THE SHERBORNE BANK TOKENS

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One of the salient features of the economic development of England and Wales in the second half of the eighteenth century was the emergence of a country banking system. When he first came to England in 1750 Edmund Burke could observe with some truth that 'there were not, as I believe, twelve Bankers shops at that time out of London'; by the end of the century there were something approaching 400. And the last decade or so of the century, despite the large number of failures that followed the outbreak of war with France in 1793, was a period of substantial banking growth, with a rise, overall, from 120 or so firms in 1784 to well over 300 by 1797.¹

These were also, coincidentally, the years of the heyday of the eighteenth-century provincial coin. Yet despite the fact that many country banks grew out of the financial activities of local industrialists, merchants and tradesmen, who daily faced a critical shortage of good quality small coin for wage payments and petty retail transactions, a mere handful seem to have had any obvious connection with the issue of local promissory tokens. A comparison of known token issuers with listed bankers or proto-bankers suggests that only one fully-fledged banking firm - yet one still ostensibly involved in merchandising - and not more than half a dozen other industrial or commercial concerns, functionally, but not yet formally, engaged in banking, put out a provincial coinage.² Plainly, the practice was an unusual one even for embryonic bankers and was occasioned more by the needs or opportunities of their primary business operations.³

Some of the country's larger industrialists or manufacturers, driven by the need to find capital for their works and cash for their wage payments, promoted banking concerns: John Wilkinson with the North Wales Bank at Holywell, John Morgan the Carmarthen Furnace Bank and Thomas Williams the Chester and North Wales Bank.⁴ All three issued tokens, Williams - their progenitor - and Wilkinson, on a very large scale, but one would not be aware from the tokens themselves that their issuers were engaged in banking even at an embryonic stage.⁵

On the more local commercial scene, John Voss of Swansea was a tradesman who had probably already added banking to a range of business activities by 1796 when he issued his halfpenny, but he was content to do no more than declare himself as 'Draper, &c' on its reverse. Thomas

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Abbreviations: D&H: R. Dalton and S.H. Hamer, The Provincial Token-Coinage of the 18th Century ([Bristol], privately printed in 14 parts 1910-18); DRO: Dorset Record Office, Dorchester.


² The analysis is based on a comparison of the token issuers listed in D&H and the banking partners recorded in Dawes and Ward-Perkins, as in n. 1, Volume 1, pp. 63-174 and Volume 2, passim.

³ Country banks, in their nature, did not, by and large, handle copper coin except at a premium and their reluctance to involve themselves in the issue of provincial coinage should occasion no surprise. Perhaps more remarkable is the apparent dearth of bankers associated with the issue of the silver tokens of 1811-12. Of some one hundred issuers at that time no more than a dozen can be definitely identified as banks.


⁵ Indeed, the only token to bear the profession of its putative issuer as a banker was that of 'George Jobson' of 'Northampton' and this piece, the reverse of which is based on the arms of Norwich, is undoubtedly a fake, said to have been produced by the Birmingham button maker, R.B. Morgan: D&H: Northamptonshire 1. Although Charles Pye included the piece in his Provincial Coins and Tokens issued from the year 1787 to the year 1801 (Birmingham and London, 1804), p. 15 and plate 38, no. 5, Thomas Sharp stated that there was no banker in Northampton of the name of Jobson nor was the token circulated there: A Catalogue of Provincial Copper Coins: Tokens, Tickets, and Medalets issued in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies, during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries . . . in the Collection of Sir George Chetwynd . . . (London, 1834), p. 76. No evidence pointing to any banker or proto-banker in Northampton named Jobson has emerged since.
Worswick, initially a Lancaster watchmaker and goldsmith, had, by the time he issued his tokens in 1792, set up a banking business with his sons but he was also a ‘merchant’ and made his halfpennies – used mainly for the wages of ‘navigators’ digging the Lancaster Canal – redeemable at his warehouse and not at his banking house. The Southampton halfpennies of Richard Vernon Moody and Walter Taylor were intended primarily for circulation in the public houses of their brewery concern and for payment to the employees of Taylor’s naval blockmaking mills, and were unconnected with Moody’s banking interests in the town.

Perhaps the halfpenny tokens of Robert Bird Wilkins, an Isle of Wight ironmonger, may have been associated with the beginnings of the banking business that he had formalised by the early nineteenth century but the edge legend ‘PAYABLE AT HIS OFFICE NEWPORT’ gives no positive proof of this. There is, in fact, only one eighteenth-century provincial coin series – the halfpennies of Pretor, Pew and Whitty, the owner-partnership of the Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank – that has any overt claim to have been issued by a bank sensu stricto. Even then, the partnership operated a virtually inseparable grocery business in which the roots of the bank lay.

The series of Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank halfpennies comprises three different types:

(a)

Fig. 1. D&H: Dorset 7.

Obv: P P & W as a monogram beneath a hive and bees.
Rev: A double-headed eagle displayed, surrounded by the legend A SHERBORNE HALFPENNY. 1793
Edge: PAYABLE AT THE BANK IN SHERBORNE + DORSET +

Measuring 29 mm in diameter, this first type is struck, on average, to a weight standard in excess of 11.2 g. Charles Pye admitted this halfpenny to the 1801 (quarto) edition of his catalogue as a genuine provincial coin, attributing its issue to ‘Preter (sic), Pew and Company’, and describing it as common (‘c’) in his time. As Dalton and Hamer suggested the P P & W halfpenny is distinctly scarce in fine condition today (i.e. EF or better) but the occurrence with which worn specimens are met tends to go more, if not completely, towards Pye’s judgement of its contemporary rarity. There were no other tokens put out for miles around at the professed time of its issue and that the Sherborne halfpenny circulated locally as familiar small change over a not insignificant period is evident from the appreciable wear of the twelve examples of the type in the Dorset County Museum and of the number that are still in private hands.

6 The obverse die of some specimens is said to show some evidence of increasing stress and the beginnings of a cracking flaw but I have not yet come across such flaws in the specimens I have examined. Thomas Sharp describes a variety of this token apparently struck from a different obverse die, ‘distinguishable by the size of the eagle and thicker claws’. Although listed by Atkins – and subsequently Kent – this was not known to Dalton & Hamer who suggested that it ‘may possibly have been described as a variety from a specimen which had been subjected to some pressure, whereby the claws appeared thicker’: Thomas Sharp, as in n. 5, p. 42, no. 8; James Atkins, The Tradesmen’s Tokens of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1892), p. 23, no. 8; G.C. Kent, British Metallic Coins and Tradesmen’s Tokens from 1660–1912 (Chichester, 1912), p. 174, no. 8; D&H, p. 27. As far as I am aware no specimen has ever since been seen to confirm Sharp’s or, for that matter, Atkins’ or Kent’s description.

7 A representation of the arms of Simon Pretor (or, an eagle displayed with two heads vert, beaked and membered gules). The device is to be found on the Pretor family tomb near the south entrance to Sherborne Abbey and on the notes of the Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank (Figs 2 and 5 below).

8 Pye, as in n. 5, p. 17 and plate 44, no. 7, and p. 4. In mis-spelling the name ‘Pretor’ Pye presumably followed the reverse inscription on (b) below. Generally, Pye used the description ‘common’ when he had not been given details of a token’s mintage by its maker and he was obliged to rely on his own and other collectors’ surmise; it could mean a striking of less than 5 cwt. Kent, as in n. 6 and Waters, in his edition of ‘Pye’ (Leamington Spa, 1916), rated the halfpenny as ‘scarce’.
Bearing in mind what must have been the halfpenny’s original incidence it comes as some
surprise to find that, although dated 1793, it is not listed in any of the early catalogues of
provincial coins until its inclusion in James Conder’s Arrangement of 1798. Its absence from
Samuel Birchall’s Descriptive List, which was not published until the early part of 1796, is
especially significant since, in addition to his own observations, he had the benefit of information
supplied by a number of enthusiastic collectors of provincial coins and by Matthew Young, a
dealer with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the contemporary token scene. One of Birchall’s
correspondents was Miss Banks and, although she was usually adept at securing pieces soon after
they were struck, we know from her own manuscript evidence that she did not acquire her
specimen until 2 January 1797.9

All this naturally raises the question of whether the date on the token was its actual date of issue.

When Charles Pye illustrated the token he attributed both its die-sinking and manufacture to
‘Westwood’. He added that its companion pieces, two halfpennies each dated 1796 (D&H: Dorsetshire 8 and 9 – Figs 2 and 3 below), were ‘both made by Westwood for sale’ but, since Pye
stressed that his catalogue contained ‘representations or descriptions’ of only ‘genuine tokens’,
the latter were omitted from his plate. Elsewhere in his catalogue Pye was more specific in his references
to the Westwood family, attributing the manufacture of Milton’s prototype Anglesey penny to ‘J.
Westwood’ (i.e. John Westwood, senior) and one – probably the first – of the tokens of the London
bookseller James Lackington (D&H: Middlesex 351) to ‘O. Westwood’ (i.e. Obadiah Westwood, who took
over his brother’s coining business after John Westwood, senior’s death in 1792).10

Otherwise, Pye was unwittingly vague about ‘Westwood’ and it has perhaps been too easily
assumed that in his use of the surname tout court Pye was referring to Obadiah’s son, John
Westwood, junior, whom he castigated in his ‘Advertisement’ for the latter’s ‘ingenuity’ in
copying genuine commercial coins and fabricating spurious ‘half halfpenny’ and ‘penny’
novelties.11 These collector’s tokens, well executed in comparatively small quantities, seem to
have been produced in the years 1795 to 1800 when Westwood tried to sell the dies for some of
the more ‘medallic’ pieces to Matthew Boulton.12 The satirical ‘Collectors’ Halfpence’, attributed
to Westwood by Sharp and one of which – a variety of the ‘running asse’ type – is struck on an
unused ‘Sherborne Bank’ blank13 (D&H: Middlesex 299a), also come from this time.

What is patently not a piece by young Westwood from this period, however, is the
‘Washington/Ship’ halfpenny (D&H: Middlesex 1051) which Pye attributed to ‘Westwood’ and
commented was ‘sold in small quantities to any person who would purchase [them]’.14 This latter piece
has every appearance of being a production of the Hancock/Obadiah Westwood consortium of about
1793, the date shown on its reverse. As Pye noted, it was struck from puncheons made by Hancock,
the obverse die being that used for the ‘Washington/Small Eagle’ cent of 1791 (D&H: Middlesex
1050) and the reverse an adaptation of that used for the Yarmouth halfpenny of the following year
(D&H: Norfolk 51). The halfpenny is listed in all the early catalogues and, while young Westwood
may have had a hand in its manufacture as an apprentice, it must surely be one of those productions
that Thomas Digges ferreted out on his visit to Birmingham in the spring of 1793.15

9 James Conder, An Arrangement of Provincial Coins, Tokens, and Medalets issued in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies,
within the last twenty years; from the farthing to the penny size (Ipswich, 1798). The halfpenny is not listed in either of John
Hammond’s catalogues (A Descriptive List of the Provincial Copper Coins including those of London by Christopher Williams:
Esquires (London, 1795) and The Virtuoso’s Guide in Collecting Provincial Copper Coins (London, 1795)); Thomas Spence’s, The
Coin Collector’s Companion (London, 1795) or Samuel Birchall’s, A Descriptive List of the Provincial Copper Coins or Tokens issued
between the Years 1786 and 1796 (Leeds, 1796). [Sarah Sophia Banks], Ms Catalogue of Coin Collection, VI – Tokens, p. 119, no. 143: BM, Department of Coins and Medals, Acc R 19.
10 Waters was sceptical of Pye’s attribution of this token to ‘O. Westwood’ since he considered that it was ‘not up to the standard of
Westwood’s fine work’ but he confused Obadiah with his son: Arthur W. Waters, Notes on Eighteenth Century Tokens (London, 1954),
11 Pye, as in n. 5, p. 4.
12 The terminus ante quem for the original striking of such pieces would seem to be 1799/1800: the letter from Westwood to
Matthew Boulton listing, inter alia, his dies for his Anglesey copies, Malton penny, Macclesfield penny and British Commercial coins,
is dated from Birmingham on 29 January 1800. (MS 5792/12/45/1800/32: Matthew Boulton Papers, Birmingham City Archives).
13 Judging from my own specimen it is not overstruck on either D&H: Dorsetshire 7 or 8.
14 Pye, as in n. 5, p. 18.
Apart from the ‘Sherborne Bank’ halfpenny Pye attributed the engraving of only one other strictly commercial token to ‘Westwood’, the halfpenny issued by the Perth wine and spirit merchant, David Peters in 1797 (D&H: Perthshire 10). The ‘Westwood’ here must be John Westwood, junior but what is intriguing about this piece is that Pye identified its manufacturer as Lutwyche, the only known association of young Westwood with this token maker. One must wonder on whose presses the other ‘Westwood’ pieces of the period 1795–1800 were actually struck.

