

## REVIEWS

*Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 42. South-Eastern Museums: Ancient British, Anglo-Saxon, and Later Coins to 1279*, by The Late A.J.H. Gunstone. Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press and Spink & Son Limited. 1992. xiv + 210 pp. inc. 78 photo plates.

THE latest volume in the *SCBI* series is a substantial contribution in all respects. Not only does it catalogue and illustrate 2,350 coins, which is the largest number in any single *Sylloge* volume, but it provides a magnificent reference collection of a diverse range of British coinage produced and used in south-east England down to the reign of Edward I. The completion of this work was a monumental task, involving the compilation of details of coins from forty-five museums, which lie to the south and east of an arc drawn between Southampton and Peterborough. (Museums in East Anglia have been considered separately in *SCBI* 26).

This volume was compiled by the late Anthony Gunstone, who tragically died during the final stages of its preparation. Having spent a year working on the coin collection at the City and County Museum in Lincoln, I am personally aware of the author's remarkable previous contributions to the *Sylloge* series. Volume 27 was an invaluable constant companion to me during that period. The completion of volume 42 is a fitting tribute to the author who published four volumes, which is more than any other contributor; apart from Dr Georg Galster. Dr Veronica Smart provided a major contribution by completing the volume for publication.

The format of this work will be familiar to those who have used previous titles, primarily comprising catalogue and plates. There is also a useful bibliography and indices of rulers, mints, moneyers and find-spots. It opens with a listing of the museum collections studied and a summary of which coins belong to each of them. The individual collections differ hugely in size and a number of institutions are included (for example the National Portrait Gallery and the Science Museum in London) which researchers may not suspect of holding reference collections. The catalogue begins with an important listing of southern Iron Age coins, many of which are provenanced. Reference illustrations of these early coins are not extensively available in the literature generally, and the 451 examples described and pictured here are a welcome addition. Of particular interest are the illustrations of bronze and potin varieties, while the parcel from the Stonea hoard is a useful supplementary reference for the Icenian series. The remainder of the volume describes Anglo-Saxon and later coins, to 1279.

The main strength of the volume undoubtedly lies in its coverage of eleventh-century coinage. This section will be a major reference for the output of the southern mints between 1042 and 1100. No less than 555 coins of Edward the Confessor are listed, followed by a valuable coverage of Harold II and William I. Some particularly interesting individual coins are described, including a Chester penny of Cnut (1074) and a Winchester penny of Harold I (1107), each with the bust right. There are two examples of an early experimental variety of Edward the Confessor, from the Taunton mint (1312-13). There is also an unusual form of reverse cross on the Facing Bust type from Sudbury, of the same king (1625-8). Other unusual items include a William I Bonnet type penny made into a brooch (1735), in a similar way to one of Edward the Confessor illustrated in the *BNJ* Coin Register for 1994 (226), and a uniface latten brooch ornamented with an impression of the reverse die of Henry I's Pointing Bust type, of the Gloucester mint (1903). The quality of the plates is generally very clear, in keeping with the current high standards of the series, although occasional examples are just too dark for adequate study.

This kind of book, which is essentially a catalogue, and also part of a highly revered series, is not easy to review. The layout adheres to the established, successful, format, which is both clear and easy to use. It does not set out to be fully comprehensive with regard to any specific coin series and presents a diverse range of types. So, how can it be assessed? Its value lies in the presentation of a major reference collection of numismatic information for the use of all researchers and collectors. As such, this volume is a most welcome and important reference for the British coinage of south-east England and will be an essential tool for anybody working on and studying material from that area. A large number of the coins are provenanced, which will also aid scholars in the analysis of the distribution of types and the output of individual mints. This work now completes a substantial coverage of the coinage of southern England within the *Sylloge* series. The volume is attractively presented and I highly recommend its acquisition. The only negative feature is its price which, while understandable, at £75 puts this most valuable reference work beyond the pocket of most students, whom we should be attempting to attract to the study of British numismatics.

JOHN DAVIES

*The York Hoard, 1831*, by Elizabeth J.E. Pirie (Northumbrian Numismatic Studies 1). Llanfyllin, Galata Print Limited 1994. 52pp, incl. 8 photo plates and 10 text figs. £12.

THIS provides a thorough new publication of a parcel of Northumbrian stycas long preserved at Stonyhurst College and first published by Nathan Heywood in volume 7 of *BNJ*. The provenance of the coins in question is attested by a slip of paper in a mid nineteenth-century hand which describes them as 'found by some men who were digging near St. Mary's Abbey in York . . . in the year 1831'. As they have now been dispersed via a Christie's sale of 10 October 1989, lots 440–455, Miss Pirie has performed a valuable service in putting them on record and in illustrating over 300 of the 322 coins that survive.

This is not the place to discuss Miss Pirie's classification of the coins, for the principles behind it are shortly to be set out in a more extensive volume by her on the Northumbrian styca series, but, as she herself remarks on p. 17, comparison of the content of the hoard as she has published it with that of the content of the comparable 1967 Bolton Percy hoard as published under a more traditional system of classification by the present reviewer in vol 43 of *BNJ*, 'is not entirely straightforward'. Readers may therefore find it helpful to have the following summary of the Stonyhurst parcel drawn up on the same principles as the summary of the content of the Bolton Percy given in *BNJ* 43:

#### STONYHURST PARCEL FROM 'YORK, 1831' HOARD.

##### *Kings of Northumbria*

##### **Eanred**

Early Phase. Daegberct 1; Eadvini 1; Herred 1; double reverse 1	4
Later Phase. Aldates 3; Brother 4; Fordred 11; Monne 10; Odilo 1; Wihtrred 1; Wulfred 2	32

##### **Aethelred II**

First Reign. Alghere 6; Brother 7; Cunemund 1; Eanred 35; Fordred 24; Leofhtegn 20 (including 1 possible contemporary forgery); Monne 23; Wendelberht 3; Wihtrred 5; Wulfred 2; blundered 1	127
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##### **Redwulf**

Coenred 1; Cudberht 2; Eanred 2; Hwaetnoth 1; Monne 1; 'Nerred' 1; Wendelberht 1	9
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##### **Aethelred II**

Second Reign. Eardwulf 24; Monne 1	25
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##### **Osberht**

Eanwulf 4; Monne 3; Winiberht 2; Wulsixt 2; blundered 2	13
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##### **Derivative regal**

59

##### *Archbishops of York*

##### **Wigmund**

Coenred 7; Ethelhelm 8; Ethilveard 15; Hunlaf 16	46
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##### **Wulfhere**

Wulfred 7	7
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TOTAL:	322
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It should be noted in relation to this summary that it is difficult to determine which coins of the moneyer Eardwulf are official striking attributable to Aethelred II's second reign and which should be classed with the mass of 'derivative regal' coins struck from Aethelred II's second reign onwards into the reign of Osberht, and that dividing them appropriately involves value judgments about a few individual coins that may be open to challenge.

