

REVIEWS

The Galata guide to the farthing tokens of James I & Charles I: a history and reclassification, by Tim Everson (Llanfyllin: Galata Print, 2007), [1] + 78 pp.: illus.

THIS work has the misleading appearance of a 'magazine', with floppy covers, and text lines too wide for the size of typeface. Yet its solid contribution would have justified appearance in a series of hardcover monographs. Its main contents are a history of the patent, catalogues of the types, and documentary appendices.

The patent holders are clearly set out, correcting Peck's confusion over the two lords Harington. It is strange to see references to 'Maltravers junior' when the title was not hereditary, and Thomas Howard, who held the title 1646–52, is better known as the 'lunatic' Duke of Norfolk. He does not have an entry in the *ODNB*, although he is mentioned in the entry for his father, Henry Frederick Howard, who was Lord Maltravers 1624–40 (*G.E.C.*, ix. 625–6). It would have been nice to see more on where the tokens were made and exchanged, for the Token House in Lothbury was an influential design by Inigo Jones (Harris, pp. 256–7), and the thirteen-bay building survived the Great Fire (Keene, p. 262).

The catalogues are distilled from a detailed examination of the dies within each type, of altered privy marks, and the identification of counterfeits. The conventional arrangement alphabetically by name of privy mark is unavoidable. A concordance to Peck avoids any problems when marks have been re-named (page 8, all convincing), though others could be re-named ('Fleece' has the distinct shape of a Golden Fleece, 'Nautilus' could be a coiled serpent or snake as in the arms of Whitby Abbey). The unnamed 'rather strange privy mark' on Everson's Harington Type 1c (Peck 37 & 38) is, to the eye of this reviewer, a Grasshopper, as flaunted near Lothbury on Gresham's Royal Exchange.

The appendices supplement the documents printed by Peck, and even discover additions to those abstracted in the *Calendar of State Papers*. For the proclamations of the royal farthing tokens Peck refers to Ruding, and an omission from Everson's printed sources is the standard edition of these Stuart royal proclamations, necessary for those who do not have easy access to the National Archives. Although Ruding comments on all of them, they fill out the picture with the following for James I: Larkin & Hughes 128, 137, 155, 164, and for Charles I: Larkin 15 and 213.

Everson's classification seems convincing, his interpretations of the documents persuasive, and altogether, despite its too modest format, this is an excellent work.

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Money of the Caribbean, edited by R.G. Doty and J.M. Kleeberg (American Numismatic Society, 2006), 318pp with illustrations in text.

At a conference in New York in December 1999 leading numismatists in the field of Caribbean coinage presented papers discussing various aspects of Caribbean money. Through the kind auspices of the American Numismatic Society, these papers have now been gathered together and presented in book form, and the Society deserves acknowledgement for giving a much wider public the opportunity to appreciate the fruits of what is often fresh and impressive research.

As well as four chapters which either impinge upon or deal solely with British colonial numismatics (about which more below), the book also includes papers on 'The 10 Reales of Santo Domingo' (J.M. Kleeberg), 'The Cuban Key Counterstamps revisited' (J.P. Lorenzo) and 'Cuba's 1897 souvenir [peso]: missing link debunks conventional wisdom' (E.M. Ortiz).

'Tokens of the Jewish merchants of the Caribbean before 1920', by Robert D. Leonard Jnr, includes several issues relating to the British colonies. In general, however, the information supplied adds little to our knowledge previously gleaned from Bob Lyall's excellent publication *The Tokens, Checks, Metallic Tickets, Passes, and Tallies of the British Caribbean and Bermuda* (1988). 'Holey Dollars and Other Bitts and Pieces of Prince Edward Island', by Chris Faulkner, offers a general survey of the cut money circulating on the Island during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The celebrated Prince Edward Island holey dollar apparently opened the floodgates for a much wider circulation of cut money, including some migrating from the considerably warmer climes of the West Indies.

The seventy-two page offering by F. Carl Braun, 'A Triple Numismatic Enigma of the Nineteenth Century Caribbean: Haiti, Barbados, St Kitts, or Vieque?' is a work of considerable importance. It provides overwhelming evidence for the reattribution to Haiti of three categories of cut money which have long puzzled West Indian enthusiasts. In the past various authorities have mistakenly assigned them to Barbados, St Kitts and Vieque. Proof is given that even such an eminent expert as Major Pridmore was not beyond reproach. In his West Indies book he catalogues under Barbados a dollar and two reales (Pridmore 8 and 9) with a countermark which he took to be a pineapple. We are now indisputably informed that the countermark represents not a Barbados pineapple but a Haitian palm tree!

