IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL COINAGES

PAUL STEVENS

Introduction

In attempting to review the contribution of the Society to the numismatic knowledge of Britain’s overseas territories, it is first necessary to determine the scope of such an undertaking. The British Empire was a dynamic concept that developed from the desire of the English to expand economically, and was created by a variety of techniques such as: colonisation in North America, direct conquest in South-East Asia, convict colonies in Australia, and direct occupation of other colonial powers’ territories such as the islands of the Mediterranean or Egypt. The control of these differently-acquired territories started at different times, and ended at different times and in different ways. How then to determine the scope? I have chosen here to include coins and tokens that were issued under the direct control of institutions that were British, but to exclude coins that were issued by those authorities only nominally controlled by the British. So, for instance, coins issued from Maratha mints in India following their capture by the British would be included, but coins issued by the princes of the Indian Native States would be excluded. Once countries achieved dominion status, even if they still owed nominal allegiance to the British crown, their coins fall outside of the scope of this paper. This decision could be the subject of many debates. Just to chose one example, should Australian coins be excluded from the date of Australia achieving dominion status (1900); or after the Statute of Westminster ended the control of Britain over the affairs of Australia (1931); or when this measure was actually ratified by the Australian parliament (1942); or should present-day Australian coins be included on the grounds that Queen Elizabeth continues as Queen of Australia even today? A similar discussion could be had for each of the dominions, but this matter is better left for debate elsewhere.¹ I have excluded coins of England, Scotland and Ireland because they are better covered elsewhere.

It must be admitted that other authors have chosen a much broader scope than that presented here,² but since this differs between authors it is not possible to find one agreed definition. This scope is fairly arbitrary, therefore, but seems to allow an examination of the numismatic contribution of Britain to the world. What’s more, it is largely similar to, though not exactly the same as, that adopted by previous authors such as Atkins³ and Pridmore⁴ and is therefore familiar, and this familiarity has been extended to grouping of the various territories by continent. Obviously, this scope is so large that I have had to be selective in the details that have been included in this paper, and here I have tried to choose areas that relate to the contributions of the Society to this subject.

America

The coins of the British in the Americas fall into three parts: North America up until the mid-1770s, Canada up until 1867 when it achieved dominion status, and the West Indies until each island achieved independence. The Falkland Islands also fall into this sphere, but will not be further discussed here.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank John Roberts-Lewis for his helpful suggestions during the production of this paper.

The first attempts by England to create an overseas empire were driven by envy of the great wealth that Spain derived from her control of the South American gold and silver mines. During the 1580s attempts were made to start colonies in Newfoundland and Roanoke Island in North America. However, these came to nothing, and it was not until the early seventeenth century that successful colonies were established in places such as Virginia (1607). This soon expanded to extend down most of the eastern seaboard of North America from Newfoundland in the north down to South Carolina, and these colonies continued under British rule until the American war of independence in the mid 1770s. The United States then split away from Britain, leaving the provinces of Canada as the only mainland colonies.

P. Nelson was the first of our members to contribute a paper on the coinage of North America. In volume 1 of the Journal he discussed the coinage of William Wood, who obtained the right to issue coins for the plantations (i.e. North American colonies) for fourteen years starting in 1722. These coins have become known as Rosa Americana and were issued in three denominations — twopence, penny and halfpenny — showing the bust of George I on the obverse and a device with a rose of different styles on the reverse. The same author also read a paper to the Society on the pre-revolutionary coinage of America in 1912. These early coins, apart from Wood’s coins, were made current in the different colonies such as: Massachusetts where the willow, oak and pine tree coins were struck; Maryland where coins were issued by Lord Baltimore; and New Jersey, which used St Patrick halfpennies and farthings. The latest coin in the British American colonial series was the halfpenny of George III dated 1773 for use in Virginia. Both of the papers published by Nelson essentially built on the work done in the 1870s by Sylvester Crosby, who brought together the early coins of America into a single work for the first time. Nelson’s paper on the Rosa Americana series not only describes the coins and ascribes the source of the rose design to a pattern penny of Elizabeth I, but is remarkable for its beautiful illustrations of the coins.

The British formally took control of Canada in 1763, and in 1791 the country was divided into two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. These were re-united in 1840 and then amalgamated into the Dominion of Canada with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1867. Manitoba was added in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873 and other territories in 1876 and 1880. Most of the early numismatic history of Canada is related to the tokens that were issued by local tradesmen in the absence of available small change, and no papers have appeared in BNJ on this subject. However, Doty, in his book sponsored by the society about the Soho Mint, does discuss tokens produced for four Canadian banks and the Province of New Brunswick by the Soho Mint between 1837 and 1844.

The different provinces issued the early coins of Canada. Thus there are coins for the province of Canada itself, but also Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. J.B. Caldecott was responsible for the first paper from our Society discussing the coins of Canada when he wrote a short note on a countermarked Spanish dollar, dated 1765, that he believed was for use in Canada.