Until 1793 the Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank operated variously as Simon Pretor and Son or Simon Pretor and Company. Pretor’s son (b.1756), who had been actively engaged in bank affairs since 1776, died in April 1790 and on the removal of his nephew and son-in-law, Michael Pretor Gill, from the business two years later a new partnership comprising Simon Pretor, his two other sons-in-law, Richard Pew (1752–1834) and Samuel Whitty (1760–1833), who had both been partners in the bank since their marriages, was established. Although this was in August 1792 the new partnership does not seem to have been formalised until the following year. The $PPW$ halfpenny in a sense, therefore, commemorates the establishment of the new partnership though, of course, this should not necessarily presume an actual issue date of 1793. Even as late as February 1792, nearly two years after the death of the younger Pretor, the bank – now Simon Pretor and Company – was still using promissory notes in the name of Simon Pretor and Son (Fig. 2 below) although this apparent tardiness may simply reflect Pretor’s characteristic thrift in not wasting an existing supply of such instruments.

![Fig. 2. A Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank Note of 1792 in the name of Simon Pretor & Son. (Reproduced by kind permission of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group).](image)

16 It may not be without significance that Lutwyche succeeded Obadiah Westwood in the manufacture of Lackington’s halfpennies.
17 DRO: Sherborne Parish Register (Burials), 13 April 1790; 27 August 1792; London Gazette, No. 13455, 1–4 September 1792, 678. Dawes and Ward-Perkins, as in n. 1, Volume II, p. 527, lists Gill incorrectly as ‘Michael Gill Pretor’. Gill’s departure from the bank followed his desertion of and separation from Martha Pretor (whom he had married in 1789) and emigration to the United States. On marriage each of Simon Pretor’s daughters had £1000 in the Sherborne bank settled on them and their husbands became partners in the bank.
18 Pew was a Shaftesbury surgeon, but later apparently qualifying as an MD (married to Pretor’s daughter Elizabeth in 1786), and Whitty, a son of the inventor of the Axminster carpet (married to Pretor’s daughter Mary in 1790), was the manager of the bank. The latter’s elder brother, Thomas Whitty, was a partner in the Axminster bank of Hallett, Stevens and Whitty. Maureen Weinstock, More Dorset Studies (Dorchester, 1960), p. 79. DRO: Sherborne Parish Register (Marriages), 19 June 1790 and 27 April 1790. Dawes and Ward-Perkins, as in n. 1, Volume II, p. 527.
19 Weinstock, as in n. 18.
Unfortunately, the fragmentary bank records that have survived throw no light on the date of issue of the PP & W halfpenny. It must thus remain something of a conundrum in the absence of any reference to it by any numismatic authority until after 1795. One could only wish that Pye’s vagueness over the Westwood family could be clarified. All one can say is that if the token was struck in 1793 it is much more likely to be a product of the Hancock/Obadiah Westwood consortium. On the other hand, if it was struck in, say, 1796, then, allowing that young Westwood was the die-sinker, the question must be asked whether he had the capacity himself to strike the quantity that one imagines was produced. The wear so many PP & W halfpennies exhibit perhaps points to 1793 but there are tokens of late date – the ‘Glamorgan’ halfpenny, the Sudbury halfpenny and, nearer to home, those of Crewkeme and Yeovil (a Lutwyche product, it should be said) – that are all similarly worn and indicate a span of circulation uninhibited by the introduction of Boulton’s ‘cartwheel’ coinage.  

(b) The second ‘Sherborne Halfpenny’ – the ‘Bank House’ token – is dated 1796. Again it is a well-struck piece, measuring 30 mm in diameter and weighing, on average, a healthy 12 g or more. Dalton and Hamer classed it as rare but this is probably too weak an estimation; in Atkins’ view the token was very rare, an estimate echoed by Kent (‘rr’, value 15/- in 1912). 

Obv: A building, above it an eagle as before with a riband inscribed STET FORTUNA DOMUS  
Rev: PRETER / PEW & WHITTY / BANKERS / SHERBORNE / DORSET / 1796  
Edge: PAYABLE AT THE BANK IN SHERBORNE + DORSET +  

Published by Prattent in Volume 8, plate 237, of The Virtuoso’s Companion, this was the first ‘Preter’ halfpenny to appear in a contemporary catalogue. Plate 192 (Volume 7) was the last plate to be engraved with the month and day of publication, in that instance 13 May 1797, so that if the current publication pattern of three plates issued in weekly numbers were preserved, plate 237 would have appeared on 26 August 1797. Miss Banks acquired her specimen on 13 July and it is not unreasonable to assume that Dorset 8, although dated 1796, was actually put out in the spring or early summer of 1797. 

On the basis of Pye’s condemnation of this piece the ‘Bank House’ token has traditionally been dismissed as a specious production. Arthur W. Waters, however, questioned how, if it was not genuine, ‘Westwood, working in Birmingham, was able to put a view of the Bank on the token’ and concluded that it was ‘more probable’ that it was made to the order of the bank. The obverse image of the bank, allowing for the constrictions imposed on the die-sinker, is a not unfaithful representation of the original sixteenth/seventeenth century property in Long Street, Sherborne occupied by the firm at this time and copied from an engraving later reproduced in the second edition of the Reverend John Hutchins’s History of Dorset with the caption ‘The Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank’.

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20 I am grateful to Michael Dickinson for the observation about the Crewkeme and Yeovil halfpennies.  
21 Atkins, as in n. 6, p. 23; Kent, as in n. 6, p. 174.  
22 ‘May good Fortune ever attend this House’.  
23 [M. Denton and T. Prattent], The Virtuoso’s Companion and Coin Collectors Guide (London, 1795–7); [Sarah Sophia Banks], as in n. 9, p. 119, no. 142.  
24 Waters, as in n. 10, p. 4.  
Although this engraving was not published in 'Hutchins' until 1815 there is persuasive evidence that it had been completed by 1796. One can thus find some justification in Waters’ doubts since there is every reason to conclude that the engraving or a preliminary drawing would have been available to Simon Pretor to serve as a model for Westwood. What seems likely to have happened is that the demand for the original Sherborne halfpennies was such — as evidenced by their wear — that Pretor ordered the ‘Bank House’ token as a replacement commercial coin but rejected the proofs because of the misspelling of his name on its reverse. Pretor was a forthright character whose temper had not improved with age and whose pride would never have allowed him to accept a defective product that he would have deemed personally derogatory. Thus although intended to be a genuine commercial coin the halfpenny never passed the test of acceptability by its projector. Young Westwood on the other hand, ever mindful of his income, would not have failed to capitalise on his lost commission by using the spurned dies to produce a ‘limited edition’ token for the collectors’ market.

The original bank building — a grade II* listed structure with the canted oriel featured on the token and the engraving — still stands in Long Street (ST 6316 1153), although in the early nineteenth century it was greatly altered, extended into an adjacent property and remodelled with the Gothic-Revival facade depicted on the firm’s later notes (Fig. 5 below).

(c) The third ‘Sherborne Bank’ halfpenny is again a well-struck token, measuring 29 mm and weighing on average 11.11 g. The lettering of the obverse monogram is ordered wrongly, however, and must be a deliberate mistake on the part of Westwood who was well aware of the bank partnership’s correct cipher. It cannot be just an unfortunate slip that might have explained away the ‘Bank House’ token; one can only presume that this piece is spurious and, as Pye concluded, was produced for sale, presumably to collectors since it is distinctly rare and is rarely

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26 The engraving was probably the work either of the distinguished engraver James Basire (1730–1802) or his son, also James (1769–1822), who executed a number of plates for the first and second editions of ‘Hutchins’, Volume I of the second edition was published in 1796 and it seems likely that the preliminary drawings and probably the plates for the projected three volumes of the edition were undertaken as a single commission. Some of Basire’s preliminary drawings are contained in ‘Original Sketches of M’. Basire, made for Hutchins’ History of Dorset. AD 1798 [or 1796] (many afterwards engraved), two books (bound as one) now deposited in DRO. No sketch of the bank is included but a note indicates that there were additional drawings ‘among many others ... in Mr. Nichols’ copy of Dorsetshire’. I am indebted to Mr. Pitfield for drawing my attention to Basire’s involvement in ‘Hutchins’ and to the existence of the sketchbooks.

27 Pretor’s querulous nature is amply illustrated throughout his Letter Book (see n. 25 below).
found in other than extremely fine condition. Dalton and Hamer, echoing Atkins, classified it as 'rare' but again this errs on being too low. Kent, putting it as 'rare' (value 20/ in 1912), was probably nearer the mark but it is difficult to say whether it is really a scarcer piece than the 'Bank House' halfpenny.28

Simon Pretor was born at Lyme Regis in 1727, apparently the youngest of some eleven children of another Simon Pretor (b.1683), an excise official who came originally from Okehampton in Devon but who, in the nature of his work, spent time in various West Country towns.29 Nothing is known of the younger Pretor's early life and he does not begin to emerge from obscurity until

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28 Atkins and Kent, as in n. 21.
29 At Dulverton in 1713 where Simon Pretor's elder brother Michael was born and where his father was described as a 'gauger': Richard Pares. A West-India Fortune (London, 1950), pp. 63 and 347. At Broadhembury in 1741: DRO: Pretor Letter Book - Pretor to William Lush, 6 June 1795. Pretor's career is usefully described in Weinstock, as in n. 9, although her three relevant chapters ('Simon Pretor of Sherborne and his family', 'The Pretor Grocery Business' and 'Simon Pretor, Landlord and Banker', pp. 74–110) suffer from a lack of adequate referencing. They are based largely on Pretor's Cashbook 1772–6, Ledger 1795–1824 and Letter Book 1794–1805: Royal Bank of Scotland Group Archives, GB 1502 PEW, and on microfilm: DRO, MIC/R/12. See also Anon., Links with the Past: National Provincial Bank Limited, Sherborne (No place or date of publication).
1753 when he married Elizabeth Vowell, probably a connection of a family of local grocers of that name, in Sherborne. We do not know when he came or what brought him to the abbey town but by the time of his marriage he seems already to have had the means to set up on his own account as a grocer and tea-man opposite the Shambles at the bottom of Cheap Street. This may possibly have been about 1750 for nineteenth-century banknotes of the Sherborne and Dorsetshire Bank (Fig. 5 above) declare that it was established in that year. While this must have been wishful thinking about any formalized banking service it no doubt reflected Pretor’s beginnings as a grocer in Sherborne and some kind of bill-discounting business that he may have operated as a subsidiary to his main trading interest.

It is of more than passing interest that family tradition had it that Pretor’s mother, who died at Lyme Regis in 1750, had, as a widow with a large family to keep, begun a form of ‘banking’ there. If the story has any credence, Mary Pretor’s ‘banking’, at so early a date, would, presumably, have been some simple arrangement carried out as an adjunct to an existing shop-keeping business, providing customers with ready cash, tidying them over with small loans, and perhaps discounting bills for neighbouring tradesmen.30

Pretor no doubt learned his trade in his mother’s shop. Her death in 1750 may have occasioned his move to Sherborne and her example may well have encouraged him, like his fellow token issuer John Voss in Swansea, to set aside part of his own shop for such facilities.31 When Pretor moved his expanding grocery business across Cheap Street to new premises at ‘the corner of Church Lane, at the foot of the Shambles, near the Conduit’ in 1757, there is no specific mention of ‘banking’ among the wide variety of activities he advertised as a dealer in ‘GROCERY, TEA, HABERDASHERY, STATIONARY (sic) and other Goods, Wholesale and Retail’;32 Sherborne, however, was a market town with a population of some three thousand souls including five attorneys, several silk and linen manufacturers and a multiplicity of substantial tradesmen. It was ripe for a ‘banking shop’. None yet existed in the town and there were many among Pretor’s customers, people of substance extending to Yeovil, Ilchester, Wincanton and Castle Cary, who would have taken advantage of a facility non-existent in their own localities. A cryptic reference in Pretor’s advertisement to ‘other forms of business’ being transacted on the most moderate Terms is thus not without significance.

It is not without interest either that before long he was announcing, though still under his title of ‘Grocer and Tea-man’, that ‘more than the current value of 36s. and 3½ 12s. pieces’ would be immediately paid for in Guineas, Bank Notes or Bills of Exchange. It seems a strange inducement but, presumably, his nascent banking flair and eye to profit had identified a niche in the currency market which he could exploit by buying in the all too prevalent ‘Joes’ and ‘double Joes’ – ‘in a great Measure the current Money of the Nation’ – and then exporting them through his nephew, the Bristol merchant John Pinney, to the currency-starved West Indies where Portuguese specie was the dominant gold coinage.33 There, on Nevis, Pinney owned sugar plantations and kept his uncle’s shop well supplied with rum and sugar.