The final article, 'The Myths and Mysteries of the Somers' Ilands [*sic*] Hogge Money', by Mark A. Sportack, occupies ninety-four pages and forms by far the largest section of the book. From this it is evident that the subject has been meticulously researched and equally minutely chronicled. In fact in this reader's view the article would have benefited from judicious editing. What started off as a fascinating read was eventually spoiled by the author's habit of repeating ground previously covered. We are for instance reminded no less than eight times that for almost two centuries after its issue, hogge money was lost to posterity. Equally irritating, at least to native Bermudians or people living this side of the Atlantic, is to be told that we have all been living under a misapprehension in regarding the Somers Islands coinage as forming an integral part of early British colonial numismatic heritage. The author poses the question whether hogge money should be considered a United States or a British colonial coin? The answer apparently is neither, since 'Hogge money is little more than a non-legal-tender private token issued by the Somers' Islands Company for use within its domain.' It is 'most properly categorized as failed company scrip from England's bullionist era.'

These statements seem to ignore all the pertinent facts. British settlers inhabited land owned by the Crown but granted under Royal Charter to the Company of the City of London for the Plantation of the Somer Islands. In addition, the Letters Patent of King James I issued on 29 June 1615 specifically made provision for the Company to 'cause to bee made a Coyne to pass Currant in their said Somer Islands, between the Inhabitants there for the more easey of commerce and bargaining between them.' In such circumstances surely hogge money should be considered as much a part of British colonial numismatics as the coinages of the East India Company, the Sierra Leone Company, the African Company of Merchants and the Imperial British East Africa Company.

I would also question the alacrity with which the author seems prepared to condemn the Somers Islands coinage as a failure. He seems to become unduly obsessed by the coinage being made of base metal, its short lifespan and the dislike it engendered amongst the colonists. Yet none of these factors are relevant in judging the economic success or failure of the coinage. I believe an excellent case could be made for suggesting

the coinage was part of a successful and relatively sophisticated currency experiment.

The colonists inhabited what was in effect a desert island, with no indigenous population. Starting from scratch, essential public works had to be undertaken with no locally acceptable form of currency available to pay for them. Initially the Company issued credit notes for work performed, balanced by debit notes for purchases made from their store. Any metallic coinage they subsequently issued would surely be a vast improvement on this system. By making them out of base metal (i.e. copper), the Company produced them at very little cost. Having very little intrinsic value they also ensured that the coins would not leave the Islands, thus leaving them free to fulfil their prime purpose of oiling the wheels of local commerce. That the coins would be disliked by the colonists was inevitable. Naturally they resented their lack of intrinsic value just as they abhorred the fact that they would not be accepted for external trade. Equally predictably, if the Company was misguided enough to feature a wild pig on the obverse of their coins they would attract the derogatory appellation of 'hogge money'. Yet despite these circumstances, all the evidence I have seen presented by Mark Sportack suggests the coins enjoyed full legal tender status within the confines of the Islands. All the early Company accounts were kept in terms of the currency. The Company paid the coins out and appear to have accepted them back with equal facility, whether in payment for goods, provisions or fines imposed by their judiciary system. Verification that the coinage circulated is provided by the wear displayed on surviving specimens. Also of some relevance is that current thinking believes that the Company sent out coins to its plantations on at least three separate occasions. If true, this provides a further hint that the coinage enjoyed a measure of success during its few years of use.

In concluding it could be said that hogge money played an essential part in the fledgling colony's development. In the early years when the colony was isolated and virtually a closed society it fulfilled a basic requirement for currency when little else was available. This role would have been all the more significant if the coins had arrived two or three years earlier as originally promised. One suspects that hogge money was always going to be a temporary expediency which would become obsolete as soon as the colony matured and a viable alternative became available. Once sufficient land had been cleared and cultivated, this viable alternative became apparent to all: it was tobacco. Here was a commodity that had value to the Company, the colonist and the rest of the world alike. Henceforth all goods and services on Somers Islands would be reckoned in terms of their value in weight of tobacco.

I hope my finding fault with certain of Mark Sportack's comments and conclusions will not deflect others from reading his article. In so many ways it is excellent and should undoubtedly be considered an essential read for anyone interested in hogge money or the history of the Somers Islands. Many years have passed since Major Pridmore's pioneering work on the subject, and much has been discovered in the intervening

period. All this has rendered Pridmore's original classification inadequate, and one suspects that Sportack's new system of attribution may well become the standard work by which the coins are referenced.

DAVID VICE

Matthew Boulton's Trafalgar Medal, by Nicholas Goodison (Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 2007), 13 pp.

