THE BRITISH NUMISMATIC SOCIETY: A HISTORY

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Foundation

The British Numismatic Society owed its foundation to a conversation in a railway train on 18 June 1903 between three of the leading figures then involved in research into the English medi-

The triumvirate were heading for Winchester on what was later to be described by one of them as ‘one of our usual archaeological excursions’, but this conversation by no means came about by chance, for this train journey out of London was deliberately arranged for the same day as the Annual General Meeting of the old-established Numismatic Society of London, and this is likely in any event to have been the first occasion that the three had been able to meet since a dramatic special meeting of the Council of the Numismatic Society of London on 28 May that year.

It is necessary at this point to introduce the Society’s three founders and to chart the succession of events which had led up to this conversation. Of the three, the oldest was Laurie Asher Lawrence (1857–1949), an ear, nose and throat surgeon in Harley Street, London (Pl. 1). Lawrence was already a recognised expert on the coinages of the Plantagenets, and an omni-

was already a recognised expert on the coinages of the Plantagenets, and an omnivorous collector in many other areas of British coinage, but although he was obviously predisposed to favour the formation of an organisation which would advance research into the coinages closest to his heart, he seems to have been of a peaceable temperament and he must also have been insulated by his known partial deafness from some of the cut-and-thrust of contemporary numismatic controversy. It is striking testimony to the unfortunate way in which events had developed that he was to be found on that particular train in the company of his two colleagues.

Next in age was Walter Jonathan Andrew (1859–1934), a solicitor from Whaley Bridge, on the Derbyshire fringes of Manchester, who was both a coin collector and a particularly keen amateur historian. It was noted in the British Numismatic Journal (BNJ) after Andrew’s death that as a young man he had been ‘a prominent and courageous aeronaut’, with reference to his role in experimental hot-air ballooning in the late 1880s, and it is as an intrepid balloonist, in a metaphorical sense, that Andrew made his most conspicuous contribution to numismatic and historical scholarship.

The youngest of the trio was Philip William Poole Carlyon-Britton (1863–1938), a London solicitor whose practice acted for a number of major country landowners (Pl. 2). Carlyon-Britton was a strong-willed personality, with an appetite for controversy and with firm opinions on the right way forward for numismatic research, and he, as will appear from what follows, was in every way the ringleader in this joint enterprise.

The events with which we are concerned had their starting point in the compilation by W.J. Andrew of an extensive paper on the coinage of Henry I. This was so extensive that the reading just of its narrative portion had, unusually, occupied two successive meetings of the Numismatic Society of London in January and February 1900, and pressure was put on the editors of NC to publish the paper as whole in four consecutively paginated quarterly parts which would form the entirety of the substantive text of the annual volume of NC for 1901. The editors of NC had not
done for this for any previous contributor, but the scale and serious intent of Andrew’s paper eventually proved persuasive, and in his Presidential Address to the Numismatic Society of London in June 1902 Sir John Evans, the doyen of English numismatic scholars, gave the published version of the paper almost unstinted praise, stressing its completeness as a survey of Henry’s coinage and drawing attention to Andrew’s pioneer use of historical sources for explaining the activities of individual mints. At this time Evans was himself one of the editors of *NC*, along with Barclay Head, H.A. Gruceber and E.J. Rapson, and since neither Head nor Rapson had any expertise in the English mediaeval coinage, it is not difficult to conclude that it was Evans and Gruceber who would have read the paper when submitted, recommended its acceptance for publication and seen to any necessary editing and proof-reading; and it is strange to modern eyes that neither of them seems to have been blamed by either side in the subsequent controversy for their less than satisfactory handling of Andrew’s manuscript.

Regrettably, the paper reflected Andrew’s ill-founded pretensions as a historian as well as his real knowledge of Henry’s coins, and it quickly became apparent to informed readers that its historical part was full of flaws. Debate was to focus not so much on Andrew’s overall arrangement and dating of the types of Henry I, which was too large a topic for any critic to undertake, but on Andrew’s imperfect understanding of many details of the surviving contemporary documentary evidence for the reign. The situation became critical in the second half of 1902 when two members of the staff of the Public Record Office, C.G. Crump and Charles Johnson, submitted to *NC* a relatively brief but undeniably brutal review article devoted to Andrew’s paper. The editors of *NC* initially hesitated, but concluded that they had no choice but to print it, and it appeared in *NC* in the early winter of 1902, very possibly without any preliminary warning having been given to Andrew.

This led immediately to Andrew’s resignation from the Numismatic Society of London, tendered in November and confirmed in December, but his friends took the view that he had been badly treated, and Carlyon-Britton and Lawrence, both members of the Society’s Council at this time, argued forcibly that under the Society’s rules all contributions to *NC* should previously have been read at Society meetings, and that the publication of the offending article was thus an act by *NC*’s editors not authorised by the Society’s rules and not done with the consent of the Council or Society. Their motion to this effect was negatived at a Council meeting in March 1903, on the wholly legitimate ground that the freedom of *NC*’s editors to accept or reject controversial material should not be fettered, but Carlyon-Britton and Lawrence returned to the attack at a Council meeting on 21 May with a proposal that the Society’s rule book should be emended to make it compulsory that papers published in *NC* should have been read at least in summary form at a previous Society meeting.

This too was rejected, with the apparent acquiescence of its proposers, but it was necessary at the same meeting to approve the names of those who would be nominated to serve on the Society’s Council for the ensuing year, and two members of the Council, Sir Henry Howorth and Horace Monckton, declared that they would not be prepared to serve on Council with Carlyon-Britton if Carlyon-Britton was re-elected. At an ensuing crisis meeting of the Council on 28 May, it was indicated that five further members of the Council, four of them members of the staff of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum and the fifth the Society’s Hon. Treasurer, would not serve on Council with Carlyon-Britton. As this was likely to make the running of the Society unworkable, an appeal was made to Carlyon-Britton and to Lawrence that they should voluntarily withdraw their names from the nomination list, but Carlyon-Britton would have none of this, making it necessary for the opposing majority to vote them off and to nominate in their place two more amenable specialists in the English mediaeval series, Frederick Walters and Thomas Bliss.

Matters would not have got to this point if that there had not been some existing dissatisfaction with the attitude of the numismatic establishment to the study of the post-Roman coinages of the

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4 C.G. Crump and C. Johnson, Notes on ‘A numismatic history of the reign of Henry I’ by W.J. Andrew, *NC* 4th series II (1902), 372–7. The present writer has not been able while writing this history of the Society to consult copies of two very rare subsequent pamphlets written by Andrew in response to the remarks by Crump and Johnson.
British Isles. Publicly this was expressed as dissatisfaction with the amount of coverage devoted to such coinages in NC, but there was a more general unease about the preoccupation of the Numismatic Society of London’s ruling elite with the coinages of ancient Greece and Rome, and it did not help that Herbert Appold Grueber, the British Museum staff member responsible at that date for the British series, interpreted his British Museum responsibilities conservatively and was not felt to be personally committed to advancing the study of the coinages of mediaeval and modern Britain. Carlyon-Britton and his colleagues were to record later in 1903 that prior to the publication of Andrew’s paper they had fruitlessly petitioned the Council of the Numismatic Society of London to issue ‘a separate series of volumes upon the British coinage’, and W.J. Andrew recounted in 1909 that ‘long ago’ he had had a conversation with the Manchester-based collector William Sharp Ogden (c.1843–1926) in which they had ‘discussed the possibility of an all-British numismatic society’, but these had been isolated initiatives which had come to nothing.

Andrew also recounted in 1909 that when in their railway carriage conversation Carlyon-Britton ‘first propounded the then seemingly preposterous proposition: “Let us have an-all British society”’, he, Andrew, initially shook his head, pointing out that he and Ogden had concluded that such a Society would only attract around a hundred members, too small a number for viability, and that it was only when Carlyon-Britton expressed his certainty that ‘I can get two hundred at least off my own bat’ that Andrew and Lawrence consented to collaborate with him in establishing the new organisation. Andrew’s testimony makes it clear both that it was Carlyon-Britton who proposed the Society’s foundation and that it was Carlyon-Britton who made himself primarily responsible for recruiting its initial membership.

It is relevant here that by an extraordinary accident of fate Carlyon-Britton was himself the prearranged speaker at the ordinary meeting of the Numismatic Society of London on 21 May 1903, on the same afternoon as the first of the two contentious meetings of its Council held that month; Carlyon-Britton’s paper offered significant new ideas about the arrangement and dating of the types of Edward the Confessor, and in the discussion that followed it, as the Society’s printed Proceedings record, ‘Mr. Grueber criticised Mr. Carlyon-Britton’s arrangement of the earlier types, and said that the attempt to fix the actual dates of the issues of the new dies was purely speculative’. Carlyon-Britton was not the man to put up with criticism of this kind and from this quarter, and it may well be that it was these ill-timed remarks by Grueber which were decisive in persuading Carlyon-Britton that a new society was necessary.

No contemporary correspondence or other documentation survive to chart the activities of Carlyon-Britton and his colleagues between 18 June 1903 and early October 1903, but the respective calculations made by Andrew and Ogden and by Carlyon-Britton seem each to have been accurate. The foundation members of the British Numismatic Society as listed in the third edition of a prospectus for the Society published in the autumn of 1903 include the names of sixty-three current members and two former members of the Numismatic Society of London, the former members being W.J. Andrew and H.W. Lawrence, L.A. Lawrence’s younger brother. Five further individuals who had been members of the Numismatic Society of London in the autumn of 1903 were recruited to the British Numismatic Society during 1904, making a total of seventy who had belonged to the older Society before the new Society came into being; and a study of the Numismatic Society of London’s membership list for 1903 suggests that there were no more than ten or fifteen others who would have joined the British Numismatic Society if the circumstances of its foundation had been uncontroversial. The figures confirm the essential correctness of Andrew and Ogden’s earlier calculation.

Similarly, an analysis of the foundation membership of the British Numismatic Society reveals name after name likely to have been recruited by Carlyon-Britton’s personal persuasion: at least five of his relatives, neighbours of his in Enfield, Middlesex, members of the Middlesex magistracy, numerous barristers, solicitors, land agents and chartered surveyors, and a few great

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5 Letter by Andrew, Carlyon-Britton, and Lawrence, in The Athenaeum, 31 October 1903.
6 BNJ 5 (1908), 457.
7 Samuel Henry Hamer, a founder member of the Society, possessed copies of all five editions of this prospectus, bound up for him in a volume with his bookplate subsequently acquired by Wilfrid Slayter, and bequeathed by Slayter to the Society’s Library.
landowners who are likely to have been his legal firm’s clients. Only a minority of these personal or business acquaintances of Carlyon-Britton were to remain members for very long, but they lent both weight and numerical strength to the lists of provisional members circulated before the new Society officially came into being, and at the Society’s inaugural meeting on 30 November 1903 its membership already stood at 270, with one additional honorary member (Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records).

It was not however to be expected that the Numismatic Society of London would remain entirely passive, and at some point during the autumn Sir John Evans, in consultation with his closest colleagues, decided that the Numismatic Society of London should apply for a Royal Charter, with the objective of being able to rename itself the Royal Numismatic Society and to confer the title of Fellow on its present and future members. A proposal to this effect was due to be put to the Society’s meeting on 15 October 1903, but before this could take place Carlyon-Britton and his colleagues got wind of it, and circulated to each of the provisional members of the British Numismatic Society a printed letter dated 14 October, in which they sought backing for a petition applying for the grant of a Royal Charter for their own fledgling organisation.8 Their move was essentially tactical, for, as they must have anticipated, the petition was in due course politely rebuffed by Buckingham Palace, and the grant of a Royal Charter to what was to become the Royal Numismatic Society was not measurably delayed; but Carlyon-Britton must now have realised that the older Society was not wholly without cards of its own to play, and that a period of mutual attrition was likely.

For the present, though, the horizon was fair. As recruits to the new Society came in, it became clear that the British Numismatic Society would have members throughout Britain, including representative members of many county archaeological societies and a good number of prominent coin collectors in the English provinces who had never got round to joining the Numismatic Society of London. The Society had also been able to recruit its first members in the United States, again including a number who had never joined the older Society. Only within the numismatic establishment and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where the prestige of Sir John Evans and the scholarly reputation of the senior staff of the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum carried weight, was recruitment more patchy; and even here there were encouraging signs, most notably the accession to the Society of R.A. Hoblyn, a loyal supporter of the Numismatic Society of London in the past and the first former officer of that body to join the new organisation.

By October the triumvirate had become sufficiently certain of their position to get a paragraph inserted in the issue for 10 October 1903 of the weekly periodical The Athenaeum, stating that ‘it has been felt for some time past by many members of the Numismatic Society of London that enough attention is not paid to the study of British coinage’ and that ‘the British Numismatic Society has accordingly been formed to encourage the historical study of the coins, medals, and tokens of the English speaking race throughout the world’. The paragraph also stated that the Society’s periodical, the British Numismatic Journal, would be published as an annual bound volume, and that the Society’s headquarters would be 43 Bedford Square, London WC (the large and then newly acquired office premises of the solicitors’ partnership of Upton and Britton to which Carlyon-Britton belonged).9 This drew a reply from Evans in the following weekly issue, pointing to recent coverage of British coinage in NC and also to the fact that over the period from 1881 to 1900 upwards of 2000 pages in NC had been devoted to British numismatics: but this was tactically a mistake on Evans’s part for it enabled Carlyon-Britton and his colleagues to have a further and more powerful letter of their own on the same subject published in The Athenaeum for 31 October (subsequently reprinted by them, together with the previous items from The Athenaeum, as a propaganda leaflet for circulation among their provisional members).10

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8 A copy of their printed letter is loosely inserted in the Hamer volume in the Society’s Library.
9 Carlyon-Britton, admitted as a solicitor in March 1886, had soon gone into partnership with another solicitor, Edward Upton. Their firm operated from 51 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London WC, between 1889 and 1903, and thereafter from 43 Bedford Square. Although they took in only one further partner, Mellor Lumb, Shirley Fox’s obituary of Carlyon-Britton in BNU refers to his having ‘a large staff’ at the outbreak of the First World War, and the move to Bedford Square reflected the firm’s then prosperity.
10 A copy of this leaflet is tipped into the Hamer volume in the Society’s Library.
It was thus at 8.30 pm on St Andrew’s Day, 30 November 1903, that the Society met for its inaugural meeting, at 43 Bedford Square, London WC. Carlyon-Britton was at once voted provisional chairman of the meeting, ‘explained the objects of the Society and the proceedings leading to its formation’, and moved a resolution declaring the Society duly established. He was thereupon elected its President for the year 1903–4. The meeting then went on to elect six Vice-Presidents (mainly non-numismatist dignitaries known to Carlyon-Britton, but including one well-known collector of English and European mediaeval coins, Lord Granetly), a Director (L.A. Lawrence), a Treasurer (Russell Howland Wood, a chartered accountant), a Librarian (Rev. H.J. Dukenfield Astley, a Church of England clergyman who was an active member of the British Archaeological Association), a Secretary (W.J. Andrew), and a Council (whose fifteen members included the coin collectors A.B. Creeke, Nathan Heywood, W. Sharp Ogden and Bernard Roth; J.B. Caldecott, an authority on milled and colonial coinages, who was also the cataloguer of Sotheby’s coin sales; and the coin dealers S.M. Spink and W. Talbot Ready). The members present approved the Society’s proposed rules and gave their approval to the petition for a Royal Charter and to a supplemental petition which needed to be lodged with the Clerk of the Privy Council. The meeting was then adjourned, and the Society did not meet for its first ordinary meeting until 13 January 1904.

On the date of this January meeting, Carlyon-Britton was able to read out the names of a further forty-four candidates for election; donations of books, photographs and a modern bronze medal were announced; various coins, tokens, etc., were exhibited; and papers by two members, J.E.T. Loveday and Bernard Roth, were read, although Loveday’s paper, entitled ‘The Henry VIII Medal or Pattern Crown’, read first and thus the very first numismatic paper delivered at a meeting of the Society, was not in fact read by Loveday himself, who was not present, but by L.A. Lawrence as Director. Bernard Roth, by contrast, both read his own paper on ‘A find of clippings of silver coins at Marcham, near Abingdon’, and at the end ‘handed in his paper, a photograph of the clippings and the negative thereof for the use of the Society’: Roth (1852–1915) was to prove a regular contributor of papers and exhibits in the years that followed, and as a well-known orthopaedic surgeon, practising in Brighton and in Harley Street, and a son-in-law of the celebrated Liberal politician John Bright, the value of his name to the standing of the Society in the outside world was acknowledged by his election in the following year as one of its Vice-Presidents.

At the Society’s February and March meetings thirty-five and fifty-two new candidates for election were respectively announced, bringing the prospective total number of members to over four hundred at a time when the membership of the Numismatic Society of London numbered only around three hundred. Although the February meeting had had to be told that the British Numismatic Society’s application for a Royal Charter had been refused – the Numismatic Society of London received its own Letters Patent for a Royal Charter that same month – both meetings again saw a wide range of exhibitions, and the paper by Lawrence read at the March meeting made an useful contribution to the study of the mint marks, legends and letter forms used on coins of Edward IV. Carlyon-Britton added to the prevailing optimism in March by proposing for nomination to Honorary Membership Britain’s most popular living military hero, Field-Marshal Earl Roberts.

Beyond this point it is not feasible to give a month-by-month account of the Society’s progress, but Andrew was confident enough in June to deliver a paper to it on ‘Buried Treasure: some Traditions, Records and Facts’, in which he took deliberate aim at Grueber’s views on the dating of the coins then associated with a Viking king Halfdan, and this paper of Andrew’s was to prove a curtain-raiser for a more violent onslaught by Carlyon-Britton on the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, contained in an address by him to the Society’s first Anniversary meeting on 30 November 1904, under the title ‘Treasure Trove, the Treasury and the Trustees of the British Museum’.

As this title makes clear, Carlyon-Britton had the current state of the administration of treasure trove law as his primary target, and he highlights the miserly sums then being paid as remuneration to finders of treasure trove coin hoards; but it is his remarks on the lack of apparent commitment by the Department of Coins and Medals to the study of the coinages of Britain that encapsulate the dissatisfaction that had led to the Society’s foundation. As he justly observed.
there was then no published catalogue of any part of the British series subsequent to the year 1066; no public display of British coins within the British Museum; no published record of the provenances even of those coins which had already been featured in the Museum's two volume catalogue of its holdings of Anglo-Saxon coins; no specific priority given to the building up of the Museum's holdings of British coins; and no consciousness of the need for extra staff to catalogue and maintain the British part of the collection. The published minutes of the Anniversary meeting record the view of one of Carlyon-Britton's audience who was both a member of the Society’s Council and a Fellow of what was now the Royal Numismatic Society that this was ‘one of the most interesting papers that he had ever heard’, and the part of Carlyon-Britton’s remarks devoted to the perceived lack of interest in the British series on the part of the staff of the Department of Coins and Medals clearly struck a chord with those present.

On this day the number of members of the year-old Society totalled 509, a figure nine higher than the maximum number envisaged in the rules that the Society had adopted just twelve months earlier, and this year of triumph was recorded for posterity in the first published volume of the British Numismatic Journal (BNJ), issued in the summer of the following year. Typically, Carlyon-Britton took the opportunity to preface this volume with a lengthy introduction from his own pen, reviewing the history of the coinage of Britain but also delivering a few verbal buffets at ‘those who have devoted their energies to the elucidation of the money of any paltry state, rather than face the historical importance of the great coinage of Britain’. Equally typically, W.J. Andrew, to whom responsibility for the reviews section of the volume was allotted, chose the bold course of reviewing at length the most recent volume of NC, which included major papers by Grueber on the Colchester Short Cross hoard of 1902 and on the Stamford hoard…

Years of Achievement

The history of the Society in the decade between the year of its foundation and the outbreak of the First World War was one of striking success. This can be measured most tangibly from the annual succession of substantial, well-illustrated volumes of BNJ, issued from the start in a uniform binding with red cloth spines, a colour which was to identify BNJ for nearly thirty years. The quantity and quality of the information contained in these volumes was quickly to demonstrate to all but the most hostile critics that the newly formed Society was performing a necessary role in the promotion and advancement of the study of the coinages of the British Isles.

