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KEELING – COCOS ISLANDS AND THE BANKNOTES COINS & TOKENS ISSUED BY THE CLUNIES – ROSS FAMILY 1858 - 1977

John Wheatley

Part II – Coins & Tokens Issued by the Clunies-Ross Family, 1913-1977

Ivorine Tokens Introduced in 1913



Image courtesy National Library of Australia

In 1910 John Sidney Clunies–Ross ("Ross IV", shown on the right in the photograph) succeeded George Clunies– Ross and notes were replaced by tokens.

These tokens were made from ivorine and were known as "Ivory Tokens" because of the colour of the pieces. A button manufacturer produced the tokens in Britain. The rupee denominations were embossed in black while the smaller cent pieces were in red. A range of shapes was used. All pieces had their various denominations embossed upon them and for the benefit of illiterate workers each value had a different size and shape.

Shapes of coins and mintage:

Five cents – oval	5,000
Ten cents – round	5,000
Twenty-five cents-square	5,000
Fifty cents – octagon	2,000
One rupee – bigger square	2,000
Two rupees – bigger circle	1,000
Five rupees – bigger octagon	1,000



Set of Ivorine Tokens, Dated 1913 Image courtesy of Baldwins (Hong Kong auction, April 2017)

Each coin was imprinted with the Cocos badge and motto "PRO PATRIA" (for the fatherland) and around it "Keeling Cocos Islands 1910" (the date Ross IV took over).

The reverse showed the coin's serial number, value, J. S. Clunies-Ross and 1913, the date of issue.

These tokens continued in circulation until 1955 when Cocos became an Australian Territory.



Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd



Two Rupees Image courtesy of London Coins



One Rupee Image courtesy of International Auction Galleries



Fifty Cents Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd



Ross IV died in 1944 and was succeeded by his son John Cecil Clunies–Ross. ("Ross V", shown at left)

Modern Plastic Tokens Issued in 1969

Coloured plastic rupees and cents made of an ICI product called Kematal were introduced by Ross V. The plastic coins were made by a silkscreen process. Designs were printed onto discs then heated in ovens. The design is incuse, below the rim of the piece, thus protected from abrasion. The cent values are coloured aqua and the rupees red. The obverse of each has a palm tree with the printed words "Keeling Cocos Islands" and the date 1968. The reverse has the denomination in the centre surrounded by a design similar to a necklace. John Clunies-Ross Junior advised me that the reverse design was that of a Spirograph (instrument for recording breathing movement) and that his parents used plastic because of its relative cheapness. Ross V and his wife designed the coins. The blank discs were produced on a type SP3 fully automatic air operated injection-moulding machine and Ultra Printing Inks Ltd, Yorkshire, England, developed the printing process.



Set of Plastic Tokens, Dated 1968 Image courtesy of worldofcoins.eu

None of the reference books detail the place of mintage or the mintage figures. John Clunies-Ross Junior informed me that the tokens were produced on Home Island and I have seen the machine that produced the tokens in the museum on Home Island.



The Machine That Produced The 1968 Tokens



Box of Remaining Issue of Plastic Tokens held by Clunies-Ross Family in 1993

The advent of plastic coinage caused excitement and some perplexity amongst coin collectors worldwide. A collector (Roger R. Glover of Dayton, Ohio) wrote to World Coins in 1970:

"An interesting revelation resulted from our interest in obtaining samples of these plastic coins and our subsequent correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Clunies-Ross, owners of the estate on Home Island, who are the producers of these so-called "coins" and also with the official representative at the Territory of Cocos Islands of the Australian Government..." The letter from the Department of External Affairs reads:

"Australian currency is the only legal tender in Cocos Islands Territory. It is understood that the estate of John Clunies-Ross, based on Home Island in the Cocos Group, uses certain tokens for its internal accounting, but these are not used outside the estate and are not recognized as legal currency. J.O. Ballard Dept. of External Affairs, Canberra, Australia"