T.V. Buttrey wrote about cut coins in Canada in a paper that explored the relationship between coins and archaeology. Buttrey discussed the fact that it is very difficult to assign cut money as being used in a particular place (rather than imported later for collectors) unless the fragments bear some kind of identifying countermark. Dated archaeological evidence would be the only way to be certain about such pieces, and Buttrey reported just such evidence being found at Fairfax in Ontario. A quarter part of a Spanish 8 reales was discovered in the debris in the cellar of a building that had been destroyed following the burning of the settlement in October 1813, thereby establishing with certainty that such pieces circulated in Canada early in the nineteenth century.

---

6 P. Nelson, 'The Pre-Revolutionary Coinage of America', BNJ 9 (1912), 417.
11 J.B. Caldecott, 'Countermarked Spanish Dollar for Old Canada', BNJ 1 (1904) 353-8.
In the islands of the West Indies, Barbados was the first to host a British colony, and by 1660 St Kitts, Antigua, Nevis, Montserrat and Jamaica had been occupied. Further gains and losses occurred during wars with other colonial powers. The islands are usually considered together with the territories on the mainland such as British Guiana, British Honduras and the Mosquito Coast. Most of these territories became independent states during the late twentieth century.

The coins generally fall into two major types: the cut and countermarked coins (very often Spanish Dollars) and, once the West Indian colonies had become more established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, those coins especially struck for use in some of the islands. Examples are the ‘pineapple’ pennies of Barbados, nickel pennies from Victoria onwards for Jamaica and coins struck for use in British Guiana (formerly Essequibo and Demarary). British Honduras also had its own machine-struck coinage.

J.B. Caldecott was the first to discuss the coins of the West Indies, in a paper reviewing the use of cut and countermarked Spanish Dollars as currency. He presented a basic numismatic study of the subject without adding much supporting documentary background. H.A. Parsons discussed a Massachusetts shilling cut into four parts to form threepenny-pieces for use in the Leeward Islands. This short paper established three important points: firstly, that the islands of the Leeward group used Massachusetts money — a nice example of one colony using the coins of another; secondly, that coins were cut to meet smaller denominational requirements; and thirdly that, at least in the early days, cut money was not countermarked with a local stamp.

Thompson examined the transfer of counterfeit currency to the West Indies in a paper giving extracts from contemporary (1797) documents describing the importation of forged stampers or ‘black dogs’ to Martinique. In addition it would seem that the culprit, a Mr Dick, was also in the habit of importing forged gold Johannes into the West Indies. The fact that Dick was found to be doing no more than was accepted practice illustrates that the problem of forgery of these early West Indian coins was widely accepted and understood even by contemporary authorities. However, as will be seen time and again, a much more complete analysis of West Indian colonial coinage was not available until Major F. Pridmore, the doyen of the British Commonwealth coinage and an honorary member of the Society, examined this fascinating series in great detail. His treatise still remains the major work on the subject, although some new information has been added since the time of his publication in 1965. (For instance, a paper on these early coins was read to the Society in 1996 by R. Lyall, who has also produced a major work on the tokens of the West Indies.)

Doty drew attention to the coins struck at the Soho Mint for use in the West Indies. In 1792/3 Boulton produced a copper penny coinage for Bermuda. In this instance he re-used for the obverse a die that had been prepared in 1788 by Jean-Pierre Droz for a proposed British coinage that never came to fruition. This obverse was combined with a reverse showing a sailing ship, a traditional design found on the rare early ‘hod money’ coinage of Bermuda. The same re-use of dies was seen in the coinage of the Bahamas penny in 1806, when Boulton used the obverse die of the British halfpenny for the obverse of the Bahamas penny, only having to produce a new reverse die.

In short, the Society has made some significant contributions to understanding the British Colonial coins of America. However, whilst there are disparate sources of information on these coins, there is no single source of reference for the whole group other than standard listings available from catalogues such as Krause.

Asia

India

India was, of course, the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the British Empire, and the complexity of coinage associated with the British makes it the largest single numismatic subject covered by this review.

---

13 J.B. Caldecott, ‘The Spanish Dollar as Adapted for Currency in our West Indian Colonies’, *BNJ* 1 (1904), 287–98.
15 J.D.A. Thompson, ‘Documents Illustrating the Export of Counterfeit Currency to the West Indies’, *BNJ* 27 (1952/54), 80–7.
In addition, it is this area of Imperial and Colonial coinage that has received most attention from members and publications of the Society. It therefore deserves to be given more space and treated separately from other territories.

The sixteenth century saw the beginnings of the formation of companies holding monopolies of trade between England and certain other markets, and it was a company of this type, formed on 31 December 1600, that was granted a charter for the exclusive right to trade with the East Indies. The first two voyages did not go to India but to the islands of the East Indies, but the third expedition, in 1607, was sent to explore the opportunities for trade in the Arabian Sea and specifically to call, inter alia, at Surat in Gujarat on the west coast of India. One of the ships of the small fleet of this third voyage, commanded by a Captain Hawkins, eventually reached Surat on 28 August 1608.