As we have already seen, the earliest papers read to the Society included contributions by Carlyon-Britton, Andrew, Lawrence and Roth, all subsequently published in the first volume of BNJ. The second volume of BNJ, which included further major contributions by Carlyon-Britton, one on 'The Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet Coinage of Wales' and another the first instalment of a massive paper discussing the coinages of William I and II, also contained papers by two new contributors, Helen Farquhar (1859–1953) and H. Alexander Parsons (1876–1952), very different in personality and interests but who were both to remain active in the work of the Society into the 1930s and beyond.

Miss Farquhar, a lady of upper class family and independent means, was keenly interested in all coins, medals or badges carrying portraits of members of the Stuart dynasty from the accession of

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11 The figure of 509 members at 30 November 1904 included 504 ordinary members, four more than the maximum number seemingly permitted by the rules, but it was explained at the time that 'peers, eldest sons of peers, Privy Councillors and some others are additions' (BNJ 1 (1904), 438).

12 The first ten volumes of BNJ were bound with red cloth spines and corners, and green cloth sides, while the next ten volumes were bound in full red cloth. Additionally, the first thirty volumes of BNJ carried on the upper cover of their binding or binding case a gilt stamped representation of the Society's Seal, engraved by Spink in 1904 and then described as having been 'designed by the President, Director and Secretary, from the reverse of a medal of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, dated 1745'.

James I to the English throne in 1603 onwards, with a special penchant for those associated with the Young Pretender, and her numerous contributions to BNJ, based as much on historical and documentary evidence as on the study of the actual numismatic material, remain a mine of information for the researcher of today. H. Alexander Parsons, a dapper South Londoner who was for many years employed as a clerk in the General Post Office, was also to contribute extensively to BNJ, mainly on coins of the later Anglo-Saxon period and on their Irish and Scandinavian imitations; he had a good eye for individual coins of interest, often recognised and purchased by him at London coin auction sales, and his papers in BNJ provide the earliest published discussion of a number of significant topics, but his judgement was sometimes vitiated by the fact that he owned the particular coin or coins that he was discussing. Additionally, his more ambitious papers, dealing with coinages as a whole, tended to be founded on bold hypotheses not properly substantiated by supporting evidence, and were to prove an enticing target for external critics.

Another early contributor to BNJ and stalwart supporter of the Society was Lieut-Col. Henry Walters Morrieson (1857–1933), a retired artillery officer (Pl. 3a), whose paper in vol. III (3) of the Journal on ‘The busts of James I on his silver coinage’ was the forerunner of many by him on the coinages of James I and Charles I. Morrieson’s papers are based on careful study of the extant coins of these reigns, and are more narrowly focused than those by Helen Farquhar, but they established a basic framework for the classification of these coinages and can still be consulted with profit.

It was however Carlyon-Britton who essentially set the tone for the first few volumes of BNJ. Carlyon-Britton’s massive study of the coinages of William I and II, published in instamements in each volume of BNJ from vol. II (2) to vol. X (10), was conceived on the same scale and with the same general approach as that of the ill-fated paper by W.J. Andrew on the coinage of Henry I, but Carlyon-Britton was wise enough to put the emphasis of his paper on a mint-by-mint review of the extant coins, and his decision to publish his study in a succession of annual parts meant that it was not until the whole of it was published that its success or otherwise could be properly judged. He also contributed to BNJ in these years a number of important notes on individual mints of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman period, taking evident pleasure from the fact that coins of several of these had not been recognised or properly identified by Grueber.

The ability of the Society to publish so impressively and so early in its history was made possible by the Society’s ability to recruit and maintain a sizeable membership. Between 1904 and 1912 the number of members remained consistently above 500, rising to a peak of 538 at the anniversary meeting in November 1906. The number then fell, first to 461 in 1913 and then to 444 by November 1914, but since the initial size of the membership had been inflated by Carlyon-Britton’s recruitment of many non-numismatist personal friends and professional colleagues, who had not remained members for long, it was a substantial achievement for the Society to have built up what appeared by 1914 to be a solid body of support. That said, the number of ordinary members (those paying an annual subscription) had never exceeded 504, the total reached in November 1904, and had fallen by 1914 to 413; while the number of members of other categories had risen from one at the time of the Society’s foundation to a total of thirty-nine in 1907, and still stood at thirty-one in November 1914.

It will be remembered that by April 1904 the Society possessed two honorary members, Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte and Field-Marshal Earl Roberts. The Society’s original rules had however also provided that ‘Members of the Royal Families of this and other countries may . . . be elected as titular members, without Ballot, and shall be called Royal Members’, and during the summer of 1904 it evidently occurred to Carlyon-Britton, a staunch Conservative and monarchist, that it would boost the Society’s prestige if it was able to include in its membership list significant Royal

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13 Parsons is uniformly described in BNJ as H. Alexander Parsons, without the initial H being further elucidated. This curious omission attracted the attention of Michael Dolley, who was pleased to recount how he browbeat an unfortunate official at Somerset House into supplying him a copy of Parsons’s birth certificate without charge, but that, somewhat to Dolley’s disappointment, the H turned out to be the initial letter of the perfectly innocuous Christian name Harry.

14 Council’s report for the year ending 1913 had given the membership total as 481, but when the figure for 1913 was again given for comparative purposes in Council’s report for 1914, it had been revised down to 461.
representation. The first Royal member to be recruited was King Victor Emmanuel of Italy (12 October 1904), known to be a keen collector of coins, quickly followed by King Carlos of Portugal (16 November 1904), and then by twenty-one other kings, queens and crown princes between 1905 and 1911, including the future King George V, then Prince of Wales (18 January 1905).

It also occurred to Carlyon-Britton at this time that the Society would benefit from having an official United States presence in its membership list, and since the relevant rule did not permit the election to Society membership of non-royal heads of state, the solution adopted was to elect the current US ambassador in London, Joseph H. Choate, as an honorary member (30 October 1904). Choate was followed into honorary membership by the Portuguese and Belgian ambassadors in London (15 January 1905), and then by all the London ambassadors of the major European powers, but it was soon realised that this was a policy error, as the Society would be obligated to retain the individuals concerned on its membership list, and to supply them with copies of *BNJ*, long after their term of service in London had ended. Nothing could be done to remedy the situation immediately, but in the Council's Annual Report for the year ending 30 November 1910 it was stated that 'the list of honorary members has been reduced by six owing to the retirement from this country of the following representatives of Foreign Powers at the Court of St James's', and after that date only one further London ambassador was elected to honorary membership, his tenure and that of other remaining ambassadorial members being deemed to expire when they left England.15

Honorary membership was otherwise conferred in this period only on the Countess of Yarborough (18 January 1905), Vernon Rendall, editor of the periodical The Athenaeum (22 March 1905), and Alfred Anscombe (1859–1934), an authority on the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxon period who had been elected to the Society as an ordinary member in 1904 (22 February 1911).

The management of the Society during this period remained firmly in Carlyon-Britton's hands. When his initial five-year term as President expired on 30 November 1908 he was warmly congratulated on his services to the Society both in the Council's Annual Report and in a vote of thanks moved by the Derbyshire antiquary Revd J.C. Cox., but it was felt that a further tribute was appropriate and at a Society meeting on 23 June 1909 he was presented with his portrait, commissioned from the painter John Shirley Fox (1860–1939), a member of the Society since 1907.16 On that day his role in the foundation and subsequent history of the Society was extolled in speeches by Andrew (his successor as President), Morrisson and others, but what the audience could not know was that Andrew was only to be a stop-gap President and that Carlyon-Britton was to resume the Presidency on 30 November 1909, the earliest date permitted by the Society's rules.17 His second Presidential term lasted from then until November 1914 and he was thus still in office at the outbreak of the First World War.

Of the other executive posts, that of Director was successively held by Lawrence (1903–8) and John Shirley Fox (1909–14). The Secretarship, coupled with primary responsibility for the editing of *BNJ*, was held more or less continuously by Andrew (1903–8, 1910–8), with assistance from Anscombe as Joint Secretary in 1906–8, except that while Andrew was serving his year as President in 1909 the secretarial duties were shared between Bernard Roth and Fleet-Surgeon.

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15 The only Ambassador to remain an Honorary Member after ceasing to represent his country at the Court of St James's was Luis Augusto Pinto, Marques de Soveral (1853–1922), Portuguese Ambassador 1897–1910, a well-known figure in London society and a personal friend of King Edward VII.

16 It was suggested at the time that the portrait of Carlyon-Britton should be reproduced in *BNJ*, but Carlyon-Britton did not wish for this, stating in a letter that 'I prefer to remain "an unpublished type"' (*BNJ* 5 (1908), 467). No reproduction of the portrait was therefore made, and the present whereabouts of the portrait is unknown (there is no record of it in the files of the National Portrait Gallery). The present writer has on separate occasions discussed the fate of the portrait with the late Peter Seaby and with Ian Stewart (Lord Stewartby), both of whom visited Carlyon-Britton's son Raymond at Raymond's home in Chichester, but neither had any recollection of seeing a portrait of Raymond's father there, although Raymond did possess a portrait painting of himself, subsequently acquired by the Seaby firm.

17 Carlyon-Britton's resumption of the Presidency was a questionable step on his part, for he seemed to be mirroring the behaviour of Sir John Evans, who as President of the Numismatic Society of London since June 1874 had seen no reason to hand over the Presidency to any one else, and was in fact to remain President of the Royal Numismatic Society until his death in May 1908.
A.E. Weightman, a retired naval medical officer with a specialist knowledge of the British milled coinage. The post of Treasurer, initially held by Russell Wood (1903–8), passed into the safe hands of another chartered accountant, A.C. Hutchins (1910–22), after a brief hiccup occasioned by the ‘retirement’ of W.H. Fox, no relative of Shirley Fox, who had been elected as Treasurer for 1909 but who failed to last the year. Finally, the post of Librarian, initially held by Astley (1903–5), was held for the rest of the period (1906–14) by Morrison.

Early volumes of BNJ had contained little published research on the coinages of the Plantagenets, for of the two leading authorities on the coins of this period Frederick Walters had remained faithful to the Numismatic Society of London at the time of the split, and did not join the British Numismatic Society until March 1910, while L.A. Lawrence’s initial authorial efforts had been devoted to a series of very necessary articles unmasking deceptive coin forgeries in the Anglo-Saxon, Norman and later hammered series. With the recruitment to the Society of John Shirley Fox the balance of BNJ altered, for Shirley Fox and his brother H.B. Earle Fox (1863–1920), a journalist with experience in Paris and London (Pl. 3b), had already commenced by February 1908 a detailed investigation and new classification of the penny coinages of Edward I, II and III, not properly unravelled by any earlier scholar, and the results of their research, set out in instalments published in each volume of BNJ from vol. VI (6) to vol. X (10), were immediately authoritative. Lawrence himself also contributed to vols. IX, X and XI (9, 10 and 11) of BNJ a major paper on the Long Cross coinages of Henry III and Edward I, which for the first time satisfactorily established the nature and order of the principal varieties in the series.

Another valued new contributor to BNJ at the end of its first decade was Henry Symonds (1859–1933), a London barrister (Pl. 3c), who was the first Society member to utilise surviving documentation in the Public Record Office to illumine the coinages of the Tudor period, starting with a paper on the coinages of Henry VII and VIII in vol. X (10).

The remaining significant feature of BNJ volumes from 1909 onwards was the publication, again in instalments, of W.J. Andrew’s ‘A numismatic history of the reign of King Stephen’. This was another mammoth undertaking on the lines of his earlier study of the coinage of Henry I and of that by Carlyon-Britton of the coinages of William I and II, and its merits and shortcomings mirrored those evident in the Henry I paper, but time had brought Andrew a greater degree of prudence, and, as with Carlyon-Britton’s William I and II paper, the decision to publish it in instalments meant that it was no easy target for critics to shoot at. In any event, by the time publication of it in BNJ wound towards completion in the 1920s, the study of Stephen’s coinage had been put on altogether securer ground by George Brooke’s great two-volume catalogue of the coins of the Norman kings in the British Museum.

This review of the Society’s activities up to 1914 may appropriately conclude by recording the significant financial contribution made to the Society in these years by an American member, John Sanford Saltus (1854–1922) (Pl. 3d). Elected to the Society on its foundation, Sanford Saltus soon became a regular donor to the Society’s own small but growing collection of coins and medals, and as his own primary numismatic interest lay in current US coinage and medallic art, a stream of donations by him brought to the Society strikings in gold of some of the finest and rarest of recent US issues. This caused the Society to elect him as one of its Vice-Presidents for the year 1910, an office which he was to retain into the early 1920s, and once elected Vice-President he took an early opportunity to present the Society with £200, a large sum at that time, to fund the production of a gold medal to be awarded by ballot of the membership to the individual responsible for the best paper published in BNJ during a specified period. This reflected both his gratitude for his election as Vice-President and his real interest in the encouragement of contemporary medallic art, and the resulting medal, appropriately named The John Sanford Saltus Gold Medal, struck from dies designed by the British artist Frank Bowcher, was awarded in quick succession to Carlyon-Britton, 1910, and to Helen Farquhar, 1911. Subsequent awards, as envisaged in the rules framed for the purpose in 1910, were to be triennial, commencing with an award to W.J. Andrew (1914), and have continued on that basis down to the present day.

Sanford Saltus followed this gift by a further donation of £150 to the Society’s newly created Research Fund in 1911; the gift of a thousand franc note as ‘a Whitsuntide gift’ in 1912; and a princely gift of £510 in 1913 to start a ‘General Purposes Fund’. As a result, the Society’s net
worth, as recorded on its balance sheet at 18 November 1914, stood at the very satisfactory amount of £2,060 14s. 6d., significantly in excess of the comparable total of £377 17s. 9d. as of November 1904, and the Society was properly fortified against harder times to come.

War and Peace

When the Society met for its Anniversary Meeting on 30 November 1914, those attending were cheered by an upbeat Annual Report, assuring the membership that 'the British Numismatic Society – with the British Empire – can look with confidence upon both present and coming events'. Nonetheless the deaths of two officer members in action in France had already to be announced, and it was also stated that Carlyon-Britton, elected as Director for the year 1915, had already been commissioned as a Major in the 14th battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, with orders to join it at Falmouth 'en route for service abroad'. As had already been arranged, he was succeeded as President by Morrieson, and it was Morrieson and Andrew who were to steer the Society through 1915 and the more difficult years that followed.

One immediate impact of the war was that the intended publication in *BNJ* vol. XI (11) (the volume for the year 1914, intended to be in members' hands by the end of the following year) of the latest promised instalments both of Carlyon-Britton's *magnum opus* on the coins of William I and II and of Andrew's paper on the coins of Stephen did not take place. Additionally, Earle Fox, the more brilliant of the two Fox brothers, suffered a sudden illness, and the publication of the Fox brothers' study of the Edwardian penny coinage had also to be suspended. Yet in the event the overall quality of vol. XI hardly suffered, for Lawrence contributed to it both the final instalment of his Long Cross paper and a paper setting out a comparable new classification for the preceding Short Cross coinage, struck from 1180 to 1247, while the volume was also to contain a major paper on the coinage of Edward VI by Henry Symonds, as well as characteristic contributions from Helen Farquhar and from Parsons.

The year 1915 proved indeed rather calmer than might have been expected, for the death of only one more member in action needed to be announced at the Anniversary Meeting, and Morrieson's recall to service as commanding officer of the 177th (Fulham) Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery did not prevent him from continuing to preside at the Society's monthly meetings.

The three following years were more tricky. In each of them the membership fell, resulting in a nominal total reduced to 401 by November 1918, and in each of them the number of members with whom the Society was in actual contact also declined, making the Society's real numerical strength increasingly uncertain. Worse, vol. XI (11) of *BNJ*, of which publication had been expected by November 1915, did not reach members until December 1916, with a knock-on effect on the publication dates for future volumes, a dangerous development for a Society operating on the principle that members received an annual volume of *BNJ* in return for their annual subscriptions. Nor were the papers read at meetings during the war comparable in authority or scope with those which had been delivered to the Society up to 1914: Roth was dead, Carlyon-Britton was absent on war service in France. Symonds did not read a paper to the Society after October 1914, Andrew was intermittently ill and a paper read by Earle Fox to a meeting in October 1918 was the first to be read by either of the Fox brothers since the outbreak of war.

Yet the Society's balance sheet remained healthy, and it is clear that its monthly meetings continued to be attended by the same loyal group of middle-aged, middle-class, London-based coin enthusiasts, numbering not more than about thirty, who had provided the regular attendance in pre-war years. Morrieson, Lawrence (awarded the John Sanford Saltus Medal in 1917), Helen Farquhar and Parsons remained regular speakers at these meetings, and were joined in this role by one active new colleague, Grant Richardson Francis (1868–1940), a specialist in the silver coinage of Charles I, who had been elected to the Society in 1912 and who soon developed into a regular exhibitor and speaker.

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18 For the figure of thirty as the average attendance at a Society meeting just before the outbreak of the First World War see *BNJ* 11 (1914), 344. The number of members attending did however fall towards the end of the war.
The Anniversary Meeting in 1918 took place only a fortnight after the armistice and the Council’s Annual Report could do no more than express a hope for ‘an era of increased prosperity’ in the post-war world. Earle Fox, who on Andrew’s resignation due to illness had been appointed Secretary and Editor of *BNJ* by Council in January 1918, was now confirmed in that role: the appointment had seemed a good one and by the date of the meeting Earle Fox had already managed to bring out a rather thin vol. XII (12) of *BNJ* (the volume for the year 1915, due in 1916, promised for 1917 but additionally delayed by Andrew’s ill-health).

Unfortunately Earle Fox was overtaken by a ‘sudden and dangerous illness’ in June the following year, and Morrieson, himself due to leave office as President at the end of that year, was compelled to discharge the duties of both posts until successors could be found. Although successors were eventually agreed – the veteran Frederick Walters (1849–1931) as President,19 and a recovered W.J. Andrew as Secretary (the latter not appointed until 15 December 1919) – the need for the Society to rely on officers who had been active in British numismatic life since before the end of the nineteenth century was not a good sign for the future. Similarly, the programme of papers read at meetings in 1919–20 offered few novelties, speakers of pre-war vintage such as Carlyon-Britton, Lawrence, Morrieson, Parsons, Anscombe and Weightman being joined only by Grant Francis and by Carlyon-Britton’s son Raymond (the Society’s Librarian 1915–20), a keen student of the later Plantagenet and earlier Tudor coinages but not strong physically, and in any case too overawed by his masterful father, still the Society’s Director (1915–21), to make any wider contribution to the Society’s activities.

At the beginning of 1921 the Society was confronted by the problem of having to move its London premises at short notice, its rent-free rooms at 43 Bedford Square no longer being available following Carlyon-Britton’s retirement from active legal practice. Fortunately, alternative accommodation was soon found at 1 Upper Montague Street, the offices of the Society of Medical Officers of Health, and the first meeting held at the new address (23 March 1921) coincided with the presentation to Morrieson of the John Sanford Saltus Medal which had been voted him at the end of 1920.

The move coincided with a degree of activity within the Society which had not recently been evident. The endemic problems with *BNJ*, becoming expensive to produce and still running over a year behind schedule despite the appearance of vols. XIII (13) (for 1916) and XIV (14) (for 1917) in 1919 and 1920, were alleviated by a decision at just this time that in future *BNJ* should only be published every eighteen months, each published volume incorporating the Society’s Proceedings for two calendar years; the decision was presented as an alternative to raising the annual subscription, unchanged since 1903, and received a friendly welcome from members generally. Sanford Saltus had already resumed financial donations to the Society (at first both in 1918 and 1920, with another $400 to follow in 1921), and was joined as a significant donor by Ernest Henry Wheeler (1876–1933), an energetic coin collector with a business as a printer of race cards, who gave the Society two sums of £100 in 1920–1 to help with the costs of *BNJ*, and who also partly subsidised the rent of its new rooms.