An exotic gamut of groceries and haberdashery, both wholesale and retail – from eleven varieties of tea to coffee, chocolate, sugar, molasses, spices, rice, dried fruit, herrings, anchovies, wine, tobacco, turpentine, saipetre, candles, gunpowder and shot, canary seed, gloves, laces and

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30 As did many shopkeepers who never metamorphosed into bankers; Abraham Dent, for example: T.S. Willan, An Eighteenth-Century Shopkeeper, Abraham Dent of Kirkby Stephen (Manchester, 1970), passim. Mrs Pretor’s business may well have been in groceries which her husband had begun in tandem with his excise duties and which his financial expertise had encouraged him to expand.

31 Pretor notes on the flyleaf of his Cashbook for 1773–6 that his mother died at Lyme Regis on 5 May 1750: DRO, MICR/12; ‘Mrs. Pretor [sic], widow’ was buried there on 10 May 1750: DRO, Lyme Regis Parish Register. His daughter Elizabeth is said to have been born at Lyme Regis in 1754 while, in a petition to the Commissioners of Excise in 1755, Pretor claimed that he had been a dealer in tea for over forty years. His move to Sherborne is, thus, more likely to have taken place in 1754–5.

32 The Western Flying-Post; or Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury, 28 November and 5 December 1757. Pretor’s new shop has been identified as on the site of the premises now occupied by the Sherborne Conservative Club: J.H.P. Gibb, The Book of Sherborne (Buckingham, 1981), p. 109; information from Dr. Penn. Pretor appears to have moved again within two years or so to the upper end of the Shambles, in Cheap Street: The Western Flying-Post; or Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury, 5 July 1761 and 20 and 27 July 1795.

33 The Western Flying-Post; or Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury, 5 July 1761. For Pinney see Pares, as in n. 29, passim. For a contemporary comment on the circulation of Portuguese coins in the country and the profits made from ‘calling’ them see Peter Vallavine, Observations on the present condition of the current Coin of this Kingdom (London, 1742), pp. 32–38.
pins – were to be Pretor’s prime preoccupation for much of the next thirty-eight years. He bought from merchants in London, Bristol, Exeter, Devizes and Weymouth and often in quantities that stress his trade as a local wholesaler as well as retail grocer. It was a prosperous concern, driven by a shrewd business sense, a total lack of sentiment and a fractious nature. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century he had also built up his banking arm to the extent that in 1774 he was encouraged to set up the separate banking house in Long Street, a stone’s throw from the Conduit, having taken over an under-lease of the Digby estate property from John Loader, a Yeovil baker. Nothing is known of any bank in Sherborne prior to Pretor’s venture and at the time of his death in 1804 it was believed to have been the first of its kind in Dorset.

Pretor never relinquished direct control of his grocery business, especially its wholesale side but by 1790 he was aging and put his ne’er-do-well son-in-law, Michael Gill, in charge. It was a familial lapse of judgement and since Pretor had no immediate successor – his son, as we have noted, died later that year and both Pew and Whitty were, in his view, ‘better pleased to be licking Honey of Thorns as Bankers than to be extracting the Sweets from the Sugar cane of the West Indies, the Rich fruit from the Mediterranean or the Aromatic Spices of the East Indies’ – he

34 But not local produce such as butter, cheese and eggs that would have been bought at Sherborne’s Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday markets.
35 DRO: Pretor Cashbook, 7 November 1774; Sherborne Estate, D/SHC – KG 1938, 10 March 1791. Hutchings in the first edition of his History of Dorset records the Long Street premises as a private residence in the occupation of a Mr Darby (the Darbie family is known to have been associated with the property in the 1750s). But by the time it was published in 1774 Hutchins had been gathering material for his book for thirty years and his information was long out of date: John Hutchins, The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset (1774), Vol. II, p. 391.
26 Gentleman’s Magazine, Part II. (1804), 885. This is borne out by Dawes and Ward-Perkins, as in n. 1, Volume 2.
decided to sell up.\textsuperscript{37} There was pressure, too, from his nephew, John Pinney, who thought that his uncle was still more concerned with possessing ‘the splendid shilling’ than enjoying ‘the comforts of this life’ and descending ‘to the grave in peace and love towards all men’. Even in the sale, however, Pretor was not prepared to let the prosperous business he had built up over half a century go cheaply: as he told one enquirer rather sniffily, ‘The Person that takes my Trade should have 1500 to 2000£’. And this was probably only for the stock and goodwill. In the event he made the business over to John and William Ensor of Sherborne in the summer of 1795.\textsuperscript{38}

The sketchy nature of the financial documents that have come down to us allow only a tantalising glimpse into Pretor’s banking activities. The records, stressing the private and family nature of his business, do not separate personal, shop and bank affairs. But, on the strictly banking side, they demonstrate that the discounting of bills was a significant part of the firm’s work. Promissory notes were issued and received, deposits accepted (with interest paid at 3% on three months’ notice) and loans and mortgages negotiated (at 5%). Cash balances were kept relatively small, surpluses frequently being converted into bills, and in true eighteenth-century entrepreneurial style a proportion of the profits or ‘neat proceeds’ were ploughed back into the bank. Appreciable investments were made in property and, to safeguard liquidity, especially in government funds. As Pretor told an old friend in the excise service, ‘Myself and Partners hold full 20,000£ of funded Property . . . we consider it as the best kind of Property for men of Business to hold because you can have any part of it when you please which you cannot of Landed Property’.\textsuperscript{39}

Under the North recoinage of 1773–6 Pretor was appointed an official exchanger of the old diminished coin in accordance the proclamations of 24 June 1774 and 12 April 1776\textsuperscript{40} and the Cashbook for these years sheds a little light on his activities in this capacity. In April 1776 Pretor collected ‘new coin from London £7,000’, part of the advance made by the Treasury towards the payment of owners of light coin. There are frequent entries for the receipt of light gold while a separate schedule lists eleven consignments of 33,890 guineas sent to the Bank of England between 6 May and 5 July 1776. Pretor himself took 5,670 guineas to London on 15 June and a further 6,250 on 3 July, his son having already taken up 2,650 on 4 June. The exchange, while bearing hardly on the owners of light coin, was a profitable trade for the banker though it is not possible to say what Pretor received in remuneration from the Exchequer.\textsuperscript{41} Nor, unfortunately, can one make any sensible comparison between what he paid and what he received for old and diminished money.

Many country banks of the period owed much of their prosperity to the services they performed in providing for the safe transfer of excise payments from the provinces to London. The Sherborne and Dorsetshire bank was no exception and was concerned with deposits from the greater part of the county. In the first six months of 1774, for example, nearly £23,000 was received from the collectors of districts as far apart as Yeovil, Shaftesbury and Poole\textsuperscript{42} and there is no reason to believe that such business was not a regular feature of bank activities.

When Pretor died in 1804, at the age of 76, he was described in the Gentleman’s Magazine as ‘a man of extensive knowledge, attained by a long life of observation . . . From his intimate acquaintance with commercial affairs, he was generally successful in his business, and consequently acquired a considerable fortune’.\textsuperscript{43} He had invested shrewdly and followed his own advice in buying ample government stock. His land holdings, too, were extensive, not only in Sherborne and its immediate area but as far afield as Ansford and Castle Cary. And in his will he stipulated that a quarter of the bank’s future profits were to be treated as a contingency fund ‘to guard against any accidental or peculiar losses’. Such prudence served the bank well. It survived the banking catastrophes of 1812 and 1825 and continued as a private bank, managed by Pretor’s descendants, for another forty years until, in 1843, it merged with the National Provincial Bank of England.

\textsuperscript{37} DRO: Pretor Letter Book – Pretor to W.P. Linnell, 8 February 1795.
\textsuperscript{38} DRO: Pretor Letter Book – Pretor to Wilson Lorrier [?], 10 March 1795; The Western Flying-Post; or Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury, 20 and 27 July 1795. The shop itself was let, at least in part, to the Ensors.
\textsuperscript{39} DRO: Pretor Letter Book – Pretor to Wm Irving, Collector of Excise, 28 May 1803.
\textsuperscript{40} The Western Flying-Post; or Sherborne & Yeovil Mercury, 18 July 1774 and 22 April 1776; DRO: Pretor Cashbook, passim.
\textsuperscript{41} Walter Murray (Remarks on the Coinage of England 2nd Edn., Nottingham, 1794), p. 57) said that £72,476 8s. was paid to the Exchangers of coin under the proclamations of June 1774 and April 1776.
\textsuperscript{42} DRO: Pretor Cash Book, passim, Pretor’s family connection with the Excise no doubt expedited this business.
\textsuperscript{43} Gentleman’s Magazine, as in n. 36.
New Zealand was the last Dominion to adopt her own coinage, which was phased in for silver denominations from the half-crown to the threepence between November 1933 and April 1934 (Pl. 8, 1-5). The economic circumstances behind their introduction are well documented, but the history, design, iconography and critical reception of the coins have received surprisingly little numismatic and no art historical attention.

This is partly due to the admirably cogent summary in Numismatic History of New Zealand (1941), by Allan Sutherland, who was closely involved in the design selection process. Certainly the 1933 designs aroused little of the intensely lively debate and media attention that would accompany their replacements, the 1967 decimal coinage reverses.

Several factors help to explain this. First, New Zealand was in the throes of the Great Depression, with a collapse in farm export prices and a decline in GDP by 16.6% between 1929 and 1931. The celebrated quip of the politician Robert Muldoon that ‘it doesn’t matter what’s on the coins so long as you have enough of them’ would have been far more appropriate in 1933 than when he made it in 1966. Secondly, the adopted designs, by George Kruger Gray (1880-1943), possess an understated beauty, dignity and daintiness that dispelled potential artistic controversy. Their characteristics were nicely summarised by George V, who considered them ‘a very satisfactory series’. Unlike the decimal reverses, no attempt was made to consult the wider public about the proposed designs. On their release, the tone of their limited press coverage was respectfully descriptive rather than sharply critical. Thirdly, ‘driftening’ the new coins in separate denominations took several months to complete and probably encouraged their acceptance. Indeed, the affection that they subsequently earned from collectors and public alike led to calls for their retention and redeployment as decimal coins. This intensified when their proposed replacements appeared so unsatisfactory in comparison.

Yet the adoption of the designs in their final form appears in retrospect to have been a surprisingly close run thing. Had Kruger Gray’s earlier set of coins, which had reached the stage of finished dies, been adopted instead, or had the alternative designs of Percy Metcalfe (1895-1970) been chosen, then the outcome would surely have been more controversial. As it is, the saga behind the emergence of the designs affords interesting insight into the power structures and personalities of the New Zealand Coalition government of 1931-5. A further ingredient that enlivened the process and progress of the coinage was the role played by the redoubtable Sir Robert Johnson. The lucid, forceful and short-fused Deputy Master of the Royal Mint found the New Zealand government ‘extremely difficult to deal with’ and complained of having to ‘serve two masters’. Hints of his frustrations emerge in the Mint’s 1933 Annual Report, but even he appeared content with the eventual outcome.

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1 Allan Sutherland, Numismatic History of New Zealand: History Reflected in Money and Medals (Wellington, 1941), pp. 266-79. See also R.P. Hargreaves, From Beads to Bank Notes (Dunedin, 1972), pp. 141-53.
5 Stocker, ‘“Coins of the People”’, as in n. 3, pp. 124-5.
6 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to H.W.F. Evans, 23 August 1933.
A recent article by Ken Matthews, 'The Legal History of Money in New Zealand', regards the 'nationalisation' of the currency as 'driven by two main causes: economic factors and a growing feeling that New Zealand had matured to the point that it should now have its own major currency.' Of these causes, the first was by far the more important; to stress the second exaggerates the significance of national identity to an extent that was never envisaged in the 1930s. As Sutherland observed, 'the introduction of a special coinage... would probably not have been contemplated but for the coin-smuggling difficulties which were experienced between the years 1930-33...'. Until then, there was little reason to move away from British Imperial coinage, which had been the assumed legal currency of New Zealand since the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). However, since their introduction in 1910, Australian coins had also been freely circulating in New Zealand although they were never legal tender. Following the devaluation of the Australian pound by ten per cent in 1930, this trickle had become a flood: some thirty per cent of the total coinage in circulation in 1931 was estimated to be Australian.