Initially the English could only base themselves near to Surat at a place named Swalley Hole, but the twelfth voyage, commanded by Thomas Best, arrived at Surat in 1612 and finally succeeded in obtaining the necessary permission to establish a factory, possibly because the Moghuls were beginning to realise that the English were seriously capable of challenging Portuguese naval power. In 1635 the Portuguese and the English signed, in Goa, a treaty that gave the English access to Portuguese trading posts all around the Arabian Sea, including the posts along the west coast of India. One of the islands controlled by the Portuguese was Bombay, and this island was ceded to Charles II as part of the dowry for his marriage to the Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza, in 1661. Charles then let Bombay to the East India Company in 1668 for a rent of £10 p.a.

Meanwhile, two Dutchmen with experience of trading in the East had arrived in London in 1609 and offered to lead a voyage to the east or Coromandel coast and to explore trade between there and Siam and Bantam. Floris and Antheuniss, the two Dutchmen, sailed from England in January 1611, and by August they had arrived on the east coast of India at the ports of Masulipatam and Petapoli in Golconda. Whilst the local trade with Siam did not live up to expectations in the longer term, Masulipatam became established as a factory of the EIC on and off for many years. In the 1630s the headquarters of the English was moved from Masulipatam to Armagon and then back again, as the English tried to deal with the various vicissitudes facing them, such as famine, the animosity of the Dutch, and local wars between Golconda and its neighbours. In 1639 the English agent at Armagon, Francis Day, sailed down the coast, visiting the Portuguese fort of San Thome and then on to a small fishing village called Madraspatam. Here he negotiated with the local naik the right to build a fort on a piece of land measuring about one square mile, whether he determined to remove the Armagon agency.

Further up the east coast, in the Bay of Bengal, Antheuniss had made contact with Bengal in the 1620s, but it was not until the 1640s and 1650s that serious trade began. Factories were established in various places including Hoogli, Patna and Dakka, and by 1681 the area was afforded the status of a separate Presidency. However, Calcutta was not then the major factory. This did not happen until after the farcical affair of the attempted invasion of Moghul India (with a standing army of perhaps 100,000 men) by a British army of 308 men. After various skirmishes, and the effective annihilation of the British infantry, the arrival of a British fleet allowed a truce agreeable to both sides to be reached. Part of the agreement allowed Job Charnock, the leader of the British forces, to select a site for a factory, and he eventually chose a place near a village called Kalighat, later modified to Kalikata and then Calcutta.19

Each of these small trading posts at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta gradually expanded its influence to surrounding areas until they controlled very large parts of India. Initially, the East India Company ran these territories, but increasing political pressure forced the British Government to take more responsibility until it assumed complete control in 1858. India, Pakistan and (eventually) Bangladesh gained independence in 1947.

The coins of the British in India fall into two main series, both recorded by Pridmore20 – the Presidency series issued by Madras, Bombay and Bengal, and the Uniform Coinage of British India issued from 1835 up to independence in 1947.

The early coins of Madras are either based on the South Indian system of gold pagodas and silver fanams with copper cash coins, or on the Moghul system of gold mohurs and silver rupees. In 1807 machinery was introduced into the mint at Madras and a more standard coinage was produced, although initially there was still a mixture of pagodas and rupees. However in 1812, following the intervention of the authorities in London, a silver rupee-based coinage was selected, essentially as a step towards the unification of the coinage across the whole of British India.

In Bombay, at the end of the seventeenth century, a series of European designs were tried but did not generally gain wide circulation, and throughout the eighteenth century Moghul style rupees were issued from the Mint in Bombay. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Bombay, like Madras, settled on the rupee standard.

In Bengal, the silver rupee was the standard coin from the beginning of British rule although, as more territory was acquired towards the North-West frontier, rupees of different weight standards came to be used within the Presidency (e.g. Farrukhabad rupee compared to Banaras rupee) and so even here standardisation proved difficult.

Eventually, in 1835, the whole of British India moved to a single standard based on the silver rupee and this continued with slight modifications until independence in 1947.

The attention of members of the BNS has been drawn to the coins of the British in India throughout the life of the society. In 1906, J.B. Caldecott exhibited coins of the Patna mint struck by the EIC, and there are some nice illustrations published with the proceedings. In 1908 R.P. Jackson published a paper describing copper coins of the EIC. Whilst the paper is merely a description of small copper coins that he ascribes to Madras, there are some interesting points to be noted that are worth further discussion. Firstly, his coin no. 15 shows on the obverse the balemark of the EIC and on the reverse the date 1710. Pridmore actually assigns this coin to the Malabar Coast under the Bombay Presidency (No. 313), presumably on the basis of style, although he does note that his listings are provisional. Secondly, Jackson’s coins Nos 22, 23 & 24, with the balemark on the obverse and the date 1803 on the reverse, again assigned to Madras, are assigned to Bombay by Pridmore (319 & 321). More recently, arguments have been made that these coins are more likely to belong to Madras rather than Bombay, thus supporting the original attribution of Jackson. In 1912 Major Jackson published another paper on the coins of Southern India, where he recorded some interesting coins of Madras including coins with the mintname Chinapatan (Madras).