The Society also benefited from a return to active numismatic research both by Andrew and by Shirley Fox, and a succession of stimulating papers read by them and others at meetings during 1921 were well received by larger than usual audiences. A start was also made at removing from the membership list the names of those who had not paid subscriptions since the middle of the war, and the membership figure of 352 announced in November 1921, of whom 328 were ordinary members, reflected the Society’s approximate current strength.

Walters evidently did not wish to serve more than two years as President, and it now occurred to him and his principal colleagues that Sanford Saltus might be asked to take on the Presidency for 1922. It was envisaged from the start that Sanford Saltus’s Presidency would be of a somewhat token character, for he was a New York resident and seems up to that time to have attended only

19 Walters was an architect by profession, specialising in designing churches in Gothic and Romanesque styles for the English Roman Catholic community. His best-known building is Buckfast Abbey, Devon, constructed to his designs from the mid 1880s onwards.
one meeting of the Society, in June 1920, and it was arranged that Grant Francis, as acting President, would perform the routine duties of the post in Sanford Saltus’s absence:20 but it was nonetheless felt that his election to the Presidency would be a fitting reward for his generosity to the Society. A telegram and a letter read to meetings early in 1922 conveyed his gratitude for the honour and his intention to come over to England for the Society’s meeting on 28 June, and plans were made to mark the occasion by an evening devoted to a ‘special medallic exhibition’. Sanford Saltus duly arrived in London on or shortly before 17 June 1922, staying at the Metropole hotel, but on the evening of Thursday 22 June, while cleaning coins in his hotel bedroom, he somehow managed to poison himself with the chemical solution that he was using, and suddenly collapsed and died.21

There was general consternation all round, not least because Sanford Saltus had come over to London without accompanying friends or relatives, and it devolved on Grant Francis, with the rather unexpected support of E.H. Wheeler, to attend and provide evidence at the ensuing inquest. The Society’s activities had nonetheless to continue, and Grant Francis was immediately chosen as President for the remainder of the year. The Society also now had a new Treasurer, Sir William Wells (1871–1933), a partner in Chestertons, the London estate agents, who had been in office since February; while Andrew (still Secretary), Walters (Director 1922–7, 1929), and Parsons (Librarian 1921–36) were the remaining executive officers.

Francis was re-elected at the Anniversary Meeting and the three ensuing years of his Presidency (1923–5) passed without undue incident, other than that Andrew and his wife were knocked down by a motor car in November 1923, she being killed and he being seriously injured. Fortunately, Andrew made a sufficient recovery to carry on as Secretary and to complete the editing of vol. XVI (16) of BNJ (for the years 1921–2), theoretically due in late 1923 but not published until March 1925.

So far as the programme of meetings and the content of BNJ was concerned, Francis’s personal interest in Stuart coinage and Stuart memorabilia made the mid 1920s a golden period for those interested in this particular field, culminating just after Francis had left office with an evening (27 January 1926) devoted to an extensive exhibition of ‘Stuart art and relics’, deemed to be the best-attended meeting that the Society had ever held. This evening also represented the high water mark of Helen Farquhar’s years of service to British numismatics, for the audience was deeply impressed by her ability to speak extemporaneously about each object on display, regardless of whether she had seen them before or not. Otherwise Andrew and Parsons (recipient of the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1923) continued to speak on their own particular areas of knowledge; Raymond Carlyon-Britton contributed an excellent paper on the last coinage of Henry VII, based on careful investigation of dies, initial marks and lettering; and W.C. Wells, an original member of the Society whose pre-war contributions to BNJ had been devoted to the seventeenth-century trade tokens of his native county of Northamptonshire, again emerged as a regular contributor both to meetings and to BNJ, now speaking and writing on the Northampton mint in the Anglo-Saxon period. Finally, a new contributor on seventeenth-century trade tokens emerged in the person of J.O. Manton, author of a series of well-informed articles on the tokens of Buckinghamshire.

The Society’s next President, William Jesse Freer (1853–1932), a solicitor from Leicester who was an authority on military and naval medals and related militaria, had served on Council continuously since 1905, for much of that time as a Vice-President, and was much liked both within the Society and further afield. It was envisaged from the start that he would only serve as President for two years, and no particular policy initiatives within that period seemed necessary: but events

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20 Derek Allen, in his Presidential Address to the Society in 1963, stated, on the evidence of letters written by W.J. Andrew to Helen Farquhar at this time, that there was ‘intense competition for the post of Vice-President. Miss Farquhar was offered it, but refused on grounds of sex. Francis, Walters, Morrison, Lawrence, and Ogden all considered themselves the rightful choice; Freer (later President) and Sir William Wells were also in the field. In fact Francis, Andrew’s candidate, was chosen and assumed the Presidency on Saltus’s death. BNJ 32 (1963), 232). What Allen failed to appreciate was that this ‘intense competition’ was not for the position of Vice-President, which Helen Farquhar had held on several occasions in the past, but for the position of acting President, involving the duty of presiding over the Society’s ordinary meetings, and it was this for which Farquhar felt herself unsuited.

21 One consequence of Sanford Saltus’s brief term of office as President was that his fiancée, Estelle Campbell (Mrs Robert James Campbell), had been elected a member of the Society on 22 March 1922, and the continuing presence of her name in the Society’s membership lists until after the Second World War remained a reminder of the events of that year.
took a hand, and it so happens that the earliest of the Society’s surviving Council minute books commences in Freer’s second year of office (the first entry is for 25 May 1927), providing from this point onwards much fuller detail on the Society’s internal history.\textsuperscript{22}

By this time Andrew’s long tenure as Secretary had finally come to an end, for he had found the burden of labour too heavy for him, and Herbert William Taffs (1870–1955), an original member of the Society and a regular exhibitor at its meetings (Pl. 4a), had been appointed initially as joint Secretary with Andrew (24 February 1926), the intention being that Taffs would undertake the secretarial duties and Andrew would continue to edit \textit{BNJ}. In October 1926 Andrew resigned his editorial responsibilities also, and those passed to his old collaborator Alfred Anscombe, now elected as Joint Secretary with Taffs (30 November 1926).

The Society’s membership was now in decline – no membership figures had been released since 1923, always an indication of underlying difficulties – and although the Society’s finances had stood up well until 1925, mainly as a result of further donations from Wheeler (£200 in 1923, £100 in 1924 and again in 1925),\textsuperscript{23} Sir William Wells felt impelled to warn the Society at the Anniversary meeting in 1926 that in the future it would not be able to afford to publish a new volume of \textit{BNJ} more often than every two years. The Council’s wealthiest current member, Richard Cyril Lockett (1873–1950), an ardent collector of Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and later English hammered coins, who happened also to be chairman of a successful family shipping company (Pl. 4b), thereupon volunteered to donate £50 towards the cost of the production of a leaflet that could be sent out with the aim of recruiting additional members.

Unfortunately, as the sequel proved, this offer, made in November 1926, had been a conditional one, dependent on the Society agreeing on the production of a suitable leaflet, and in May 1927, when the Council minute book commences, Lockett’s cheque for £50 had only just been received and no scheme for ‘advertising propaganda’ had yet been formulated. Freer was away ill at the time, and although he promised a further £25 of his own money for the same purpose at Council’s June meeting, it was decided in October that the whole issue should be considered afresh by next year’s Council, who would not meet until January 1928.

In the interval, pressure had been put on Carlyon-Britton, still energetic and ten years younger than Freer, to accept nomination as President for a third term. To this he agreed, and although Sir William Wells felt obliged to deliver a further financial warning at the ensuing Anniversary meeting (30 Nov 1927), there was confidence that with Carlyon-Britton once again at the helm the Society would surmount present and future difficulties. For what followed the historian is dependent on Taffs’s record in the surviving Council minute book.

When Council met as arranged on Wednesday, 23 January 1928, Taffs records that Carlyon-Britton, now President, ‘addressed the meeting on the financial state of the Society, showing the necessity for increase of income on the one hand and for reduction of expenditure on the other hand. As regards the first the President proposed that the subscription for new members should be two guineas and that present members be invited to increase their subscriptions to that account’. The meeting was not particularly well attended, and in the discussion that followed it fell to Taffs himself to question the power of the Council to increase the subscription under the Society’s existing rules, one of which inconveniently specified that the subscription was one guinea; but Carlyon-Britton’s proposal was seconded by his old ally Lawrence, and was ‘eventually carried’.

The meeting then went on to an inconclusive discussion about competing estimates for the printing of \textit{BNJ}, but before it concluded, as Taffs again records, ‘Mr. Anscombe asked for instructions with regard to the draft of the Appeal which contained of course references to the subscription. In view of the lateness of the hour, however, no decision was arrived at or instructions issued’. As the two sentences last quoted were struck out of the minutes when read at Council’s next meeting, they may not fairly represent what was said: but it is clear from this and from the

\textsuperscript{22} This minute book carries on its spine the gilt stamped inscription ‘Council no.3’, indicating that two earlier Council minute books once existed.

\textsuperscript{23} Wheeler’s financial generosity to the Society was recognised by the award to him of a special striking of the John Sanford Saltus Medal on 30 May 1926, ‘for his valued services 1917–26’ (the medal was presumably so inscribed). It was stated at that time that another special striking of the medal had previously been presented to John Sanford Saltus himself, but the present writer has not been able to discover the date and circumstances of that award.
tenor of Taffs’s record as a whole that Carlyon-Britton had concluded before the meeting took place that the appropriate solution to the Society’s financial difficulties was to double the level of the subscription, and that he had already drafted a leaflet in which the higher subscription amount was mentioned.

Nothing material happened thereafter until Taffs received in the post a brief letter from Carlyon-Britton dated 16 February 1928, enclosing a draft of ‘proposed alterations to our Rules’. Taffs’s letter of reply, dated 19 February, of which a typed copy is pasted in the minute book, seems to have been written with the best intentions, but that is all that can be said for it, for the letter has a tone of self-satisfied righteousness bound to bring down on him the wrath of his President, an eventuality which even Taffs himself contemplates in the course of the letter. What he said, in summary, was that he was delighted to receive Carlyon-Britton’s draft alterations to the Society’s rules, which would be ‘a complete answer to those criticisms of what has been regarded as the irregular proceedings of our last Council Meeting’, but that he and Anscombe nonetheless felt that they had to withdraw their names from the Appeal which you have instructed Harrisons [the long-standing printers of BNJ] to proceed with’, as the Appeal included ‘a statement that is not strictly covered by the Rules’. In the circumstances, Taffs continues, ‘I have taken the liberty on your behalf of asking Harrisons to hold up printing until they hear further from you’. Four more paragraphs impress on Carlyon-Britton the need for the Society to act constitutionally, in case some member ‘who knows or ought to know the ropes may . . . bring us to book in the public interest’. These were not terms in which Taffs, a clerical officer in the civil service, should have addressed a man his senior who was both a qualified solicitor and the Society’s joint founder and chief motive force.

Taffs was nonetheless surprised to receive an immediate reply from Carlyon-Britton dated 20 February, which reads as follows:

My dear Taffs,

My reply to your long letter is a short one. I hereby resign my office as President of the British Numismatic Society. Yours sincerely. P. Carlyon-Britton.

A startled Taffs replied on the following day, without apparently bothering to consult any colleague, apologising for any offence that his letter may have given and offering his own resignation if that would induce Carlyon-Britton to withdraw his. Here again, however, Taffs’s obvious conviction that he, Taffs, was in the right, intruded itself on what should have been a straightforward letter of apology, and the letter elicited no reply from Carlyon-Britton.

The letter was in any case overtaken by events, for Council met again just one day later, without Carlyon-Britton but with five Vice-Presidents and ten other Council members present. The meeting, as Taffs records, ‘whilst endorsing the tenor of the Secretary’s letters’, nonetheless asked him to write to Carlyon-Britton conveying Council’s wish that he should reconsider his decision. This was however a more representative meeting than the previous one, and a letter read to it from Andrew (again in office as Director for the years 1928 and 1931), supporting Taffs’s opinion that the subscription could not be raised without the rules being altered, persuaded those present that the draft rule alterations already supplied to Taffs by Carlyon-Britton should be put to the ensuing general meeting of the Society. The meeting also solved one other dilemma, for the discussion over competing estimates for BNJ was ended by an offer by Helen Farquhar, also by letter, of a gift of £100 if the printing contract for the current volume of BNJ remained with Harrisons.

This brief scuffle had its conclusion in a more dignified letter written by Taffs to Carlyon-Britton on Council’s behalf, dated 4 March 1928, conveying Council’s ‘unanimous hope’ that Carlyon-Britton would withdraw his resignation. To this Carlyon-Britton’s reply, of 6 March, was:

My dear Taffs,

My reply to your letter dated the 4th inst. is in the negative. Yours sincerely P.Carlton-Britton.

One final communication from Taffs, asking in what form Carlyon-Britton would like his resignation to be reported, was merely returned with these words written across it in Carlyon-Britton’s handwriting: ‘The facts are within your personal knowledge. PCB.’
So ended Carlyon-Britton’s active connection with the Society that he had founded. He was never to attend another meeting and although he sufficiently relented in 1935 to accept nomination as a Vice-President, he was to make no further contribution to the work of the Society.24

Decline and Survival

In this emergency Morrieson was again chosen as President (28 March 1928), but it was not easy to shake off the consequences of the Society’s recent bloodletting, for it transpired that, on the very day of his resignation letter to Taffs, Carlyon-Britton had instructed Harrisons to go ahead with printing the leaflet that he had drafted. This had necessarily to be pulped, with financial loss to the Society, and the affair of this wretched leaflet still dragged on, for it was felt that no leaflet could be issued until the rules were altered. It was not until the Anniversary Meeting that the results of the consequent ballot of members were announced, and, as might have been predicted from the outset, the proposal to alter the rule relating to the level of subscription so that the subscription could be doubled failed to carry (rule changes needed the support of four-fifths of those voting). Irritatingly, a parallel rule change temporarily suspending the payment of admission fees was carried, so the Society had actually managed to make its financial position worse rather than better.

Yet Morrieson and his colleagues confronted their position with a degree of sangfroid, for they believed that the Society had sufficient accumulated capital to continue the publication of BNJ in its accustomed format at least until the publication of vol. XX (20) (the volume for 1929–30, due to appear in 1931 or 1932, which would be the final volume in BNJ’s ‘Second Series’).

Additionally, two events during 1928 presaged a new era. First, the remaining rule change that did go through at the Anniversary meeting was one that removed a provision in the Society’s original rules that members involved in the coin trade were ineligible for office within the Society other than as ordinary members of Council. Why this particular rule change, one of those suggested by Carlyon-Britton himself, was made at this particular time is unclear, and it had no practical effect, but the coin dealers A.H. Baldwin (senior) and S.M. Spink had served on Council as ordinary members in the past, and the removal of this artificial barrier against coin dealers serving as Society officers probably played some part in the subsequent emergence of A.H. Baldwin & Sons as one of the Society’s strongest supporters.

Of more obvious consequence was the emergence of George Brooke (Pl. 4c) as an active participant at Society meetings. In the years after 1903 the bad feeling between the Royal and British Numismatic Societies had gradually diminished, and the election of Sir Henry Howorth, Evans’s immediate successor as President of the Royal Numismatic Society, to membership of the British Numismatic Society (1 December 1913), effectively ended the stand-off between the two bodies. Staff members of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum were however still inhibited from joining the British Numismatic Society, and George Cyril Brooke (1884–1934), the Assistant Keeper responsible for the Museum’s British series from 1910 onwards, cut his numismatic teeth with a comprehensive demolition in NC of one of Parsons’s shakier papers, and was then put to work by his superiors on the compilation of a scholarly catalogue of the Museum’s coins of the Norman period which would relegate to history the earlier and more amateurish research on the series by Andrew and Carlyon-Britton.

At the same time, Brooke wholly lacked the personal animus against the British Numismatic Society and its founders felt by Grueber and other senior departmental colleagues, and a developing friendship between Brooke and Lawrence, a regular visitor to the Museum’s Coin Room throughout these years of strife, emboldened Brooke, during some years’ wartime and post-war secondment to the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic), to brave his Museum superiors’ wrath and let himself be elected a British Numismatic Society member (1 December 1919). He returned to his position at the British Museum in 1921, but it was not until 22 February 1928, the very

24 Carlyon-Britton’s death was marked by a formal motion of sympathy with his family carried unanimously at a Society meeting on 26 October 1938. An obituary of him by Shirley Fox was published BNJ 25 (1938–40), 169–70.
evening that Carlyon-Britton’s resignation was reported, that Brooke felt able to deliver his first paper at a Society meeting, a well-judged review of the evidence for the mechanics of coin type change in the eleventh century. Brooke’s new willingness to give the Society his positive support, underlined eighteen months later by his willingness to accept nomination to serve on its Council for 1930, was a real boon, for in the first quarter century of the Society’s existence the one thing that it had lacked was respectability in museum and academic quarters, and it was high time that it received proper backing from the British Museum.

For the moment, though, all that the Society could do was to manage a continuing decline. Membership numbers steadily fell, increasing deficits were met out of its diminishing capital, and the standard both of its meetings and of BNJ was barely maintained by contributions from such veterans as Andrew and Morrieson. The promised recruitment leaflet appeared at long last in January 1930, but it only attracted just over twenty new members, too small a total to make any measurable contribution to the Society’s financial well-being.

The question of how future volumes of BNJ after vol. XX (20) could be financed now overhung the Society, for by the middle of 1930 the membership had fallen to 280, of whom only 258 were ordinary members paying a subscription. A rumour that the Society would wind itself up once vol. XX had appeared prompted Brooke to threaten resignation at a Council meeting (28 May 1930), on the ground that if this was the Society’s intention it should be frank with its members: but he had misunderstood the position, and the discussion as minutely is chiefly notable for Taffs’s strong personal view that the Council was under a duty to ‘those old members who had supported the Society... through prosperous times and lean’ to keep the Society going. The Society’s lack of younger talent was separately exposed by its difficulty in finding a replacement as editor of BNJ when Anscombe resigned in October 1930, the position remaining vacant until the duties were taken up by Taffs in March the following year. Even the John Sanford Saltus gold medal, awarded successively to Grant Francis in 1926 and to Shirley Fox in 1929, had to go in 1932 to a much less qualified candidate, Charles Winter, the Spink firm’s medal specialist, whose papers in BNJ had been numerous but of a descriptive character only.

The final years of Morrieson’s term as President, due to expire at the Anniversary meeting in November 1932, were punctuated by the first of a series of deaths which in 1931–4 would progressively remove many of the key figures in the Society’s earlier history: Frederick Walters, 3 December 1931; Lionel Fletcher (an original member, Director for 1930), May 1932; Freer, 12 July 1932; Morrieson himself, 11 May 1933; Wheeler, autumn 1933; W.J. Andrew, 14 Jan 1934; and Anscombe, late 1934. Another unannounced departure at this date was that of Grant Francis, still a member of Council for the year 1932, but who then entirely disappears from the Society’s records, although he did not die until 1940. In May 1932, with no obvious successor to Morrieson in view, Morrieson himself was invited by Council to continue as President for an unprecedented sixth year, but he declined on grounds of health, and Council’s choice ultimately fell on Vernon Crowther-Beynon (1865–1941), Director for that year and previously a Vice-President. Crowther-Beynon’s primary numismatic interest was in coin weights, a somewhat peripheral area of knowledge, but he was a sensible man of scholarly interests, experienced in charity work and in the ways of learned societies, and the best choice in the circumstances.

Vol. XX (20) of BNJ was not to appear until the spring of 1933, so decisions about the printing of a future volume continued to be deferred. Sir William Wells had stepped down as Treasurer at the end of 1931, to be replaced by Douglas Whinney (Treasurer 1932–9), member of a well-known London dynasty of chartered accountants, who found no unpleasant surprises in the Society’s balance sheet but who took a more direct interest than Sir William in the routine of the post. This resulted in October–November 1932 in an amusing confrontation between Whinney and Revd W.L. Gantz, an Anglican clergyman who was a well-known coin collector and regular buyer at coin auction sales, in which Gantz quite untruthfully claimed to have paid his membership sub-

25 The Society’s likely future subscription income was even more unfavourable than the membership figures themselves suggest, for of the 280 ordinary members twenty-three had previously compounded for their annual subscription, and would thus receive future volumes of BNJ without making any further financial contribution, while two institutional members had compounded for their subscriptions until 1942 and 1943 respectively.
scriptions for the years 1929–31: on being challenged, Gantz claimed that he had burned the receipts that he had received for these subscriptions when he had recently moved house, and an unconvinced Council instructed Whinney to accept Gantz’s resignation.