It also seems helpful to compare the percentage representations of coins of each reign or other defined grouping in this hoard with the percentage representation of similar coins in the Bolton Percy hoard. As all the coins in the Stonyhurst parcel (S) can be identified, whereas there were 58 coins in the Bolton Percy hoard (BP) which were unidentifiable or which could only be partially identified, the percentages for Bolton Percy have been calculated omitting the 58 coins concerned.

The percentages are as follows: Eanred BP 12.4%, S 11.2%; Aethelred First Reign BP 34.8%, S 39.4%; Redwulf BP 2.2%, S 2.8%; Aethelred Second Reign BP 9.6%, S 7.8%; Osberht BP 4.4%, S 4.0%; Derivative Regal BP 23.1%, S 18.3%; Abp. Eanbald BP 0.1%, S nil; Abp. Wigmund BP 12.5%, S 14.3%; Abp. Wulfhere BP 0.9%, S 2.2%.

It will be evident that the composition of the hoards was broadly similar, and it can be suggested that the weaker representation of coins of the 'derivative regal' group in the Stonyhurst parcel is due at least in part to the coins in that parcel being a selection which favoured specimens that were more readily identifiable.

HUGH PAGAN

*The Short Cross Coinage 1180–1247 Henry II to Henry III* (Herne Bay, 1992). 90 pp, paperback. ISBN 0 9520348 0 8. *The Voided Long Cross Coinage 1247–1279 Henry III and Edward I* (Herne Bay, 1993). 80 pp, paperback, ISBN 0 9520348 1 6. *The English Long Cross Pennies 1279–1489 Edward I to Henry VII* (Herne Bay, 1995). 190 pp, ISBN 0 9520348 2 4. By Christopher R. Wren.

THESE three volumes are each subtitled 'An illustrated guide to identification' and form part of a projected series to cover similarly the late medieval and early modern English hammered silver coinage up to 1662. It may seem unfair to mention another work of similar purpose in the opening paragraph of a review, but it would seem clear that to some extent this series is intending to serve as an alternative to J.J. North's *English Hammered Coinage* (to a point, as there is as yet no indication that the new series will cover Saxon, Norman and the Cross and Crosslets coinage, nor is the subject of gold coinage or early copper addressed). Obviously, there is absolutely nothing to object to in this aim (which will be returned to below), and there are many things to welcome and admire about the volumes so far produced.

The coinages covered by the three volumes under review have two main characteristics: they are regularly encountered; and they are, relatively speaking, difficult for the non-specialist to identify properly, a consequence of immobilised designs and the often detailed and sophisticated modern numismatic classifications which have been necessary to tackle them. From this point of view, anything which helps the curator, archaeologist, finder or collector is to be welcomed. But one would not want to damn these guides with such faint praise, as they also have manifest virtues, usually arising from their professed purpose as introductions.

They are well organised, and straightforward to use, with a structure designed for the benefit of the non-specialist and beginner. They begin with a glossary of relevant terms, useful not only in their immediate context, but also for anyone pursuing their interests further. (The numismatic usage of terms such as sinister and dexter, Roman and Lombardic, can too easily be taken as self-evident.) Where the terms describe symbols or aspects of letter forms and other design features (annulet, mullet, pot hook, trifoliate), these are often illustrated. Forms of initial cross are also illustrated in the third volume.

Then there comes an introduction which, with brevity and admirable clarity, sets out the historical context for the coinage concerned and the background to the classification applied to it. Next there is provided a general discussion of how to read and classify the coinage in question, accompanied by relevant lists and tables. The Short Cross volume, for instance, includes a table of lettering; a table of moneyers with the mints and classes for which they are known; and a list of the mints. The Long Cross volume adds to these a table of ligated letters and a list of elements in the reverse legends. (It should be noted that a great advantage of the production of the Short and Long Cross volumes is the use of accurate letter forms when quoting from coin legends; this is given up, however, in the volume covering later pennies.) The volume devoted to the penny from 1279 to 1489 has the most extensive set of such aids, subdivided into obverse and reverse sections. These cover legends, initial marks, mint readings, symbols and other identifying features.

The next part of the guides provides their heart, a survey of the coinage under review, class by class or reign by reign as appropriate, illustrated with clear drawings. The levels of classification applied here are sensibly chosen, without delving into the murkiest depths of sub-classes and varieties. Wherever possible the author sticks to objective criteria, instead of the more 'eye-of-the-beholder' distinctions ('crude style', 'bushier hair', 'square letters', etc.) which can be so meaningless and off-putting to the beginner. There are inevitably limits to this approach, particularly in the thickets of the Edwardian series: class 3f with its 'large nose and coarse appearance', for instance, may well leave the unfamiliar user nonplussed, and it is in this sort of area that the lack of photographs of (ideally) several specimens is most felt. Again the highly distinctive form of the letter A on coins

of 11c is less than ideally realised on the thick lettering used in the drawings. This is not meant to be a criticism of the works under review, as considerable use of photography would presumably have raised the costs enormously and probably have rendered the project impractical. Rather, it simply reflects the problems inherent in the nature of this particular coinage and its classification.

For most users of these guides the level of information provided in this section will be more than sufficient and, for those wishing to take matters further, the author generally provides references to the detailed studies of each class, a resource which is bolstered by the extremely useful bibliographies which conclude each volume. Before these, however, a final chapter or set of chapters deals with related coinages (issues of Scotland and Ireland, continental imitations, forgeries, piedforts and jetons).

Thus, the guides should present enough information for most people to make a reasonable attempt at accurate identification of the penny coinages of the periods covered. The volume covering the later penny coinages is perhaps the least easy to use, and it might have been useful (considering the frequently worn and clipped state of many specimens) to have helped the beginner along by indicating the main developments of face, shoulder and hair that make, for instance, a coin of Edward IV often so immediately distinguishable from one of Edward III or Edward I. There are some oddities to be noted, for instance the conventional dates (or indeed any dates) for the Long Cross coinage classes are not provided.

'Placing' them among the relevant section of numismatic literature, one can certainly recommend them highly to those with a wish, or need, to identify English medieval coins without initially making a major study. Their didactic approach makes them much more useful in this regard than the commercial catalogues and price guides, despite the advantage of good photographic reproductions some of these provide. North's *English Hammered Coinage* is more comprehensive and also often more detailed in its classifications, though its very density can make it forbidding as a first port of call, and one may well view Wren's books as complementary to North, providing the introductory methodology and outlines of classification necessary to make easy use of it. (This reviewer has certainly found himself using both in the course of identifying one coin.) Thus there can be no doubt of the new series finding a clear niche in this area of numismatic literature, and being a useful addition to the libraries of most medieval numismatists, experienced or otherwise.

B.J. COOK

*Monnaies et Marchés au Moyen Âge*, by John Day, Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, Paris 1994. 308 pp. ISBN 2-11-087833-9.