This situation prompted the government MP for Egmont, Charles Wilkinson, to introduce a private member's bill in July 1931 to establish a separate coinage. While New Zealand nationalism was not the prime concern, resentment towards the depreciated and endemic Australian coinage motivated considerable cross-party support. Wilkinson's arguments, while well intentioned and not uninformed, nevertheless revealed a naivety, both in sentimentalising colonial ties and in underestimating the technical complexities involved in minting. He stated that 'if we are going to favour any outside money at all, I would say that we should favour British rather than Australian. The Mother-country has always treated us well, and I think that in the retirement of the British silver she would treat us generously today.' A New Zealand coinage would maximise minting profits for the government and would thereby give a valuable boost to the economy. According to Wilkinson, the coins could be made 'in the British Mint and made available with very little delay, and, as a matter of fact, they could easily be made in New Zealand – here in Wellington.'

As the bill was an appropriation measure that required government initiation, it was ruled out of order by the Speaker. However, the debate generated sufficient interest for Sir Thomas Wilford, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Britain, to seek the Mint's opinions on the issue. Johnson was discouraging, saying that he hoped that the New Zealand government 'will decide not to press the question further at any rate for the present.' He stressed the inability of the British government to repatriate Imperial coin from New Zealand, especially in the present circumstances when there was 'generally a surplus of coin everywhere.' Once he had studied the parliamentary debate in detail, Johnson saw that the main problem was 'how to get rid of Australian coin which is already there.' Here too, he could afford little encouragement:

In the present situation, I am afraid that any attempts to negotiate an arrangement with Australia under which she would gradually buy back her own coin at face value would be bound to fail.

The most he could offer was for the New Zealand government 'to call in the Australian coins, paying for them, of course, to the Banks at face value and ship them home at her expense', whereupon the Mint would 'exchange them for the same face value of British coin.'

Fourteen months later, in January 1933, the monetary situation took on a new and still more serious turn. To raise farm export credits, Gordon Coates, the new Minister of Finance, devalued the New Zealand pound at the rate of £1.25 to £1.10 sterling. While this proved a wise economic move, the immediate consequence, as Coates's Cabinet colleague Robert Masters put it, was 'a

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9 Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, p. 266.
12 Ibid.
13 PRO MINT 20/217, Johnson to Thomas Wilford, 8 September 1931.
14 PRO MINT 20/217, Johnson to Wilford, 5 November 1931.
serious drift of silver coin to the Old Country and Australia'. 16 Trafficking in silver was prohibited but this had little immediate deterrent effect on the outflow: 'Gresham's law proved too strong and the old adage "No law stands between the merchant and his profitte" again proved true.' 17 Sutherland noted the ingenuity of smugglers in secreting coins from the prying eyes of searchers:

The use of specially constructed gas cylinders, in which . . . coins were supposedly secreted, was one method; other means adopted were to secrete gold coins in the oil tamps of old motor cars or motor cycles sent to Australia. The classic example, however, appears to have been the consignment of cases of silver coins as 'frozen duck' and conveyed in refrigerators to England. 18

Four weeks after devaluation, Coates cabled the High Commission in London and outlined the urgent situation:

Only effective remedy appears to be establishment distinctive New Zealand silver coin and desire to have . . . information from Royal Mint urgently as, if required, coin legalisation should be passed during the present parliament.

Coates asked for the costs and time frame for supplying coinage denominations from the penny to half-crown inclusive 'of the same dimensions and weight and fineness as present British minting but with distinctive New Zealand design'. 19 In response, Johnson told Athol Mackay of the High Commission finance office that such questions could 'not be dealt with immediately' and estimated that it would take some six months for any designs to reach the die stage. 20 Nevertheless, Johnson appreciated the urgent situation and, following consultation with the Treasury, told Wilford that all concerned realised the necessity for a separate coinage. The Mint would be prepared to undertake recoinage of all British Imperial or Australian silver coin in circulation up to a maximum of £2 million. No charge would be made for this work, other than for freight, the manufacture of dies and artist fees for the new designs. 21 The offer was based on acceptance of the .500 silver 'quaternary alloy that had been used for imperial coin since 1927. Any profits that derived from the reminting of existing .925 standard silver coin would be credited to New Zealand. For bronze denominations, the Mint was only authorised to accept coin bearing the pre-1895 uncrowned effigy of Queen Victoria. As this was a far less urgent priority than the silver coin, the New Zealand government decided to take no immediate action here.

Johnson assured Wilford that minting could immediately commence once designs and dies were approved by the High Commissioner on behalf of the New Zealand government. All being well, the six-month period from draft designs to finished dies might even be shortened. Johnson warned that 'if . . . it is necessary to send the draft designs out to New Zealand, this will naturally very considerably prolong the preparatory period.' 22 Actual supply of the required coinage would take a further four months, 'but advance supplies could begin to be shipped after the final approval of the specimen coins within a month'. At the soonest, Johnson warned that supplies would probably not arrive in New Zealand till December 1933 or January 1934. 23 Although he assured the New Zealand government that no special legislation was required until the next parliamentary session in October 1933, Johnson was underestimating Coates's zealous energy. Within a few days, the latter had introduced before Parliament a clause in the Finance Bill empowering the Minister of Finance to arrange the issue of coinage with the Royal Mint. The introduction of 'a special silver coinage for New Zealand' would remove the incentive to use silver as a means of exchange. In his speech, Coates announced that talks were pending with the Royal Mint. 'to whom for years past we have looked for guidance on such matters. . . . Our negotiations have shown that we will experience little difficulty so far as the price is concerned.' 24

17 Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, p. 266.
19 PRO MINT 20/1265, Coates to Wilford, 25 February 1933.
20 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Athol Mackay, 27 February 1933.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Dominion, 8 March 1933.
New Zealand was given no choice for the obverse design. This would bear the effigy of George V, adapted by Metcalfe from its predecessor by Bertram Mackennal (1911), and first used for the Southern Rhodesia silver coinage of 1932 (Pl. 8, 7). New Zealand would follow the dominion and colonial convention of using a crowned effigy, while the uncrowned head would be maintained for Imperial issue. Although minor controversy later erupted over the obverse inscription, discussed below, the unexceptionable yet dignified portrait effigy itself aroused remarkably few comments. Given freer rein, Metcalfe might well have subjected the effigy to modernistic simplification, but in view of the King’s conservatism this was impossible. When the effigy first appeared on the new half-crown coin, Sutherland declared it ‘an outstanding success, being carried out in good relief’.25

For the reverse designs, there was naturally greater creative scope. Johnson stated that Mint would appreciate ‘early suggestions for suitable subjects, but they are of opinion that a fine series could be issued based, in so far as the larger coins are concerned, on some of the features in the Arms of New Zealand and, as regards the smaller coins, possibly of typical Maori designs.’26 This would be consistent with the recent precedents for South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, both of which were designed by Kruger Gray. Johnson also recommended that Wilford should examine Metcalfe’s 1928 Irish Free State reverses:

You will see that these are based upon the animals of Ireland, and it is just possible that New Zealand would like to have the animals of New Zealand instead of a mere treatment of Arms.27

A request from the Association of New Zealand Art Societies ‘to offer facilities to New Zealand artists . . . to submit designs for coinage and prepare the dies for minting’ was received by Coates in May.28 However, the reader availability of experienced design talent in Britain and the likelihood of the successful competitor working in tandem with the Mint authorities within a tight time frame effectively eliminated this possibility. From the outset, it appears that Kruger Gray and Metcalfe were the only prospective designers of the new coinage. Described by Johnson as ‘two numismatic artists of repute’, they enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the medium between the late 1920s and the mid 1930s.29 It is hardly surprising, then, that Johnson did not look past them, telling the Royal Mint Advisory Committee that ‘he knew of no “new” artist who could be entrusted with such work’.30

George Kruger Gray was a highly versatile artist, whose work in other media included stained glass, historical costumes and heraldic architectural decoration. His Dictionary of National Biography entry states that ‘his success as a designer was securely based on his knowledge of heraldry and of the materials for which he worked . . . he was able to maintain a high standard of excellence throughout . . .’.31 Kruger Gray hoped that his heraldic designs for coinage would evoke ‘the best medieval spirit’, yet have ‘certain qualities which make them, as a whole, of our own day’.32 His fellow competitor, Percy Metcalfe, was known affectionately by Johnson as ‘our “bright-eyed boy” here’ at the Mint.33 Fourteen years younger than Kruger Gray, Metcalfe was more radical, experimental, modernistic and inconsistent. His work veered from the outstanding Irish Free State reverses to the banal, unadopted designs for the New Zealand denominations of 1940. The latter were early symptoms of the long decline in his work following Johnson’s death in 1938.34 The artistic and temperamental contrasts between these two figures would intriguingly emerge in their respective designs for the 1933 coinage.

While Kruger Gray and Metcalfe were at work, there was regular contact between the Mint, the High Commission and Coates. In May, Coates appointed a committee ‘to assist in finalising a
scheme for the issue of New Zealand coinage’. Chaired by A.D. Park, Secretary to the Treasury, the Coinage Committee’s members included representatives of banks, commerce, the Audit Department and, in Sutherland’s case, the recently founded (1931) but thriving New Zealand Numismatic Society. The question of adopting decimal coinage was one of its main briefs, which Johnson welcomed: ‘there would be nothing . . . to prevent the adaptation of these designs to such a series.’ More disturbing for him was the ongoing question of whether the coinage would be minted locally, notwithstanding the agreement with the Royal Mint now contained in the 1932–3 Finance Act. This reflected the effective lobbying conducted by the New Zealand Manufacturers’ Federation which, Sutherland later told Johnson, presented ‘a fairly formidable case’ on behalf of its members. In Parliament, the future prime minister Walter Nash believed that ‘if it can be maintained that a great deal of employment would be provided in the manufacture of the coins here’, he would support such a move. This was reiterated in a Dominion editorial in May 1933 which stated: ‘. . . if we are to have a new coinage we could get it made cheaper in New Zealand than in Australia or England. Why not?’

Such reasoning met a scathing response from Johnson:

... if there was ever an instance of economic nationalism run mad, it is any idea of a country with a comparatively small population like New Zealand either erecting a Mint of its own or going to local contractors for coinage which it can certainly get better and cheaper from London . . . The offer of the Mint is to do the whole recoinage for no charge at all except for the freight and the artists’ fee . . . and in addition to credit New Zealand with anything that may be obtained from the sale of the surplus bullion.

He promptly compiled two tables estimating the respective profits of a custom-built Mint in New Zealand (£61,900) and by the Royal Mint (£181,900), concluding that ‘The figures, I think, speak for themselves’. Indeed, Johnson was ‘perfectly certain’ that contracting the work to a private firm would lead to immense trouble and delay:

since the production of good silver coin is, after all, an expert matter and cannot be undertaken by any metallurgical, let alone purely machinery firm. . . . if New Zealand goes to a private firm, they will have to use nearly twice the amount of silver, since, as we know very well from sad experience here, the straight silver-copper alloy loses colour to such an extent that we are already beginning to withdraw these coins in Great Britain after 5–10 years in circulation, while the quaternary alloy, which we have now adopted here and are recommending to New Zealand, is so difficult in manufacture that no other Mint in the world has yet attempted it.

Johnson direly predicted a considerable loss of bullion in the process of manufacture by people who are ‘only beginners at the job’. Moreover, the establishment of a New Zealand Mint would create ‘overheads for ever after the coinage was completed’ as ‘a minting staff once set up must remain in being, even if there is only a month’s work a year for it to do (with attendant salaries to pay)’. The Deputy Master added as his coup de grâce an invitation to George Forbes, the New Zealand Prime Minister, who was shortly due to arrive in London to attend the Monetary and Economic Conference: ‘if Mr Forbes thinks that it would help him to see me for a few minutes and get the facts into his head, I shall of course be entirely at his disposal.’

No specific information was indicated by the New Zealand government to the Royal Mint as to preferred subjects for designs. However, a mass of material in the form of illustrated books and photographs ‘concerning New Zealand in all its aspects’ was supplied, ‘the artists being left free to select their own subjects’. The submitted designs nevertheless indicate that the artists followed Johnson’s advice to use heraldic imagery for the higher denominations and Maori motifs

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35 Dominion, 17 May 1933.
36 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Wilford, 8 June 1933.
37 PRO MINT 20/1265, Sutherland to Johnson, 14 August 1933.
39 Dominion, 3 May 1933. ‘John Citizen’ claimed in a letter to the Evening Post, 30 May 1933, that the ‘minting of the coins in New Zealand will mean work for the workless’. The ease of making silver coins was compared variously with milk tokens and jam tins. See Hargreaves, Beads to Bank Notes, as in n. 1, p. 145.
40 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Wilford, 14 June 1933.
41 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Wilford, 15 June 1933. Johnson added that the mints at Paris and Budapest had experienced ‘immense trouble’ in making such an alloy that they ‘have vowed never to touch it again’.
42 Ibid.
43 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Sutherland, 13 October 1933.
for the lower, while both depicted a kiwi on the shilling. Shortly after inviting Metcalfe to submit designs, Johnson advised him to ‘take great pains over your lettering and make it large and bold’. He also advised Kruger Gray that ‘modelling gives a much better idea than sketches’. Ironically, both pieces of advice would backfire during the selection process.