In 1929/30, H.A. Parsons published a paper on the early coins of the Bombay Presidency and particularly examined the dating of the copper coins. The early forms of these coins show the date as A.D. 1667 or A.D. 1668 and had been supposed by earlier authors to represent the seventh and ninth regnal years of Charles II (i.e. 1667 and 1669 respectively). However, William Foster had already established that the first of these coins was struck at Bombay in 1672 and that the coins were dated from 1665 when the English formally received the island of Bombay from the Portuguese. Thus, 7 represented 1672 and 9 represented 1674. Parsons was able to confirm this date by the publication of a coin showing the A.D. 1668 date together with the numerals 74 (for 1674) in the outer legend on the reverse.

More recently, Major Pridmore published his paper on the coins designed by Spencer for the Indian coinage of George VI. This is a complete account of the work of the artist/engraver responsible for the design of the Indian coinage of George VI and is based on coins from the Spencer collection.

Despite all these contributions, it was not until the publication of the final two volumes of Pridmore’s works that British Indian numismatics really received the detailed analysis that such a

---

21 J.B. Caldecott, ‘Coins of the Panna Mint Struck by the East India Company’, *BNJ* 3 (1906), 61.
27 F. Pridmore, *Mr A.P. Spencer, Artist/Engraver, His Majesty’s Mint, Calcutta and the re-designed Coinages of King George VI British India 1938–1947*, *BNJ* 37 (1968), 158–74.
complex series requires. However, several lacunae still existed to be filled by new research. For instance, coins issued from mints that were captured by the British and continued to issue coins in the native styles have been published by Wiggins but still require further analysis, and Pridmore’s assessment of the coinage of the Malabar Coast left some unanswered questions, although these have recently been addressed.

Doty has presented an excellent account of the events surrounding the building of a steam driven mint, supplied by Boulton, Watt & Co during the 1820s for the Calcutta Mint. This story is worth recounting as an example of the trials and tribulations faced by the people involved in producing the Indian coinage. Matthew Boulton was first approached about the possibility of building a mint for the East India Company as early as 1808. The initial discussion revolved around the possibility of building two mints, one at Calcutta and one at Madras, but this changed to building just one at Madras and then again to building just one at Calcutta, but smaller than previously planned, having five coining presses instead of the original eight. Sometime during 1809, this project was dropped for reasons that are not entirely clear. By 1819, it was obvious that the Calcutta mint was incapable of meeting the requirements placed upon it, and agreement was reached that someone should be sent to England to explore the possibility of obtaining a steam driven mint to be shipped out to India. A Lieutenant of the Bengal Engineers named William Nairn Forbes was selected for this task, and he was to become the major player in the construction and operation of the new mint at Calcutta for more than thirty years, ending as Calcutta Mint Master.

Forbes arrived in England in 1820, and by the end of that year agreement had been reached that Boulton, Watt & Co. would act as the main contractors for the construction of the mint and would provide not only the steam engines but also the coining and cutting-out presses. John and George Rennie would act as sub-contractors, supplying the rolling mill, while Henry Maudsley would provide other parts such as the draw bench, lathes and melting furnaces. Plans for the new mint were drawn up early in 1821 and approved on 2 April, and during that year Forbes learned more about the science of coining when he helped to produce a copper coinage for St Helena at the Soho mint.

By March of 1823 the equipment was ready for shipping to India. It was sent out on three separate ships, and had arrived by 21 October 1823, when Forbes himself arrived back in Calcutta. No time was lost in selecting a suitable site for the new mint on the banks of the Hoogly, and work began on draining the site and establishing the foundations.

As well as providing the machinery, it was necessary for Boulton & Watt to recruit a number of trained mechanics to go to India to help build the mint. The names of the men recruited for the project, and their fates, are shown in Table 1 below.

### TABLE 1. The Fate of People involved in constructing the Mint at Calcutta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date started in India</th>
<th>Fate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Hughes</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Died in India 1824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Gozzard</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Survived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Mears</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Died in India 1824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Wilkinson</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Died in India 1826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Stratford</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Took to drink. Sent home 1825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Lewellyn</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Died in India 1825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Pigg</td>
<td>1823?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Burley</td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Died in India 1824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rose</td>
<td>1823?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Dunn</td>
<td>1823?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas O'Brien</td>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Fell ill and was sent home in 1826.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Daniels</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Fell ill and was sent home in 1826. Returned in 1827.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hudson</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Cashmore</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>1827</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 Bhandare & Stevens, as in n. 24.
30 Doty, as in n. 10, pp. 190–205.
It is immediately apparent that many of the men sent out to provide the necessary mechanical expertise did not survive very long in the pestilential climate of Calcutta. Forbes did his best to get new recruits trained and sent out from England, and to redeploy those who survived, but the mint was not completed until 1829 or 1830. However, once complete it is clear that it met all expectations, and Forbes was clearly delighted with the first output during the summer of 1830. Doty suggests that the coins struck in 1830 would have been the one-pie coins authorised for circulation in 1831. He argues that the coins could have been prepared in advance of being put into circulation. This seems to open an unnecessary complication. Pridmore has recorded that the mint-master proposed making changes to the copper pice in 1829, and that specimens were submitted to the Mint Committee on 26 August 1830. It is therefore much more likely that any coins struck in advance of the necessary legal bureaucracy authorising their issue would have been these pice and not the one-pie coins, the design of which was not agreed until 1831.