Brooke, by now a regular speaker at Society meetings, took executive office for the first time in 1933, as Director, and his presence among the Society’s officers persuaded the youthful Christopher Blunt (1904–1987) (Pl. 4d), a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society since 1926, that the British Numismatic Society was a respectable enough body to join (22 February 1933). Blunt was the rising star of Plantagenet numismatics, having already contributed to NC the first proper account of the issues of the Berwick mint under the first three Edwards, and he had already won the confidence of Lawrence and of Shirley Fox as well as of Brooke. He was nominated for membership of Council that autumn, but although elected to Council for 1934, he had not yet attended one of its meetings by the date of Brooke’s unforeseen death on 11 October 1934.

Brooke’s death might easily have been fatal to the Society, of which the membership was still in decline (its total was 219 at 30 June 1935, of whom just 200 were ordinary members), and of which the then weakness was typified by the fact that in June 1934 Council had for the first time been unable to transact business in the absence of a quorum. But at their October meeting Council took the brave decision, perhaps at the instigation of Lawrence, attending Council for the first time since 1928, that Brooke’s successor as Director should be Blunt, and Blunt, evidently having reflected on the Society’s position over the winter of 1934–5, came to Council’s January meeting with two significant proposals.

The first, approved with minor amendments, proposed a Junior Membership category, open to individuals between the ages of 17 and 21, who would pay an annual subscription of half a guinea only until they reached the age of 21. The second firmly grasped the nettle of what to do about BNJ. The publication of vol. XXI (21), for the years 1931–3, under Taffs’s editorship, was already arranged, in a reduced format and in a cheaper binding (in green cloth) by a new firm of printers, but the long gaps between the appearance of volumes were becoming unacceptable, not least to institutional members which had to pay annual subscriptions but which only received one new volume every two or three years. Blunt’s own proposal was that BNJ should in future be issued in parts in printed paper wrappers every six months, but after discussion Council took the more realistic view that these parts should be issued at annual intervals.

Problems with BNJ were by no means over, for the printing of vol. XXI (21) by an inexperienced firm in Manchester gave rise to endless difficulties, and the volume was not finally delivered to members until the autumn of 1936. Council had however accepted as early as the autumn of 1935 an estimate from Oxford University Press for the printing of the first part of vol. XXII (22) (covering the Society’s activities for the years 1934–5), and this appeared, under the joint editorship of Taffs and Blunt, in the spring of 1937, giving hope for more efficient publication arrangements in years to come.

The Society’s rental of rooms at 1 Upper Montague Street from the Society of Medical Officers of Health ceased at the end of 1935, and from February 1936 (there was no January meeting in 1936 because of the death of the Society’s Patron, King George V) meetings were held in rooms rented from the Royal Anthropological Society at 52 Upper Bedford Place, London WC. When the Royal Anthropological Society moved premises in 1938, the Society moved with it to a new address at 21 Bedford Square, and its first meeting there was held on 27 April 1938.

Although the size of the membership had now begun to stabilise, and there were other factors giving rise for hope for the Society’s continued existence, the imminence of the International Numismatic Congress, to be hosted in London by the Royal Numismatic Society in the summer of 1936, had raised the issue of why the United Kingdom should still have two competing national numismatic societies, and in March 1936 Council appointed Crowther-Beynon, Taffs and Blunt to negotiate with the Royal Numismatic Society ‘to discuss the possibilities and terms’ of an amalgamation. Talks eventually took place in October and November that year, but Council was no doubt

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26 The Royal Anthropological Society also provided accommodation to the Royal Numismatic Society at this period, but on a separate lease, and the British Numismatic Society continued to hold its meetings at 21 Bedford Square after the Royal Numismatic Society moved its meetings in 1947 to the Society of Antiquaries’s rooms in Burlington House.
relieved to hear, in a report from Blunt, that the negotiators had agreed that 'a complete amalgamation, which would in fact mean the absorption and elimination of the British Numismatic Society, was undesirable', and that all that was thought feasible was a degree of mutual co-operation, potentially extending to the sharing of premises.

Brooke's successor at the British Museum, Derek Fortrose Allen (1910–1975) (Pl. 5a), had joined the Society on 30 November 1935, a few months after taking up his museum appointment, and had soon begun to participate in Society affairs. He was elected to Council for 1937, and Taffs's election as President at the end of that year, in succession to Crowther-Beynon, vacated the post of Secretary, which Allen was now to hold (1938–41). The presence of a British Museum employee in so key a role within the Society laid finally to rest any remaining friction between the Museum and the Society, and although Allen was still only in his late twenties, his intellect and academic background were quickly evident in a succession of papers read at Society meetings.

In *BNJ* itself, the work of younger scholars was not at first apparent, for, as has been seen, it was not until early 1937 that the editors had completed the publication of a back-log of papers read to the Society in 1931–5 by such authors as Brooke, Parsons and Wells, and it was not until the publication of vol. XXII (22) part II (for 1936–7), in April 1938, that members could read the first papers contributed to *BNJ* by Blunt and Allen (now *BNJ*'s joint editors). This had the consequence that although in 1935 there had been a very proper award of the John Sanford Saltus gold medal to Raymond Carlyon-Britton, it had to be given in 1938 to W.C. Wells, a representative of an older and less scholarly generation.  

The three years leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War were nonetheless one of the most satisfactory periods in the Society's inter-war history, for serious research into the later Plantagenet coinage was now being done both by Blunt, actively working on the coins of Edward IV (and V), and by a new member, Cuthbert Alexander Whitton (1890–1950), a Midlands schoolmaster, who read a good paper to the Society in April 1939 on the heavy coinage of Henry VI, subsequently published in three instalments in *BNJ*. Allen, as well as speaking and writing on such notoriously difficult topics as the coinage of Viking Northumbria in the early tenth century and the Cross and Crosslets ('Tealby') type of Henry II, initiated the publication in *BNJ* of routine reports on treasure trove coin hoards of post-Roman date, previously reserved for the pages of *NC*, and delivered his first lecture on the Ancient British series (22 Feb 1939), subsequently to be his main numismatic interest. There was also new interest in the Scottish coinage, initiated by the father-and-son partnership of H.J. Dakers (Librarian 1936–44) and Capt. Colin Dakers (sadly killed in action in Malaya during the Second World War), with subsequent contributions from James Davidson, a Scottish medical practitioner then working at the Metropolitan Police's forensic laboratory at Hendon.

The prospect of war became threatening in the early summer of 1939, causing Dakers to be asked in May to prepare a list of the most valuable books in the Society's library, with a view to their removal from London if there was a danger of air raids. The Society met as usual on 25 June, but by the date of its next meeting (25 October 1939), the United Kingdom had been at war with Germany for nearly two months. How the Society fared during that war will be seen in what follows, but its Council's immediate reaction was robust, as the minute of the meeting on that day records: 'The Chairman [Taffs], whilst recognising the gravity of the national situation could not see sufficient reason for the suspension [of Society activities] and in fact advanced what he considered very cogent arguments why the Society should persevere in its aims, It is satisfactory to record that the Council were quite unanimous in the expression of their opinion that in spite of all difficulties the work should proceed in its usual routine so far as was possible'.

27 Although W.C. Wells's contemporaries recognised the assiduity with which Wells collected information about the mints of Northampton and Stamford, and accepted the merits of his resulting articles about these mints in *BNJ*, it is clear that they took a more cautious attitude to his personality and activities in general, for he was the only pre-war John Sanford Saltus medallist never to serve on the Society's Council.
It is fortunate that Taffs and his colleagues were prepared to confront the future with such resolution, for the Society’s accounts for the year ending 31 October 1939 were to show assets of only £1582 2s. 6d. The total number of members was also again beginning to fall, and a list corrected to 30 November that year showed just 197 members, 179 ordinary, 18 royal or honorary. Additionally, by the date of the October meeting, the Society’s Treasurer had already resigned both from his post and from the Society, necessitating the immediate appointment of a successor. Nor could the Society from this point onwards count on the services of its Director and Secretary, for Blunt and Allen quickly became involved in various wartime activities incompatible with regular attendance at Society and Council meetings.

On a more positive note, Anthony Wrightson, an insurance broker who had been a member of the Society since 1937, was at once appointed as Treasurer, proving a reliable administrator in difficult circumstances; the Anniversary meeting took place as usual; and in the absence of Director and Secretary the burden of keeping the Society going was carried willingly by Taffs and a small group of older men. These included Ernest Christison Carter (1865–1950), a retired medical practitioner with inherited wealth, living in Enfield, Middlesex, who had served as a Vice-President off and on since 1928; Horace Herbert King (1890–1976), partner in a family firm of local government publishers (Pl. 5b), a member of the Society since 1909 and a current Vice-President, who now for the first time emerged as one of its most faithful supporters; and a new member, Edgar Joseph Winstanley (1892–1977), a Hampstead dentist and a specialist in the coinage of the fifteenth century.

It is much to the credit of those concerned that a programme of monthly meetings was maintained during the war years, and that even on days when no proper meeting could be held for the lack of a quorum, a few members seem always to have assembled. The first serious test of the Society’s determination is pithily recorded in the published minutes of the ordinary meeting of 23 October 1940, presided over by Dr. Carter:

It was announced that the President [Taffs] had been seriously injured by a bomb, and his house demolished. It was decided to send him a special vote of sympathy from the Society. It was decided to continue meetings in spite of air raids. The Society’s windows had been broken by bombs in Bedford Square.

Happily, Taffs was not too seriously injured, and was able to take the chair at the Society’s January meeting in 1941 and thereafter.

Further anxieties for the Society arose in May 1941, when a fire caused by incendiary devices gutted the Coin Room of the British Museum, incidentally destroying the Society’s older records and the Society’s collection of plaster casts, both, somewhat ironically, stored there for safety. At this point Blunt, although still absent from Society meetings, suggested that the Society’s library should be removed from Bedford Square, and the major part of it was eventually evacuated in November of that year: the books spending the remainder of the war in storage in St Albans.

After that, it is something of an anticlimax, although a pleasing one, to have to record that during the rest of the war the Society suffered no material losses due to enemy action, although its minutes do record one ordinary meeting (28 June 1944), when “the date coinciding with considerable activity with the new German aerial warfare, the meeting was brief”.

Even the Society’s more routine problems over personnel, finance and the production of BNJ were not as severe in these years as might have been envisaged. Taffs was able to continue as President right through the war to the Anniversary meeting in 1945, his tenure being successively extended at Council’s wish. Allen, who had reappeared at Council meetings between June 1940 and October 1941, vacated the Secretaryship at the Anniversary meeting in 1941, to be succeeded first by T.M. Turner, Secretary from 1942 to his resignation on health grounds in January 1945, and then by Winstanley, Secretary from January 1945 to 1950. Turner, a promising numismatist interested in the issues of the Colchester mint, died young and seems always to have been in poor health, but his disappearance from the post of Secretary is to be regretted by students of the Society’s minute books, for his elegant and legible handwriting contrasts sharply with the very much less reader-friendly handwriting of his predecessor and successor.
Blunt was succeeded as Director for 1942 by Whitton, but Whitton, like Turner, was a man in poor health, and fell ill that autumn. Winstanley took over as Director for 1943 and soon became the indispensable figure in the Society’s administration, holding the posts of Director and Secretary concurrently between January 1945 and November 1946, while also serving as Librarian between January 1944 and November 1946 (although the latter post was largely nominal while the books remained in store). Finally, Wrightson, the Society’s Treasurer, remained in office from October 1939 to May 1946, skilfully managing the Society’s scanty financial resources with help from occasional windfalls such as legacies of £50 each in 1941 from Dr F.B. Penfold and from Crowther-Beynon.

The existing editorial team of Blunt and Allen had seen to the publication of vol. XXIII (23) part 1 of *BNJ* (for the year 1938), at some point towards the end of 1939. The active editorial role then passed to Whitton, occasionally with colleagues, and Whitton, ill although he often was, proved a natural editor, corresponding efficiently with contributors, printers, and the Government’s Paper Controller, with the result that despite every internal and external difficulty the successive parts of vols XXIII and XXIV (23 and 24) of *BNJ* appeared at intervals through the war years. Whitton’s tenure of the Editorship was interrupted by illness between late 1942 and October 1944, vol. XXIV (24) part 2 being edited by Winstanley and Turner, but Whitton remained actively engaged with numismatics during this period, and Council’s minutes record that it was Whitton who first suggested, as early as May 1943, that members should ‘collect and collate all known and unpublished corrigenda and agenda to Brooke’s English Coins’, an idea that was ultimately to lead to the publication in 1950 of a revised edition of George Brooke’s general book on the English coinage first published in 1932.

What was also encouraging was that although these war-time parts of *BNJ* were slim, their scholarly quality was generally excellent. This is best exemplified by the thinnest part of all, vol. XXIV (24) part 1 (for the years 1941–2), which within its sixty-eight pages contains just five papers, but all of real merit, including an authoritative paper by Blunt on the coinage of Henry IV. Other contributors in this period included Derek Allen, writing successive articles on the coin engraver Thomas Simon and on Simon’s coinage for Oliver Cromwell; W.C. Wells, continuing a series of articles on the Stamford and Peterborough mints; Winstanley, on the coinage of Richard III; and Pierre Le Gentilhomme, of the Cabinet des Médailles de the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, who in the late 1930s had become interested in the English thrymsa and sceatta coinages. The John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1941 went, appropriately, to Whitton for his series of articles on the heavy coinage of Henry VI already referred to, and although no award could be made in 1944 in the then prevailing conditions, this was perhaps no bad thing, for the medal awarded to Whitton in 1941 was not struck and presented to him until April 1947.

Taffs’s long tenure as President extended into 1945, but he was away ill during the first half of the year, leaving Horace King (who presided over meetings in his absence) and other colleagues to resist a demand for increased rent for the 21 Bedford Square premises after the Society’s lease had expired on 25 March. By June, when Taffs returned, the prospect on that front seemed less threatening, but the Society now faced the important question of who Taffs’s successor as President should be, and by October the chosen candidate was Blunt. As with Blunt’s appointment to the post of Director in 1934, this was not an expected choice, for Blunt had hardly attended a meeting of the Society since 1939 and he was still out of the country on active service: but the choice was not made out of deliberate policy, for Council’s minutes record that the Presidency had previously been offered to Carter, King and Lockett, all of whom had refused it, and it was a fortunate chance that the Presidency now passed to one of the ablest holders of the post in the hundred years of the Society’s history.

Blunt, by occupation a merchant banker, possessed both good judgment and an easy natural authority, bolstered in these years by his having risen during the war to the temporary rank of Colonel, and it was as Colonel Blunt that he took the chair at his first Council meeting as

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28 Crowther-Beynon’s legacy, although announced at the time, was not in fact payable until after his wife’s death, and was only received by the Society in November 1952. One other legacy received during the 1939–45 War was the numismatic library formed by Capt. H.E.G. Paget, a Society member (Council minutes 25 October 1944).
President on 25 January 1946. There had been a sudden flurry of membership applications in the autumn of 1945, resulting in the election of eight new members at the Anniversary meeting (30 Nov 1945), including Colin Stewart Sinclair Lyon, a future President (Pl. 5c).\(^{29}\) and the first two meetings in 1946 saw nineteen further elections and nominations for membership, including those of Wilfrid Slayter (1915–1993), later the longest serving Secretary in the Society’s history (Pl. 5d), and of Gordon Vincent Doubleday (1914–1993), successively Secretary (1951–4), Director (1955–6) and Vice-President (1957–91).

This was encouraging for an incoming President, and Blunt at once began to discuss with Council policy aims for the future, set out under seven headings in Council’s minutes for 27 March 1946. Essentially, more new members had to be recruited; new premises had to be found; improvements should be made to \(BNJ\); the holdings of the library should be expanded once it was again available to members; better advance information should be given about Society meetings; and a minor adjustment should be made to the rules to make it optional, rather than compulsory, for the Society to have as many as six Vice-Presidents at any one time.\(^{30}\) The one less positive conclusion then reached was that the subscription could not as yet be raised from its historic figure of one guinea, although it was contemplated that the level of the subscription might be reviewed in the future.

Blunt had already indicated to Council that it was his intention to deliver a Presidential address at the Anniversary meeting (removing the need for Council to make its habitual Annual Report), and he had other new initiatives in view. One, a resumption of talks with the Royal Numismatic Society about closer co-operation, brought about no very obvious practical result, but it looks as if it was a conversation at this time between Blunt and E.S.G. Robinson of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum which led Blunt to propose to a Council meeting (3 July 1946) that the Society ‘should compile and publish a record of Mr Lockett’s collection of English coins on the lines of the \(Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum\) in course of publication at present’. Blunt and Robinson were on friendly terms, and as Robinson was then editing the \(SNG\) volume devoted to Lockett’s Greek coins, it is not difficult to conjecture that a proposal for a comparable volume on Lockett’s English coins would naturally have emerged from a conversation between the two of them, a conjecture supported by the fact that Robinson was co-opted to the sub-committee which Council then set up to consider ‘practical ways of putting the scheme into effect’.

Although Blunt was to refer in general terms in his subsequent Presidential Address to the desirability of producing proper published records of major private collections of English coins, those who have written on the genesis of the subsequent Sylloge of the Coinage of the British Isles (\(SCBI\)) series have not so far realised that a specific proposal of this character was put to the Society as early as 1946, or indeed that the proposal came with a promise of collaboration from Lockett himself, personally present at this July meeting. The reason for this is that it was soon concluded at another Council meeting (6 November 1946) that the Society lacked the competence and means to produce a volume of this character, and that the best alternative would be for the Society to provide supplementary plates and text for a commercially prepared catalogue when Lockett’s collection was dispersed. With this in view Blunt used his Presidential Address to launch an appeal for money to establish a Publications and Research Fund, capable of being utilised both for this purpose and for funding monographs on such topics as coin hoards.

\(^{29}\) Lyon was under twenty-one at the time and should therefore have been elected as a junior member. He has however indicated to the present writer that as he was living at Liverpool at the time he was unaware that the junior membership category existed, and it seems quite possible that his proposer, the elderly Leonard Forrer senior, was equally unaware that the Society now had junior members.

\(^{30}\) Up to 1946 the practice had been that of the six Vice-Presidential positions one or two were held by senior members of the Society for continuous periods of time, while the others were rotated between a pool of other senior members who served as Vice-Presidents for terms ranging between one year and four years. At this distance in time it is not easy to work out how this rotational process operated, and as some of those in this pool never attended Council meetings during their periods as Vice-President, it is not clear what advantage it brought the Society. From 1947 onwards the custom has been that all the Vice-Presidents have been annually re-elected until their deaths or until such time as they themselves have indicated their wish to stand down. The only Vice-President since then who has availed himself of the opportunity to stand down before the onset of illness or extreme old age was Elmore Jones, who served as a Vice-President for just one year in 1955.
What was typical of the outgoing style of Blunt’s term as President was that the Council Meeting of 6 November was held not at the normal hour at 21 Bedford Square, but at 7.00 pm at the La Belle Etoile restaurant, 17 Frith Street, Soho. Those present on the day included Francis Elmore Jones (1898–1982), now the Society’s Treasurer (1946–54), a chartered surveyor with an office in the City of London (Pl. 6a), whose unique visual memory for individual coin dies, trained in pre-war study of the Cross and Crosslets type of Henry II, was soon to be put to wider use in the tracing of inter-mint die links in the late Anglo-Saxon series. Another stalwart Society supporter present was Albert Henry Frederick Baldwin (1889–1970), managing partner of A.H. Baldwin & Sons and now well into a continuous twenty-two years of service on the Society’s Council; the trust between the Baldwin firm and the Society was indeed such that the more valuable part of the Society’s collection of coins and medals was long kept in the Baldwin firm’s Pall Mall safe deposit.31

The meeting on 6 November also had to consider a suggestion from another dealer member, H.A. Seaby, that the Society and the Royal Numismatic Society should sponsor a national ‘Numismatic Day’ in 1947. The idea was rejected, the minutes noting that ‘it was not in the best interests of the Society’, but a ‘Coin Day’ did take place in May 1947 with personal backing from Blunt and from other individual members of Council, and when in November 1947 Seaby asked for the Society’s support for a similar event in 1948, a more extended debate took place. A body of opinion on Council, led by Baldwin, was clearly very unhappy about the proposal,32 but Blunt, although clear that any ‘commercial stuntism’ should be avoided, pointed out that a Coin Day would be held in 1948 whether the Society supported it officially or not, and a formula was found by which the Society could be one of the organisations associated with it. This was a sensible decision, leading in due course to the foundation of the British Association of Numismatic Societies as the umbrella organisation for arranging events of this nature, but the doubts as to whether participation in them was compatible with the Society’s essentially scholarly objectives were understandable, and it was probably something of a relief when it became clear with the passage of time that it was not necessary for the Society to become actively involved in the management of such events except when they were held in London.