This occurred on 28 June 1933 when a New Zealand government delegation met the Royal Mint Advisory Committee in the Tapestry Room at St James’s Palace. The Advisory Committee members present were Johnson, the chairman; Oswald Barron, a heraldic specialist; Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith, Surveyor of the King’s Works of Art; Sir Eric MacLagan, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum; Sir Frederick Ponsonby, Keeper of the Privy Purse; Robert Anning Bell, the painter and decorative artist; and the sculptors Charles Sargeant Jagger and Sir William Goscombe John. The New Zealand delegation, headed by Forbes, was accompanied by Robert Masters, Minister of Education, Industries and Commerce, and G.C. Rodda, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury; Wilford and Mackay from the High Commission were also present. Designs for the reverses of all five denominations were examined. Kruger Gray supplied for consideration five actual-size drawings and a model for only the half-crown, while Metcalfe submitted ten plaster models, comprising one half-crown, two florins, two shillings, three sixpences and two threepences.

Opinion came down ‘strongly in favour of Mr Kruger Gray’s style’. Jagger, who had formerly employed Metcalfe, a fellow Yorkshireman, as his studio assistant, preferred the younger man’s designs ‘but thought Mr Gray’s treatment better’. Metcalfe evidently suffered for following Johnson’s advice to use large, bold lettering, only for it to be unflatteringly ‘compared with the past capitals often to be found in clear soup’. Conversely, Kruger Gray’s preponderance of drawings rather than models did him no disservice. Indeed, the refined sense of engraving conveyed in his work was preferred to Metcalfe’s chunky modelling. Johnson did his best to support his ‘bright-eyed boy’, saying that he personally liked several Metcalfe designs, although he conceded that they departed from the so-called ‘Empire style’, seen in Kruger Gray’s recent coinsages for the United Kingdom, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. This was precisely what commended Kruger Gray’s designs to the conservative Forbes, who ‘desired that the coins should not exhibit too great a departure from the style of the British series with which the New Zealanders were familiar’. Despite this, for the florin and the threepence a Metcalfe design was preferred, causing Ponsonby to ask whether designs could be taken from each artist. Johnson agreed this was permissible – a precedent was the reverses of 1893 – but he believed that ‘a measure of conformity in the series seemed desirable’. Unfortunately for Metcalfe, this resulted in Kruger Gray being asked to modify his rival’s designs.

The Committee examined designs for each denomination separately. Although there was no specific mention of Metcalfe’s half-crown, Barron clearly disliked it (Pl. 8, 6). In heraldry, he said that ‘Mr Gray’s work was very much the better – he considered it a very good treatment of the Heralds’ College drawing of the New Zealand Arms’. Kruger Gray’s design was approved subject to revision in the legend, correcting the awkward split in ‘Zealand’ created by the cross of the Crown (Pl. 8, 8). His rich bicultural fusion of ‘native ornament’ with Pakeha heraldry was barely mentioned. Nor, surprisingly, did this subsequently receive much attention when the eventual coin was circulated in New Zealand. It looked as a half-crown should, and in doing so it created relatively little room for critical comment. The ornament might perhaps be archaeologically faulted for being an inaccurate, even crude, rendition of koururu or personified owl figures. The latter form a double heart motif that is not actually found in the original article. Yet Kruger Gray was an obvious newcomer to Maori carving, and was adapting it to a completely

44 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Percy Metcalfe, 21 March 1933.
45 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnston to George Kruger Gray, 19 June 1933.
46 PRO MINT 25/2, Royal Mint Advisory Committee, 79th meeting, 28 June 1933.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
different medium and context. He had to strike a satisfactory formal balance with the heraldic core and fill the field; the end result was by no means unhappy.

With the florin, the artistic honours were more evenly divided. There was no mention of Metcalfe’s clever if stark design based on the Southern Cross mullet (star) and fleece quarterings of the New Zealand shield (pl. 8, 9). On the other hand, his effective and economical triangular rearrangement of the lymphads (ships) quartering (pl. 8, 10) was ‘definitely preferred’ to Kruger Gray’s rather crowded and confused design. The latter recycled the royal crest on his 1927 English shilling, adding a Union flag and Maori-inspired spiral motifs on either side of the lion statant guardant (pl. 8, 11). It was therefore agreed to invite Kruger Gray to prepare a new design based on Metcalfe’s lymphads. The heraldic objections of Barron, who believed that their regrouping would ‘create confusion with other Coats’, did not influence the New Zealand representatives.51

Metcalfe’s Maori shilling was his most baffling and ineffective design. It shows a toki pou tangata (ceremonial hafted adze) together with a superimposed whakapakoko rakau (godstick) which a tohunga (priest) would use to communicate with the gods (pl. 8, 12). The two objects have no obvious relationship with each other apart from their rarity and status.52 Unlike Metcalfe’s combination of the quarterings on his florin, the adze and godstick cannot even be said to work formally. The division in the ‘shilling’ inscription compounds the visual dislocation of the design, which was rejected without any minuted comment. Nor, unfortunately, was any discussion of Metcalfe’s extraordinary kiwi shilling recorded (pl. 8, 13). A boldly Art Deco creation, it is more clockwork toy than secretive nocturnal flightless bird, and makes no concessions to ornithological naturalism. At least this offers some consistency with Metcalfe’s simplified and stylised heraldic designs. Moreover, the counterpoint between the curved back and the coin, together with the bold horizontal ground line creating the exergue for the date, indicates there was method in Metcalfe’s madness. For years afterwards, the kiwi simply appeared outlandish, and the New Zealand Numismatic Journal dismissed it as ‘hardly recognisable as such’.53 Today, however, it looks remarkably timeless, stylish and funky.

In comparison, the normally consistent Kruger Gray’s kiwi and kowhaiwhai (painted rafter pattern) design looks ludicrously inept (pl. 8, 14). At the Advisory Committee meeting, however, the latter was ‘generally liked, the representation of the bird in particular being approved by the representatives of New Zealand’.54 When he saw the design and its first revision several months later, Sutherland reacted very differently and described them as ‘going from bad to worse. The carvings and ground representations did not improve the design and are better out of the way. The feathers are supposed to be spotted, but really look like fish-scales.’55 In his Numismatic History of New Zealand, he likened Kruger Gray’s kiwi to ‘a pine-tree cone’ and claimed that ‘the average New Zealander would not accept this as an accurate representation of the national wingless bird’.56 In mitigation, Sutherland recognised that the ‘kiwi is not a handsome bird’ and appreciated the challenges that its shape and proportions posed to ‘non-Kiwi’ designers.57

Metcalfe’s ‘hammer and sickle’ sixpence was a numismatic suicide note (pl. 8, 15). He probably intended it to complement the Maori adze and godstick shilling, as both coins used superimposed motifs. Here, he featured two hammers, possibly a variant on the ‘mining hammers in saltire’ of the New Zealand shield quartering. Certainly there was little formal resemblance between his design and the USSR flag motif (1923). Yet their iconographic links were unmistakable and the Advisory Committee minutes are an indictment of Metcalfe’s naïveté:

Mr Metcalfe’s designs were disapproved – the composition of the hammers and sickle in particular being considered undesirable on account of its undesirable [sic] political associations.58

51 Ibid.
52 Roger Neich to the author, 22 December 2003.
54 PRO MINT 25/2, RMAC, as in n. 46.
55 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 5 January 1934.
56 Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, p. 274.
57 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 11 April 1934.
58 PRO MINT 25/2, RMAC, as in n. 46.
His boldly modelled alternative sixpences were probably considered too austere, or even banal, to be acceptable (Pl. 9, 16–17). Kruger Gray’s design was also ‘much criticised’. It featured the heads of two crossed taiaha (spears) and closely echoed the design of his 1932 Southern Rhodesia threepence which represented Matabele spearheads (Pl. 9, 18). The objection came because ‘a true aspect of the taiahas could not be represented on the coin owing to the length of the haft’.59 Yet when Sutherland later saw this design, together with Kruger Gray’s threepence depicting a kotiake (short-handled club) and crossed tewhatewha (long-handled clubs), he regretted that these ‘very effective’ possibilities had been discarded60 (Pl. 9, 19). In the absence of an acceptable sixpence, Forbes suggested that Kruger Gray created a new design based on the fern frond.

With the threepences, yet another remarkable Metcalfe design was rejected without comment (Pl. 9, 20). The three vertical motifs can be read as miniature pilasters and they share the same essential qualities as the monumental ‘Stripped Classical’ architecture of the interwar period. Metcalfe brilliantly exploited the graphic possibilities of the numerals and capitals, and surely found satisfaction at how the ‘N’ becomes a ‘Z’ when rotated through 90 degrees. In the event, the Advisory Committee warmly approved Metcalfe’s more conservative tiki (greenstone pendant) design, which Wilford considered ‘perfect’ and familiar to ‘everybody in New Zealand’61 (Pl. 9, 21). It was agreed that Kruger Gray would modify this design, particularly the lettering, to harmonise with the rest of the series.

In retrospect, the preference for Kruger Gray’s designs is hardly surprising. Bold innovation has rarely been encouraged for coin design, and the socially and culturally conservative, economically precarious New Zealand of 1933 was in no mood for stylistic experimentation. The stark yet elegant simplicity of Metcalfe’s designs, showing his familiarity with the recent, cutting-edge French Art Deco coin and medal designs of Pierre Turin, was probably only appreciated by Johnson and Jagger. Imparting such knowledge would have made little impact on the New Zealand delegation. For Forbes and his colleagues, consistency with the existing Imperial coinage and the ‘Empire style’ was paramount. Sutherland later echoed this when he told Johnson:

I must confess that the designs submitted by Mr Kruger Gray are more acceptable to the New Zealand mind than those submitted by Mr Percy Metcalfe, although for my part I do appreciate Mr Metcalfe’s work. It is, however, just a little in advance of what the New Zealander expects at the present time. 62

Some thirty years later, Paul Beadle’s designs for the decimal reverses were rejected for not altogether different reasons and constitute, like Metcalfe’s, fascinating New Zealand numismatic ‘might have beens’.63

Kruger Gray was authorised by Johnson to take the approved designs to the next stage, for a fee of £350 on completion of the dies. He made brisk progress. The revised half-crown with the beading inserted and the legend modified was approved by Wilford on 18 July (Pl. 9, 22). Next, the Mint received the adapted Metcalfe florin on 8 August (Pl. 9, 23). ‘NZ’ was now rendered as ‘New Zealand’ and the lymphads were given greater nautical elegance and detail. Although Wilford personally approved of the design, Kruger Gray’s initials, ‘KG’, touched a sensitive nerve:

He asked whether the initial ‘G’ would not be sufficient as the New Zealanders actively dislike the name ‘Kruger’ with its South African associations which caused many bereavements in New Zealand.64

The initials were therefore shifted and made less prominent. On 18 August Johnson approved Kruger Gray’s threepence plaster model based on Metcalfe’s tiki (Pl. 9, 24), and within two weeks models for the sixpence and shilling were also ready. The sixpence, depicting the crossed fern fronds, was an innocuous and not unattractive design suitable for a lower denomination (Pl. 9, 25). In the shilling, however, Kruger Gray compounded rather than mitigated the faults of his first design by making the kiwi slightly more naturalistic, inserting defined nostrils which poked into the coin band (Pl. 9, 26). The feathers remained more heraldic than naturalistic, however. The

59 Ibid.
60 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 5 January 1934.
61 PRO MINT 25/2, RMAC, as in n. 56.
62 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 5 January 1934.
64 PRO MINT 20/1265, C.F. Barrett to Johnson, 1 September 1933.
areas of kowhaiwhai ornament were enlarged and the ground was curved. Yet except for the kiwi, the set of coin-sized prints delivered on 7 September ‘for sending on to New Zealand’ is a capable one.\(^6\)

Each denomination is distinctive and there is a certain consistency between the heralDIC, fauna, flora and Maori designs in the descending denominations. But within a month Kruger Gray was urgently asked by the Mint to start work on a virtually new set of designs. Why did this happen?