In his account, Doty notes interesting information about the huge numbers of blank dies that were shipped out to Calcutta from Soho. For instance in 1827, 2000 blank dies for rupees were shipped out, and in 1830, 14,500 dies for rupees, half rupees and quarter rupees were ordered. Doty paints a similar picture for the installation of a new mint at Bombay, again during the 1820s, but this time the mint was not new, but a second-hand mint from Soho itself. In fact, this mint was the refurbished second Soho mint, built in 1798/99.

Doty also describes the coins produced at Soho for use in the different Indian Presidencies, and a paper presented at the special summer meeting in 2001 on the copper coins of the Bombay Presidency struck at Soho in 1791–6 drew heavily on his work. Up until very late in the eighteenth century the copper coins of the Bombay Presidency were poorly manufactured and very crude. In 1790 steps were initiated to correct this sorry state of affairs, and the Bombay authorities were informed that the copper coins then in circulation were to be replaced by a new coinage sent out from England. The initial idea was that this would be a gradual process, but by 1791 a decision had been taken to replace all circulating copper coins in one go with 100 tons of new coins. Accordingly, 35 tons of coins were sent from England to Bombay aboard the ‘Essex’, with instructions not to open the casks until the rest of the shipment arrived. A further 65 tons were duly received aboard the ‘Rockingham’ with instructions on how to issue them. The total quantity shipped was 660 casks weighing 100 tons 14 cwts 2 qtrs 13½ lbs.

These coins were to be issued at the rate of:

- 200s. @ 50 to a rupee
- 150s. @ 66½ to a rupee
- 100s. @ 100 to a rupee
- 50s. @ 200 to a rupee

The intention of this rate was to make one rupee worth 10,000 grains avoirdupois weight of copper, compared to the existing rate of 7314 grains. This, combined with the greatly increased quality of the design, would reduce the amount of forgery that was obviously worrying the authorities at the time.

Major Pridmore makes a rather ambiguous comment about the fact that the Company had established a mint at French Ordinary Court in London, and that this may have played a part in the decision to manufacture the coins in England, rather than locally in Bombay. This might imply that the coins were struck at a mint in London. In fact, Matthew Boulton in his factory at Soho near Birmingham struck the first 100 tons. This can be seen from the minutes of the meetings of the Court of Directors, who on 13 January 1791 agreed that Boulton would be employed to undertake the coinage. On 2 February a Mr Williams was instructed to deliver 100 tons of copper to Mr Boulton at Soho, Nr. Birmingham. Mr Williams didn’t think that he could deliver the copper before the middle of March, and it presumably took some time to complete the coinage, because on 24 August the Court agreed to advance Boulton £6000 for the work that he was then

---

31 P.J.E. Stevens, Summer meeting of the BNS (2001).
32 India Office Collection. Dispatches to Bombay, E/4/1006, pp. 393-4
carrying out. Doty has examined the records of the Soho mint in some detail, and his work confirms that these coins were indeed struck there.

Pridmore records that further deliveries occurred in 1792, 1793 and 1794. I have not been able to confirm the deliveries for 1792 and 1793, and am doubtful that they occurred. However, a second coinage was undertaken in 1793 and shipped to India in 1794 (Doty). The coinage consisted of double pice, pice and half pice. The coins were dated 1794. The 1/2 pice denomination was discontinued, presumably because it caused confusion with the double pice. A further large coinage was undertaken in 1803 with the coins dated 1804.

In 1794, Boulton produced a dub and half-dub coinage for use in the Madras Presidency, and this was repeated in 1797. The coinage is interesting for the first use (on coinage as opposed to tokens) of a wide, raised rim bearing an incuse legend in an attempt to prevent forgery. Of course, this approach was later used on the British ‘cartwheel’ coins. Other coins produced by Boulton for Madras consisted of 20, 10, 5 and 1 cash coins dated 1804 and 1808. The one cash coin was so small that it required special production techniques, and these coins were produced last of all the denominations. Matthew Boulton had sent John Phillip to London in 1802 to consult the EIC’s experts on the designs, and he returned in October. Production of the three larger denominations began almost immediately, but production of the one-cash pieces caused problems until January 1803 when a new method was perfected.

The only coins that Doty records as being produced at the Soho mint for the Bengal Presidency were for a coinage of copper pice in 1809, but various problems caused this project to be abandoned and only the patterns remain. However, Vice has added to this with his research into the hexagonal patterns produced at Soho, and has shown that Pridmore’s view that these coins were to be used in the Bombay Presidency was wrong, and that they were planned for use in the Bengal Presidency to replace cowrie shells.