A review of this book of essays, which are entirely in French, and only in passing concerned with the coinage of Britain, is in some ways inappropriate for this journal. However, the appearance of this volume of collected essays does provide an occasion for us to draw attention to the work of an economic historian of great stature, who has done more than anyone, with the possible exception of John Munro, to persuade historians of the later middle ages of the importance and interest of numismatic evidence and monetary problems.

English readers will probably prefer to consult Day's essays collected under the title *The Medieval Market Economy*, Oxford, 1987. Of the twelve essays in the French volume, eight appear in English in *The Medieval Market Economy*. Moreover, of the essays which appear in the French volume but not in the English, two originally appeared in English. 'The problem of the standard in medieval coinage systems', and 'The history of money in the writings of Marc Bloch', both in the *Problems of Medieval Coinage in the Iberian Area* series edited by Mario Gomes Marques in 1986 and 1988.

Moreover, from a narrowly British point of view, it has to be admitted that Day's familiarity with the English evidence is somewhat limited, relying heavily on the old stalwarts Feaveryear and Craig. However, even the most blinkered students of British numismatics would still do well to study what he has to say. For Day's study of the continental monetary evidence complements and reinforces the English picture of bullion scarcity in the fifteenth century. The globalisation of modern economics has its roots in the truly international character of ancient and medieval bullion flows.

For those with not exclusively British interests who are willing to dabble in continental waters, try a fascinating Mediterranean cruise with Day from Genoa to Alexandria and back in 1382. This essay, 'Prix agricoles en Méditerranée à la fin du XIVe siècle', is far more than a list of prices, but also provides insights and information on shipping, trade, currencies, and weights and measures. Though published in *Annales* as long ago as 1961, 'Prix agricoles', which does not appear in the English volume, came freshest to this reviewer, and alone makes this book worth seeking out, even by those already familiar with the English essays.

N.J. MAYHEW



*Changing Values in Medieval Scotland: A Study of Prices, Money, and Weights and Measures.* By Elizabeth Gemmill and Nicholas Mayhew. Cambridge University Press, 1995. 419 pages, 42 figures, 77 tables.

THIS work satisfies a need expressed by a Scottish numismatist in the 1860s: in a letter to R.W. Cochran-Patrick, he suggested that the latter should compile a list of Scottish prices, which would be a great service, Bishop Fleetwood's *Chronicon Preciosum* being quite inadequate.

The authors begin by emphasising the inadequacy of the available data, in relation to the rules drawn up by the International Scientific Committee on Price History. Among the difficulties mentioned of using different types of price quotation is the occurrence of fossilized valuations, in commutation of rents in kind. Assize valuations in burghs, on the other hand, responded to variations in supply, but 'may tend to flatten out the extremes of glut and dearth', in the case of bread and ale in particular, since they tried to balance the interests of the craftsmen who processed the raw materials and of the consumers of these staple items of diet. The problems do not detract from the value of this collection, but they do make clear the importance of the interpretation of the figures, and of avoiding the use of isolated prices.

The chapter on currency, which numismatists may be inclined to read first, deals mainly with the standards of the Scottish coinage, without details of the types. At the beginning of the period considered the standards were the same as in England, and English coins dominated the circulating medium, except probably for short periods after a recoinage. The opportunity is taken to examine The Assize of King David, although a slight change in the standard under Robert Bruce, which has been postulated (unnecessarily) in interpreting this Assize, would not affect the comparison of prices with English ones or with those at other dates in Scotland. The pennyweight of 32 wheat grains, given in this Assize, was taken by Burns – following Cochran-Patrick and Ruding – to be that of the Tower weight system, which is no longer accepted, but the fact that this fits with Troy weight needed to be stated in a Scottish context. There were changes affecting weights larger than the ounce. In contrast to this, it is argued that there were fundamental changes in the dry measures of capacity, between the Assize of King David and the 1426 legislation. Local variations are also known. The barrel, too, was a subject for repeated regulation, largely because of the importance of the export of barrelled fish.

1367 saw the first, or first important, reduction in the Scottish coinage standard in relation to that of England, and from this date a 'deflator', based on the silver coins, is used to show the sterling equivalent of Scottish prices, averaged over convenient periods: this allows a reasonable comparison between Scottish prices at different times, as well as with England. This does not mean that the relatively stable English standards are put forward as ideal: it is pointed out that 'at times England's coinage . . . appears to have been distinctly undervalued'. Devaluation of the Scottish coinage made her exports easier to sell, these being largely products of a pastoral economy, together with fish. Cereals were a different matter, since the limited amount of suitable land would prevent increased production to substitute for more expensive imports. The sterling equivalent prices of cereals show a strong rise, in contrast to England, whereas livestock was cheaper in Scotland.

The 1367 change is not clearly marked by price increases, nor indeed is the more drastic 1393 reduction in the weight of the Scottish groat, but this may be attributable to the paucity of evidence. From 1398, however, with one gap, there are copious Aberdeen records, of which only extracts have been published, and these provide very valuable price material. The prices here certainly reflect the increase in the currency value of fleur-de-lis groats in James I's reign.

James III's reign likewise saw an upward revaluation of the coins, but this was soon countermanded, after 'the penny worthis ar rysin with the penny'. More importantly, small copper coins were introduced, with the farthings being made legal tender, initially for 1s. in the pound, but in 1486 for up to 3s. There is an Aberdeen record of the refusal of black money in 1470, but 'this first period of black money does not seem to have caused excessive difficulties'. The notorious black money, apparently introduced in 1480, was a different matter, being struck in great and presumably uncontrolled quantities. There is Aberdeen evidence of widespread commercial disruption in 1482, and average prices for the 1480s show a major rise, particularly for cereals, although the price of oatmeal remained far below that given in the contemporary chronicle, which reflected destruction by war as well as the currency problems. There was also trouble over the billon packs introduced in this reign, but the much larger and baser issues of placks under James IV appear to have been accepted. Under James V resistance to the placks grew, and their issue was halted in 1526 or earlier, with the exception of a small issue authorized in 1533, at a lower standard.

In 'The Evidence of Scottish Coin Hoards for Monetary History', in *Coinage in Medieval Scotland*, Dr. Metcalf remarked on the occurrence in burghs of sixteenth-century hoards consisting of little but billon, and this may be connected with 'the difficulties of retailers who bought in bulk but sold piecemeal for base money', suggesting a tendency for good silver and gold coin to flow out of the burghs. This may also be relevant to the considerable investment in feued agricultural land by men below the status of laird, including merchants, for which evidence is summarised in the last chapter of the book under review. There is, however, a reference to shortage of ready money in the countryside in 1511: 'the silver isnocht wer to gett in Orkney and Scheitland thane it is in Buchane'.

One of the interesting features of the Aberdeen records is that 'salmon became so creditworthy as to be as good as money itself', there being 'an almost limitless demand for salmon on the export market'. Barter agreements are

mentioned in which salmon was nevertheless priced in money terms, but I suspect, from reading later records, that this was not always the case in other barter agreements.