The answer lies in Forbes’s fundamentally weak premiership, which was buttressed during his stay in London by his former political ally, Wilford, but was countered in Wellington by Coates. Forbes and Coates had long been political opponents when in 1931 they formed an uneasy Coalition government under pressure from economists and businessmen. While Forbes was conciliatory, conservative and even complacent, Coates had a far more radical, dynamic and interventionist temperament. During Forbes’s prolonged overseas absence from May to September 1933, Coates was Acting (and a very active) Prime Minister. Nash described the balance of power best: ‘Mr Coates ought not to pretend he is only Minister of Finance when he is really Prime Minister.’\(^6\) Characteristically, Coates was not content to support Forbes’s decisions overseas, particularly when they affected coinage matters. Rather, his personal endorsement of relevant committee recommendations would constitute government policy.

The Coinage Committee deliberated through May and June over decimalisation and location of manufacture. Another major area of its responsibility, the design of the new coins, was deliberately postponed pending decisions on the other two issues. In the event, design would be the concern of the subsequent, so-called ‘Coinage Designs Committee’.\(^6\) The Coinage Committee reluctantly rejected decimalisation due to the ‘existing economic conditions’. As to local or overseas manufacture, Johnson’s forceful economic and technical arguments carried the day and the committee recommended ‘acceptance of the offer made by the Royal Mint in connection with the recoinage of the present issue of silver coin’\(^6\).

Despite his awareness of the existence of the committee and its brief to consider design, Forbes evidently disregarded it in ‘the illustrious setting’ of St James’s Palace.\(^6\) The Coinage Committee report, produced on 1 July, just three days after the Advisory Committee meeting, noted that ‘we are given to understand that the offer of the Royal Mint to have prepared suitable draft designs . . . was accepted by the Government.’ Before final approval was given to them, the report recommended that the ‘description of the designs when received . . . be submitted for the opinion of leading representatives of the New Zealand Numismatic Society and the New Zealand Association of Artists’ Societies.’\(^7\) The report gives no indication as to whether the Coinage Designs Committee, as it would become known, had yet been convened by Coates. Prompted by the description of the designs which he clearly disliked, this new body rapidly materialised and took over from where the now dissolved Coinage Committee had left off. On 11 July, Wilford was obliged to forward Johnson a telegram from Coates containing a set of different designs wanted by the new committee.

The Coinage Designs Committee was, according to Sutherland, ‘prepared to break new ground and to recommend truly distinctive designs which characterised the Dominion’, even if this meant delaying their issue.\(^7\) The preliminary requirements posed no problems: high relief ‘within reason’ was essential for all coins and lettering which denoted the Dominion, denomination and

\(^{65}\) PRO MINT 7/43, Illustrated album of New Zealand coin designs, unpaginated.

\(^{66}\) Bassett, Coats of Kaipara, as in n. 15, p. 195.

\(^{67}\) Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, pp. 269–74. The committee members comprised Coates (chairman); A.D. Park, Secretary to the Treasury; John Rankine Brown and Allan Sutherland, representing the New Zealand Numismatic Society; A.D. Carbery and Joseph Ellis, representing the New Zealand Society of Arts; and Nigel Connell, an artist and photographer. See also New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 237 (1 November–22 December 1933), pp. 74–5.

\(^{68}\) National Archives, Treasury T1 1/255, 'New Zealand Coinage: Report of Special Committee Appointed by the Government, 1933', 1933, p. 7. The report did, however, recommend ‘that the question of allowing local firms to tender for the work be considered if and when additional coins are required in the future’; ibid., p. 8.

\(^{69}\) Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, p. 272.

\(^{70}\) 'New Zealand Coinage', as in n. 68, p. 9.

\(^{71}\) Sutherland, Numismatic History, as in n. 1, p. 271. Descriptions of the work and decisions of the Committee are dependent on Sutherland, especially in his correspondence with Johnson. The author was unable to trace any records relating to the Committee in the Treasury Papers, Archives New Zealand.
year was essential throughout. More radical was the elimination of ‘all native ornament’ on the reverses. For the half-crown, preference was now for a complete and detailed New Zealand Coat of Arms, not the shield alone, with the ‘attitude of supporters to be made more vigorous’. The florin design with lymphads was rejected because they ‘did not suggest ships of the type used by Captain Cook, much less those used by early colonists’. The kiwi would now appear on the coin instead, with ‘plain figures, no base, nostrils and feathers suitably defined’. The shilling would be an entirely new coin, featuring a ‘Maori figure crouching alert with taiaha or tewha [sic] held in one hand, design fairly filling circle, plain field’. The Mint was referred to Allan Gairdner Wyon’s Hector Memorial Medal, awarded by the New Zealand Institute (1911), for guidance but its Maori figure would be reversed in the coin (Pl. 9, 27). Here, Sutherland noted that the committee received specialist advice from the Minister of Native Affairs and cultural leader of Maori, Sir Apirana Ngata. For the sixpence, the extinct huia bird was required in preference to feathery fern fronds, as past experience indicated that these were difficult to reproduce convincingly on metal. Finally, for the threepence, the committee wanted ‘two Maori panels crossed at right angles with figure 3d in clear space in centre’. Johnson took immediate steps to contact Wyon about the proposed new shilling. The two men strongly disliked each other. Wyon resented Johnson’s expansion of Mint activities in the areas of medal design and manufacture, which he saw as undercutting his own expertise and livelihood as a self-employed medallist. In turn, Johnson’s attitude towards Wyon’s designs was one of barely concealed contempt. After the librarian and curator at the Mint, C.F. Barrett, tried to deal with Wyon, Johnson had to explain the situation about the coinage and requested the loan of the Hector medal, as the Mint had no copy:

As the Prime Minister of New Zealand is in this country at the present moment, he is naturally the person to make the final decision, and it is for this purpose that I am anxious to show him your medal. I need hardly assure you that, if he agrees to the Committee’s recommendation, we shall certainly not just copy your design as it stands but make a design of our own.

Despite this attempt at reassurance, Wyon was highly suspicious of any incursions on his intellectual property, and told Johnson that ‘as things stand there is no guarantee that my design would not be followed more closely than I should wish’. The loan was therefore not forthcoming.

Meanwhile, an ailing Kruger Gray was alerted to the proposed changes to the designs. He expressed understandable misgivings, and regretted the elimination of the native ornament, ‘because it at once makes the coinage so characteristic of New Zealand and apart from existing colonial or Imperial coins’. Still more disturbing was the proposed ‘complete achievement of arms’ for the half-crown, as he believed there is ‘far too much in it to make this possible and even if it were done the result would be most unsatisfactory from both the artistic and practical points of view’. Kruger Gray was also reluctant to make naturalistic modifications to the kiwi, ‘as this pattern is excellent for a die & is so decorative’. He did not have access to Wyon’s Hector medal, but made the perceptive point, later echoed by Johnson, that ‘if the human figure is to be used, it should be on the 2/- rather than the smaller coin’. The crossed Maori panels for the threepence he found a baffling prospect without the aid of relevant illustrations.

Two days later, a relieved-sounding Johnson assured ‘My dear Kruger’ that the revisions would not be necessary after all. After meeting Forbes again, he explained that the ‘New Zealand Premier wishes to abide strictly by the decision which was arrived at by the Advisory Committee and proposes to disregard the observations of the local Committee’. The only exception was the kiwi, where Forbes agreed that the nostrils required definition. Small modifications needed
making to the half-crown legend, while the sixpence New Zealand fern ‘must be recognisable in terms of the Badge worn by their troops in the War’. Johnson urged Kruger Gray to proceed briskly ‘since there is a regular currency famine in New Zealand’.  

Subsequent correspondence indicates Kruger Gray’s progress. Barrett believed that the revised florin, with slightly smaller lymphads, would ‘come out excellently’ and that the new ‘two shillings’ inscription would give the coin ‘perfect balance’. Unfortunately for all concerned, ‘perfect balance’ was disturbed once again when Mackay forwarded another cable from Coates dated 18 August to say that the Coinage Designs Committee unanimously reiterated the requests made the previous month. Kruger Gray’s half-crown alone was acceptable, probably because Coates appreciated the need for the rapid consignment of at least one higher value denomination to ease the coinage crisis. Further details were specified for the other coins, beginning with the shilling:

centrally placed Maori figure carrying a Taiaha in proper war dance attitude or recognised stance in moving into battle and placed on plain ground. For reference only see also one Centavo 1925 Filipinas [Pl. 10, 28]. Unfortunately for all concerned, ‘perfect balance’ was disturbed once again when Mackay forwarded another cable from Coates dated 18 August to say that the Coinage Designs Committee unanimously reiterated the requests made the previous month. Kruger Gray’s half-crown alone was acceptable, probably because Coates appreciated the need for the rapid consignment of at least one higher value denomination to ease the coinage crisis. Further details were specified for the other coins, beginning with the shilling:

When he read this, Johnson objected vociferously:

We cannot serve two masters in NZ and I think the [High Commissioner] will agree with me, that at our last meeting with the Premier and the other Ministers present, the Premier definitely decided that the Committee was going beyond its province in laying down the law about designs at all, and that in any case his decision was final.

The Deputy Master went on to draft a strongly worded telegram for the High Commissioner to send Coates:

work on these lines is far advanced - and redesigning on lines suggested would involve 4 months’ delay, which is impracticable in view of urgent currency situation. It is therefore proposed . . . to adhere to Premier’s decision. First issues will therefore be made accordingly, but Royal Mint point out that designs can if desired be changed for 1934 and thereafter . . . In order to facilitate this suggest your Committee supply rough sketches of their present suggestions. Maori figure, however, which is suitable for a medal could not be satisfactorily represented on so small a piece as one shilling.

Johnson’s decision to press on with the original designs was supported by Wilford and Mackay. They believed that Forbes’s imminent return to New Zealand would act in their favour and the Mint should hold out till then. Barrett summarised the situation in a memorandum to Johnson:

The Minister of Finance is acting Prime Minister and for the moment any cable would have to be sent to him, possibly with direful results so far as the work we have done is concerned. The High Commissioner does not propose, therefore, to take any action until after the arrival in New Zealand of Mr Forbes – on 20th September. Then the H.C. will cable the Prime Minister, and in this connection I have undertaken to let him have, in writing on the 19th, a statement of the full position with regard to the designs . . . (The more advanced these are, the stronger the cable!) It will then be for the Prime Minister to decide matters on the spot.

Barrett reported that Wilford did not believe there was a high risk of Coates forcing his hand in the face of the Prime Minister’s commitments over here. Nevertheless, the possibility could not be eliminated. Meanwhile, Barrett concluded, ‘our work is, so to speak, in the air. I told Sir Thomas, however, that we should proceed with the work and run the risk.’

Wilford had underestimated Coates and the Coinage Designs Committee. On 13 September Coates cabled him to tell the Mint to ‘please proceed without delay’ on the designs as instructed in the July and August telegrams. Coates also said he was ‘unable to understand’ misgivings about the proposed new shilling as being too small for the Maori figure, but would arrange for sketches.

80 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Kruger Gray, 18 July 1933.
81 PRO MINT 20/1265, C.F. Barrett to Mackay, 9 August 1933.
82 PRO MINT 20/1265, Mackay to Johnson, 21 August 1933.
83 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Evans, 23 August 1933.
84 Ibid.
85 PRO MINT 20/1265, Barrett to Johnson, 1 September 1933.
86 Ibid.
to be sent over to assist with the design. Was Johnson using his misgivings as a delaying stratagem? This is possible, although he genuinely believed that the design was ‘quite inappopriate’. By the end of September, it now seemed opportune for Wilford to cable the recently returned premier thus:

Sir Robert Johnson before carrying out instructions draws urgent attention to fact that all dies based on designs approved in principle by yourself completed and ready striking coins which would be shipped in a few weeks. He advises that to adopt new designs necessary that sketches be supplied from NZ involving additional fees artists and approximately six months delay. If necessary new designs could be adopted subsequent issue. Kindly advise.

But Forbes had capitulated: ‘Please carry out as a matter of urgency instructions issued by Minister of Finance.’ Short of overruling Coates and the Coinage Designs Committee, which ran the risk of his Coalition partner’s resignation, there was probably little alternative for him. Kruger Gray was duly issued with instructions to proceed with the ‘Designs approved by Mr Coates’ as stipulated in the earlier telegrams. Rapidly he set to work, sending Johnson in mid-October what he modestly described as four ‘very rough sketches’. They already bear a close resemblance to the adopted reverses.

This is most remarkably evident in the shilling, where the crouching Maori warrior, poised on a simply denoted escarpment, intently faces an invisible foe. He turns less abruptly away from the viewer than his counterpart in Wyon’s Hector Memorial Medal, as there was no scope in the coin to depict a detailed landscape. Little over a month later, a relieved Johnson was able to tell Kruger Gray ‘it seems clear that your design ... has been accepted, so will you please go ahead with the modelling as quickly as possible?’