A paper has been presented to the Society on a pattern two annas of 1841, confirming Pridmore’s prediction that coins of this denomination should exist with plain edges, although at the time that he wrote no specimens were known and he had only archival sources for his prediction. The coinage of Madras at the beginning of the nineteenth century was discussed in another paper read to the Society. In this instance new contemporary documents had revealed more details about the difficulties encountered in moving from a hammered to a machine-struck coinage. There are still many other gaps that need filling, and the British Indian field of numismatics offers a great opportunity for further study and research. However, Pridmore does leave later scholars with something of a challenge because, although he transcribes many quotes from ‘the records’ in his books, there is an annoying lack of reference back to the original documents, so that later researchers are left with the unenviable task of ‘rediscovering’ these records in order to advance the subject further.

Other Far Eastern Parts of the British Empire

Close to India, the English East India Company acquired the island of Ceylon from the Dutch in 1795, although the interior was not conquered until 1815, and it became a British colony from 1802 until 1948. As with India, the early coins of the British period of occupation really have a local feel to them, although they were based on the earlier Dutch coins. They were replaced by coins struck at the Soho mint dated 1802 and denominatated as stiver (1/48th rix dollar), half stiver (1/96th rix dollar) and quarter stiver (1/192nd rix dollar), with an elephant on the obverse and the value on the reverse. Of course, all these coins circulated alongside each other for some considerable time.

These were then replaced by coins with a much more British style, showing the British monarch’s head on one side, and this style continued right up until independence. In addition to
local denominations, tiny half and quarter farthings were struck in England for use in Ceylon during the nineteenth century, and these were locally valued at one twelfth fanam and one twenty-fourth fanam respectively. A major part of the numismatic landscape of Ceylon comprises the tokens issued by the plantation (e.g. coffee) owners for their workers. These tokens provide a fascinating insight into the industrial history of the island, but have not been the subject of any publications of the Society. The Andaman Islands hosted a penal colony before becoming part of independent India in 1947, and rupee tokens were issued during the early 1860s.

The Cocos-Keeling Islands were discovered in 1609 and became external territories of Australia in 1955. From a numismatic standpoint, these islands are interesting for the use of unusual materials (sheepskin, ivory and bone) in producing tokens.

In the Malay Archipelago, Penang was occupied in 1786 and Singapore established in 1819. Malacca was gained from the Dutch in 1824. Collectively these three territories became the Straits Settlements in 1826. Further states were added, and eventually they were all brought together as the Federation of Malaya, which gained independence as Malaysia in 1957, although Singapore later left the federation. Sarawak and British North Borneo also joined the federation of Malaya but Brunei did not and was given independence in 1984. The coins of the different states in the Malay archipelago form a very interesting series, simply because of their diversity of types and styles, varying from early locally-struck, European-type coins of Fort Marlborough, in Sumatra, to the merchant tokens of Singapore (mainly struck by Birmingham manufacturers, some at the Soho mint), with later coins tending to conform to the more standard imperial type showing the British monarch’s bust on one face.

The British occupied Hong Kong Island in 1841 and the New Territories were added in 1898. It became part of China in 1997. The coins are generally of the standard colonial style, with a very interesting series of trials and patterns being prepared during the Victorian era.

Very little has been published in BNJ on any of the coins of Asia outside India. J.E. Cribb presented a paper on the coins of Hong Kong in 1988, and he has published his research in his book discussing the collection of coins formed by the Hong Kong and Shanghai bank. In this work he essentially rewrites the previous work undertaken by Pridmore concerning the Victorian patterns and reveals the different phases that these coins went through before the first currency coins were produced. Coins struck for more general use throughout South-East Asia include portcullis money produced at the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and these have been studied by P. Preston-Morley.

In his book on the Soho Mint, Doty presents a summary of the work undertaken by Boulton to produce coins for these areas of Asia. It is interesting to note that the first proper (as opposed to token) coinage undertaken by Boulton was for use at the Company’s possession of Benculun in Sumatra. The coinage consisted of denominations of 3 and 2 kepings and 1 keping, weighing 150, 100 and 50 grains respectively. They were struck in 1786 and are dated accordingly, and were produced, not by machines driven by steam power, for which Boulton was to become so famous, but by water and man-powered machinery. Rolling and cutting of blanks was undertaken at the Soho factory in Birmingham but the actual coinage at a mint specially constructed in London. Many problems were encountered in producing these first coins but, despite this, a further order was received in 1787, with a total of over eighteen tons eventually being struck. By 1797, when Boulton received a further order for the same three denominations for Sumatra, he had perfected his coining techniques to such an extent that he was able to produced over fifteen tons of coins within two months of receiving the firm order. Boulton received the final order for copper coins for Sumatra in 1803 and these were dated 1804.

---

41 Doty, as in n. 10, pp. 299–300.
Once again coins of Asian areas outside India have been the subject of study by Pridmore, whose published work remains the only collected reference work on the series. However, there do seem to be some gaps in this work, particularly surrounding the Hong Kong coins (see above), and these gaps may extend to other series, so it would seem that there is scope for further research in this whole area and perhaps an updating of Pridmore’s work.

Asian Territories in the near East

Palestine became a British Mandated territory in 1917 and remained so until 1948. Aden was annexed to British India in 1839 and, after some territorial expansion, became a crown colony in 1937 before achieving independence in 1967, and other Gulf and Middle Eastern states became British Protectorates at various times during the twentieth century. Coins of these territories have not been addressed by any publication of the Society, but Pridmore has covered those of Palestine.

