparent absence of post-Treaty halfpennies may be because older dies or tools continued to be used to strike the small halfpenny output that is known to have been produced: perhaps this factor can help account for the relative variety of Type 17 (the 'Treaty' type)? Fourth Coinage farthings seem to have a broader range, with several new pre-Treaty varieties noted, though the presentation of some of these seems at first glance a little unclear: the types and sub-types being well-described in themselves, but somewhat opaque as set down in their sequence. For instance, Type 7 is divided into Type 7 (the substantive version, as it were) and 7a (with variant obverse and reverse legends), rather than, say, 7a and 7b. The other types have similar divisions, the post-Treaty farthings, for instance, are now Type 10, but divided into Type 10, 10a and 10b. The logic for this is that Type 10 is presumably the substantive type, 10a has a variant reverse legend, and 10a and 10b have variant legends on both sides: clear enough when you realize this, but the reader is not coddled by having it spelled out up front.

For the coinage of Richard II, especially the quite plentiful halfpennies, the Withers have serious (and justified) reservations about using the letter fonts as the basis for classification. They maintain their practice of giving priority to portraits, crowns, and hair, to give five broad types of halfpennies and two of farthings. The structure of the classification differs a little from that they employ for the Edward III Fourth Coinage: for example, Type 1 has a substantive form with nothing on the breast, but subdivided into sub-types 1a to 1c; coins of the type with a cross on the breast are Type 1A (with subtypes IAi and lli); those with an annulet on the breast are of Type 1B (subtypes IBi, ii, and iii); those with an annulet and pellet are 1C (no subtypes). The remaining types of the coinage are less complicated. Overall, the great success of the Withers' work on these fourteenth-century coinages has been to absorb the new material into the body of evidence and use this enhanced resource to establish an accurate sequence of types.

In vol. III, the approach taken by the authors shifts in line with the increasing role played on the coinage by explicit mint and issue marks, which it would clearly be madness to ignore. Their earlier approach still allows them to subdivide the coinage of Henry IV by the sequence of portraits etc.: as before, and thus to offer four types each of halfpennies in both the Heavy and Light Coinages, though with only one corresponding type of farthing for each period. With Henry V, the appearance of marks in the field allows the different approach to begin, and these are the sensible basis of the Withers' sequence of twelve types of halfpenny. For Henry VI, this approach is, of course, unavoidable, and the system of numbered types is now abandoned in favour of the traditional approach of named issues ('Annulet issue' etc.). Tradition is maintained only up to a point, however, since, in looking at the small change of this reign in isolation, the Withers have decided to introduce some renaming to
the issues. Looking at the results, this may not have been necessary, since the variations are not too extreme, and there may be a worry that this might inhibit use of their system. This would be a shame, since essentially their adjustments have simply allowed for the interpolation or clarification of some distinctive groups, e.g. their Plain issue and Rosette-mascle issue both fit within the old Rosette-mascle type, and their Leaf issue runs through the traditional Leaf-mascle and Leaf-trefol issues. The variants within each issue are extensive, and a guide is provided to show how coins can be identified to reflect these possibilities (vol. III, p. 48); it is highly advisable to look at this before attempting to understand the issue details as laid out earlier in the catalogue.

Bringing order to a neglected area of the currency is always to be praised, and such a response is wholly deserved for the Small Change series. Future volumes can be awaited with confidence, and that there is unlikely to be long to wait only adds to the achievement.

B.J. COOK


ONE can think of books on particular periods or particular forgers (e.g. Hill's Becker the Counterfeiter), but surprisingly I can not think of a general work on counterfeits. Our member, Ken Peters, has benefited the numismatic world, and added one more to the achievements of the Society, by largely filling this gap.

Imitations, if not strictly counterfeits, began almost as soon as the first Lydian coins had been made in the sixth century BC (one of these was shown at the British Museum's 'Money under the Microscope' exhibition in 1994). Plated copies of Celtic gold rings, which may have circulated as an early form of primitive money, could possibly be even earlier: they are not easy to date.

The author traces counterfeiting through the Greek, Celtic and Roman periods. He regards the plated Roman denarii, numerous as they are, as forgeries, citing Pliny and Crawford in support of this view. Some were made with serrated edges, to show that they were of good silver all through - but even some of these are actually plated!