For the sixpence huia design, Kruger Gray was lent a copy of Sir Walter Buller’s classic History of the Birds of New Zealand (1888). His design is not a direct transcription, however, of either of the birds illustrated in J.G. Keulemans’ superb chronolithographic plate. Kruger Gray depicted a female huia, as he saw the graphic potential of her distinctively curved bill. He defied instructions to have a ‘plain field’, protesting ‘I do not see how one can use the Huia without a branch!’

Significant progress was also made with the florin. The Mint continued to press for Kruger Gray’s earlier design, and it was argued that elimination of the kowhaiwhai ornament would disrupt consistency with the Maori motifs in the approved half-crown. Coates, who by now had seen a photograph of the proposed coin, was unforthcoming: ‘Kiwi design originally suggested by Mint for 1/- ... not acceptable. Pending the receipt by you of sketchings, please see ... Oliver’s New Zealand Birds ... Maori ornamentation to be eliminated.’ Kruger Gray sketched a kiwi related in stance to the large grey species depicted in the frontispiece of W.R.D. Oliver’s reference book. Stylistically, this drawing represents a metamorphosis from the previous ‘pine-cone form’ towards a noticeably more naturalistic rendition. The prominent decorative band around the coin was omitted and the bird was considerably enlarged. By late October, the

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87 PRO MINT 20/1265, Charles Bunn to Evans, 15 September 1933.
88 PRO MINT 20/1265, Wilford to George Forbes, 29 September 1933 (copy).
89 PRO MINT 20/1265, Forbes to Wilford, 4 October 1933 (copy).
90 PRO MINT 20/1265, Kruger Gray to Johnson, 9 October 1933. For the sketches see PRO MINT 7/43, Illustrated album of New Zealand coin designs, unpaginated.
91 PRO MINT 20/1266, Johnson to Kruger Gray, 14 November 1933.
92 Walter Buller, History of the Birds of New Zealand (London, 1888 edn), v. 1, pl. II.
93 PRO MINT 20/1265, Kruger Gray to Johnson, 9 October 1933.
94 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Mackay, 13 October 1933.
95 PRO MINT 20/1265, Coates to Wilford, 14 October 1933 (copy).
transition towards the adopted coin was all but complete: Kruger Gray had switched to the North Island kiwi with lowered head and bill, a reverse copy of another photograph, traced from Oliver96 (Pl. 10, 36). The design was further enhanced by the insertion of a horizontal ground-line — which contravened Coates’s instructions — and by changes in the legend from ‘two shillings’ to ‘one florin’ (Pl. 10, 38). Johnson’s only misgiving with the design in mid-November was the prominence of Kruger Gray’s initials, and this prompted one of his more memorable effusions:

It is clear that the initials must come out, and I would be glad if you would suggest what kind of buzz-fuzz can go in to take its place. What about a New Zealand fern, very small, or something of that kind? I am afraid that, if you put a plain spot there, it would look as if the kiwi had just relieved nature, and moreover that he was suffering from so violent a need to do so that he had propelled the pellet out with considerable violence.97

In the eventual design, the initials were reduced considerably in scale and moved beside the date. No ‘buzz-fuzz’ took their place and result did not suffer. Johnson also belatedly learned the New Zealand side of the story in a lengthy, confidential letter from Sutherland. This dated from 14 August, several weeks before Forbes’s return and expressed regret at how the delay over the designs ‘has been costly to us’. Sutherland also confirmed that the designs chosen at the Royal Mint Advisory Committee meeting were not acceptable to the Coinage Designs Committee, even unseen. He argued that ‘since we, in New Zealand, have to live with the coins we should at least be permitted to make the decisions as to the subjects — provided the artists can treat them satisfactorily and that is where co-operation should come in. So far it appears to me that that aspect has been neglected so far as the artists are concerned.’ Sutherland was not to know that Kruger Gray was the last person to blame. As a committee member, he defended its decision to hold out for the coins Coates had stipulated and offered the first proper explanation to the Mint as to why:

we consider it important that the kiwi should appear on the florin which is a decimal coin and a possible standard of value in a decimalised currency. This, of course, is looking into the future. The Maori tikis proposed by the artists [sic] for the 5d . . . is not favoured by me as it is supposed to represent a human foetus, and is worn by native women — so we are told — to induce fertility . . . . It has a significance that is inappropriate in these times!98

In his reply, Johnson graciously acknowledged Sutherland’s points, assuring him that ‘no one regrets more than I do the delay which has occurred in the issue of the new coinage’. As to the trouble over the designs, the Mint’s main difficulty had been ‘serving two masters’, although he could now assure Sutherland that ‘we are . . . working on the basis of the [Design] Committee’s suggestions’. A major problem had been that ‘we were not originally instructed that New Zealand wished to select her own designs and that we should await cabled particulars before taking the first steps towards the manufacture of the dies’.99 This also explained why importance had been vested in the decisions of the New Zealand delegation at the Advisory Committee Meeting.

Johnson enclosed a four-page memorandum, a brilliant summary of ‘our story on this side of the water’ from March 1933 to date. The memorandum recounts Forbes’s attempt to reverse Coates’s decision and further complications such as Wyon’s refusal to lend his Hector Memorial Medal, though one had been found elsewhere.100 For the first time, Johnson properly explained why he considered the Maori figure so inappropriate for the shilling:

The difficulty in adapting a design of this character, which is primarily a medal design, to a coin is that the amount required on the reverse to present the crouching figure adequately is so great that it cannot be taken up successfully with the single blow which is a necessary feature in . . . coinage, since the effigy of His Majesty on the obverse side already requires a considerable mass of metal on the other side.101

96 W.R.D. Oliver, New Zealand Birds (Wellington, 1930), p. 56.
97 PRO MINT 20/1266, Johnson to Kruger Gray, 14 November 1933.
99 PRO MINT 20/1265, Sutherland to Johnson, 14 August–7 September 1933. When he saw the tikī designs, he modified his opinion, and told Johnson: ‘In a measure I would have preferred the tikī to the mere. I liked Metcalfe’s tikī best, as Mr Gray’s (bottom half) looked like a cow’s head!’ (PRO MINT 20/1266, 5 January 1934). L.C. Mitchell’s tikī design was used for the 1940 halfpenny.
100 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Sutherland, 13 October 1933 (letter).
101 ibid. Following a request from the High Commissioner, Lord Rutherford lent his medal to the Mint. This was not returned until November 1934, as it was found to be mislaid. See PRO MINT 20/1266, Barrett to Mackay, 1 November 1934.
102 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Sutherland, 13 October 1933 (memorandum).
Every attempt would, however, be made to surmount the difficulty, even if at this stage the Mint could not promise a well struck coin. After having being reproved by Sutherland for the delay, it was now Johnson’s turn to strike back:

I am afraid your Committee are rather inclined to think the making of a suitable design for a coin is a much simpler matter than it actually is and that all that is needed is to take a picture or engraving and splash it, without amendment, on to a piece of money.

He assured Sutherland that in Kruger Gray, ‘they are dealing with a numismatic artist of considerable experience’, and defended the latter’s crossed mere: ‘I really do think that this is a case in which a freer hand might have been given to the artist.’ Johnson repeated the points contained in his memorandum about the difficulty of striking a satisfactory shilling, and added for good measure that ‘we all consider here that, even as a medal, the Hector Research Medal fails in almost every essential of a good one.

In the final weeks of 1933, only relatively minor changes were made to the designs, although Johnson complained to Mackay in November about the continuing difficulty of dealing with Coates and the committee. The cause of this outburst was a sketch forwarded by Coates of a kiwi that Johnson found ‘grotesque’. Kruger Gray’s design copied from Oliver was left defiantly unmodified. Small improvements were made to the perch on the sixpence, and the design was promptly accepted by the New Zealand authorities. Slightly more problematic was the threepence, where the crossed mere were at last accepted in principle but needed to be inverted and have incised ornamentation applied. For this, Kruger Gray was lent Augustus Hamilton’s standard reference book, *Maori Art* (1901). He followed Johnson’s recommendation to copy a ‘very old’ patu (ornamented mere) that had belonged to Hemi Whero of the Ngaititumakori tribe and a similarly venerable club from near Lake Waikaremoana, now in the Otago Museum, Dunedin.

Once this was accomplished, Johnson told him, ‘I really believe . . . we shall have seen the end of our troubles!’

Coates gave the first public description of the new half-crown on 5 November. The shipment, with a face value of £250,000, was at that stage en route to New Zealand. A reproduction of this ‘attractive design . . . the shield appropriately decorated with Maori design to fill the field’ then appeared in the *Auckland Weekly News*. In the same week, Coates steered the Coinage Bill through Parliament. The new law provided for a distinctive New Zealand coinage and removed the status of Imperial coin as legal tender from 1 February 1935. Passage was, Coates said, ‘made urgent by reason of the fact that the new half-crown had almost reached our shores’.

In the debate on the bill, political exchanges inevitably occupied more attention than the design of the new coins. Michael Joseph Savage, the Labour Party leader, said he ‘could not understand the need for a metallic form of currency’, while his colleague, John A. Lee, ‘could not understand why we cannot mint our silver coin in New Zealand’. Lee welcomed the prospect of the new coinage and did not believe that it involved ‘any disloyalty to Britain to adopt for our coinage . . . something that expresses features of our own country. . . . There are wonderful parts of New Zealand that could be illustrated.’ To this, the MP for Rotorua, Cecil Clinkard, responded ‘A geyser rampant?’

The question of national identity took on a more serious note when the MP for Southern Maori, Eruera Tirikatene, advocated that ‘tattooed Maori figures or characters should be used in the designs for the coins’. In reply, Coates said that while he ‘believed there should be indigenous descriptions’.  

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102 PRO MINT 20/1265, Johnson to Sutherland, 13 October 1933 (letter). Sutherland replied: ‘. . . you give us a quiet “dig” by conveying the impression that our Committee had little appreciation of the difficulties confronting coin designers. I can assure you that this is not so . . . . The suggestion that our Committee seemed to imagine that any picture or engraving could be splashed on to a coin made me chuckle! . . . The drawings or illustrations in standard works were cited by us merely as a simple method of conveying our opinions by cable.’ (PRO MINT 20/1266, 5 January 1934).

103 PRO MINT 20/1265. Johnson to Sutherland, 13 October 1933 (letter).

104 PRO MINT 20/1266. Johnson to Mackay, 16 November 1933.

105 Augustus Hamilton, *Maori Art* (Wellington), 1901, pp. 250, 363. The tribe should properly be rendered as ‘Ngati Tomatawakiri’ (Margaret Orbell to the author, 26 January 2004).