There is much in this book which should interest a student of the Scottish coinage. It throws light on the economic background of the parliamentary committees, or at least the burgh representatives on these, which were called on to advise on the monetary needs of the whole country. It is not the fault of the authors that it leaves unanswered questions in my mind: in particular I share their regret that there is almost no data on wages. Although there may indeed have been 'some measure of protection through wages in food or other goods', I suspect increased hardship from inflation, for wage-earners as well as the unwaged poor.

JOAN E.L. MURRAY

*Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland 1550–1780*, by A.J.S. Gibson and T.C. Smout. Cambridge University Press, 1995. xvi + 398 pp., figures, graphs and tables, £50.

INTEREST in prices and wages ranges from the visitor to an exhibition wanting to know what a particular coin might have bought to the more demanding questions of the economic and social historians interested in patterns and trends. Coins now arranged in trays with full numismatic details were once paid out in wages and used to purchase a variety of goods, from the basic necessities of life to luxury items. However price information for Scotland was not easy to find, even for the later medieval and modern periods when more numerous records are available. This gap has now been remedied by Gibson and Smout with their detailed listing and analysis of a large number of prices for the period 1550 to 1780. The authors state that the main purpose of the work is to act as a source book for others, and in the long runs of data and graphs given in each chapter they provide a detailed and varied corpus which will be of immense value. In addition each chapter has a careful discussion and analysis of the sources used, followed by an interpretation so that the reader is not merely presented with a series of dry statistics. Great care was taken as to the exact meaning of any stated price or wage, as this is clearly a path strewn with pitfalls for the unwary.

Prices can be essentially 'wholesale' or 'retail', contain a mark-up for processing, be influenced by the prejudices of the persons setting them, vary throughout the country and with the time of year and not least refer to different measures, usually not specified. Scotland indeed had a great number of local standards, which are discussed in an appendix. Quality too had different bands, from best quality grain, bread or candles to second and third class varieties. This also applied to wages, there being much difference between those paid to a boy tending cattle and a prime agricultural worker skilled in everything from ploughing to mending. Although the working week was then of six days, a more important factor was the total number of days worked throughout the year, for employment was by no means regular. In these circumstances the income earned by female members of the family was often of crucial importance.

Bearing such problems in mind, the first group of prices is taken from the burgh records relating to the regulation of the products of the main crafts concerned: wheatbread, ale, tallow/candles and meat. Wine, being an import and less of a staple, figures only infrequently. There exist good runs of such prices in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling from the mid sixteenth century. Chapter 2 mainly covers wheat, wheatbread and ale, and these burgh prices are complemented by the very comprehensive county fiars data given in Chapter 3. These were prices determined annually by the Sheriffs and juries throughout Scotland for oats, oatmeal, wheat, bear and barley, malt and rye and pease and beans. These commence in the first half of the seventeenth century and run throughout the eighteenth. There appears to be a greater range of sources for the county fiars prices, and as regards wheat, these provide an admirable check against the burgh prices.

A further source of prices, from the press, is dealt with in Chapter 4. These are, however, more limited, mainly covering grain prices at Haddington given in the *Scots Magazine* from 1721. On the other hand the prices were published monthly, and such a wealth of detail allows a sight of fluctuation within the year as well as providing further valuable comparative material to set against the burgh and county fiars records.

Chapter 5 takes an overall view of the various prices for grain and its products and attempts to trace and interpret both long and short-term trends. There was thus a great increase in prices between 1550 and 1600 as seen in the cost of a pound of wheatbread in Edinburgh, which rose in the first twenty-five years from approximately 3*d.* Scots around 1550 to 4*d.* Scots in 1575, but doubled over the following decade and again during the next ten years ending up at 16*d.* Scots in 1597. Ale trebled in price over the same period while wine went up eight-fold. However this has to be seen as part of a sharp price increase throughout Europe, and in Scotland is here blamed on the debasement of the Scottish currency under James VI and a rising population.

However prices levelled off after 1600 and, albeit with some blips, became more stable, even showing some decrease in the couple of decades after 1650. In the later decades of the seventeenth century this trend was reversed but it was only after the start of the eighteenth century that prices began to move up again. It is suggested that these were high enough by 1750 to encourage landowners to take up agricultural improvement. Many reasons are put forward for these changes, from the amalgamation of the Scottish and English currencies after 1603 to the results

of the Act of Union and population increase, but also decrease due to epidemics and emigration. Periods of unrest spring to the numismatic mind as supposed causes for coin hoards and these presumably also affected prices, though this aspect seems only to receive passing notice here: '... scarcities of the 1640s, which were exacerbated by military problems' (p. 165) and 'How far it was caused, or exacerbated, by the turmoils associated with war and English invasion cannot readily be assessed' (p. 168). However, 'The Jacobite rising can perhaps account for the sharp short-term hike in prices in the Haddington market in the first half of 1746' (p. 173).

Chapter 6 moves on to the prices of animals and their products, mainly cattle and sheep for the former and tallow/candles, and to a lesser extent, butter and eggs for the latter. Sources, too, are much more restricted in scope and time. Among the more interesting of these are the purchases made for the kitchens at St. Andrews University, running from 1587, but several estate records add their bit to the burgh material, especially from Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Of particular note are the investigations into animal prices carried out in 1626 and 1627 by the Justices of the Peace on the orders of the Privy Council. There then follows a short chapter on diet and nutritional values, of interest in that the staple food of oatcake washed down with ale managed to sustain a relatively healthy population.

Wages are dealt with in Chapter 8. These cover masons and related workmen, male and female farm workers, agricultural servants and labourers. The data comes from Crown, town and gown accounts as well as estate archives, and is supplemented by burgh statutes, rates fixed by the Justices of the Peace from early in the seventeenth century and other sources such as the Poll Tax returns of 1693 and 1695. A point of interest to the numismatist is how much of these wages was actually paid in coin. Urban workers such as the masons would be thus paid, as well as live-in servants who received cash in addition to their keep. However wages in kind were common for other employees and a mixture of the two not uncommon. One noteworthy example quoted (p. 264) records payment, as late as 1720, of a share in a cow to be slaughtered, a deal board for a coffin, a halfcrown sterling and the loan of two shillings Scots in remuneration for an agreed amount of ditching. In the seventeenth century farmwork was carried out in East Lothian and the eastern Borders by a family unit which received a cottage, yard, some land, grazing and an amount of oats – but no cash – in return for a wide range of tasks to be carried out on the farm. A final chapter discusses real wages and concludes that on the whole the population managed, but did not greatly improve its lot until towards the end of the period under discussion.