The copies of Roman bronze types, found in England from the period after Claudius's invasion (AD 43), may well have a different character. The author argues that the heavier, better executed, specimens may be authorised products, whilst the lighter and poorer examples are unauthorised forgeries.

It gave the reviewer some amusement to discover that one of his Trajan denarii had a Hadrian reverse! Forgeries of this period are often difficult to spot, by contrast with some of the barbarous radiates and fourth- to fifth-century 'mini' and 'minimissi', where the problem is to guess which type, if any, was being copied! The book gives a good treatment of this important phenomenon.

After the 'Anglo-Saxon lull' (not completely so!), the author deals with the crockards, pollards and lushtimbours (with comments from Piers Plowman and Chaucer). The Tudor period saw the addition of two dots to the Elizabethan twopence, to discourage the gilding of such coins in order to pass them off as gold half-crowns. Every reign brings material for the book, with a positive 'epidemic' in Georgian times! Even the modern bimetallic £2 has now been forged, along with the Irish euro.

There are brief chapters on Ireland and Scotland, and quite an extensive, and sometimes amusing, account of the forgers themselves. (Cavino and Becker are not forgotten.) Penalties are detailed in the final chapter.

The author has certainly done his homework - one feels that this is the fruit of a long period of study. He does not in this volume, extensive as it is, deal with the coinage of the East, nor of America, nor, except incidentally, with that of Europe. However, a whole series of monographs is intended, and if they are indeed published, we shall know a great deal more about forgeries. Some of the Indian rajahs are said to have allowed favoured merchants to make copper coins, and the variable quality of their coinage is consistent with this; I do not envy anyone trying to write an account of Indian forgeries!

The reader is cheered on his way by many contemporary quotations; may I offer one more, which Mr. D. Scally drew to my attention once:

'Romena's there, the city where I learned
To falsify the Baptist's coin, up yonder
For the offence, I was condemned and burned.

They brought me into this gang of ruin and loss
They caused me coin the florins that brought me hither
Whose gold contained these carats by weight of dross.'

(Dante's Divine Comedy, (Hell) canto XXX; Adam of Brescia, burned in 1281 for counterfeiting the gold florins of Florence - which showed John the Baptist as a well-known type.)

A.J. HOLMES

Romano-British Coin Hoards, by Richard Anthony Abdy (Shire Archaeology no. 82, 2002). 72 pp., numerous illustrations. £5.99.

The late Anne S. Robertson's Inventory, published in 2000, was a massive labour of love to record and summarise all known Romano-British coin hoards. Richard Abdy has now, in effect, produced for us a pocket-sized guide to the larger work - and very welcome it is, too. An introductory 'overview' is followed by a well-structured chronological narrative and discussion relating hoards and hoarding to the principal phases of coin supply and use in Britain from the first century AD to the mid-fifth. The many spectacular finds of the past quarter-century or so have stimulated modern study and much has been learned, even for those periods already well supplied with hoards. Abdy does an excellent job in condensing all this to the needs of the Shire series. His account is interspersed with many valuable observations, for instance on wear (p. 31) and in bringing out the distinctiveness of the late hoards from Britain (p. 62). Occasionally, however, the phraseology becomes a little over-excited: can Shapwick be both 'largest and most typical' (p. 29) and were the radiate copies 'sinister'?

The condensed nature of any summary account can sometimes, however, lead to over-simplification - here, for instance, in discussing Cinetto (p. 44). The accumula-
tion and deposition of this massive hoard was distinctly more complex than Abdy suggests. The bulk of the hoard ("Cunetio I", in the pot) was probably buried no more than a year after the 'M1 Motorway' hoard of c.270; and the 600 or so denarii were almost certainly all in the later 'Cunetio II'; in the lead box. Cunetio is distinctly atypical for a British hoard of the early 270s and I have suggested (in CHRB IX) that the closest parallels are to be found on the Continent.

Abdy concentrates, understandably, on hoards found during recent years, which are both numerous and on the whole well recorded. However, this has led to the odd missed trick. To take Tetrarchic hoards as an example: Bridgegate (p. 50), fine though it is (NC 2002), is not the largest early numerus hoard from Britain — Evenley (Northants) and Fyfield (Oxon.) are much bigger. Nor is Langtoft (p. 46) unique in Britain; Evenley and Budock (Cornwall) both contained a mixture of pre- and post-reform coins.