The Society was still in search of suitable long-term premises, as in the post-war period its tenure at 21 Bedford Square was limited to the monthly use of one room in which Council meetings and ordinary meetings had to be held in direct succession to each other, making it necessary for members not on Council to queue on the stairs outside the room until Council meetings had finished. This was a problem not to be resolved for some years yet, but the Society’s new vitality and slowly rising membership finally emboldened Blunt and his colleagues to propose that the subscription should be raised to two guineas, as had been contemplated in 1928. This was now easier to achieve, for it was recognised that the subscription could not remain unaltered for ever, but the proposal still had to be carried by a vote of the membership at the Anniversary meeting in November 1949. On that evening Parsons chose to attack the proposal in crude terms reflecting on Blunt personally, and Wilfrid Sayer, who was present, long remembered what he described as the ‘great dignity’ with which Blunt responded. Following the carrying of the proposal, Parsons submitted his resignation by letter, and Council’s acceptance of that resignation on 25 January 1950 terminated his long association with the Society.

On a happier note, Lawrence, the last survivor of the Society’s three founders, had lived to celebrate his ninetieth birthday on 23 October 1947, and the occasion was marked both by his election to Honorary Membership and by the striking of a special silver medal for presentation to him. The most distinguished other survivor from the early years of the Society’s history, Helen Farquhar, was also elected to Honorary Membership (30 November 1950), in what was almost the final act

31 See Council Minutes 29 November 1941, 21 May 1947, 28 March 1956, 27 June 1956. At the last of these meetings it was decided that the gold coins and medals held for the Society by A.H. Baldwin & Sons should be sold to them by private treaty. Some other coins and medals of less monetary value, long kept in a cabinet in the Society’s Library, were eventually deposited with the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.
32 Baldwin’s opposition to Coin Days doubtless had something to do with the fact that H.A. Seaby and David Spink, his two principal commercial rivals, had both played prominent parts at the Coin Day in 1947.
of Blunt’s Presidency, and her appearance at that meeting, at a very advanced age, was also long remembered by Slatyer for her speech of thanks, in which she apologised to the Society with old-fashioned courtesy for having brought her personal maid with her, explaining that her maid had been with her for over forty years and that she could not come to such an occasion without her.

At this time, too, a solution was finally found for the long-standing problem of where the Society’s Library should be housed. It will be remembered that the greater part of it had been sent for storage in St Albans in 1941. It was still there when the Society’s first post-war Librarian, Demosthenes Mangakis, was chosen at the Anniversary meeting in 1947, but with no obvious home for it available, the best that could be arranged was that it should be stored with the Royal Numismatic Society’s library in the house within the British Museum complex then occupied by John Allan, Keeper of the Museum’s Department of Coins and Medals. There the books stayed during 1948 and 1949, while the Society looked around for premises where it could hold meetings as well as have space for its books. After various fruitless negotiations, the only organisation found willing to make suitable premises available at acceptable cost was the Warburg Institute, then occupying part of the Imperial Institute building in the London SW7 postal district, and the difficulty here was that although the Society was willing for its library to be housed there on a temporary basis, along with that of the Royal Numismatic Society, Council voted against holding Society meetings in the same location, it evidently being felt that the Warburg Institute was not in the right part of London. Negotiations about the moving of the library to the Warburg Institute nonetheless went ahead, and the move of the books there took place in the spring of 1950.

So far as BNJ was concerned, the principal contributors were at this period Blunt and Whitton, joint authors of what remains the most comprehensive study of the coinages of Edward IV and of Henry VI (restored), and Whitton by himself, as author of a similarly substantial paper on the coinages of Henry VIII and of Edward VI in Henry’s name. It should be noted in passing that although Blunt should have been the main contender for the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1947 (and did receive it in 1950), he clearly concluded in 1947 that as President he ought be ineligible, and the medal was voted instead to Lockett, for no very good reason except the personal respect in which the latter was held.

These years also saw the appearance of the last published articles in BNJ by Parsons and Wells; further articles by Derek Allen (again briefly in office as the Society’s Director for 1947), Winstanley and Dr Davidson; and the first contributions to BNJ by Elmore Jones and by such younger researchers as Anthony Thompson and Stuart Eborall Rigold (1919–1980) (Pl. 6b). The latter’s paper on ‘The Trail of the Easterlings’, read at a Society meeting on 23 June 1948, and subsequently published in BNJ vol. XXVI (26), part 1, set the English coinage of the thirteenth century in its wider European context, and this chimed in with an intellectual journey of Blunt’s own, which had led Blunt from a specialist interest in the coinage of the Plantagenets into a different numismatic terrain.

In Blunt’s case, what had happened was that towards the end of the war his interest had been caught by the complex and at that date very under-researched coinages of continental Europe in the early mediaeval period. After some initial exploration of the relationship between these coinages and those of Anglo-Saxon England, his attention focused on the Anglo-Saxon coinage itself, and this was to become his chosen field of scholarship in more than thirty years of productive numismatic research which still lay before him.33

As yet, however, it was the elucidation of the coinages of the later Plantagenet and early Tudor periods which was the Society’s most obvious preoccupation, evidenced both in BNJ and in the preparation by Whitton, with assistance from Blunt and other Society colleagues, of a supplement of addenda and corrigenda intended as part of what would otherwise be an essentially unchanged reprint of Brooke’s pre-war book on English Coins. Whitton had handed over the editorship of BNJ to Blunt in May 1946, on health grounds, and his deteriorating health was eventually to con-

33 A clinching factor in Blunt’s decision to devote himself to the Anglo-Saxon series only was that the study of the contemporary issues of Continental Europe was taken up just after the war by his younger contemporary Philip Grierson, to whom Blunt readily conceded that field both as collector and scholar.
fine him to a nursing home, but he retained a role within the Society, initially as Assistant Editor of *BNJ* and then as Director (1948–50). All this time he soldiered on both with his own contributions to *BNJ* and with the supplement intended for the new edition of Brooke's book, of which he was to live just long enough to see an advance copy. The material added to this edition of Brooke, most abundant and authoritative for the English hammered coinage of the later middle ages, encapsulated what had been achieved by the leading figures associated with the British Numismatic Society over the period since Brooke had died, and it was altogether fitting that shortly before Whitton's death on 19 January 1950 he also was elected to Honorary Membership of the Society (30 November 1949), as a culminating tribute to his services to British numismatics during this era.

The Dolley Years

Blunt's term of office expired at the Anniversary Meeting for 1950, although he retained an executive role as Director (1951–4) and as Editor of *BNJ*, and the Presidency passed to Edgar Winstanley, who had seemed for some time to be his natural successor. Winstanley's Presidency (1951–4) was uneventful by comparison, but his Presidential Addresses show the keen interest that he took in many aspects of the Society's work. It was also Winstanley who, as Chairman of the 'Co-ordinating Committee of the National Numismatic Congress' (Coin Days having by that time been replaced by annual National Numismatic Congresses), took a principal part in the formation of the British Association of Numismatic Societies (BANS), for which the preparatory meeting took place in his own house on 11 April 1953. Not unnaturally, Winstanley arranged that the British Numismatic Society should act as joint host society with the Royal Numismatic Society for the first subsequent Congress held under the auspices of BANS, at King's College, London, on 14–15 May 1954, and there is a full account of this in his Presidential Address for that year.

It was also in Winstanley's term of office that the first stirrings were felt of what was to be a real transformation in the study of the post-Roman coinages of Britain and Ireland. The catalysts for this were two. One was the discovery at Chester in December 1950 of a major new coin hoard of the Anglo-Saxon period. The other was a new staff appointment made shortly afterwards at the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum.

The Department of Coins and Medals had up to this moment made virtually no post-war contribution to the study of the coinages of the British Isles. For Derek Allen, who had spent the war on secondment to the Ministry of Shipping, had chosen not to return to his Museum post when the war ended, and when the Department of Coins and Medals eventually reopened, responsibility for the British series temporarily rested with a very junior Museum employee, Robert Carson, who had in fact been recruited to look after the Museum's Roman coins and who did not join the British Numismatic Society.34

There was thus no British specialist on the Museum's staff when the British Museum was granted, under the terms of L.A. Lawrence's will, the right to purchase such coins from his collection as they needed to complement their existing holdings. The number of coins acquired in this way, doubtless on Blunt's advice, was significant, and the transaction was referred to at length in Presidential addresses by Blunt and Winstanley in 1950 and 1951, but the timing was unfortunate, and it was only discovered over thirty years later that many of the coins had never been formally accessioned or integrated into the Museum's coin cabinets.

Such a situation could not well continue, and it was with genuine pleasure that the Society elected as one of its members (23 May 1951) the Department of Coins and Medals's newly appointed Assistant Keeper, Reginald Hugh Dolley (1925–1983), who was now to be in charge of the Museum's British holdings (Pl. 6c). Dolley, universally known as Michael Dolley after he assumed that additional Christian name in 1953, possessed both energy and a real enthusiasm for

34 Carson remained aloof from the British Numismatic Society during most of his British Museum career, but he came to be held in considerable respect by numismatists in Britain generally, and he was eventually elected an Honorary Member of the Society on 27 March 1979.
research, and he had had a proper postgraduate academic training which had impressed on him not merely the importance of research in itself but the desirability of prompt publication of its results. The accident of the discovery of the Chester hoard just before he had joined the Museum staff meant that his first serious allotted task at the Museum was to study and catalogue it, and because of his inexperience at the time his Museum superiors readily assented to the published report on the hoard being a joint undertaking by Dolley and Blunt. A close scholarly partnership between Dolley and Blunt immediately developed, and this was to be central to the history of British numismatics over the next fifteen years.

So far as the Society was concerned, the first result of Dolley’s arrival was his active participation at its ordinary monthly meetings, and the impact of this can be judged from the fact that in the year 1953 he read papers to meetings in March and April, was the joint author of papers read in January and May, and spoke in post-paper discussions at the meetings in February, September and October. As on such occasions he was delighted to pass on any relevant new discoveries or information that he had come by in his official role at the Department of Coins and Medals, all this proved an exciting diet both for younger members of the Society and for more senior members who had been accustomed to a more distant relationship with the Museum.

Additionally, Dolley’s close association with the Society was of some consequence when the Society had to confront two important policy issues at just this time. Towards the end of 1951 Dr N.L. Rasmussen, Director of the Royal Swedish Coin Cabinet in Stockholm, wrote to the British Museum asking for the assistance of British numismatists in the cataloguing of the large number of Anglo-Saxon coins in Viking-age coin hoards in Sweden. The Museum seems not initially to have been keen on offering assistance itself, for its immediate step was to pass copies of the letter to the Councils of the Royal and British Numismatic Societies; but after some initial uncertainty a joint committee of the two societies, on which the Society was represented by Blunt and Elmore Jones, concluded that Dolley was the proper person to go to Scandinavia to undertake this task, and the Museum was persuaded to send him to Stockholm for this purpose both in the summer of 1952 and annually thereafter.

The idea of publishing Lockett’s English coins in a *Sylloge* volume had not been forgotten by Blunt and Robinson, and in May 1953 the British Academy, doubtless as a result of some diplomacy behind the scenes, indicated that it would be willing to ‘sponsor’ a *Sylloge Nummorum Britannicorum*, as it was then styled, in which Lockett’s collection would be published. It was agreed that the framework for such a project should be worked out by a joint committee of the Royal and British Numismatic Societies, but the participation of the Royal Numismatic Society was from the start somewhat notional, mainly because of their own very benevolent decision to allow Blunt and Dolley to be their primary representatives on this committee (the British Numismatic Society being represented on it by Winstanley and Elmore Jones). It became clear quite soon that Lockett’s collection would be dispersed before any *Sylloge* volume could be prepared, and it also became clear by April 1954 that the British Numismatic Society would be the only organisation prepared to fund a photographic record of those coins which would not be illustrated in the series of auction catalogues in which the collection would be offered.

This was possible because the appeal launched by Blunt in November 1946 for funds for a Publications and Research Fund had brought in a sum of a little over £160, intended for just such a purpose, and this still remained unspent. Photography of a first selection of Lockett’s coins – Anglo-Saxon, Norman and early Plantagenet coins intended to feature in the ‘English, Part 1’ sale scheduled for June 1955 – took place over the winter of 1954–5, as a result of close co-operation between Dolley and the Baldwin firm (by whom Lockett’s coins were being catalogued), and the first sets of the resulting photographs were offered for sale that summer. Further portions of the Lockett collection were photographed in following years, and the operation as a whole was a definite success.

Winstanley handed over as President to Horace King at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1954, and it fell to King to preside over the Society during a period of very real advance. The membership, which in November 1943 had numbered only 158, had risen sharply to 213 by November 1946, but subsequent increases in membership numbers had been slow, and it was not until 16 March 1955 that Dolley, now Secretary (1955–6), was able to inform Council that the
membership, ‘inclusive of exchanges, but exclusive of Royal Members’, had reached a total of 250. Yet only eighteen months later, in November 1957, the membership had reached 310, and it stood at 329 when King left office in November the following year.

This partly reflected the vigour with which Dolley, first as Secretary and then as Director (1957–63), proselytised for new members, but it also reflected a growing recognition that that BNJ was necessary reading not just for coin collectors but for a wider community of scholars and archaeologists interested in coins as historical evidence. After Whitton’s death, Blunt had been joined as Editor of BNJ first by Anthony Thompson (1950–2) and then by Horace King (from September 1952 onwards), but Blunt was throughout the essential editorial figure, and it was under his firm guidance that BNJ expanded both in quality and in size. Serious post-war coverage in BNJ of Anglo-Saxon coins had commenced with a series of papers on the sceatta coinage by Philip Hill, published in vols XXVI and XXVII (26 and 27), but it was the appearance of Blunt and Dolley’s article on the Chester (1950) hoard, in vol. XXVII (27) part 2 (for 1953), which foreshadowed what organised research could contribute to an understanding of the coinages of Anglo-Saxon England, and a paper by Dolley in vol. XXVII (27) part 3, on the coins of Jewel Cross type struck in the reigns of Harold I and Harthacnut, was the first to be written with full knowledge of the relevant material in the Royal Swedish Coin Cabinet. Meanwhile, a more traditional topic, the hammered coinage of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had attracted the attention of an ardent new collector, Herbert Schneider (1914–89), and a series of papers by him, principally devoted to the Tower gold coinage of Charles I and characterised by knowledge, intellect and a vivid prose style, were to enliven the pages of BNJ over the next decade.

It was however vol. XXVIII (28) of BNJ, the three parts of which cover the Society’s proceedings for the years 1955–7, that fully revealed the scale and variety of the research that members of the Society were now undertaking into many aspects of the coinage of Britain. The most conspicuous contributor, unsurprisingly, was Dolley, who as well as collaborating in joint papers with Blunt and Elmore Jones, supplied an admirable report on the Dover hoard of coins of Edward I (fatal to the French numismatist Jean Lafaurie’s chronology for the French coinage of the same epoch), and also, in partnership with his Museum colleague Joan Sirudwick (afterwards Mrs. Martin), provided a long-wished for listing of the provenances of the coins published over sixty years earlier in the two volumes of the British Museum’s catalogue of its Anglo-Saxon holdings. It fell however not to Dolley but to Peter Seaby, H.A. Seaby’s son, to contribute a paper which definitively established the order of Anglo-Saxon coin types during the period 1030–1050. Other younger numismatic scholars whose earliest significant contributions to BNJ were to appear in this volume included Stewart Lyon, providing the first reliable account of the sceatta and styca coinage of Northumbria; Ian Stewart (Pl. 6d), writing successively on the coinage of the Stamford and Peterborough mints and on the Scottish coinage of the fifteenth century; and I.D. Brown (Secretary 1957–8), author of an extensive paper on the coinage of Elizabeth I.

At the different end of the age scale, Horace King himself now committed to print in BNJ a series of articles on coins struck at Sussex mints in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, embodying information acquired while he was making his own unrivalled collection of coins struck at these mints. One other contributor, W.J.W. Potter, whose area of research lay in the coinages of the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, now made his debut in BNJ with articles on the coinages of Henry VI and Henry VIII: he was a careful student, and was to collaborate closely with Winstanley, but he had the bad luck that Blunt, who had previously worked on

35 It is surprising in retrospect that it was Peter Seaby, not Michael Dolley, who first correctly ordered these types, and as Seaby acknowledges assistance from Dolley in the preparation of his text, posterity may possibly conclude that although the paper appeared under Seaby’s name it was in reality a joint production. Dolley did however on one occasion confirm to the present writer that the paper was essentially Seaby’s own work, and it is a matter for some regret that Seaby was never honoured by the Society for his numismatic achievement in this and other fields.
many of the coinages in which Potter was interested, did not greatly value Potter's opinions or Potter's sometimes impenetrable prose.  

BNJ's rising prestige had already been recognised (22 Feb 1956) by the receipt of a grant of £150 towards its publication costs from the British Academy, which was to be the first of a series of annual grants from that body which were to help fund BNJ over the succeeding two decades. Moreover, the British Academy now seemed interested in providing 'very substantial financial backing' for the Sylloge Nummorum Britannicorum project, which had seemed dead in the water in 1953-4. Productive discussions during 1955 had induced the historian Sir Frank Stenton, author of the standard history of Anglo-Saxon England and himself a neighbour and coin-collecting friend of Blunt, to assume the chairmanship of a revamped Sylloge committee, which was now to include both numismatist and non-numismatist members, and this committee, adopted as a committee of the British Academy itself on 18 January 1956, embarked on a publishing programme which has since produced over fifty volumes recording Ancient British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Plantagenet and early modern coins in major public and private collections in the British Isles, Europe and the USA.

Although the British Academy's adoption of the Sylloge committee as a committee of its own was to mean that the British Numismatic Society was in future to have no formal involvement with the Sylloge project, it should be recorded here that numismatic scholars associated with the British Numismatic Society have long played a major role in the Sylloge committee's deliberations, and that the present membership of the Committee, as at the beginning of 2003, includes three of the Society's current Vice-Presidents.

King's Presidency also saw the fulfilment of the Society's long-standing wish to hold its meetings in the same building where its library was kept. It was reported to Council in January 1957 that the Warburg Institute would soon be moving from its premises in London SW7 to a new site in Bloomsbury, and by the following month the Society and the Warburg Institute had reached a preliminary understanding that the Society would be able to hold its meetings and house its library in the Institute's new building in Woburn Square, London WC1. The change of meeting place from 21 Bedford Square and the move of the joint libraries of the Royal and British Numismatic Society from London SW7 both took effect in the spring of 1958: Council's minutes are silent as to the mechanics by which the books were moved to Woburn Square, but after the move the Society saw no more of Walter Forster (Librarian 1951-8), an antiquarian bookseller in North London, who had done useful service in sorting and cataloguing the books after their return from St Albans.