The letter from the manager of the Clunies-Ross estate read as follows:

"Tokens of Keeling Cocos Islands are available to collectors only in full sets of ten pieces comprising the denominations of 25, ten, five and one cent. Cost per set is US\$17 postpaid. Cash with order or a cheque on an American Bank is acceptable in payment. J. Dixon, Manager Clunies-Ross Estate Keeling Cocos Islands Indian Ocean"

Mr. Glover concluded:

"Seemingly, the Keeling Cocos Islands plastic tokens are "coins" to the same extent as wooden nickels and bus tokens".¹

A trial plastic token of 25 rupees dated 1963 was sold in Downies auction sale 313 lot 1486. This trial token was dated 5 years prior to the 1968 tokens.



Trial Plastic Token of 25 Rupees, Dated 1963 Image courtesy of Downies Australian Coin Auctions

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First Metal Currency Introduced in 1977

In 1977, Ross V introduced the first metal currency to Cocos by having \$100,000 worth of coins minted to his order by the Mint of Valcambi in Switzerland ahead of a Federal Government plan to extend the Australian currency to the Islands. He also had individually boxed and numbered sets of coins prepared for collectors.

The obverse of the new coins featured an effigy of his great-great grandfather in a wreath with "John Clunies-Ross" beneath. The reverse showed a palm tree on the seashore with the value and "150 Anniversary Keeling Cocos Islands 1827-1977".

The coins were in ten denominations and four different metals:

5, 10, 25 and 50 cents in copper coloured alloy;
1, 2, and 5 rupees in white metal;
10 and 25 rupees in sterling silver; and
150 rupees in 22-carat gold.
(Three rupees were rated equal to 1 Australian Dollar.)



Set of 6 Uncirculated 1977 Coins, 5 Cents – 2 Rupees Image courtesy of ma-shops.com

No mintage figures are available for the denominations between 5 cents and 5 rupees, but the following figures are available:

Denomination	Mintage
10 rupees	6,000
10 rupees proof	4,000
25 rupees	6,000
25 rupees proof	4,000
150 rupees	2,000
150 rupees proof	2,000



10 and 25 Rupee Proof Coins Image courtesy of International Auction Galleries



150 Rupee Gold Proof Coin Image courtesy of International Auction Galleries

Mintage figures for mint and proof sets seem to indicate that approximately 6,000 mint sets were produced and approximately 4,000 proof sets.

According to John Clunies–Ross Junior there was an oversupply of coins, so the family buried a large quantity in concrete under the kitchen in the Big House (Oceania House).

The entire shipment of gold 150 rupee coins (2,000 ordinary circulating coins and 2,000 proofs) was stolen and only about 250 specimens subsequently recovered. These were struck in .750 fine gold and were quite distinct from the replacement issue (also of 2,000 in each version) that was struck in .925 fine gold.

On the 150th anniversary of the first Clunies–Ross settlement on Cocos (16th February 1977) Ross V gave one of the gold coins to the mother of each child born that year.

Stamps Issued in 1993 to Commemorate Coins and Tokens of the Islands

A set of four stamps was issued on the 30th March 1993 commemorating the coins and tokens. These depicted:

The obverse of the ivorine token of 5 rupee 1910-13 (\$1.20); The reverse of the 5 rupee red token of 1968 (45c); The palm tree obverse of the aqua token of 1968 (85c); and The obverse of the 150 rupees gold coin of 1977 (\$1.05).



Set of Four Stamps Commemorating the Coins & Tokens

You may be interested to know that I had some input into these stamps. I met Allan Taverner (Philatelic Officer) of the Cocos Philatelic Bureau in January 1992 whilst on holiday at Cocos. I mentioned to him my interest in the currency issued by the Clunies-Ross family, particularly the Ivorine Tokens of 1913. He subsequently advised me by letter, dated January 1992, that they planned issuing a new set of stamps depicting the obverse of some of the tokens and requested that I send him some written information to assist with the promotion of the stamps. I immediately did so.