Australasia

The first settlers arrived from Britain in 1788 with the establishment of the penal colony at Botany Bay in what became New South Wales. Separate colonies were established in Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, before Australia achieved dominion status in 1900, followed by the union of the states into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. New Zealand began to attract European settlers from the 1840s and achieved dominion status in 1907.

The earliest coins used were imported from a variety of different sources, and in 1800 the Governor of New South Wales issued a proclamation establishing the rates at which these foreign coins should pass current. However, the numismatic history of nineteenth-century Australasia is really dominated by the tradesmen’s tokens, of which over 600 have been recorded as issued between the late 1840s and the 1870s. Amongst the first of these tokens were those produced for Annand Smith & Co. of Melbourne, and these, coincidentally, were the last tokens produced by Boulton & Watt in 1849, just before the company was shut down and the assets sold. The earliest coins of Australia and New Zealand are the cut and countermarked Spanish dollars known as Holey Dollars and Dumps. Later, the discovery of gold in Australia led to the establishment of branches of the Royal Mint in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, where sovereigns and half sovereigns were struck throughout the second half of the nineteenth century both for use at home and for export as bullion. With dominion status achieved for Australia in 1900, currency, coinage and legal tender became the concern of the new Federal Government of Australia, as it did for the Government of New Zealand in 1907.

Alfred Chitty, a corresponding member of the Society, published the first paper in *BNJ* dealing with the early coins of Australia. After discussing the holey dollars and the fifteen pence bitts he went on to discuss a whole series of silver tokens, which eventually led to the resolution to strike a silver coinage for Australia following the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia. He then went on to discuss the gold coins produced following the discovery of gold deposits in 1851. Of particular interest are the so-called kangaroo pieces struck in weights of 1, 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 ounces. This paper was followed a few years later by a paper showing the mint accounts for the numbers of sovereigns and half sovereigns produced at Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. In the mid 1930s Francis Gardner briefly reviewed the early coinage of Australia, although this paper contained lit-

---

43 Pridmore, as in n. 42.  
44 Doty, as in n. 10, p. 337.  
tive information. More recently, Freehill read a paper to the society on the subject of Australian coins.

Australasia is one of the areas that was not covered by Pridmore’s series on Commonwealth coins, and the major work of reference remains Andrews’s *Australasian Tokens & Coins*. This is a superb book covering all the early coins and tokens of Australia and New Zealand, but, since it was published in 1921, there have been a number of new discoveries that obviously are not included. A more recent work by Rennick is very difficult to obtain.

Pacific Islands include New Guinea (1884–1904), Fiji (1874–1970), New Hebrides (1887–1980) and the Solomon Islands (1893–1978), Tonga (1900–1970), Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1892–1978/79) and various other islands of little numismatic importance. The coinage of these islands has not been addressed by the Society, nor was it the subject of Pridmore’s work. However, since many of these islands became dependencies of Australia or New Zealand after those countries achieved dominion status, their coinages may be considered to fall outside the scope of this work.

In summary, the early coins and tokens of Australasia have received reasonable coverage by the Society, but there may be room for a reappraisal or updating of Andrews’s work, with an extension to include the coinages of the Pacific Islands where appropriate.

**Europe**

Territories considered as part of the British Empire in Europe outside the United Kingdom from a numismatic standpoint include: Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Lundy, Gibraltar, Ionian Islands, Cyprus and Malta. Major Pridmore covered this coinage as part of his work on Commonwealth coins, and there have not been significant changes since that time, although there have been additional modern coins struck for use in various of these territories. Most of the territories have coins with their own distinctive features: the Isle of Man with the triune (three legs), Lundy with the puffin, Jersey and Guernsey with their shields of arms, Gibraltar with its castle and the Ionian Islands with the winged lion of St Mark.

Early contributions to knowledge of these coins came in 1907 with a paper on the Ionian coinage by N. Heywood. During the Napoleonic wars, the British took possession of six of the Mediterranean islands including Cephalonia and Corfu and formed them into the United States of the Ionian Islands under the Protectorate of Great Britain in 1815. They were ceded to Greece in 1863. The British coins consist of a copper penny (two obols), halfpenny (obol), and farthing (half obol), dated 1819 or 1820, and a lepton or 1/5 obol bearing various dates from 1834 to 1862. In addition a curious coin was identified in 1904 as a mule between the obverse of an Irish penny of George IV and a reverse bearing the seated figure of Britannia as shown on the penny of the Ionian coins.

The Guernsey eight doubles of 1864 featured in a paper by D.L.F. Sealy written in 1965. In this masterly work Sealy showed how six obverse dies and six reverse dies were chain-linked into a series to give ten die pairings. From this he was able to deduce that the firm of Henry Jay & Co., the manufacturers of the coins, probably only possessed one coining press. Furthermore, he was able to conclude that each die must have been engraved directly by hand and that the company did not possess any means of die multiplication. Guernsey coinage also features in Dotty’s book on the Soho mint, where he describes the minting of the 1830 four doubles and the 1834 eight doubles.