The first meeting in the Woburn Square building took place on 23 April 1958, with Horace King in the chair, Sir Frank Stenton as guest speaker and a display of some of the more exciting coins from a recent trove in Morley St Peter, Norfolk. Stenton's address, on the theme 'The Anglo-Saxon Coinage and Historians', was eagerly anticipated and enthusiastically received, and its importance was deemed to be such that it is the only paper in the Society's history of which there exists a tape recording, made on the day by Stewart Lyon. The meeting concluded with a sherry party, apparently the first of its kind in the Society's history: Council, accustomed to post-war frugality, had negotiated in advance that 'glasses and sherry and suitable refreshments (biscuits) would be provided by the Warburg Institute, and that the estimated cost, £10, should not be chargeable to the Society', but it was not long before annual sherry parties, paid for by Council members from their own pockets, became a regular feature of the Society's programme.

Towards the end of his life Blunt sorted and placed in box files his correspondence with various numismatic friends and colleagues, and on a visit to Blunt's house in Ramsbury in the 1980s the present writer, invited to browse among these files while his host was absent on some local errand, decided that a box file identified on the outside as containing correspondence with E.J. Winstanley would be a pleasant and undemanding read. To his surprise, the file contained a vigorous exchange of correspondence between Winstanley and Blunt, in which Winstanley expressed marked displeasure at Blunt's decision not to accept for publication in BNJ an extensive manuscript by Potter on the coinage of Edward III. No ultimate harm was done, except to relations between Blunt and Potter, for Potter's paper was almost immediately accepted on John Kent's recommendation for publication in NC, but it was not until after Potter's death that Blunt was persuaded that there might have been more merit in Potter's numismatic work than he had realised at the time.
Only on the financial front was the Society’s position less satisfactory. Although the Society’s balance sheet assets had crept back above £2000 by November 1946, they still only stood at £2470 at October 1954, and the years of Elmore Jones’s Treasurership had been punctuated by a continuing need to keep the printing costs of *BNJ* firmly under control. His successor, J.M. Ashby (Treasurer 1954–9), a solicitor attached to the Law Society’s London head office, confronted similar difficulties, and a specially appointed sub-committee recommended in September 1958 that the subscription should be raised from two guineas to three guineas. As on previous occasions, the Society’s rules made this technically difficult, and after the proposal for this subscription increase was finally put and carried at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1959, it was soon apparent that the increase had been too small and that a further increase would be necessary.

Derek Allen, who had spent the period from 1947 to 1952 as the UK Government’s Shipping Representative in the Far East, based at Singapore, was now again in London, as a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Family responsibilities and official duties had meant that although he had been awarded the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1953, and had rejoined Council in 1954, he had been something of an absentee from Society meetings, but in November 1958, when King stepped down from the Presidency, Allen was nonetheless prevailed upon to succeed him.

Allen was still under fifty, but his pre-war service at the British Museum and as an officer of the Society, coupled with the wide experience of people and affairs that he had acquired in his civil service posts, enabled him to take a more dispassionate view of the Society’s activities and future prospects than that held by Dolley and other colleagues who had only come into the Society in the post-war period. His successive Presidential Addresses ranged widely over matters of current numismatic interest, but in them he was always careful to remind the Society that other areas of the British coinage were as important fields of study as the coinage of Anglo-Saxon England. He was also concerned throughout his Presidency that the Society should remain financially viable, and it was in no sense his fault that, as ruefully recorded in his final Presidential Address, he was the only President in whose term the subscription had had to be raised twice.

He was however an admirable President and chairman of meetings, and no particular controversy disturbed his tenure of office. The most obvious problems to be surmounted arose from an unusually rapid turn-over among the Society’s executive officers. The post of Secretary, held for short periods between 1955 and 1958 by Dolley and by Brown, then passed to Lyon (1958–60). On Lyon’s resignation owing to pressure of work, this post, increasingly onerous as the Society’s general level of activity increased, was accepted by Peter Spufford (Secretary 1961–2), keenly interested in coins since boyhood and by now a junior lecturer at the University College of North Staffordshire (later Keele University). Unfortunately Spufford in turn found it impossible to attend Society meetings after April 1962, and Wilfrid Slayter took on his duties, at first as a temporary replacement, and then as Secretary proper (1963–90).

Slayter, a teacher’s son who worked as an assistant in a dispensing chemist’s shop in Golders Green, seemed at first sight an unlikely person to be the Lynch-pin of the Society’s administration over the next quarter of a century of its history, but he had attended every Society meeting since 1946, and his promptness with paperwork and profound loyalty to the Society, accompanied by an equable disposition and an underlying common sense, soon made him indispensable to the successive Presidents under whom he served.

A more or less contemporary difficulty in filling the post of Treasurer, held in the years 1960 and 1961 by Dr Peter Vernon, a medical practitioner in Purley, Surrey, was temporarily solved by a return to executive office by Lyon (Treasurer 1962–3), who as an actuary with Legal and General Assurance was well qualified to handle the Society’s financial affairs, but Lyon wanted greater leisure to pursue his own numismatic research, and was clearly the proper person to take on the less time-consuming role of Director when that in turn became vacant at the Anniversary Meeting in 1963.

The remaining executive position, that of Librarian, held for the year 1959 by John Porteous, was then accepted by Dr John Philip Cozens Kent (Librarian 1960–5). Kent (1928–2000) had been appointed to the staff of the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum in 1953 as a second Assistant Keeper in charge of the British series, his sphere of responsibility encom-
passing the later hammered series and the subsequent milled coinage. Despite the nature of his Museum duties, he was never profoundly committed to the study of the British series as such, for his main numismatic interest lay in the coinage of the later Roman empire, which had already caught his attention before he had come to work at the British Museum, and his spell as an officer of the Society seems in retrospect only a passing episode in his long career of service in the Department of Coins and Medals. More materially, it was Kent’s nomination in succession to Winstanley as the Society’s representative on the committee of BANS, with effect from October 1959, that first gave him a role in the activities of BANS, with which Kent was genuinely pleased to be associated over a forty-year period.

Dolley’s zeal for research continued to be fully reflected in the pages of BNJ, to which he remained the most prolific contributor until well into the 1960s. Indeed, the scale of his contribution to BNJ, formally honoured by the award to him of the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1959, is not simply to be judged from papers published under his name or from papers published under his name jointly with that of another scholar or scholars, for Dolley had a real gift for persuading other researchers to set down their discoveries in print, and it has been observed in this context that “the series of short articles and notes contributed to BNJ by Elmore Jones from the early 1950s onwards (and which largely brought about the award to Elmore Jones of the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1956) would probably not have materialised without Dolley’s unstinting encouragement.”

Since the decision back in January 1935 that BNJ should be issued in annual parts in printed wrappers, it had been the practice that volumes of BNJ should comprise three such parts, and that when the last of these three parts were issued, the Society should simultaneously distribute a green cloth binding case, within which the three parts could either be bound or loosely preserved. The combined thickness of the three parts of vol. XXVIII (28) had however been such that the binding case hardly fitted them, and it was decided that vols XXIX and XXX (29 and 30) should comprise two annual parts only. This meant that the Society was one stage nearer the long-desired objective that it should revert to pre-First World War practice and publish one cloth-bound volume annually, and the first discussion of that possibility by Council took place in March 1961. It was then decided that no change should be made until after the publication of the final part of vol. XXX (30), scheduled to appear at the end of 1962 or early in 1963, but Council was evidently already keen on the idea, and in June 1962 the editors, still Blunt and King, were able to inform them that there would only be ‘marginal extra cost’ if vol. XXXI (31) (for 1962) was issued in bound form.

At that point the editors were expecting that the extra cost would be met out of a prompt increase in the subscription, but although there was the usual delay in implementing this increase, which was not put to the membership for approval until the Anniversary Meeting in 1963, there was no waverings over the decision that vol. XXXI (31), and future volumes, should be annual and cloth-bound, and that has continued to be the position until the present day.

The years between 1951 and 1963 remain a unique period in which Michael Dolley, working from within the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, regarded Blunt, Elmore Jones and other leading figures in the British Numismatic Society as his natural collaborators in advancing the study of the British coinage, and devoted himself with equal energy to forwarding the work of the Society and to the discharge of his Museum duties. It is difficult to look back without nostalgia to a period at which any serious student of whom Dolley thought well was allowed ready access both to him and to the Museum’s coins in cabinets, even if their visits extended well into the hour and a half at lunch time when the Coin Room’s door was officially closed. It is also chastening to recall an epoch during which almost every numismatic discovery made by Michael Dolley or reported to him in his official Museum capacity was communicated to fellow scholars working in the relevant field, and then promptly written up and published by Dolley, whether in BNJ itself or elsewhere, and it is hard to see why what was possible in Dolley’s time is not even more readily feasible in today’s age of instant communication and printing.

That said, Dolley was an individual of complex personality and strong opinions, not easily enduring what he regarded, sometimes quite wrongly, as scholarly error or scholarly lethargy, and although he retained a lasting respect for John Walker, his departmental chief, it was probably for the best in 1963 that he left the Department of Coins and Medals for a lecturership in mediaeval
history at Queen’s University, Belfast. He remained associated with the Society as a joint editor of *BNJ* (1965–78) and as Corresponding Member for Ireland on the Society’s Council between 1964 and 1977, and his occasional appearances at Society meetings during the rest of the 1960s continued to induce much the same sense of excitement as had been the case in the preceding decade. But Dolley’s great period at the British Museum had now passed, and the future of the Society was to lie in different hands.

**Advances and Anxieties**

Dolley’s approaching departure to Belfast had been notified by him to Council in May 1963, as had Lyon’s wish to stand down as Treasurer, and it was also known that Derek Allen’s term as President would expire at the end of that year. That gave the Society’s senior figures longer than usual to think who the Society’s future officers should be, but the post of President was declined by the first candidate approached, Herbert Schneider, and was accepted instead by Charles Wilson Peck (1901–1968), the leading expert on the milled copper coinage of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Peck, Chief Pharmacist at St Thomas’s Hospital, had recently completed an admirable published catalogue of the British Museum’s holdings in this series, much facilitated by Dolley’s willingness to allow Peck lunch hour Coin Room access, and he enjoyed the esteem of colleagues round the Council table, but he was only able to serve two years as President, too short a time to have a measurable impact on the work of the Society.38

The 1960s were in many ways a watershed in the Society’s history. Although Blunt still remained active in its affairs, and Horace King, whose contributions to *BNJ* as an author were recognised by the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1962, remained his editorial colleague, King was now elderly and corrected *BNJ* proofs with a visibly shakier hand as the years passed. He continued as an editor of *BNJ* until the autumn of 1969, and members present at Society meetings in the 1960s will recall that he still came up to London from Hindhead, Surrey, for every monthly meeting, attending Council meetings but leaving shortly after the formal business of the succeeding ordinary meeting. It gave considerable pleasure both to him and to the Society that in March 1969 he was able to attend a meeting on the sixtieth anniversary of his election to membership.

Winstanley had moved in 1958 from London to Deal, Kent, too far from London for him to attend Society meetings thereafter, but a series of papers on the coinage of Henry VII, written jointly by him and Potter, appeared in vols XXX, XXXI and XXXII (30, 31 and 32) of *BNJ*. These, taken together with other papers written separately by Potter, rounded off a prolonged period of research into the coinages of the later Plantagenet and early Tudor periods at the end of which numismatists had identified and arranged all the principal types and varieties in the series, and Winstanley’s role in this process was rightly, if a little belatedly, recognised by the award to him of the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1968.

Blunt’s authorial contribution to *BNJ* during the 1950s had been continuous, much of it in the form of short notes on aspects of the Anglo-Saxon coinage of the ninth century, but also including longer papers written jointly with Dolley, as for example a joint paper of great importance on the hoard evidence for the coinage of King Aelfred. A substantial paper by Blunt on the coinage of Offa of Mercia, essential as providing an illustrated record of all significant varieties of Offa’s coins then known, had been published in 1961 as one of the major ingredients of a numismatic *festschrift* edited by Dolley to mark Sir Frank Stenton’s eightieth birthday, but it was an article by Blunt, Lyon and Ian Stewart in vol. XXXII (32) of *BNJ*, setting out all the evidence for coinage in Southern England over a thirty year period between the late 790s and late 820s, which demonstrated for the first time that a coinage of this period could be explained with the same clarity as

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37 Dolley accepted Council’s invitation to serve as Corresponding Member of Council for Ireland in what was obviously a characteristic letter, summarised in the minutes as stating that he was willing to become ‘Corresponding Member of the Society for his own country’.

38 Peck’s numismatic prowess was acknowledged by a posthumous award to him of the John Sanford Saltus Medal in 1968. This was an additional award, made concurrently with the normal award of the medal in that year, and although it was not in itself justified by Peck’s contributions to *BNJ*, which had been slight, it recognised the fact that Peck had been the first scholar to approach the British milled series in a modern scholarly manner.
coinages of later Anglo-Saxon or Norman date. Here Blunt’s inherent judgment and profound
knowledge of the numismatic material combined admirably with the more sharply analytical
talents of his two fellow authors, and in the two decades that followed, during which Blunt carried to
completion his researches into the Anglo-Saxon coinage in the period from Aelfred to Eadgar, the
mutual respect and trust that linked Blunt with these two younger scholars was profoundly benefi-
tcial to British numismatics.

Of the two, Lyon, John Sanford Saltus medallist for 1974, has always been a specialist in the
Anglo-Saxon series, but Ian Stewart’s numismatic interests were from the first wide-ranging, for
while he was still only a junior member of the Society he had written the first reliable modern
book on the coinage of Scotland, and his contributions to BNJ, now also including an authoritative
paper in vol. XXXI (31), on the Montrave hoard of Edwardian sterlings, written by him jointly
with G.L.V. Tatler, were matched by regular contributions to NC. By the 1960s he possessed a
specialist knowledge of much of the English hammered coinage, as well as a complete grasp of
the Scottish coinage down to 1707, and although his career as a merchant banker and later as a
Conservative politician was to limit the time that he was able to devote to the work of the Society
(he was its Director 1966–75 and was awarded the John Sanford Saltus medal as early as 1971,
but had to decline subsequent offers of the post of President), he has been indispensable both in
the foreground and in the background of numismatic research into the coinages of Britain.

The Society’s chief problem in the early 1960s was, as usual, financial. The sharp rise in mem-
bership in the mid 1950s had been braked by two successive rises in the subscription, and
although the total membership was 359 at the time of the Anniversary meeting in 1964, the
Society’s net assets in the early 1960s had averaged just over £2700, less than £300 more than in
1954 when the membership had been almost a third smaller. This, coupled with inconvenient
delays in the printing of BNJ by Oxford University Press, led Council in September 1964 to
accept a proposal originating from Michael Dolley that BNJ vol. XXXIII (33) should be printed
instead by Dublin University Press. Dublin University Press offered cheaper printing rates and the
promise of an earlier annual delivery date, but things went wrong almost from the start, for a seri-
ous fire at Dublin in March 1965 destroyed the original manuscripts of nine papers that had not
yet been printed, and that particular volume of BNJ did not reach members until May 1966. In the
interval (22 June 1965), Dolley had been appointed an additional editor of BNJ, to improve liaison
with Dublin, but Dublin University Press’s efficiency and standard of typesetting never compared
with that of Oxford University Press, and volumes of BNJ dating from the Dublin period can be
distinguished on members’ shelves by the fact that their spines now hang loose or are wholly
missing, as the cloth used to bind them was of inferior quality.

Five annual volumes of BNJ (vols XXXIII–XXXVII) (33–37) were printed by Dublin University Press, but by the spring of 1968 Council’s patience was running out, and although a
decision to go back to Oxford University Press was delayed first by resistance from Dolley and
then by the amount of Oxford University Press’s initial estimate, there was in the end an unan-
imous decision (24 June 1969) that Oxford University Press should resume the printing of BNJ.

What really made the decision possible was that the Society’s membership was now once more
rising, with a consequent beneficial effect on the Society’s finances. Stewart Lyon, who had suc-
sceeded Peck as President at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1965, was able to announce in
his Presidential Address the following year a membership total of ‘more than 400’, and by the
Anniversary Meeting in November 1969 the total had reached 451. The Society’s net assets had also
rapidly improved, reaching £4200 in 1967 and £5045 in 1968, and the Society’s successive
Treasurers in this period, Marion Archibald (1964–7), Michael Dolley’s successor at the British
Museum, and Clifford Allen (1968–73), a London chartered accountant, had reason to be pleased
with the Society’s overall position.

The later 1960s were a good period for the Society in other respects as well. Lyon himself was
an effective President (1966–70), and it fell to him during his term of office to make what was
probably the first direct intervention by a President of the Society on a matter of public policy,
when in April 1966 the government issued a temporary Exchange Control (Gold Coins
Exemption) Order, making it illegal for any UK resident to hold more than four gold coins minted
after 1837 unless he had a permit from the Bank of England. The requisite application form was
so drafted that coin collectors were required not merely to declare to the Bank of England what modern gold coins they held but also to provide extensive details of the rest of their collection to prove that they were indeed bona fide coin collectors. Lyon criticised this sharply in a letter to the Times, and then played a leading role in organising a joint deputation from the British and Royal Numismatic Societies which made effective representations to the Bank authorities.

It was Lyon also who in his first Presidential Address divided his remarks into a review of the year and a separate lecture on a topic of scholarly interest, creating a precedent which all subsequent Presidents have followed. This was a conscious decision by Lyon, reflecting his view that the President of the Society should take a leading role in the advancement of scholarly research into the British coinage, but students of the history of the Society should note that it has had the incidental result that those responsible for selecting subsequent Presidents have had to have more clearly in mind than in the past that the chosen candidate should be an individual whose Presidential Addresses will be of appropriate scholarly quality. One other innovation by Lyon was that the Presidential Address should include a list of the year’s newly discovered treasure trove coin hoards; this was useful, for at that time no such list was otherwise available, and similar lists were provided in most Presidential Addresses down to and including those delivered by the present writer, but the practice has since lapsed.

On another front, Herbert Schneider (Pl. 7a), who had been awarded the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1965, but who had not actually been presented with it until 25 October 1966, the day on which he delivered a paper to the Society on the Tower Gold coinage of Charles II, used his speech of thanks to stress the importance of funding photographic records of coin collections, and in January 1967 sent the Society £250 for this purpose. The Schneider Research Fund so established was used in 1972 to finance the photography of the collection of coins of Edward III made by Gordon Doubleday, one of the Society’s Vice-Presidents, and again in 1985 for the photography of the collection of coins of Edward IV made by Peggy Delmé-Radcliffe.

On both occasions it was Peter Mitchell, managing director of the Baldwin firm, who suggested the use of the Schneider Research Fund for this purpose, and Mitchell’s services to the Society in this and other respects have since been recognised by his election as one of the Society’s Vice-Presidents. The Fund was not however of the continuing assistance to numismatic research that Schneider might have hoped, and in 1997 the remaining balance was amalgamated with other benefactions in the Society’s present-day Benefactors’ Fund. The gift was nonetheless an important boost to the Society’s morale at the time, for it seems, remarkably enough, to have been the first gift of over £100 to the Society by a private individual since the £200 given by Wheeler in 1923.

It is not necessary from the 1960s onwards to draw attention to individual papers in BNJ, for the volumes in which they appear will be more readily available than earlier volumes to current members of the Society. Additionally, the practice by which BNJ volumes were dominated by long papers published in instalments over a period of years now lapsed, with the result that volumes were filled with papers individual to the particular volume which it is less easy to pick out and highlight. Nonetheless it is fitting to mention here one particularly important paper contributed to vol. XXXIII (33) of BNJ (for 1964), on ‘The origins of the English sovereign and the symbolism of the closed crown’, by the Cambridge academic Philip Grierson, in which Grierson brilliantly combined numismatic, documentary and iconographic evidence to explain the sovereign coinage of Henry VII. Grierson’s principal scholarly interests lay in the coinage of mediaeval Europe, and he had only been an intermittent contributor to BNJ, but the Henry VII paper made it apparent what contribution a historian could make to an understanding of the coinages of late mediaeval and early modern Britain, and it is noticeable that the next significant papers in BNJ on the coinage of the early Tudor period were by just such a historian of a younger generation, Christopher Challis (Pl. 7b).