108 *Evening Post*, 9 November 1933.
designs, it was not desirable to have all Maori characters. They should be designs that represented New Zealand’ and he ‘hoped to have one Maori design.’ Tirikatene responded ‘That is all I ask.’ Sutherland’s version of this exchange, as conveyed to Johnson, was far more colourful:

when the Coinage Bill was going through the House of Representatives, a young Maori member of Parliament . . . asked that a Maori figure be placed on one of the coins and when the Rt Hon Mr Coates (Minister of Finance) informed him that every effort was being made to do this, but that some difficulty was then being experienced in getting finality, the Maori member expressed his dissatisfaction and after an exchange of words . . . the Maori member suggested the Finance Minister was frightened to press the matter, and being dissatisfied with the reply of the Minister threatened to ‘stoush’ him there and then.106

Although the misunderstanding was rapidly cleared up, ‘considerable prominence was given to the incident’ and the design was ‘naturally’ awaited with interest.111

Within three weeks, the half-crowns had arrived and were put into circulation. Their press coverage was modest in column inches but certainly favourable in tenor. The Dominion admired ‘the sharpness of the design and exquisite finish of the workmanship’, while the Evening Post headline declared: ‘Experts well-pleased.’112 Sutherland spoke to the Evening Post in some detail about the half-crown design. He explained the symbolism of the quarterings and noted how the shield ‘was slightly sunk in relation to the carved border . . . this not only enhanced the appearance of the design but also protected the shield from wear.’ He also believed that ‘the inclusion of the Maori carvings was a happy blending of heraldic and native features and the result was quite pleasing’. With a magnifying glass, the intricacies of the designs were revealed ‘and the mechanical perfection of the dies became apparent’.113 Sutherland was franker in his verdict to Johnson: ‘Personally I consider the reverse design a little crowded, but otherwise the coin is a handsome one, and I have not stinted in the interview, as you can see.’114

The half-crown did, however, attract criticism from conservative quarters for its omission, even in abbreviated form, of ‘Dei Gratia’ on the obverse and ‘Fidei Defensor’ on the reverse, both of which remained on English coins. A prominent Auckland Methodist clergyman, the Revd Percy Knight, objected that ‘The New Zealand coin declares [George V] King without any reference to God at all.’115 The editor of the New Zealand Baptist believed the omission of ‘Dei Gratia’ reflected atheistic New Zealand officialdom, while the Federation of New Zealand Justices urged the words to be reinstated on the coins as soon as possible. This level of concern caused the Government to cable the High Commission about the ‘criticism locally concerning elimination of words Dei Gratia and Fidei Defensor. Please ascertain if any technical reasons for alterations.’116 Johnson explained to Mackay that the Royal style and titles had been ‘specifically approved by the King, together with the new effigy for all new coinages in the Dominions as well as in the Colonies’ and reminded him that ‘the New Zealand authorities had been informed of this in July’117. Canada, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia had all adopted the new model and only the unpopular Australian coinage retained full style and titles in Latin. This reply was conveyed to the New Zealand press by Park. The Treasury Secretary added, not unhumorously, that ‘There is no reason to suppose that the inclusion of Maori tikis in the [reverse] design is indicative of a lack of religious faith in New Zealand.’118

The tedious controversy was briefly rekindled in February 1934 by the elderly visiting English Conservative MP, Sir John Sandeman-Allen. At a public dinner in Christchurch, he asked:

Why is not ‘Fid. Def.’, the ancient title of His Majesty the King, mentioned on the New Zealand half-crown? It looks at first as if you want to cut the painter of tradition. Perhaps you have not noticed it, but I know from very good experience that you are inhabitants of an exceedingly bright, happy and loyal country.119

106 Ibid.
110 PRO 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 5 January 1934.
111 Ibid.
112 Dominion, 28 November 1933; Evening Post, 4 December 1933.
113 Evening Post, 4 December 1933.
114 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 5 January 1934.
115 Ibid. Quoted in Hargreaves, Beads to Bank Notes, as in n. 1, p. 148.
116 PRO MINT 20/1266, Mackay to Johnson, 7 December 1933.
117 PRO MINT 20/1266, Johnson to Mackay, 8 December 1933.
118 Auckland Weekly News, 20 December 1933.
119 The Press, 13 February 1934.
Gratified applause ensued but matters rested there. Three years later in September 1937, Sutherland addressed the issue at a meeting of the New Zealand Numismatic Society. He asserted that the absence of ‘Fid. Def.’ from the coin inscription did not indicate lack of recognition of the Christian faith and believed that only a tiny percentage of people knew what the ‘cryptic’ Latin abbreviations meant. In the search for an all-embracing inscription, the Royal Mint Advisory Committee had considered ‘George V King Emperor’ adequate. Sutherland believed that the omission ‘would not give offence to the millions of non-Christian British subjects in India and elsewhere’. Indeed, it reflected a ‘broad-minded spirit of tolerance on the part of the dominant Christian minority towards the majority . . . in the British Empire’. While Sutherland’s terminology may appear quaintly dated today, it certainly signifies a shift in thinking by the late 1930s away from a metropolitan Empire towards the concept of a more inclusive, proto-Commonwealth entity.

The remaining coins arrived in New Zealand in the early months of 1934: sixpences in late January 1934, florins in mid-February, threepences in mid-March and, finally, shillings in early April. In early January, Sutherland delivered a mixed verdict to Johnson on the imminent coins. Of the florin he wrote: ‘Mr Gray’s efforts are disappointing.’ Clearly he had still not seen the revised design dating from late October, as he hoped that a superior coin, aided by Oliver’s illustrations, would result. With the shilling, he was ‘fairly well pleased’, but believed there was ‘an absence of youth, vigour and vitality’ in what should be the Maori’s warlike attitude. The sixpence, which had just gone in to circulation was, however, was ‘the masterpiece of the set’. Sutherland ‘wholeheartedly’ congratulated Kruger Gray for the coin: ‘he has shown the hand of the master designer.’ At this stage, Sutherland had not seen the final threepence design, where the mere were modified into carved patu. In their unadorned form, Sutherland complained that they ‘looked like a couple of bottles’. He regretted that the Design Committee had only recently been shown the photographs of Kruger Gray’s earlier weaponry designs showing the taiaha, kotiake and tewhatewha, as one of these might well have been accepted instead.

‘What you say in your letter gives me good ground for hope that the two shillings, threepence and shilling will . . . give satisfaction when they arrive’, replied the unruffled Johnson. He assured Sutherland that the ‘fish scales’ on the florin had been turned into ‘something looking much more like feathers’. Although it was now too late, he believed that the kiwi would have looked more effective on the shilling and the crouching Maori figure on the florin: ‘we ourselves should have suggested this had not our instructions . . . been quite definitely to transfer the kiwi to the larger piece.’ While Johnson assured Sutherland that the shilling would be successful, his earlier worries about the viability of a coin of such high relief on both sides had been partially vindicated. Striking the coin required a ‘much harder blow’ than normal, and this led to a shorter lifespan of the dies, with the attendant costs for the New Zealand government.

In the same letter, Johnson also noted with relief how the need for new coin had evidently turned out to be less ‘desperately urgent’ than he had previously understood: ‘Had we realised at the time that new Zealand could hold out till . . . the New Year as she has’, the Mint would have gone slower and ‘full consultation with New Zealand herself’ could have taken place rather than hurried and conflicting exchanges. Seizures of smuggled silver by the New Zealand customs authorities made some impact here, reflected in a noticeable drop in Imperial coinage entering Australia. In addition, some £50,000 worth of the unpopular Australian coins, mostly florins, were imported by the Government as a stop-gap measure in the winter of 1933, four months before the arrival of the first consignment of the new half-crowns.

In April 1933, by which time all denominations were in circulation, a clearly relieved and almost enthusiastic Sutherland could tell Johnson that the series had been ‘very favourably received by the public. Our people are extremely critical in so far as stamp designs are concerned.’
and I am surprised at the good reception so far given.’ In his verdict on individual designs, Sutherland was ‘very pleased indeed’ with the final result of the shilling. Its expert treatment and high relief had created an attractive coin in both appearance and handling. Consistent with his earlier letter, the kiwi on the sixpence made it ‘the most favoured’ of the coins. The kiwi florin was also popular, not least with bank clerks who appreciated its complete visual contrast with the half-crown. Sutherland freely admitted that here Kruger Gray had ‘made a very good effort, and he has given us our national bird in good relief, and that is what we wanted’.

References in newspapers to the new designs confirmed Sutherland’s views. The sixpence was praised for its ‘fineness of workmanship’, the florin for its ‘sharp finish’ and the shilling for its ‘distinctive design’. The immediate popularity of the florin was reflected in its reproduction in newspaper advertisements for Atlantic Petrol (Fig. 1). The most comprehensive discussion of the designs was published in the Dominion in April 1934. Beneath the highly misleading headlines ‘Warlike Shilling’ and ‘Ginger-beer Bottles on Threepenny Pieces’, the newspaper reported a handsome endorsement from members of the New Zealand Numismatic Society. The librarian and ethnologist Johannes Andersen admired the coins for being ‘distinctively New Zealand in design’, surely a tribute to Kruger Gray’s intelligent use of his borrowed reference books as well as to his artistic skill and versatility. Andersen singled out the florin for praise as ‘particularly well designed’ and clear-cut in appearance. He was noticeably less enthusiastic about

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Fig. 1. Atlantic Petrol advertisement, 1934. (New Zealand Herald, 24 February 1934).

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125 See for example The Press, 15 February 1934; New Zealand Herald, 24 February 1934.

126 New Zealand Herald, 26 January 1934; Dominion, 17 February 1934; Dominion, 13 March 1934.

127 PRO MINT 20/1266, Sutherland to Johnson, 11 April 1934.
the ‘quite good’ shilling, which would have been preferable if the Maori had been depicted as less warlike and more watchful: closer, in fact, to Wyon’s Hector Research Medal. The sixpence he found ‘dainty in the extreme’. Andersen noted that the *patu* of the threepence had been likened to ginger-beer bottles, ‘but only by those who do not know what they are. Ignorance of the characteristics of the country in which they live does not give weight to the criticisms of such people.’ Sutherland summarised the coins thus: ‘the subjects were well balanced, the relief was bold and effective, and the designs faithfully typified New Zealand.’

Johnson too appeared satisfied, and presented Mackay with a specimen coin set as a token of gratitude for his hard work in the ‘rather lengthy and difficult negotiations’. In his 1933 Annual Report, the Deputy Master devoted two pages to the New Zealand coinage. This was inevitably couched in more temperate terms than in his earlier memoranda, letters and draft telegrams. He outlined with relative tact the difficulties that had arisen over the conflicting instructions from the Prime Minister and the Coinage Designs Committee and the ‘considerable delay’ that had consequently ensued. He also implied some regret that the Advisory Committee ultimately ‘had little to do’ with the final designs. In a related point, Johnson also mentioned the technical difficulties which could arise from being obliged to follow ‘designs which have not been prepared initially by those experienced in coin manufacture’. This was a clear reference to the revised shilling. In his best, paternalist manner, Johnson noted that ‘my technical experts are not always too grateful for the labour involved’ in making such designs coinable. Yet he acknowledged the strength of Sutherland’s point that ‘the users of the coin should have the principal say in their appearance’ and he was, finally, ‘very pleased that their reception in the Dominion has been so friendly’. Or, as he put it to Sutherland, ‘all’s well that ends well’.

Although numismatic uniformity, or to put it modishly, ‘closure’, did not come to New Zealand until the introduction of the 1940 penny and halfpenny, the issue of a distinctive national coinage in 1933–4 certainly brought this process about. And while it was earlier argued that economic factors were more important than burgeoning national identity in analysing the history of that coinage, it would be churlish to dismiss the latter altogether. ‘All numismatists would rejoice in the fact that at last New Zealand was to be placed on the numismatic map of the world’ enthused the Revd D.C. Bates, foundation president of the New Zealand Numismatic Society. Even more excitedly, the Society’s 1932–3 annual report announced ‘The numismatic birth of the Dominion’. Kruger Gray, Metcalfe, Johnson, Sutherland and Coates should be gratefully acknowledged as its midwives.

KEY TO THE PLATES

**Plate 8**

1–5. New Zealand reverses: George Kruger Gray, half-crown, florin, shilling, sixpence and threepence, 1933. (University of Otago)

6. Percy Metcalfe, half-crown design, 1933. (PRO)

7. Percy Metcalfe after Bertram Mackenral, approved colonial and dominion effigy: 1932. (Royal Mint Library)

8. George Kruger Gray, half-crown design, 1933. (PRO)

9–10. Percy Metcalfe, florin designs, 1933. (PRO)

11. George Kruger Gray, florin design, 1933. (PRO)

12–13. Percy Metcalfe, shilling designs, 1933. (PRO)

14. George Kruger Gray, shilling design, 1933. (PRO)

15. Percy Metcalfe, sixpence design, 1933. (PRO)

128 **Dominion**, 29 April 1934.

129 Ibid.

130 PRO MINT 20/1266, Johnson to Mackay, 15 February 1934.

131 Sixty-Fourth Annual Report, as in n. 7, p. 8.

132 PRO MINT 20/1266, Johnson to Sutherland, 8 February 1934.


Plate 9

16–17. Percy Metcalfe, sixpence designs, 1933. (PRO)
18. George Kruger Gray, sixpence design, 1933. (PRO)
19. George Kruger Gray, threepence design, 1933. (PRO)
20–21. Percy Metcalfe, threepence designs, 1933. (PRO)
22. George Kruger Gray, approved half-crown design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
23. George Kruger Gray, florin design, 1933. (PRO)
24. George Kruger Gray, threepence design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
25. George Kruger Gray, sixpence design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
26. George Kruger Gray, shilling design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
27. Allan Gairdner Wyon, Sir James Hector Memorial Medal, 1911. (University of Canterbury)

Plate 10

28. George Kruger Gray, florin design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
29. Philippine Islands, one centavo, 1925. (University of Otago)
32–33. George Kruger Gray, sixpence designs, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
34–35. George Kruger Gray, threepence designs, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
37. George Kruger Gray, florin design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
38. George Kruger Gray, florin design, 1933. (Royal Mint Library)
39. George Kruger Gray, approved threepence design, 1933. (PRO)
PLATE 22 (X2)

STOCKER: 1933 NEW ZEALAND COINAGE DESIGNS (2)
PLATE 10

STOCKER: 1933 NEW ZEALAND COINAGE DESIGNS (3)