In view of this plethora of prices, it is pertinent to ask to what extent real money or coinage circulated in Scotland during this time. Coin hoards of the seventeenth century, site finds, and the large issues of smaller denomination billon in the late sixteenth century and the prolific copper issues throughout the seventeenth century suggest coin use was relatively advanced and widespread. Yet this book makes clear that many in employment received little or no cash, though it is pointed out that the personal produce of a farm worker could be sold rather than consumed. Even in the eighteenth century rents in the eastern Highlands were paid in kind, in grain, though the perhaps surprising corollary is the rents for the pasture lands of the western Highlands were paid in coin, obtained from the sale of the cattle at the great fairs, such as that held at Beaulieu near Inverness. However the purpose of the county fairs was to proclaim cash prices to which rents, stipends and other payments in kind could be converted. They existed 'to liquidate the prices of victual in divers processes ...' according to an act of 1723 (p. 67) but traced back to before 1650, they surely demonstrate an increasing use of coin.

This work will mainly appeal to the numismatist working on the economic aspects of Scottish coinage in the period after 1550, but for the rest there is much to instruct and amuse on the occasional perusal of its contents. However, as intended, it provides a much-needed corpus of prices and wages material for historians, and along with a companion volume covering the period up to 1550, reviewed elsewhere in this journal, should greatly satisfy them in filling a major gap in the literature on Scottish economic history.

J.D. BATESON

*Promises to Pay: The First Three Hundred Years of Bank of England Notes*, by Derrick Byatt, London, 1994. 245 pp with many illustrations, hardback. ISBN 0 907605 50 8.

GIVEN the Bank of England's eminent status both in Britain and as one of Europe's earliest note issuing banks, its notes have an understandable allure for anyone interested in the history of paper money. Often, however, the note issues of central authorities offer territory that is at first sight more predictable and less accessible than more romantic private or local issues: there is inevitably a tendency to conservatism in design and policy, with background information firmly secured in the bank's or treasury's own records. Of course this gives tempting scope for speculation, but firm facts require objective and patient investigation. Such facts are provided attractively and in abundance in Byatt's book, published to mark the tercentenary of the Bank's foundation in 1694.

With the benefit of some forty years working at the Bank, most recently as their Records Adviser, Byatt has had direct access to the best source material, which no doubt offered more than could reasonably be contained in one book. This publication indicates how much ground he must have covered: the emphasis is on a chronological account of the changing appearance of the Bank's notes, explained in the light of the Bank's own objectives, public

reactions, designers' frustrations, and the constant juggling of aesthetics, security, costs, and the mixed advantages and constraints of ever advancing technology.

The book contains a wealth of facts, dates and figures, with information ranging from paper-makers' marks for matching watermarks and denominations, or the complexities of serial number prefixes, to consideration of a two pound note in the 1950s. There are also valuable and repeated warnings that the printed dates on notes do not necessarily correspond with the actual date of production or issue. Three useful appendices concentrate on branch issues; the secret marks deliberately incorporated to help the Bank detect forgeries (of limited use to the public at the time; by law anyone finding a forgery now still has to give it to the Bank); and the numbering systems for black and white notes. Impersonal facts are, however, given another dimension by Byatt's extensive use of quotes and anecdotes which illustrate the close relationship between numismatics and social history. For example, the Bank's dilemmas in deciding when to replace lost or defaced notes in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries implicitly reveal social hierarchy – it was inevitably the servant's fault – and costly commercial practice: pity the poor shopkeeper's wife who used a £100 note to wrap up some butter for a customer! There are also glimpses into working practices and employment policies; two workaholic Chief Cashiers who scarcely left the Bank premises; a special pension scheme in 1821 for 'right-sizing' after the withdrawal of £1 and £2 notes; a handsome re-location package to lure John Oldham from the Bank of Ireland's printing works. Officialdom is often shown to have an all-too-human, inconsistent face, as the Bank decided which forgers to pardon or condemn, or left one Bank Teller, convicted of clipping guineas, to the traitor's fate of execution at Tyburn, but later gave relative mercy (mere transportation) to a fraudulent Chief Cashier-elect. Such incidents do far more than add colour and spice to the book; they are evidence of the many ways in which issuing and using money affect the lives of individuals.

For the most part Byatt resists argument, speculation or comment, but readers may at times find themselves moved to all of these. As may happen with any history, once-unthinkable changes in attitude are revealed. It is sobering to read, now, that when in 1937 the metal security thread was tested on notes of the South African Reserve Bank, the General Works Manager of the Bank's printing works likened the experiment to 'the quite common practice of trying out a play at a suburban theatre before producing it in the West End'. In the light of current economic debate it is ironic also to discover that in the 1950s proposed designs featuring Sir John Houblon, the Bank's first Governor, were rejected in favour of a series carrying a portrait of the Queen, partly as it could solve for all time the problem of a central theme (not so much beware of imitation as beware of innovation?) and because the monarch's image reflected the Bank's state-ownership, while Houblon might seem to personify its independence. Is it significant that Houblon has at last appeared on the back of the new £50 note issued in 1994?

*Promises to Pay* is beautifully produced; full of illustrations (though with less fresh material than I would have hoped) and generous in its use of colour – an unusual treat which is particularly important for the modern issues. The presentation suggests that the book is designed to appeal to non-specialist readers, but given the subject matter and minutiae of detail, it is surely specialists who should form its main readership, and for them the non-academic approach has some disadvantages. The absence of sources for the well-chosen quotes is infuriating, as they contain, or point to, such enlightening material; the occasional footnotes are placed in the margins, looking confusingly like the picture captions; and even limited to one page, the Selected Bibliography might have been longer and should surely contain more precise publication details. At times the flow of the text is disjointed, with some bewildering jumps in subject matter; say, from the Bank's negotiations with country banks over note issue after the 1844 Act, to the division of the Bank into two separate Banking and Issue Departments, to William Brewer and shaded watermarks, all in three consecutive but unconnected paragraphs. This is perhaps a case of appearances being deceptive, for while the book is eye-catching and offers intriguing insights for the merely curious, it contains much more, and will yield most to thorough reading by serious readers who are prepared to use its information in wider research and analysis. Indeed, it is rather like the Bank itself: based on solid foundations, judicious in its revelations, sometimes idiosyncratic, and undeniably full of riches.

VIRGINIA HEWITT

*British Historical Medals*, vol. 3, *The Accession of Edward VII to 1960*, by Laurence Brown, Spink & Son, London, 1995, 432 pp.

TURNING the pages of the final volume of Laurence Brown's *British Historical Medals 1760–1960*, it is hard to resist the conclusion that what one is witnessing here is the decline and fall of the commemorative medal in Britain. To approach the subject from a purely statistical point of view, the first two volumes, covering the years 1760–1837 and 1837–1901, contained 1,755 and 1,940 medals respectively; the present volume has but 785. If one discounts for a moment those medals that record the different stages in the transfer of monarchic authority (death or abdication, accession, coronation) and the royal prize medals that also appear in this volume, the author has identified for inclusion on average some fourteen medals for each year of the first decade; the following two decades have about eight medals for each year; the equivalent figure for the 1930s is four, and for both the 1940s



and 1950s it is three. Turning to coronation medals, one notes a similar falling off. For Edward VII's coronation in 1902, Brown records no fewer than 129 medals, for that of George V fifty-six, for Edward VIII and George VI thirty (there may of course have been more had the coronation taken place) and fifty respectively, and for the coronation of the present queen twenty-five.