Since 1936 the Society had always possessed a small number of junior members under the age of twenty-one paying a reduced subscription, of whom Stewart was the first so elected to emerge as a significant force within the Society. By 1961 their number, although still not large, was sufficient that an American member, Edward V. Buxton, offered an annual sum of £10 as a prize ‘for encouragement of junior members’; Council decided (24 October 1961) that an Edward V. Buxton
prize would be awarded for the best paper read to a meeting by a junior member, and although it proved difficult to award this prize after the first couple of years, the prize eventually lapsing, the group of junior members elected in the early 1960s included a number who were subsequently to take an active part in the Society’s work. The first of these to serve as an officer of the Society was Robert Thompson (Pl. 7c), who put his own workplace experience as a professional librarian to good use in a long period of office as the Society’s Librarian (1966–81), while also becoming over a period of time the leading authority on English trade tokens of the seventeenth century.

Lyon’s final months as President were disturbed by an unexpected suggestion from Derek Allen, in his final Presidential Address in a term as President of the Royal Numismatic Society ending in June 1970, that a merger between the British and Royal Numismatic Societies, under which both BNJ and NC would still be published but members of the combined new society could subscribe to either or both, might now be in the interests of both organisations. It must be remembered that Allen had always been a proponent of closer co-operation between the two Societies, and the suggestion for a merger with a proviso that BNJ should be retained as a separate periodical may well have been one that had been floated in conversations to which he had been party before or just after the Second World War, but it is still somewhat surprising that he should have revived such a suggestion in 1970, when the British Numismatic Society was in as thriving a position as it had been for a long time.

No less surprising was the reaction of the Society’s Council at an ensuing meeting (27 October 1970), at which Lyon’s intended successor as President, Stuart Rigold, ‘speaking as an archaeologist, not primarily interested in British numismatics’, is muted as saying that he agreed in the main with Allen’s remarks and wondered whether there was enough material to publish a volume of BNJ every year; while Porteous, now an editor of BNJ (1969–75), and Stewart, the Society’s Director, voiced respective pessimism about the quality of articles submitted to BNJ and the continuing ability of the Society to provide a programme of meetings of sufficiently high numismatic standard. Faced with such expressions of opinion on the part of his principal colleagues, Lyon in his own final Presidential Address had no choice but to give a cautious welcome to the setting up of a joint working party of the two Societies to explore Allen’s idea, but he wisely left the onus of making such a proposal to Allen’s successor as President of the Royal Numismatic Society, and no such proposal was ever made.

Rigold, who now took office as President (1971–5), had spent his working life as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments in the Ministry of Works, but had throughout retained an enthusiasm for numismatics, most effectively displayed in papers in vols XXX and XXXV (30 and 35) of BNJ which had established what remains the basic framework for the classification of the sceatta series (these and other contributions to BNJ brought him the John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1977). Those who knew him will also recall that he possessed an extraordinary range of learning about the historic past which enabled him to contribute helpfully to post-paper discussions at meetings of learned societies of every kind. As President, he was no natural administrator, and the double act of Rigold and Slayer at Society meetings had a certain visual resemblance to the Walrus and Carpenter pairing in Lewis Carroll’s Alice through the Looking Glass, but he discharged his Society responsibilities with obvious goodwill to all and his Presidency proved largely uneventful.39

In October 1971 Blunt retired as editor of BNJ, after a period of service in that capacity which had commenced as far back as the 1930s, to be succeeded as a member of the editorial team (1971–6) by the present writer. His initial editorial responsibilities were routine, but in May the following year an American scholar, Dr Mavis Mate, indicated that she was anxious to secure publication of a monograph by her on the mints of Edward I and II, which might run to about 100 pages of printed text. Although this could if necessary be accommodated in a normal volume of BNJ, it was known at the time that Christopher Blunt was completing an extensive monograph of his own on the coinage of Aethelstan, and it was thought that his and Dr Mate’s monograph might

39 Rigold’s Presidency was sufficiently uneventful that at one point during it he found himself able to suggest that Council ‘could do with fewer meetings’ (Council Minutes, 27 November 1973).
between them form a special volume of *BNJ*, to be numbered XLII (42), which would be distributed free to members to mark Christopher Blunt’s seventieth birthday in 1974.

After due consideration, Council decided on financial grounds that this special volume, to be funded from donations rather than from the Society’s regular income, should contain Christopher Blunt’s Aethelstan monograph only, and that Dr Mate’s monograph, or the larger part of it, should appear as an article in vol. XLI (41) of *BNJ*. This decision was a sensible one, for the cost of the special volume rose between February 1973 and September 1974 from an estimated £2000 to an actual £2657, but such was the esteem in which Christopher Blunt was held by Society members and other friends and colleagues that all but £189 of the £2657 was raised by donations, making it the most cost-free volume of *BNJ* in the Society’s history.

Less satisfactorily, Oxford University Press’s bills for the production of the normal volumes of *BNJ* were consistently more than expected, and it had been agreed during 1972 that a future rise in the subscription would be desirable. The sudden death of the Society’s Treasurer, Clifford Allen, in March 1973, only temporarily delayed an inevitable decision to increase the subscription to £6, approved by members at the Anniversary Meeting at the end of the year. This was to bring about a brief improvement in the Society’s financial position, but the disruption to the normal production schedule for *BNJ* caused by the printing of an additional volume, coupled with some unnecessary delay on the part of the present writer in getting the text of vols. XLIII and XLIV (43 and 44) of *BNJ* to the printers, was to create serious difficulties for the Society later in the decade.

It is convenient to record at this point a largely unnoticed change in the content of *BNJ* which took place about this time. Michael Dolley’s close involvement with the Society had meant that in his years at the British Museum most treasure trove coin hoards of post-Roman date had been published in *BNJ*. This continued to be the practice for some years after his departure, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s there was an influx of very large hoards which could not speedily be written up and published, and a decision in the mid 1970s by the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum that both these and hoards of lesser importance should in the first instance be published in summary form in the Royal Numismatic Society’s periodical Coin Hoards had the possibly unintended effect that between the mid 1970s and the mid 1990s *BNJ* more or less ceased to carry published reports on treasure trove coin hoards from England.

It is difficult in retrospect to feel at all happy about this as a development, for the effect has been that some of the hoards concerned have not been properly published at all, and others have only been published in full many years after their discovery. Happily, *BNJ* has remained the customary place of publication for most significant post-Roman coin hoards found in Scotland and Wales, and any temporary shortfall in its content in the 1970s was soon to be made up by contributions from a new generation of researchers.

Peter Woodhead, the Society’s next President (1976–80), a specialist in the English coinage of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and in related coinages struck on the European continent (Pl. 7d), has been a member of the Society since 1952, and by 1976 was already widely respected by the numismatic community generally. Although his parallel business career had occasionally limited his ability to participate in the work of the Society, he was permanently based in London during his years as President, and was well placed to steer it successfully through a tricky period in its history.

In this he had the energetic support of a new Director, John David Brand (1931–90), a qualified chartered accountant who had had to retire early owing to ill health (Pl. 8a), and who was now able to put his abilities at the disposal of the Society, while simultaneously pursuing research into the Short Cross coinage of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries and into the documentary evidence for the administration of mints and the exchequer in the early mediaeval period. Robert Seaman, the Society’s Treasurer from 1973 to 1981, and an employee of the Standard Chartered Bank, was also a helpful colleague at this time.

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40 The figure for the cost of the special volume as subsequently printed in *BNJ* was slightly higher, doubtless reflecting some other hidden costs, but, as Seaman pointed out to Council at this time, the Society had ordered the printing of some extra copies of this volume for sale to non-members, and their sale proceeds would further improve the financial arithmetic.
The Society’s membership had reached 503 by November 1972, a figure not attained since the very earliest years of the Society’s history. It then rose to 530 in 1974, fell back to 519 in 1975 and then rose again to an average of just over 530 for the rest of the 1970s. Although this was an all-time high, these totals included honorary members and junior members, and an ordinary membership of around 500 paying an annual subscription of £6 each could not in itself fund an alarmingly large cost of £5695 for the production and distribution of vol. XLIII (43) of BNJ (the volume for 1973, not delivered to members until 1976). This revealed the inherent fragility of the Society’s financial position, and despite a welcome legacy of £500 received from Horace King’s estate in January 1977, and generous donations totalling another £1500 from the Baldwin and Spink firms, Woodhead found it necessary in the autumn of 1977 to issue a special financial appeal to the membership. The appeal brought in a total of £5025 during 1977 and 1978 from ninety-three donors, partly in gifts of money and partly from the proceeds of coins donated for sale at auction on the Society’s behalf, but Council recognised that this could only be a partial solution to a profounder problem, and at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1977 members approved a doubling of the subscription from £6 to £12.

The underlying difficulty was not now delay on the editorial or production front, for Nicholas Mayhew, Assistant Keeper of Coins at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, who had succeeded the present writer as editor in July 1976, hastened Oxford University Press into printing and distributing three necessarily thinner volumes of BNJ (vols. XLIV, XLV and XLVI) (44, 45 and 46) in rapid succession during 1977. It was rather that in the dying days of old-fashioned printing technology it had become quite extraordinarily expensive to have text typeset, and especially so when the general economic climate was one of high inflation and the Society’s printers, Oxford University Press, had to build into their prices a sufficient profit margin to help meet recurrent wage demands from their unionised work force.

Nevertheless, the steps taken in 1977 had dispelled the immediate clouds overhanging the Society, and Council was able to turn its mind to more agreeable matters during 1978. The Society’s fiftieth anniversary in 1953 had passed without any overt festivities, but it was decided that its seventy-fifth anniversary should be marked by the issue of a cast commemorative medal, produced for the Society at the Royal Mint, and also by presentations at the Anniversary meeting and by a party at its close. In the event, a family bereavement prevented Woodhead himself from being present at the Anniversary meeting, but in his absence the responsibilities were shared, fittingly, between his most senior colleagues, Gordon Doubleday taking the chair at the preliminary Council meeting, Christopher Blunt the chair at the Anniversary meeting proper, and Brand as Director reading Woodhead’s Presidential Address and making presentations to Elmore Jones (on his final appearance at a Society meeting) and to Wilfrid Slayter. The subsequent party, at which a birthday cake was duly cut and consumed, is well recorded in an album of photographs in the Society’s possession.

It was also in this year that Council received the first intimation that the Society was likely to receive a significant legacy from a then as yet unnamed member, and it was this that brought about a decision in the spring of 1978 that the Society should register itself as a charity. It is strange that this step should not have been taken earlier in the Society’s history, but, as we have...
seen, the Society’s net assets had historically been small and it had not previously been felt necessary to worry about its legal position. Responsibility for communicating with the Charity Commissioners was devolved on one of Council’s younger members, Mark Blackburn, and charitable status was finally achieved in May 1979.

Michael Dolley, who in 1975 had been promoted to a personal chair as Professor of Historical Numismatics at Queen’s University, Belfast, left Northern Ireland at the end of 1977 to return to England. He was elected to the Society’s Council for 1978, but he did not resume an active role within the Society and in the summer of that year he resigned from what had been an increasingly nominal role as an editor of BNJ. This reduced the editorial team to Nicholas Mayhew and Peggy Delmé-Radcliffe (joint editor 1975–80), a friend and neighbour of Christopher Blunt and a collector of coins of Edward IV, and following the successive resignations of both of them during 1980 the Society was left with a single newly appointed editor, Christopher Challis, a lecturer in history at the University of Leeds. Challis was well qualified for the appointment, for he was by now the author of an excellent book on The Tudor Coinage, published in 1978, and although at the time he had done the research for it he had not known much about coins as such, a paper of his on ‘The Tudor Coinage for Ireland’, published in vol. XL (40) of BNJ, had already unravelled problems which had defeated a bevy of distinguished numismatists in the past.

At the very beginning of 1980 there had been general consternation when the Society’s faithful Secretary, Wilfrid Slayter, had failed to turn up to the January meeting (the first and only monthly meeting of the Society not attended by Slayter between 1946 and his death in 1993), but the heart attack which had briefly prostrated him did not prevent him from resuming his duties at the February meeting and he was still to serve as Secretary under three more Presidents.

In his final Presidential Address, at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1980, Woodhead was able to record a membership total of 542, a higher figure than ever before in the history of the Society, but the Society’s accounts for the previous year, approved at the same meeting, had shown net assets of only £2317, and a deficit, with no net assets, was projected for the year to 31 October 1980. Members were therefore asked to agree to another significant increase in the annual subscription, from £12 to £18. In proposing this increase Woodhead and his principal colleagues were acting prudently, for although the Society was not in the same financial difficulties as had been the case in the mid 1970s, printing cost increases were then running at ‘around 20 per cent per annum’, and it was rightly felt that the rate of subscription should be set high enough to be held at least for the following three years.

Brand, who now took over as President (1981–3), had more spare time to devote to the routine administration of the Society than his immediate predecessors, and an early decision by him to assume a hands-on role in the management of the Society’s library provoked the resignation of Robert Thompson, the Society’s long-standing Librarian (offered in February 1981, confirmed in the following month). This was unfortunate, but it had a useful consequence, for the resignation on other grounds soon afterwards of the Royal Numismatic Society’s Librarian, Nicholas Lowick, enabled the two Societies’ joint library in the basement of the Warburg Institute at long last to be administered by a single individual, holding office as Librarian on the Councils of both Societies. The present writer (Librarian 1981–3, and concurrently Librarian of the Royal Numismatic Society June 1981–June 1984) was the first to hold both posts.

The Society’s Treasurer, Robert Seaman, resigned shortly afterwards for personal reasons, to be replaced by Robin Davis (Treasurer 1981–3), but 1981 was otherwise a peaceful year. It had been felt for some time that the Society needed to do more than simply provide its regular programme of monthly meetings, and under Woodhead’s Presidency the annual Journées Numismatiques of the Société Française de Numismatique at Rouen in June 1978 had taken the form of a joint meeting with members of the British and Royal Numismatic Societies. This was now reciprocated by French attendance in September 1981 at the year’s BANS Congress. In a more specifically British context, Council decided in October 1981, on a proposal from Graham Dyer, Librarian and Curator of the Royal Mint, now the Society’s Director (1981–8) (Pl. 8b), that in 1982 the Society should hold an experimental one-day meeting in London on a Saturday in July, to accommodate members not normally able to attend meetings on Tuesdays. The experiment itself, repeated in 1983, was not a great success, but Dyer’s objective had been that these meetings would lead to the
Society taking the more radical step of arranging annual Saturday meetings outside London, and a symposium on Matthew Boulton, organised by the Society in Birmingham in October 1983, confirmed that there would be an audience for future meetings of this character. An annual out-of-London meeting on a Saturday in July has since become a regular feature of the Society’s programme.

The years 1982 and 1983 proved challenging. Oxford University Press’s bill for vol. XLIX (49) of *BNJ*, delivered to members in February 1981, had been £8788, and it was already known that their bill for vol. L (50), due in the spring of 1982, would be significantly higher. As there could be no question of a further increase in the subscription so soon after the last one, a special meeting of Council was held on 12 January 1982 to decide between a range of publishing options, and it was decided that for the present the text of *BNJ* should no longer be typeset but be printed from camera-ready copy produced on an electronic typewriter.

This solved the immediate financial difficulty, for whereas Oxford University Press’s bill for vol. L (50) had eventually been agreed at £11,436, their bill for vol. 51, printed and bound by them but not typeset by them, was only £5468, and the total cost of the production of vol. 51, allowing for purchase of a typewriter and payments to typists, was not much more than £7000, well within the Society’s capacity to pay. The change to typewritten text was displeasing, but recognised as inevitable in the circumstances, and it did have one unexpectedly beneficial side effect, in that the format of *BNJ* had to be increased slightly, allowing for more coins to be illustrated on each plate. The new arrangements also required the appointment of a ‘production editor’ of *BNJ*, and this post was filled by Brand himself (March 1982–November 1983).

It will be remembered that the reading of a paper to the Numismatic Society of London by Carlyon-Britton on the coinage of Eadward the Confessor had played some part, and possibly a decisive part, in the sequence of events that had led to the Society’s foundation in 1903. In that paper Carlyon-Britton had for the first time set out the theory that in the later Anglo-Saxon period coin types circulated for a predetermined period of years, and that their issue commenced at Michaelmas one year, and ended at Michaelmas in whatever subsequent year the following coin type was due to be introduced. Although by no means proven, this theory had been refined and made his own by Michael Dolley in the 1950s, but the arguments for it had not properly been set out in print by Dolley at that time, and it was only in his last substantial contribution to *BNJ*, an article in vol. XLIX (49) on ‘Roger of Wendover’s date for Eadgar’s coinage reform’, that he deployed what seemed to him a conclusive case for his theory that Eadgar had reformed the coinage in c. 973, and that coin types were changed at regular intervals of six years between then and the end of the reign of Cnut.

By the late 1970s Dolley was in sharply declining health, and in many of his published articles of this period there was a marked falling off both in scholarly judgment and in the respect with which he should have handled differing opinions expressed by others working in the same field. This was not however true of the article in *BNJ*, which was founded on a draft composed at the height of Dolley’s powers, and which presented a proper case set out in broadly unobjectionable terms, and the proper response to it should have been an article of similar character.

Unfortunately Brand and Dolley had engaged in a controversy on this very subject in the columns of Spink’s *Numismatic Circular* in 1967, in which Brand, though outgunned at the time, had always felt himself to be in the right, and in the intervening period Dolley had worsened matters by making unjustified adverse comments in print about Brand’s attainments as a scholar. As a result, Brand’s response to Dolley’s *BNJ* paper was to devote the scholarly part both of his 1982 Presidential Address and of his 1983 Presidential Address to a full-blooded demolition of Dolley’s arguments. In these Presidential Addresses, of which the substance was subsequently published by him as a pamphlet under the title ‘Periodic Change of Type in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman Periods’, he combined reasoned analysis of the case presented by Dolley with remarks of a more personal character sharply reflecting on Dolley’s methods of handling numismatic evidence.

It is not wholly possible to judge the impact of these remarks on his audiences from the text of his pamphlet, for he omitted from the pamphlet a few of the more controversial passages in the Presidential Addresses as read, including a particularly regrettable suggestion that Dolley had himself attacked the Society in print, and the pamphlet also includes a fair amount of text which
although in Brand's manuscript was not in fact read by him on either occasion. As however Dolley had been elected an Honorary Member of the Society as recently as March 1981, during Brand's own Presidency, and it was generally believed that he was not likely to live very long (he was to die in March 1983), it was an error of judgment for Brand to have expressed himself in the terms that he did in 1982, and when he returned to the same theme in 1983 he compounded the offence.

Dolley's death further complicated the situation, for Council decided in May 1983 that vol. 52 of BNJ (for 1982) should be dedicated to his memory, making it difficult indeed for the scholarly part of Brand's 1982 Presidential Address to be published in that volume, and at roughly that point a decision must have been taken that publication of it would have to be deferred. It was not however that in itself which brought about Brand's decision, communicated by him to Council in September 1983, not to offer himself for re-election as President for 1984; it was rather that Brand, who was not always easy in temperament, now felt that he had achieved all that he could as President, and that it would be better for the Society if the Presidency passed into other hands.

Marion Archibald, the Society's John Sanford Saltus Medallist for 1980 (Pl. 8c), who has always been much liked within the Society and who as a scholar is familiar with a vast numismatic terrain extending from the seventh century to the late fifteenth century and beyond, would have been Brand's most appropriate successor, but she did not wish for the Presidency, with the result that the present writer, an antiquarian bookseller whose primary numismatic interest lay in the Anglo-Saxon coinage of the ninth and tenth centuries, now found himself in that post (1984–8).

The Last Twenty Years

Difficult though the period from the mid 1970s onwards had sometimes been for the Society, the decisions taken during that period had secured the Society a financial breathing space, and as the 1980s progressed it gradually became clear that the Society had weathered its difficulties on that front. The first fruit of this was that Council decided at its meeting in February 1984 that it was financially feasible to revert to having the text of BNJ professionally typeset by Oxford University Press; the decision was a fraught one, for Brand, who although no longer President or production editor of BNJ had remained an executive officer in the role of Librarian (1984–7), had been too personally involved in the arrangements for having the volume typewritten to take a detached attitude to the new proposal, and was only persuaded with some difficulty to withdraw a resignation tendered at the end of the meeting concerned.