---

48 M. Freehill, ‘On the Coinage of Australia’, *BNJ* 34 (1965), 188.
53 P. Nelson, ‘The Coinage of Ireland in Copper, Tin and Pewter’, *BNJ* 1 (1904), 221.
Doty also describes the first coins produced by Matthew Boulton for the Isle of Man. The duke of Atholl, who had sold the island to the Crown in 1765, suggested to the king in 1797 that Boulton should produce a copper coinage for the Isle of Man. This was agreed but the Royal Mint apparently caused delays, presumably because it considered that the coins should have been produced there. However, coinage eventually began in 1799 and consisted of pennies and halfpennies dated 1798. A second order was placed in 1812 and filled with coins dated 1813.

Coins of the other colonies and dependencies within Europe have not received attention in the publications of the Society. However, as usual, Pridmore has comprehensively dealt with this series. Perhaps the major opportunity for future study lies in the more modern coins that were not addressed by him.

Africa

Coins struck under the authority of the British in Africa can conveniently be divided into four sections based on the points of the compass. Initially contact was really confined to necessary watering holes on the route round the Cape to the markets of South-East Asia. However, in 1672 the Royal Africa Company was formed, and together with its successor Companies it engaged in the triangular trade of goods exported from Britain to West Africa, particularly the Gold Coast. Here they were exchanged for slaves, who were shipped to the American plantations, and exchanged for goods such as sugar and tobacco, which were taken back to Britain. By 1785, the British controlled the greater part of trade with the Gold Coast, although the slave trade was coming to an end and was abolished throughout the British Empire in 1807. In contrast to the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone was specifically founded in West Africa as a haven for freed slaves, particularly those who had fought with the British during the American War of Independence and who did not wish to stay in America as slaves after the war. From these beginnings the group of territories that formed British West Africa developed by 1901, consisting of the Gambia (independent 1965), Sierra Leone (independent 1961), the Gold Coast (independent 1957 as Ghana) and Nigeria (independent 1960).

In the south of the continent, Britain obtained control of Cape Colony from the Dutch following the Napoleonic wars in 1814, and expansion to the north into Southern and Northern Rhodesia (independent as Zimbabwe in 1965/1980 and Zambia in 1964 respectively) was led by Cecil Rhodes in the drive for gold and Empire. To this southern group can be added Nyasaland (independent 1964 as Malawi). South Africa obtained dominion status in 1910.

In the Eastern sector of the continent, the British had an early interest in Zanzibar, and this expanded onto the mainland at the end of the nineteenth century to encompass Kenya and Uganda and, following the first world war, Tanganyika (Tanzania).

To the north, the British took control of Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century, with Sudan to the south being part of this sphere of influence at various times. However, the country did not formally become a part of the Empire until 1914 when it was declared a protectorate, which it remained until 1922.

Coinage for all these different territories developed as British control grew. In the west, Sierra Leone had a coinage as early as 1791 (actually issued somewhat later than the date on the coins), and the Gold Coast in 1796, with a second issue in 1818. During most of the nineteenth century cut and countermarked Spanish Dollars were used as currency, and it was not until the twentieth century that a uniform coinage was issued for all the territories in this region. The coinage of St Helena can conveniently be included with the West African group. The British West African coinage has been studied by a number of eminent numismatists such as Pridmore55 (though this

did not form part of his series of books on Commonwealth coins), Parsons, and Dolley. The most comprehensive account of the coinage can be found in the work of Vice. As far as the Society is concerned, Doty has included discussion of the coins, though much of this is based on the work of Vice.

In South Africa early coinage requirements were met through the use of tradesmen’s tokens until after the Boer War. Nothing has been written about these tokens in the Society’s publications nor about the coins of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Theron published the major work on the tokens of South Africa in 1978, but this publication is very difficult to get hold of, as is an earlier work by Maynard. Very little is published on the coins of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Likewise the coins of Eastern Africa have not been published together in a collected work.

In Egypt the British instituted a gold, silver, nickel and bronze coinage with denominations ranging from 1 to 100 piastres, and Pridmore has described these.

In short, the British imperial and colonial coins of West Africa have been well documented by Vice, but all other areas would benefit from similar treatment.

Conclusion

In 1912 J.B. Caldecott read a paper to the Society in which he ‘urged the necessity of a new and standard work’ for the coinage of the British possessions and colonies. Major Pridmore eventually filled this gap to some extent (excluding the coins of Africa, North America and Australasia), but it would seem that the time is now ripe for a new work of reference for the series. Work on the coinage of British India was started by the late Ken Wiggins, working with Bob Puddester, and is now being advanced by the current author in collaboration with others. I am not aware of work going on in other areas, but perhaps now is the time to reiterate Caldecott’s call to arms and for the BNS and its members to take a lead in supporting a new, comprehensive work to address this fascinating part of British history.

---

62 J.B. Caldecott, ‘Coins and Tokens of the British Possessions and Colonies’, BNJ 9 (1912), 419.