Before attempting to speculate on possible explanations for this decline, two notes of caution need to be sounded. The first concerns the author's inclusion policy, which (as Brown himself admits) necessarily involves a certain degree of arbitrariness. The various grounds for inclusion and exclusion are set out, and it is made clear that medals have been excluded expressly in order to reduce the catalogue 'to a manageable size'. There are no medals that have been 'deemed by the author to be of minor importance, i.e., those of purely local interest'. Nor are there any commemorating people not listed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'unless considered to be of particular interest to the work'. This means that, of the 151 medals listed by Lady Harris in her *Portrait Medals of a Generation* (sixteen of which are represented in the British Museum collections), only one, that of Sir George Hill of 1927, makes it into the book. Commemorative medals produced in other countries are also excluded, 'unless considered to be of special value to the work'. Amongst the First World War medals, Armand Bonnetain's memorial to Edith Cavell is included, and amongst the Second World War medals is Pierre Turin's tribute to Field Marshall Montgomery, but we do not find Henri Dropsy's 1914 medal celebrating 'L'Angleterre, champion du droit contre la violence', nor the same artist's commemoration of the English entry into Lille on 17 October 1918: the various medals by Goetz, such as the optimistic 'Wir fahren gegen Engeland' of 1940, are also omitted (the British replica of Goetz's *Lusitania* medal is included). With the exception of the royal prize medals, award medals are also excluded, so that Hubert Herkomer's fine Royal Automobile and Associated Clubs presentation medal of 1908 is not listed, and we have to wait for the golden jubilee of the Austin Motor Company in 1955 for the first documentation of that quintessentially twentieth-century phenomenon, the car. Disappointing for numismatists – and more inexplicable – is the omission of Paul Vincze's medals of Harold Mattingly (1947) and Edward Robinson (1952). Either these medals also fell foul of the author's inclusion policy, or else – and here we come to the second caveat – they were missed. It is evident that the author has recorded assiduously medals in both private and public collections (eighteen of the latter are cited in the catalogue), but, given the relatively recent date of these medals, it is inevitable that some, which have not yet entered collections, will have escaped attention.

Despite this, the question as to why the commemorative medal is less popular in the twentieth century than in the period covered by the earlier volumes demands to be answered. This is not an issue that is addressed in this volume, for the greater part of the introduction, which was written by Ann Brown, is given over to a summary of twentieth-century British political and social history, and refers to medals only where they are relevant, which is not often. As the author writes, '... it is not possible to follow closely the development of the country in the twentieth century by reference to the medals issued throughout the period'. Why in the present book do we find no medals commemorating air travel, or radio or television? Why none marking what Brown calls 'probably the greatest civil achievement of the twentieth century', the creation of the Welfare State? Why no National Health Service medal with Sir William Beveridge on one side and Asclepius holding dentures and spectacles on the other? Why, when the second volume of *British Historical Medals* recorded fifty-three medals commemorating the Great Exhibition of 1851, in the present volume are there only three relating to the Festival of Britain one hundred years later?

This is a complex question and deserving of greater study. Doubtless many factors come into play, and the various roles of manufacturers, publishers and other commissioning bodies, and artists, would need to be analysed, along with the expectations of the public, who constitute the market. It may be that the twentieth-century stress on state action has reduced the demand for objects commemorating individuals, or that changes in education have helped to diminish the popularity of the medal, founded as it is in a classical tradition. Economic factors must surely be important, as must technological innovation. Certainly, other newer, and often cheaper, media have grown in popularity at the expense of the medal. As Brown notes in his introduction, illustrated magazines have become lasting souvenirs of important events, and, even for royal events, cheaper plastic badges have become more popular than medals. For the silver jubilee of 1977 both monarchist and anti-monarchist groups produced badges, and the 1981 royal wedding also saw a range of views (including the memorable 'Don't do it, Di') expressed in a large number of badges. Whereas the temperance movement of the nineteenth-century spread its message by means of mass-produced medals, twentieth-century equivalents such as the nuclear disarmament lobby, have used the badge. The commemorative medal has in effect been sidelined, a state of affairs seemingly recognised at the time of the coronation by Lionel Thompson, Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, who wrote in his report of 1952 that, 'it seemed reasonable, at a time when the resources of the Royal Mint would be fully employed in the production of coinage and official medals for the new reign, to leave in the hands of the medal trade the production in quantity of souvenir medals for distribution throughout the Commonwealth and Empire'. He explained: 'In some quarters this "break with tradition" was regretted, but the tradition is comparatively recent, dating only from the reign of Edward VII'.

The cast medal has fared even worse in the period in question, and only fifty are included in Brown's book. At the beginning of the century four former pupils of Alphonse Legros at the Slade School make occasional appearances: Lilian Hamilton, Feodora Gleichen, Ella Casella and Charles Holroyd. The dating here of two of their

pieces appears not to be quite accurate. Ella Casella's medal of Henry Irving, placed under 1905, the year of the actor's death, must surely belong to the mid 1880s, and Holroyd's George Meredith medal certainly belongs to a much earlier point in the century than the year 1923, which is where it is listed by Brown. A second medal given here to Holroyd, portraying the painter G.F. Watts, is surely the work of Legros himself, although the attribution to Holroyd also appears in the National Portrait Gallery's catalogue. This attribution is based on the fact that the NPG example was donated by Lady Holroyd in 1927 and on a similarity with a painted portrait of Watts by Holroyd, dated 1897, now in the Tate. However, although Holroyd exhibited medals at the Society of Medallists' exhibitions of 1898 and 1901, there is no record of his having portrayed Watts in that form. A medal of the painter by Legros, on the other hand, is documented in 1900, and from a stylistic point of view the present medal fits perfectly into Legros' oeuvre. It is, of course, very possible that, when modelling the medal, Legros had before him the portrait by his former pupil and friend (the painting remained in Holroyd's possession until his death).

Other producers of cast medals include Theodore Spicer-Simson, whose first listed medal is dated 1905, and who was especially active in the 1920s. The First World War period is distinguished by Sidney Carline's interesting medals of Viscount Dillon and the Battle of Jutland. From the later 1930s two artists only produced the few cast medals listed in Brown's book: the Hungarian Frank Kovacs, who from 1956 lived in France, and Fred Kormis who came to England from Germany in the 1930s. Kormis continued working for another twenty-five years after the period covered by this book, but he was very much a lone figure until the mid 1970s, when Ron Dutton began his medallic work. Dutton played an important part in the formation of the British Art Medal Society in 1982, and two of Kormis's last works were issued by that Society.