Happily, the decision as regards the printing of BNJ proved to be entirely correct, for changes in printing technology had now eliminated the horrendous costs associated with traditional typesetting in metal. In addition, after vol. 54 had been successfully printed with a typeset text, Council was persuaded by Mark Blackburn, now production editor (Nov 1983–Jan 1987), that in the new printing environment it was no longer necessary to pay a premium price for having the volume produced by Oxford University Press, and it was decided in April 1986 to accept a cheaper quotation for vol. 55 from Alan Sutton Limited, with whom the publishing contract for BNJ subsequently remained until vol. 68.

One remaining problem left over from Brand's Presidency was the question of whether or not his Presidential Addresses should be printed in BNJ. This was a difficult issue, but the editorial committee decided in the summer of 1984 that they should not be published as part of BNJ, and alternative proposals put by Brand to successive Council meetings in September and October were rejected. Brand had however gradually come round to the idea that he would have to publish the text of his addresses as a pamphlet of his own, and when the dust of the controversy had subsided he remained in office as Librarian. In that role he was able to play a major part in the organisation of a coloquium on the coinages of Carausius and Allectus at the British Museum in November, addressed by speakers drawn equally from the Société Française de Numismatique and from the British and Royal Numismatic Societies.43

43 Four of the contributions to the symposium by British speakers were printed in vol. 54 of BNJ, and were also made available in separately bound form under the title Studies in the Coinages of Carausius and Allectus, 1985.
When Brand eventually resigned from the post of Librarian, in April 1987, it was as the result of a disagreement with his colleagues on the Council of the Royal Numismatic Society, rather than with his British Numismatic Society colleagues, and he continued to attend the Society’s ordinary meetings regularly until his death in 1990. His scholarly achievement was subsequently recognised by the publication in 1994 of his 1981 MA thesis for the University of Kent, entitled *The English Coinage 1180–1247: Money, Mints and Exchanges*, as Special Publication no.1 in the Society’s new monograph series. As joint Librarian for the two Societies he was succeeded (Apr 1987 – Nov 1990) by Dr Roger Bland, of the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, who brought to the post both organising ability and appropriate family credentials as being Elmore Jones’s grandson.

The John Sanford Saltus Medal for 1983 had been awarded to Michael Metcalf, Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Pl. 8d), whose numismatic interests range widely over the coinages of Europe and the Levant in the earlier middle ages, but who in a British context has long been the leading authority on the thrymsa and sceatta coinages of the seventh and eighth centuries. Inconveniently, a first attempt to strike the medal failed, the reverse die cracking after seventy-three years of intermittent use, but a new reverse die was quickly produced, as a gift from the Spink firm, and the present writer was able to present the medal to Metcalf at the Society’s May 1984 meeting as normal. The obverse die lasted long enough to strike two further John Sanford Saltus Medals, those for 1986, awarded to Joan Murray, a wartime Bletchley cryptographer latterly based at GCHQ Cheltenham (Pl. 9a), who as a numismatist was an expert on the Scottish coinage of the later middle ages, and for 1989, awarded to the present writer, but it too had to be replaced when the time came to strike the medal for 1992, awarded to Christopher Challis.

The remainder of the present writer’s Presidency passed more peacefully, and from the mid 1980s to the present day the Society has not had to experience any serious financial difficulties or other significant internal problems. Robin Davis’s business commitments had not allowed him to continue as Treasurer after 1983, and his immediate successor, Tom Stainton, a specialist in commemorative medals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, died suddenly in June 1985, but Stainton’s successor, Tim Webb Ware, remained continuously in office from June 1985 to November 2001, and the combination of a favourable economic climate and Webb Ware’s careful stewardship of the Society’s finances was such that during that period the subscription only had to be raised just once, from £18 to £24, at the Anniversary Meeting in 1991.

The size of the membership had declined from 542 in 1980 to just under 500 in 1983, and it only rose slowly again thereafter, but the savings made in the production of BNJ meant that as early as 1985 the Society’s net assets had reached £13,177, making minor fluctuations in the number of members relatively unimportant for the Society’s future well-being. A further boost to the Society’s balance sheet was provided during 1986 by the receipt of £5000 as a gift from Mrs Linecar, the widow of Howard Linecar, a long term Spink employee and editor of Spink’s *Numismatic Circular* (Pl. 9b), in lieu of the Society’s residuary entitlement to a proportion of Linecar’s estate under the terms of his will. Linecar had expressed the wish that a lecture should be endowed in his name, and the Linecar gift, maintained as a separate interest-bearing fund, has since had as its primary purpose the endowment of a biennial lecture delivered at one of the Society’s ordinary meetings by a distinguished outside speaker.

Council also agreed at the beginning of 1986 to a suggestion by the present writer, first made in his Presidential Address for 1984, that a cash prize should be awarded triennially by Council to a younger scholar who had made a significant recent contribution to British numismatics, and this prize, first awarded in October 1987 to Mark Blackburn, has been awarded triennially since.

1986 was the year in which the International Numismatic Congress was held in London, for the first time since 1936, and on this occasion the event was hosted jointly by the British and Royal Numismatic Societies, the present writer representing the Society as Vice-Chairman of the Congress’s Preparatory Committee and subsequently of its Organising Committee. The Congress was held in London in the week of 8–13 September, attended by 597 delegates, and among over
200 speakers twenty-three were members of the Society. The Society also hosted a well-attended reception of its own during the week, enabling it to extend hospitality to various distinguished numismatists from overseas. It is convenient to record here that although the Society had had overseas numismatists as ordinary members from the year of its foundation, it was not until 23 November 1976 that the Society elected an overseas numismatic scholar as an Honorary Member, Dr Georg Galster (1889–1983), the veteran head of the Royal Danish Coin Cabinet in Copenhagen. To mark the occasion of the Congress, two new Honorary Members from overseas, Peter Berghaus (Germany) and Gay Van der Meer (Netherlands), were now elected (24 June 1986); both had long been ordinary members of the Society, and they had worked alongside Dolley in the 1950s and 1960s in the publication of Viking-age coin hoards from Sweden.

Christopher Blunt, now in his early eighties, was able to attend the Congress, at which he and Dr Herbert Cahn were the only delegates who had also been present at the London Congress in 1936. Blunt had already celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as a member of the Society in February 1983, an occasion marked by Blunt himself being the speaker at the Society’s February meeting and also by a party afterwards, and for Blunt’s eightieth birthday, in July 1984, a portrait medal was commissioned by his friends. He had remained active in numismatic research until the end of his life, and his death on 20 November 1987, four days before the Anniversary Meeting, was marked at the meeting by a formal motion of regret expressed in similar terms to a motion put to a Society meeting in 1938 to mark the death of Carlyon-Britton. This was fitting, for just as Carlyon-Britton had been the Society’s real founder, it had been Blunt who as Director, Editor, and President had given fresh impetus to the Society halfway through its history, and who in his later years as a Vice-President had been a rock of support to his successors.

One final event of consequence during the present writer’s Presidential term was an editorial decision, reported to Council by Challis in November 1987, that each future volume of BNJ should include a listing of all recently reported single finds from Britain and Ireland of Celtic coins, Anglo-Saxon coins, and Norman and Plantagenet coins up to the end of the Cross and Crosslets type of Henry II, together with single finds of Scottish coins, Hiberno-Norse coins and of foreign coins found in the British Isles and struck before c.1180. Significant single finds of later date were also to be listed.

This decision had stemmed from a growing realisation that single finds of such coins, now being made in significant numbers as a consequence of activity by metal-detectorists, should be recorded ‘promptly, accurately, and in an organised manner’, with accompanying illustrations whenever possible, and the first such list, published in vol. 58 of BNJ under the heading ‘Coin Register’, was immediately seen as fulfilling a real need. Subsequently, the Coin Register sections in successive volumes of BNJ have become the customary place in which museum numismatists have written up new single finds reported to them, and BNJ has in this respect regained the essential role in the publication of new discoveries which it occupied in the 1950s and 1960s. Dr Barrie Cook, who had then been newly appointed as an Assistant Keeper in the Department of Coins and Medals of the British Museum, responsible for English hammered coins of the Plantagenet and later periods, and who was also now BNJ’s production editor, was initially responsible for this section of BNJ and deserves credit for the format then devised.

44 It had been intended that an official Congress medal should be produced, as is customary on the occasions of International Numismatic Congresses. The year of the Congress coincided with the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Numismatic Society of London, and in early discussions it became clear that in consequence the Royal Numismatic Society’s representatives on the Congress’s Preparatory Committee would insist that the medal should carry a design derived from their own society’s device, a decision to which the representatives of the British Numismatic Society could hardly be expected to assent. By the time that the present writer joined the Preparatory Committee, the question of a Congress medal had disappeared off its agenda, the Royal Numismatic Society having decided to go ahead and commission a 150th anniversary medal of its own, and it was something of a surprise that when the Congress finally took place the resulting medal was marketed to delegates as if it was in fact the official Congress medal.

45 Dr Galster’s election to Honorary Membership stemmed in part from the fact that he claimed to have paid a sum of money some half a century previously to Sir William Wells, the Society’s then Treasurer, for life membership of the Society. By the late 1970s Galster’s memory may well have been inaccurate, and it is much more probable that what Galster had done in the 1920s was to pay personally the membership subscription due to the Society from the Royal Danish Coin Cabinet, Copenhagen, elected as an institutional member in 1917.
The Society’s next President, Christopher Challis, who held the post from 1989 to 1993, had been involved during the 1980s in editing a new official history of the Royal Mint, with text contributed by Ian Stewart, Nicholas Mayhew, Challis himself, Graham Dyer and Prof. Peter Gaspar (Corresponding Member for the USA on the Society’s Council). Although this was not to be published until 1992, the close working partnership which had developed between Challis and Dyer extended to a shared involvement in the affairs of the Society, and Challis’s Presidency, during which Dyer served successively as Editor of BNJ (1989–90) and as Secretary (1991–3), initiated an era in which the Society has benefited in various ways from the good will of the Mint authorities.

It was in this climate that it was decided early in Challis’s term of office that the Society should commission a membership medal, to be struck at the Royal Mint, of which specimens in bronze would be available for purchase by all current or existing members, while specimens in silver could be purchased at a higher cost by those who had belonged to the Society for twenty-five years or more. A competition held during 1990 produced an attractive winning design by the medallist artist John Lobban, and the first medals became available for distribution in March 1991. As the cost of the production of the dies had been met from a few generous donations, the Society’s expenses were limited to the payment of prizes of £250 each to the six participants in the competition, and to the production costs of the medals. It has nonetheless been a matter for some regret that the number of medals subsequently ordered by members had been smaller than anticipated, especially as they are personalised to the members ordering them by the addition of the member’s name and the year of the member’s election to the Society, and it is to be hoped that members who have not so far ordered one will do so in the future.

Wilfrid Slayter, who celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday on 27 January 1990, would no doubt have been willing to carry on in the role of Secretary indefinitely, but he was persuaded by Challis, with the backing of other senior colleagues, that he should retire with effect from the Anniversary Meeting in November 1990, and the affection in which he was held by present and former officers of the Society and by the membership as a whole was suitably reflected by the presentation to him on that evening of a cast portrait medal of himself, designed by Bob Elderton and produced at the Royal Mint, and by a substantial testimonial cheque.

In his Presidential Address that evening, Challis was able to record a net membership total of 545, just above the previous highest figure reported by Peter Woodhead ten years previously, while net assets for the year ending 31 October 1989 stood at a healthy £19,530. Additionally, the year had seen the much regretted early death (20 March 1990) of Helen Frizzell, an employee of the Baldwin firm (Pl. 9c), whose outgoing personality had captivated her many numismatic friends, and Challis expressed the Society’s gratitude for a legacy of £5000 under her will. This, and a subsequent legacy of £3000 received in 1993 from Wilfrid Slayter, form the core of the Society’s current Benefactors’ Fund, established in 1992.

He also had to announce the death (4 May 1990) of Roy Osborne, a pharmacist from Clare in Suffolk, who had belonged to the Society since 1951 and who had made a specialist collection of coins of Charles I. It had been Osborne who had indicated privately in 1978 that he was contemplating making a substantial bequest to the Society, and his intention to do so had been reaffirmed in the course of discussions between Challis and himself in relation to the publication in vol. 54 of BNJ of a lengthy article of Osborne’s own on the Tower coinage of Charles I.

It was now revealed that he had bequeathed the Society a sum of £50,000, dwarfing any other sum given or bequeathed to the Society during its preceding history. This legacy, realised from the sale of Osborne’s coin collection and received by the Society during the following summer, has since been maintained as a separate fund, used to finance a new Special Publication Series. The first volume in this Series, as noted above, was John Brand’s volume on The English Coinage 1180–1247, published in 1994. This was followed in 1998 by a volume on The Soho Mint and the Industrialisation of Money, written by Dr Richard G. Doty of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, published jointly by the Society, the Smithsonian Institution and Spink. The third volume in the Series, Tokens of the Industrial Revolution, Foreign Silver Coins countermarked for use in Great Britain c.1787–1828, published in 2001 as a joint publication by the Society and Spink, has as its author another US member of the Society and Washington resident, Harrington E.
Manville, and its merits have already been recognised by the award to Manville of the International Association of Professional Numismatists' book prize for 2002.

Challis's Presidency also saw active involvement by him on the Society's behalf in the affairs of two other numismatic bodies. The UK Numismatic Trust, set up by the Royal and British Numismatic Societies to administer the financial aspects of the International Numismatic Congress in London in 1986, had emerged from the Congress with a financial balance of £7279.72, and after some initial disbursements and a following period of inactivity, the Trust was reactivated as a grant-giving body in 1991–2. Challis gave his full co-operation to the Trust's then chairman, Professor T.V. Buttrey, President of the Royal Numismatic Society, and has since chaired the Trust himself.

Similarly, Challis pledged the Society's support early in 1992 to a proposal by Dr. Andrew Burnett, Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, which led to the first meeting in June that year of a Co-ordinating Committee for Numismatics in Britain. The Committee itself never flourished, and does not currently function, but a CCNB Newsletter, jointly funded by the Royal Numismatic Society and the British Numismatic Society, has since been issued on a regular basis. It has over this period of time served the useful purpose, identified as a need by the present writer in his Presidential Address to the Society in 1987, of providing those interested in numismatics in the United Kingdom with organised information on current numismatic events, discoveries and publications, but a newsletter issued under the ostensible authority of a non-functioning committee is something of an oddity, and it is no doubt time that the two Societies reflected on its future.

Under the leadership of Graham Dyer, President 1994–8, and of David Dykes, President since 1999, the Society has continued to prosper. The events of their Presidencies are too close in time to the present to review in detail, but the health of the Society is evident. Its membership reached 556 at the Anniversary Meeting in 1994, 587 by the Anniversary Meeting in 1998, and finally attained a figure of over 600 at the Anniversary Meeting in 2002. In parallel, its net assets, vastly swelled in Challis's time by the legacies mentioned earlier, stood at £126,466 in the year ending 31 October 2001. It must nevertheless be remembered that the cost of the production of *BNJ* still has to be met out of the Society's General Purposes Fund, representing only £34,452 of that total, and the subscription was therefore raised from £24 to £32 at the Anniversary Meeting in 2002.

The standard of *BNJ* has also been fully maintained under its successive editors. The principal editorship has recently been held by Barrie Cook (1990–4), Edward Besly, of the National Museum of Wales (1994–8) and Nicholas Holmes, of the National Museums of Scotland (1998 onwards), Besly and Holmes having in turn previously acted as production editor. The post of production editor was held in 1999–2002 by Dr Gareth Williams, Marion Archibald's successor at the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, and since 2002 has been shared with David Symons, of Birmingham City Museum.

In the context of *BNJ*, it had been felt for some time that the rules for the John Sanford Saltus Medal, historically awarded in recognition of papers published in *BNJ*, ought to be revised so that members were better informed about the candidates best qualified to receive the medal in the triennial ballot, and Council approved new rules in October 1993. These provided that in future members would be supplied with a shortlist of qualified candidates and attached listing of their principal contributions to *BNJ*, while also permitting members to take account of numismatic writings by the candidates other than in *BNJ* if their contributions to *BNJ* appeared to be of equal merit. The first award under the new rules was made in 1995, when members voted to award the medal to Jeffrey North, a member of the Society since 1957 (Pl. 9d), whose principal numismatic territory has been the coinages of Edward I, II and III, but who is probably most familiar to numismatists as the author of *English Hammered Coinage*, a Spink publication which in successive editions during the last forty years has provided an authoritative numbered listing of the English hammered series, and he was a very appropriate recipient of the medal on this occasion.

Council also decided in June 1996 to make a special award of the medal to Philip Grierson (Pl. 10a), whose contributions to BNJ had commenced with a paper on ‘The Canterbury (St Martin’s) hoard of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon coin ornaments’, published as far back as vol. XXVII (27), and by now included an admirable paper on ‘Domesday Book, the geld De Moneta and Monetagium, a forgotten minting reform’, published in vol. 55. As Grierson pertinently observed when receiving the medal on 27 May 1997, Council’s action was wholly irregular, for the award had not been made by the vote of members in a ballot. Council should nonetheless be forgiven, for Grierson’s papers in BNJ, although not numerous, have been of consistently high quality, and it would have been wrong to let them go unacknowledged by the Society.

Regrettably, the special award to Grierson induced confusion in the timing of the next award, and the ballot which should have been held at the Anniversary Meeting in November 1998 was not held until the Anniversary Meeting in 1999. The award of the medal on that occasion to Robert Thompson recognised Thompson’s significant achievement in introducing proper scholarly rigour to the study of the seventeenth century token coinage, both in the pages of BNJ and in the successive volumes of his great catalogue of the Norweb collection. The seventeenth century has also been the main research area of the Society’s most recent John Sanford Saltus medallist, Edward Besly (Pl. 10b), winner of a ballot delayed from November 2002 to January 2003, who has contributed a series of authoritative papers to BNJ on the coinage of the provincial mints of Charles I, as well as providing BNJ with some exemplary reports on coin hoards and other numismatic discoveries in Wales.

Thompson had served as Director in 1989–90, and that post has subsequently been held by Dr Donal Bateson, of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow (1991–3). Thomas Curtis, a director of the Baldwin firm (1994–8), Edward Besly (1999–2001), and Dr Kevin Clancy, of the Royal Mint (2002 onwards). Bateson went on to serve as Secretary (1994–8), and the current holder of that post (1999 onwards) is Lieut.-Com. Charles Farthing, Royal Navy, retired. Philip Mennick is the Society’s present Treasurer (2002 onwards). T.J. Robertson, a retired police officer, was the joint Societies’ Librarian in 1991–4, but latterly found it difficult to attend the library, and on his resignation in February 1994 the post was held on a caretaker basis for some months by his immediate predecessor Roger Bland. Anthony Holmes, the Societies’ current Librarian (1995 onwards), is now the longest serving of our Society’s executive officers.

Of the two Presidents during this final period, Graham Dyer, as we have seen, had served continuously as Director, Editor and Secretary between 1981 and 1993, and presided over the Society with considerable efficiency and skill during his years as President. One particular feature of his Presidency was his involvement in the affairs of BAMS, on whose committee he had been the Society’s representative since 1987, and the BAMS Congress held at one of the halls of residence of University College, London, in April 1994, was the first which the British Numismatic Society has hosted by itself (and only the fourth in the management of which it has played any part).

David Dykes, a recent former Director of the National Museum of Wales (Pl. 10c), has been a member of the Society since January 1954. In his youth he came under the influence of Michael Dolley, and was encouraged by him to study the coinage of thirteenth century Ireland, on which he contributed two excellent papers to vols XXXII and XXXIII (32 and 33) of BNJ. The pattern of his career prevented him from making more than an occasional contribution to the work of the Society in the years that followed, but after his retirement from his museum post he returned to an early numismatic interest, the token coinage of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Having served on Council for the years 1997–8, he was selected for nomination as President for 1999, and in that post his courtesy and warmth of personality has endeared him to members generally. It is fitting that in the Society’s centenary year we should be presided over by a President whose experience of the Society’s meetings began almost exactly halfway through the century of the Society’s existence, and he will hand over a prosperous heritage to whoever is chosen as his successor.