On the 20th October this year a new issue of stamps is to be released by Australia Post, featuring the Currency of the Clunies-Ross Era complete with images of George Clunies-Ross and John Cecil Clunies-Ross



Cocos (Keeling) Islands Currency of the Clunies-Ross Era Courtesy of https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/50304349161_4b99c50370_o.jpg

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End Notes

¹ Copies of the letter from the Dept. of External Affairs and the letter from the manager of the Clunies – Ross Estate are contained in "New Coinage of Cocos Keeling", Australian Coin Review, April 1970, Vol. 16, No. 10 at page 7

THERE ARE STILL SOME BARGAINS ABOUT

Anthony Dawkins

While I was living in Birmingham there was an Auction House called Biddle and Webb, which was described as the most interesting place in the UK. It was in Hockley, near the jewellery quarter.

My wife and I enjoyed visiting as she was fascinated by their monthly auction for jewellery. The jewellers used to sell rings which I presume they bought as scrap but got more for by selling through the auction.

One day there was a wooden display box with recesses to hold coins. I did not take a lot of notice when viewing before the auction but when it came up for sale I thought it may be of interest to store coins, so I bid and got it for $\pounds 35$.



What a surprise when I went to collect it.

The attendant put the box on the counter and then said; "You might as well have this". He fetched up an old army haversack from the floor, and what a win! Inside the haversack was a complete set of silver medallions entitled The Genius of Rembrandt.

It was a set of 50 silver medallions depicting Rembrandt paintings. Each medallion was 51 mm in diameter and 2.08 ounces of sterling silver, for a total of 104 ounces.



They were still in their original packing, addressed to someone at Oxford university in England. They had obviously signed up for the collection and thrown them into the haversack each month, never bothering to put them in the wooden display case. I did not know about the medallions and I presume no one else knew either. I just wanted the display case.

One of my rare "wins". I still have the medallions, still in their packing.



YE OLDE GOLD

Jonathon de Hadleigh

The gold coins of the Middle Ages, although produced at specific national mints, did however circulate internationally and therefore belonged to no single country but to commerce wherever it was conducted. It therefore behoved each issuing authority to maintain certain standards in order for their coins to be acceptable. Of course, this did not always happen.

The first gold coins of the Middle Ages appeared in Italy in 1252 at both Genoa and Florence. The '*genovino*' had a local value of 10 soldi and the '*florin*' one pound, both coins weighing 54 grains, or 3.5 grams.



Genovino, c. 1363-1370 Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group (https://www.cngcoins.com)



Florin (or Fiorino), c. 1252-1260 Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group (https://www.cngcoins.com)

These two coins were followed soon after by the '*ducat*' of Venice, in 1284, which had the same weight. Each coin had a local value, but they were interchangeable. Soon, the Florentine coin went north to fill the markets and manuscripts with florins. The ducat went south and eastwards, replacing '*bezants*', originally produced by the Byzantine empire.



Ducat, c. 1343-1354 Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group (https://www.cngcoins.com)

Eventually, Florence began making changes to their florin to bring it back into line with their local silver coinage, keeping it valued at a pound in Florentine money. So, it became no longer acceptable to international trade and the ducat went north to fill the gap. But it had to compete with all the imitations of the florin, mainly along the Rheinlands, where the '*rheingulden*' had initially been the same weight and fineness as the florin. However, temptation was too great for some issuers and variations in fineness emerged. This made it easier for the ducat to compete and the Doges of Venice realised that they needed to keep their gold ducat stable.

The genovino seemed to remain largely restricted to Italy.

It was during that time that new, large silver denominations also appeared. Italy again led the way, with Venice in 1202 followed by Milan, Como, Bergamo, Pisa, Lucca, Bologna, Florence, Siena, Rome and others. All these cities issued their silver at local values and therefore different weights. This reflected the Italy of the time; not one country but a series of independent city states.