BAMS has done much to revive the medal in this country, but it is noteworthy that few of the artists who have produced medals for the society have chosen to commemorate events in the way that, for example, large numbers of German medallists have recently responded to the removal of the Berlin wall and the unification of their country. Of course, there are British medallists who address contemporary issues in their work: Jacqueline Stieger's *Destruction of the Town* of 1992, which points to the damage inflicted by traffic, is a case in point. But for most the medal is a vehicle for a more personal self-expression, far removed from notions of commemoration or (even more so) celebration, and for this reason the compiler of a fourth volume of *British Historical Medals* would be forced to exclude many contemporary medals. Given the decline of the traditional commemorative medal discussed above, however, this expansion of the role of the medal may, in this country at least, turn out to be the vital factor that saves the medium from extinction.

These later medals by artists such as Dutton and Stieger have no place in this catalogue of medals of 1901 to 1960. There is, however, a great deal of information on British medals earlier than 1901. For the catalogue of twentieth-century medals, with its various indices, ends on page 223, and is followed by forty-five pages of addenda to volumes one and two, seventeen pages of medal advertisements from a nineteenth-century scrapbook, a twenty-page dictionary of the artists and publishers of medals appearing in all three volumes, and no less than 118 pages of combined indices for this two-hundred year stretch of British medals. These alone would be enough to ensure that the present volume is an essential acquisition for anyone already in possession of the other two.

The author is to be congratulated for amassing such a vast amount of information, and for bringing to a successful conclusion this mammoth project, commenced some thirty years ago. Spink & Son are also to be thanked, for taking over publication (the first two volumes were published by Seaby) and producing what is a very handsome book. Modern technology and boundless patience on the part of Laurence Brown enabled him to work on the page layouts himself. The format of the entries follows closely that of the earlier volumes, but the active involvement of the author means that the pages are composed with greater clarity and care. Only about 160 of the 785 twentieth-century medals are illustrated, but this has enabled the publisher to keep the book down to a very reasonable price.

The combined works of Edward Hawkins and Laurence Brown have succeeded in chronicling the history of medallic art in Britain from its inception up to modern times.

PHILIP ATTWOOD

*Lions, Ships and Angels: Identifying Coin-Weights Found in Britain*, by P. and B.R. Withers, Galata Print, 1995. 80pp. A5. ISBN 0 9516671 3 0.

IN recent years, much has been written about the hitherto murky world of coin-weights. This has proved a welcome development, and has made the life of the provincial museum curator very much easier as, with the fostering of ever closer links between the archaeological profession and the detecting fraternity, these curious bronze pieces have come to be deposited for identification with ever-increasing frequency.

Norman Biggs' booklets and studies in *BNJ* and elsewhere have proved to be of enormous value, as has Paul and Bente Withers' ground-breaking corpus, *British Coin-Weights*. What has been lacking, however, has been an affordable pocket-sized guide to identifying the types of weights found in this country, and it is at precisely this perceived gap in the market that the new volume has been directed. There can be little doubt that, as an aid to

identification, *Lions, Ships and Angels* is outstandingly successful. It is lavishly illustrated with 450 photographs and 70 line drawings contained within its 80 pages, and the quality of reproduction of these is almost without exception of a very high quality.

Commencing with a brief historical introduction, the book proceeds to acquaint the reader with the various physical forms of the weights which he or she is liable to encounter, prior to covering at a very general level the types of reverses likely to be found on both British and Continental weights. The third section of the book, which sets out the various issues according to their obverse design, is likely to prove the most useful to novices, as armed with the illustrations and the associated index the tracking down of any particular weight is almost embarrassingly easy. Other sections cover such topics as Irish weights, British-made weights for Portuguese coins, and the bewildering range of marks to be found on the Low Countries weights of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Apothecaries' weights are also touched upon, as are the re-use and countermarking of coin-weights. Useful indices provide the weights (in grains) of the principal British gold coins, as well as the weight in grammes of a range of Continental pieces.

Overall, it is a splendid little book, and although only card-bound and saddle-stitched, it appears to be robust enough to survive sustained use. Clearly, a work of this size cannot hope to cover all the ground surveyed in *British Coin-Weights*, but as the authors make clear in their introduction, this was never their intention. Rather it is intended to be used as a working tool, and at that level it is eminently successful. No dealer, collector or museum can afford to be without it, although it is to be hoped that the presence on the market of this inexpensive alternative will not dissuade too many people from acquiring a copy of the Withers' excellent earlier work.

CRAIG BARCLAY

*Encyclopaedia of British Numismatics*. vol. I, 420pp, 1986, by H.E. Manville and T.J. Robertson; vol. II part I, 449pp, 1993, by H.E. Manville. Published by A.H. Baldwin and Sons Ltd; and Spink and Son Ltd.

THESE two monumental volumes, representing some thirty years of painstaking, dedicated work by Mr Manville, aided by Mr Robertson on volume one, are the first of a proposed series making up an *Encyclopaedia of British Numismatics*.

Volume I is a complete listing of coin auction sales held in the British Isles from the 17th century to the present day (i.e. 1984). It is a masterly production, analysing each auction catalogue by content and listing public institutions where copies can be found.

When I was the young librarian in the Coin Department at the British Museum in 1960, I remember the late Joan Martin asking me to do a card index of the Department's extensive holding of sales catalogues. It was a tedious and lengthy job, but the completed cards went into constant use by the BM staff and visiting students. The exercise brought home to me just how much valuable material there is in auction catalogues. In 1962 the Department purchased a copy of the American Numismatic Society's multi-volumed *Dictionary Catalogue*. Only one of the volumes dealt with auction catalogues, but that quickly became the one that was most used. Along with Lugt's *Repertoire*, Manville and Robertson acknowledge the ANS publication as one of their sources. However they have greatly extended its scope with their own original research in the archives of other institutions such as the V and A, the Ashmolean, Fitzwilliam and Christie's International, to produce the first complete published list of British auction catalogues.

However this volume is much more than just a list. The analysis of the contents of each sale is fleshed out with summaries of the main sales of each decade, and biographical details of collectors. The numerous footnotes contain nuggets of information which provide an insight into the material, the opinion of the period and the habits of the collector. A very useful feature is the appendix, listing important collections not sold at auction, but privately to dealers. There are also quite a number of illustrations of catalogue covers, frontispieces and some delightful advertisements and bookplates. It is undoubtedly an essential volume for all serious students of British and Irish coins, and already one to which I refer every working day of my life. It is one of the most important contributions to the numismatic literature of these islands in recent times.