Occasionally, in seeking comparisons with other ages, Abdy repeats interpretations that appear to me to be questionable. I am not aware, for instance, that the English Civil War was a period of rampant clipping. To take Tetrarchic hoards as an example: Bridgegate (p. 50), fine though it is (NC 2002), is not the largest early numerus hoard from Britain — Evenley (Northants) and Fyfield (Oxon.) are much bigger. Nor is Langtoft (p. 46) unique in Britain; Evenley and Budock (Cornwall) both contained a mixture of pre- and post-reform coins.

The above comments should not detract from the fact that Abdy has produced what is by Shire standards a substantial and readable introduction to a large topic, and he is to be congratulated. The quality of production is good and illustrations clear. However, Shire Publications have demonstrated in other subject areas (for instance British ceramics) an ability to produce highly attractive books illustrated in colour. It would have been marvellous had that policy been pursued here.

EDWARD BEASY

Coins of Northumbria: An Illustrated Guide to Money from the Years 670 to 867 by Elizabeth J.E. Pirie (Galata Prim Ltd., Llanfyllin, Powys, 2002). 80 pages, numerous enlarged illustrations of coins in text. £15.

The publication of Elizabeth Pirie's long-anticipated Coins of the Kingdom of Northumbria in 1996 filled a conspicuous gap in the literature relating to this hitherto frequently overlooked series. A true labour of love, CKN has been an invaluable addition to the specialist's bookshelf, but, at £75, has perhaps proved a little too expensive for the general reader. Miss Pirie's latest work is more modestly priced and, as the author herself observes, is intended to be a practical handbook that will be accessible to a far wider readership and 'bridge a gap in outlook' between amateurs and specialists.

Following a brief introduction, the work is broken down into five parts. Part 1, entitled 'Explanations', helpfully addresses the topics of terminology and the processes of coinage manufacture. Part 2, 'Context of the Coinages' provides the reader with a concise and useful historical framework within which to set what follows, together with a brief summary of the key points relating to denominations, issues and the distribution of finds.

The bulk of the monograph (pp. 10-67) is taken up by Part 3. Under the heading 'Content of the Coinages' this sets out and illustrates the various coinages and issues, illustrating numerous specimens at a magnification of 3:2. In reviewing Coinage of the Kingdom of Northumbria in BNJ 66, Stuart Lyon drew attention to what he identified as a number of flaws in Miss Pirie's arrangement of the various styca issues. Some readers may be disappointed to find that these criticisms are not addressed in the current work, which instead adheres faithfully to the classificatory system established by CRN.

Part 4 ("Further Topics") touches on the influences of Celtic culture on the coinage, as well as the problems of modern forgeries and the provenance of Series J sceattas; whilst Part 5 — simply entitled "Practicalities" — explains the need adequately to record new finds, and provides practical advice on a range of topics including the storage, housing and display of collections. An index and a brief bibliography are also included, although the latter is restricted to works by the author. Welcome mention is made of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, although the absence of any references to the Fitzwilliam Museum's on-line Early Medieval Corpus or to the implications of the Treasure Act (1996) in relation to base-metal coins are to be regretted.

Elizabeth Pirie and her publishers are to be congratulated on having set out to bring an understanding and appreciation of this most demanding of coinages to a new readership. It may be that the labyrinthine complexities of the Northumbrian coinage will continue to bewilder all but the most dedicated of students, but the publication of Coins of Northumbria nevertheless represents a solid step on the path to enlightenment.

CRAIG BARCLAY


The intention behind the publication of this book was that it would appeal to a wider audience than the traditional numismatic readership or the collector specialising in gold coins generally and sovereigns in particular. What is immediately apparent from its coffee table format and from the numerous illustrations, the dramatic design style and the clear hint in the title that readers would be buying into a celebrated story, possibly even a romantic story, is that an intelligent effort has been made to attract people who would not ordinarily buy a book on coins. From this point of view there is much to praise in the authors' work. The illustrations are well chosen and the narrative in general moves along at a jaunty pace, picking out with a confident touch the main personalities and the obvious highlights in the life of the sovereign since its reintroduction in 1817.