The English sterling penny found favour in Italy, as it did elsewhere in Europe, because it was a stable silver coin. Some Italian '*grossi*' were of a similar weight and standard to the penny, so they could be interchangeable.

When gold coins began to reach northern Europe, at first the florin was dominant, but soon imitations appeared such as the '*petit royal d'or*' of Phillip the Fair of France (1285-1314). No surprise to hear that his bankers were the Peruzzi, a Florentine family, and on some coins a pear mint mark appears, the symbol of that family.

However, gold was struck in France to local values denominated in '*sous tournois*'. The French monarch had taken over the money of the city of Tours earlier on, and as it had a strong silver '*denier*' it was accepted in most places in France. So, the king then had a general 'French' denomination and also his new 'Paris' denomination. They exchanged at 5 '*deniers tournois*' to 4 '*deniers Parisis*'.

Throughout the Middle Ages, French gold coins displayed a series of artistic and beautiful designs. However, the '*ecu*', bearing a shield of France, stands out as its international coin. Quite plain in design, the first ecu displaying 'France ancient', with more than 3 fleur de lis upon its field, appeared in the 13^{th} Century. It is now very rare.

Louis IX (1226-1270) followed it soon after with the '*ecu d'or*' of 10 sous tournois, weighing 4.2 grams, heavier than the florin. However, it was a failure.

Alongside the French gold was the silver 'gros tournois' of 12 deniers tournois, struck in 1266. This was the first large silver denomination north of Italy. It was a success and soon imitated in the Low Countries and Germany's northern lands.

The ecu reappears in the 14th Century, its shield displaying 'France Modern', with 3 fleur de lis.



Écu d'or, Montpellier mint, 1394. Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group (https://www.cngcoins.com)

This was a successful coin for several centuries and it was known in England as a "French crown". It circulated freely in London and was mentioned by Shakespeare. Medieval gold used for coins came from two main sources, some from eastern Europe (Hungary) but most from Africa, travelling by camel to north African ports and then by boat to Europe.

A figure I have read was an eye opener; between 1st May 1344 and 30th April 1345 Florence minted 352,000 gold florins amounting to 1,200 kg of gold!

After the battle of Poitiers, in which the French king John was captured, his ransom, paid in new gold "francs", was to be 3,000,000 ecus, or 13,500 kg of gold!

The gold coins of this period have many stories to tell and would make a spectacular collection, the only hindrance is not the value of the gold itself, but the numismatic premium placed on them as survival numbers are not high. But then, collector numbers are not high either, so the coins are sometimes at reasonable prices, other than those of England which are popular and keenly priced. That said, many gold coins of Medieval European origin are very rare, seldom seen and therefore highly valued.

It is not surprising that many of the coins are rare. Their issues may not have been very large and they were often melted down to make new coins, which over successive centuries led to many 18th Century survivals, many of which may have been made from Medieval gold.



AN INTERESTING WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CENTENARY SOUVENIR

Walter R Bloom

The 1929 Western Australian Centenary saw a range of events, one of the most notable of which was the beginning of flights between Perth and Adelaide. Quoting: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Australian_Airways

'West Australian Airways was an Australian airline based in Geraldton, Western Australia. Established on 5 December 1921 as Western Australian Airways by World War I pilot Norman Brearley, it was the first airline in Australian history to establish a scheduled air service. The first service left Geraldton on 2 November 1922.

Following World War I, Norman Brearley, who had served with the Royal Flying Corps, returned to Australia in 1919. He brought with him two Avro 504J aircraft. In May 1921, the Federal Government advertised for tenders for the first subsidised air-mail & passenger contract, operating a weekly service between Geraldton and Derby. Brearley was so eager to win the tender he submitted multiple submissions. On 2 August 1921, Brearley was advised that his tender had been accepted. Brearley then set about hiring 5 pilots; Val Abbott, Arthur Blake, Bob Fawcett, Charles Kingsford Smith and Leonard Taplin.