FOR close on forty years the standard account of the circumstances surrounding Matthew Boulton's Trafalgar Medal has been that given by the late Graham Pollard in his study of the medallic work of Conrad Heinrich Kuchler for Boulton in the *Numismatic Chronicle*.¹ Now that seminal study has been joined by the booklet under review which, equally, draws on the mammoth cache of documentary material contained in the Matthew Boulton Papers held by Birmingham City Archives.² Sir Nicholas Goodison, who has straddled the business world and that of applied art with equal distinction, is well known for his authoritative – and elegant – studies of English barometers and, particularly, of Matthew Boulton's ormolu, and his latest offering, though but a minnow in comparison with the latter leviathan, has all the hall marks of Goodison's good taste, scholarship and knowledge of the man described by one contemporary as a 'Maecenas' of artistic design.

The booklet has its origins in the Annual Lecture to the Friends of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery given by Goodison in 2005 on a theme which served to mark the Trafalgar bicentenary and to link it with Birmingham and the town's most innovative industrialist of the eighteenth century. With the bicentenary of Matthew Boulton's death (17 August 1809) also looming it was a happy idea to make the lecture available to a wider audience. The resulting publication is divided into four sections over twelve A4 pages of text and one of notes: an introduction providing a brief overview of Boulton and his manufactory, and chapters on Boulton's reaction to the news of Trafalgar and his decision to strike a medal for 'every officer and man engaged in that great victory who had the good fortune to survive it'; the frustrations over the design of the medal's obverse portrait and the capricious influence of Lady Hamilton approached for her opinion as to Nelson's likeness since 'no one [was] so likely to remember it distinctly'; and the medal's minting, distribution and enthusiastic reception. A year and more were to elapse after the defeat of the French and Spanish fleets before the medal was issued; a delay occasioned largely by the difficulties in achieving an acceptable profile of Nelson – eventually based by Kuchler on a wax portrait by Catherine Andras who also modelled the effigy of

Nelson in Westminster Abbey – and Boulton's anxiety to achieve a representation as accurate as possible, but one compounded too by Soho's preparations for the copper coinage of 1806.

Goodison is particularly good on the tribulations of the medal's design – one is left with heartfelt sympathy for Boulton's banking friend J. Furnell Tuffin who acted as Soho's intermediary in its commissioning – although he perhaps adds little to what one already knows from Pollard and to learn more about the actual detail of Kuchler's trial pieces one has to return to Pollard or go to Milford Haven or Laurence Brown.³ In his final chapter Goodison does not bring out sufficiently clearly that, while the medal was very much Boulton's idea, its manufacture and distribution became the concern of his son, Matthew Robinson Boulton, who had by now taken over the management of the Soho mint from his ageing and sick father. The son proved to be far less open-handed than the father and in the event the production (tin) version of the medal went only to the ordinary seamen and marines who had actually served in the line of battle. No officer was normally included in its issue and even many crewmen missed out. But this booklet is not directed at a specialist audience and as a piece of *haute vulgarisation* it serves Goodison's purpose admirably. It is a pleasure to read, felicitously written, rendering its subject readily accessible without any sacrifice of scholarship, and is handsomely produced in colour with a wealth of quality illustrations. Even if to some it may, in its presentation, have the tinge of a company brochure, Sir Nicholas Goodison and his publishers, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, are to be warmly congratulated on the production of a booklet which will bring before the interested layman – and the scholar not over-familiar with the subject – at least one facet of the achievement of an industrial pioneer of great discernment who while renowned in his own time has been all too much neglected by succeeding generations.

The encomia that followed the publication of the medals were fulsome. Lord Barham, the First Lord of the Admiralty who had orchestrated the Trafalgar campaign, in congratulating Boulton described them as 'Exquisite in their workmanship & truly expressive of the character and likeness of that great man Lord Nelson and the glorious action in which he fell'. He added, 'Your patriotism in perpetuating this glorious and decided victory must be felt by every person interested therein'. But it was not for nothing that in striking the medals at great personal cost even if in tin – some 17,000 in all were projected and 14,000 odd known to have been struck – for 'the Heroes of Trafalgar' Boulton made sure that the Royal Family and many of the great and the good received silver gilt and bronze versions as well. As Goodison concludes, while 'Boulton gave the medal because of his heartfelt

¹ Pollard 1970.

² Now subsumed in the 'Archives of Soho' housed in the Archives and Local Heritage department of Birmingham City Library.

³ Milford Haven 1919, nos 493–5; Brown 1980, nos 584–584B.

admiration for the achievement of Nelson and for the men of his fleet. . . I am sure that he was also driven by his perennial wish, undimmed by age or illness, for recognition in high places'. Yet this striving for acknowledgement was not for social reasons alone; Boulton was ever the businessman and his pursuit of high connections was also a means of promoting his fashionable ornamental wares and reaping a financial reward which sadly in so many of Boulton's aesthetic ventures too often eluded him. This said the story of the Trafalgar Medal typifies Boulton's concern and meticulous care to produce an object of the highest standards of taste and accuracy, an outlook encapsu-

lated in the remark he once made to the auctioneer, James Christie, 'Nor would anything induce me to make a shabby appearance'.

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