Daniel Fearon's opening comments summarise, from the perspective of a dealer, the challenge that might face the collector embarking upon putting together a comprehensive series of sovereigns. Thereafter, the first century of the coin's life, from the reign of Henry VII to James I,
is dealt with in a few pages that are aimed at setting the
scene, more than anything, else for the last coinage of
George III and the birth, as the authors see it, of the
numismatic phenomenon which is the modern sovereign.
Although the book does not set itself up as a catalogue,
there is a tendency in this direction and the next chapter,
the main chapter in the book, by taking us reign by reign
from the waning years of George III to modern collector
gold coins, gives the impression of being too consciously
structured. A thematic approach might have been more
rewarding, one that could have included as a separate
section, for example, an account of the artists who have
designed sovereigns over the last two hundred years.
Some of the more detailed mintage figures, which at times
unnecessarily slacken the pace of this part of the story,
could also have been saved for later in the volume and the
aesthetic history of the coin, which very evidently is of
some interest to the authors, could thereby have been
given the prominence that one suspects was actually
intended.
The branches of the Royal Mint in Australia, Canada,
India and South Africa at which sovereigns were struck
are dealt with in the next section. A further chapter
discusses succinctly but with ample clarity the role of the
sovereign in international monetary affairs, focusing in
particular on the operation of the gold standard. It is a
shame that the approach adopted in this part of the book,
with its stories of salvage teams uncovering fabulous
hoards of sovereigns from the holds of sunken ships and
the turbulent times that collectors of gold coins endured in
the postwar period, could not have been repeated else-
where in the text. It is here that the narrative achieves a
balance between being authoritative in tone and readable
in style. A comprehensive if somewhat indigestible price
table follows, which is supplemented by basic guidance
on how coins are graded.
Although the structure is not entirely satisfactory, it is
clearly not without merit, but the main difficulty arises
with the manner in which the authors have throughout
assumed more knowledge or more fortitude on the part of
their readership than was probably reasonable. Taking the
price table as an example, the suspicion is that nineteen
pages of detailed figures on what sovereigns of a host of
different grades can cost is probably not what the general
reader is likely to gain much use from. This, indeed, is
one of the most obvious weaknesses in the book: it
attempts to take the reader from the potential position of
non-specialist through to confirmed collector within the
pages of a single volume and, however well written or
appropriately illustrated the book might be, such an im-
plicit objective is rather too ambitious for an introductory
work.
Set against the authors’ objectives one suspects that yet
more remains to be done. What the literature on gold
coins really lacks is a volume that would do for gold coins
what the English Silver Coinage has done for silver.
Michael Marsh has gone some way to achieving this with
his catalogues on the sovereign and the half-sovereign and
Mark Rasmussen and Alex Wilson have also added
usefully to the existing pool of knowledge with their
book on gold patterns, trials and proofs. But what is not
available within the covers of one book is a catalogue that
provides a listing of the gold coins that have been struck
in Britain since the middle of the seventeenth century, and
if such a work were to contain details of uniface pieces as
well it would have a claim to being comprehensive in a
way that even ESC has never been.

KEVIN CLANCY

Medals of British India with rarity and valuations, Volume
I: Commemorative and Historical Medals from 1750 to
1947 by Robert P. Puddesier (Spink, London 2002), xviii
+ 544 pp., 1 map, 931 half tone ills. in text. £45.

This book, the first of a proposed four-volume work, is
a much enlarged version of the author’s Catalogue of
British India Historical Medals published in 1987 which
listed some 400 medals. The new work catalogues 1,200
medals, of which approximately 500 appear for the first
time, thus rendering the 1987 edition virtually obsolete.

In the Introduction the author has optimistically
stated that volume II, dealing with Indian orders, deco-
rations and military medals etc., will be published in
2003/4; volume III, listing the medals of the Principly
States and Historical medals etc., will be published in
2004/5 and volume IV, cataloguing Passes, Tickets and
Checks etc., is scheduled for 2005/6. This statement
would appear, to the reviewer at least, to be a little rash.
Surely it can rarely be the case that such ventures
projected over four years finish on schedule? However if
the production and publishing processes should for once
run smoothly, the completed corpus will be well worth the
wait.

In dealing with volume I, the first to be brought to the
press, the author freely acknowledges his debt to his wife
who travelled widely in India carrying out research on his
behalf. She visited various educational establishments and
other institutions in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, while
the author served as a foreign service employee of the
Canadian Government at Delhi. His wife obviously
carried out her task thoroughly and garnered much useful
information.
The catalogue is essentially divided into two parts: the
first lists the dated medals from 1757 to 1947, numbered
in the text 757.1 to 947.4, followed by the undated pieces
which are numbered 948.1 to 948.171, i.e. there are 171
undated medals listed. Introductory articles are given on
many subjects throughout the catalogue and are valuable
sources of information, some of which is not readily
found elsewhere.