Volume II is an analysis of all the numismatic material featured in British and Irish archaeological and antiquarian magazines, as well as news magazines such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Scots Magazine*, from 1731 to 1991. There is an enormous amount of important data of coin finds and hoards hidden away in these non-numismatic publications, and we should be eternally grateful to Manville for making it so easy to find it now with this illuminating study. Like Mr Manville, I remember Joan Martin at the British Museum enthusing about the *Gentleman's Magazine*; she always had at least one volume on her desk and was constantly unearthing important data, which was passed on to the scholars working in the Department. The fact that 130 pages of Manville's book are dedicated to the *Gentleman's Magazine* indicates what a rich source it is. Joan would have loved this book. It is an invaluable volume and it is very satisfying to be able to pinpoint important articles that you remember seeing but cannot remember where, hidden away in obscure archaeological journals. Once again, as with Volume I, it is illustrated throughout with some of the line drawings and maps, etc. from various magazines and journals it surveys. Finally there is a superb index, which runs to nearly 60 pages.



One can only wonder at the kind of dedicated toil it must have taken to produce these mammoth volumes. We should also congratulate the rival firms of Baldwin and Spink, and in particular Edward Baldwin and Douglas Saville, for coming together to support and finance such a superbly altruistic venture.

PATRICK FINN

*The Oxford Book of Money*, edited by Kevin Jackson (Oxford, 1995). xvi + 479 pp. £17.99. ISBN 0 19 214200 3; paperback edition (Oxford, 1996). £8.99. ISBN 0 19 282510 0.

OVER the past few years Oxford University Press, the world's largest and still most prestigious academic publishing house, has, no doubt for all too understandable commercial reasons, brought forth an ever-growing assemblage of thematic miscellanies aimed rather at the common reader than the scholar or, indeed, it would seem, at the bookman who has delighted in the time-honoured pleasures of the Press's poetry anthologies. Perhaps it is a natural concomitant of our 'sound-bite' age but OUP's authoritative blue and gold livery now graces the binding of a whole hoard of 'middle-ground' literary excavations ranging from death, dreams and the supernatural to 'creatures' and villains.

A recent addition to this cache of excerpts and quotations is a *Book of Money*, edited by Kevin Jackson, associate arts editor of *The Independent*. This, as Jackson is at pains to point out in his introduction, is a book about 'money and the imagination'; an attempt, as he says, to 'illustrate some of the main ways in which poets, novelists, dramatists, and wits have written about money, and to suggest some of the other ways in which money has been important for writers'. It is by no means, either in its treatment or in its structure, a compendial 'history' of money or a chronological representation of his subject. For an historical approach to money and monetary institutions Jackson properly urges the reader to turn to J.K. Galbraith's luminously elegant *Money: Whence it Came, Where it Went* (1975; new Penguin edition 1995) or the very much older, but admittedly still very readable, *The Story of Money* (1930) by Norman Angell. Perhaps because it appeared too late for mention, he unfortunately omits the latest recruit to such accounts: *A History of Money* (1994), the heavyweight – both figuratively and literally – *magnum opus* of Glyn Davies.

Jackson's deliberate eschewal of any sense of history may well disappoint the pure numismatist and frustrate the scholar desperately searching for a chrestomathy of gobbets to exemplify some thesis. One leading practitioner has even been overheard to remark that he found the work 'boring'. 'Boring' is certainly not an accusation that can be levelled at Jackson's anthology: it is both entertaining and illuminating and, while a few passages will be only too well-known, the whole makes up an ingeniously worthy commonplace book for any numismatist whose view extends beyond his coin trays.

This said, *A Book of Money* must be accepted within its declared limits and recognised as a decidedly personal literary excursion in choice and equally in the treatment of that choice. The book's structure is itself 'thematic', divided into ten sections encompassing, *inter alia*, 'Opening Accounts' (definitions of money, myths about its origins), 'Riches and Poverty', 'Borrowing and Lending', and 'Hells and Heavens' (panics, crashes, and monetary Utopias). 'Coins and Paper' will, one imagines, be the part to which the numismatist will naturally turn first. Here, among the familiar, like Addison's charming 'Adventures of a Shilling' – many an erstwhile child's initial foray into numismatic literature, the reader will find several nuggets, not least an anonymous ballad on 'Breeches Money' and Henry Bold's 'Satyr on the Adulterate Coyn inscribed The Common-Wealth'. There is, as well, Bruce Chatwin's evocation of the nineteenth-century king of Dahomey – a cowrie-shell-economy country – whose reaction to the sight of European gold coin was to snort 'I wouldn't let anyone walk off with my head'. And not least, Anthony Burgess's only too rational outburst against the introduction of decimal coinage, that 'demented abstraction that was a remnant of the French Revolutionary nightmare'.

Jackson's motif – literature's reflection of money's function as a social element and its impact on individual and group identity – leads him naturally to cull much of his material from the realist novel. Not that he neglects other imaginative genre. Poetry and drama, classical and modern, have their place, and even the writings of philosophers, scientists, and economists, too, where Jackson recognises their prose to be 'graceful and pungent'. This striving after grace and especially pungency is a conditioning factor of the editor's approach to his task and is both a strength and weakness of the anthology. All too often individual passages, extracted from their context, are given an illusory life of their own and, juxtaposed with similarly 'free-standing' excerpts, a false point-counterpoint of argument or emphasis is created. This treatment and the aphoristic or episodic colouring imparted to the individual pieces both enliven and entertain; but it also leads to downright obscurity, as in the Fidgets' baffling dialogue from Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, or to a wilfully deceptive simplicity in Lear's assertion of his prerogative over coining, plunged, as it is, in a *mélange* of passages on false money. Even the Chatwin extract already cited has more to do with the Dahomian cultural fetish of decapitation than any fixation with primitive currency; but only the informed reader would know this.

Satire is demonstrably the most successful element in the collection, lending itself best to Jackson's treatment; and mockery is not restricted to the wits. Even Carlyle's 'dismal science' makes a contribution in the shape of an



appositely scathing diatribe against 'the vain hope' of lotteries from an unusually skittish Adam Smith. This, though, is not Smith's only entry. He is represented by other, weightier and more earnest, excerpts from *The Wealth of Nations*.

There is, it must be stressed, a great deal of substance in the anthology and much, too, that will send the reader to search out the original sources, but his task will be fraught with difficulties; he will have to penetrate an obfuscation of maddening proportions, for hardly a passage in Jackson's book is referenced by chapter, line or scene. This apparent editorial indifference to the basic chores of compilation may stem from Jackson's desire to contrive a chimerical independence for his extracts; more likely it is due to a lack of rigour that extends to his irritatingly slipshod and inconsistent approach to the dating of his excerpts, which is frequently confusing and occasionally plain wrong. This is no mere cavil because such bibliographic insouciance, which should have been redressed by a press of the like of OUP, serves to spoil what is a remarkably rich, pleasurable and imaginative compendium.

Since this review was drafted a paperback version of *The Oxford Book of Money* has appeared. It is good to see that the opportunity has been taken of correcting at least the all-too-obvious errors in the dating of the book's title-page epigraph and its prefatorial passage from *Dombey and Son*. But this is minimal; the shortcomings touched on above remain. Nevertheless, and deservedly, the new format will make a fascinating publication that much more widely available.

D.W. DYKES