The main body of the catalogue is arranged chronolo-
ically with, frequently, an illustration of the medal
following the description. These photographs, nearly all
of which are by the author, add immeasurably to the value
of the work and are generally of a good quality, although
the author notes that some photographs were taken under
less than ideal conditions and that some of the medals
illustrated were in poor condition. Nevertheless, an
illustration, even only half-way decent, is better than no
illustration at all and there are very few here which could
be counted as not worth while.

These illustrations, it must be noted, are not necessarily
actual size. Some perhaps have been enlarged to illustrate
small pieces better or reduced to make optimum use of
space. This is unusual in a numismatic work in which field
we are used to seeing – as far as possible – specimens
Illustrated Same Size. This variation may, perhaps,
mislead those who do not read the text thoroughly. The
size is quite clearly given in the text, but it is surprising how frequently this sort of information is overlooked by a user. The result, nevertheless, is not unpleasing and means that very little space has been wasted, an important factor in a work of this size.

Each entry has a title, obverse and reverse descriptions, followed by a number of abbreviations, the explanations of which are to be found in the Introduction. It is here noted that E equals edge; P equals plain edge; D = diameter; M = metal; R = rarity and V = value. The bibliographical references to, for example, BHM (British Historical Medals) and WE (Whittlestone and Ewing) are explained in that section of the book entitled 'Format of Catalogue'. A comprehensive bibliography comprising some 150 entries appears at the end of the book.

There is also a section entitled Metal - Rarity - Value abbreviated to M - R - V in the catalogue entries. The scale of rarity runs from unique, through five R's to one R and then to scarce, normal and, lastly, common. The value is expressed in American dollars. The assessments of rarity and value are, of course, entirely in the judgement of the author, having taken account of market prices gleaned from dealers' lists and auction catalogues.

In addition to the bibliography there is an index of medallists, designers and engravers etc., listing where their medals are to be found in the text. There is also an excellent subject index.

The errors in this work appear to be few; there are, however, two which have escaped a vigilant editor. On page xv, the explanation of the abbreviation for S (scarce) should, presumably read 'elusive' rather than 'illusive' and the explanation for N (normal) on page xvi should read 'peruses' and not 'puruses'.

This book is considerably more comprehensive than the previous work published in 1987 and yet, as one may suppose, it is not complete and indeed may never be so. It is interesting to speculate how the author came to omit the small (32 mm) size official medal by Percy Metcalf for the Silver Jubilee of the reign of George V in 1935. The dies for this were prepared in London and an issue made in both South Africa and India, the medals for the latter being identified by the letter 'T' which appears near the lower rim on the reverse. This piece is noted in British Historical Medals, vol. III, No. 4249 and is illustrated with the note that the Review of the Report of the Mints at Calcutta and Bombay for 1935–6, pp. 24–5 confirms that 26,417 specimens were struck. Why did Robert Puddester not include this medal? It cannot be that he never saw any of them but perhaps, like many people, he simply assumed that all were struck at the Royal Mint.

Among the many interesting medals listed are those which may be termed patterns or perhaps, more accurately since they are unfinished, trial strikings for the proposed presentation medals for the Viceroy of India as Marquess of Dufferin and Ava. They remained incomplete and unissued since the Marquess made a surprise decision to retire early from office. The example proposed for presentation in Burma, whilst lacking a reverse legend, is signed by Allan Wyon. The two trials for India are unsigned and the author correctly believes that they are the 'product of the Wyon/Pinches workshop'. There are, in fact, two examples of these medals in bronzed copper, of which the author is presumable unaware, bearing the Wyon identification numbers on the edge - Number 753 on the proposed Viceroy of India medal that Puddester calls type I (catalogue number 884.1.2), and 749 for Puddester type II (catalogue number 884.1.3), perhaps suggesting that type II is the earlier. It has to be admitted, however, that the numbers that are to be found on a very small number of Wyon medals designed by various members of the family appear to have been allocated entirely arbitrarily.

This is a substantial, well made and reasonably priced book and is a considerable improvement both visually and textually on its predecessor. The author is to be congratulated on his diligence in producing a more comprehensive work; it should prove a most useful book and one looks forward to the completion of the projected volumes.

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