On 5 December 1921, on the very first flight as an airline, Ted Broad and Bob Fawcett in the Bristol Tourer G-AUDI crashed 130 km north of Geraldton. Brearley suspended flight operations until 21 February 1922.

On 3 December 1926, Western Australian Airways Ltd. changed its name to West Australian Airways Ltd, though for the majority of its existence it was usually referred to as simply "Airways". On 2 July 1928, Australia's first interstate airmail contract, between Perth and Adelaide, was awarded to West Australian Airways, for 5 years. Services began on 26 May 1929. The service used four new DH-66 Hercules aircraft with space for 16 passengers and a cruising speed of 95 knots. A hot luncheon would be provided at Ceduna, dinner at the airline-owned hostel at Forrest and catering at Kalgoorlie. On 19 April 1934, the Federal Government awarded the 5-year Perth-Daly Waters route contract to MacRobertson Miller Aviation Co. This decision left West Australian Airways with only the now unsubsidised Perth-Adelaide route. In April 1936, Adelaide Airways Ltd offered to purchase West Australian Airways and on 12 June the purchase was finalised for £25,000. On 1 July, Adelaide Airways and West Australian Airways became part of the new Australian National Airways'.



Obverse: FLY/A.N.A./B9501/85 WILLIAM ST./PERTH *Reverse:* AUSTRALIA'S/MOST EXPERIENCED/AIRLINE/• ★ • *Size:* 28.7mm *Metal:* Grey Metal *Designer:* n/k *Mintage:* n/k *Mint:* n/k.

Back to 1929:



Obverse: EAST-WEST/(biplane right)/AIR MAIL.SOUVENIRS/COPYRIGHT *Reverse:* -

Size: 62.2x76.5mm Metal: Leather/Cloth Designer: n/k Mintage: n/k Mint: n/k.

Included with the pouch are a four-page leaflet and six photos.



The air liners will make the journey between Perth and Adelaide in approximately 27 hours, thus assuring mails being deliverAeroplanes from Perth leave on Tuesdays at 9.30 a.m., and arrive in Adelaide at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. From Adelaide they leave at 9.30 a.m. on Sundays, and

Australian East-West Air Service. Inaugurated, June 2nd. 1929. SOUVENIR.

'The East-West Air-Way, as it has been popularly called, is being controlled by. "The West Australian Airways Ltd", of Perth, W.A., and operates between Perth and Adelaide, S. A., a distance of 1,400 miles.

The machines which are being used are British De Havilland Hercules Air Liners at a cost of $\pm 16,000$ each. They are equipped with three motors ensuring the maximum of safety as flights may be completed with only two engines in operation, while a landing can be comfortably made with one engine working only. As shown in the accompanying pictures, the liners will accommodate fourteen passengers and their personal luggage, besides mail and are equipped with comfortable seats with adjustable head rests, while sliding windows are fitted along the full length of the cabin. A toilet compartment is also provided. The first of these liners have been appropriately named "City of Perth" and "City of Adelaide."

The airliners will make the journey between Perth and Adelaide in approximately 27 hours, thus ensuring mails being delivered to the Eastern capitals three or four days earlier than by the ordinary means of transport.

Of this time, however, only 14 hours will be actual flying time, as stops will be made at Kalgoorlie, Forrest, and Ceduna.

A night will be spent at the hostel at Forrest, which is midway between Adelaide and Perth, and is situated in the centre of the fascinating Nullarbor Plain. Here even attention is paid to the passengers' comfort, and radio musical and sporting equipment is provided. Electric lighting and power are installed and electric cooking and refrigeration.

Aeroplanes from Perth leave on Tuesdays at 9.30 a.m., and arrive in Adelaide at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. From Adelaide they leave at 9.30 a.m. on Sundays, and arrive in Perth at 1 p.m. on Mondays. The fare each way. is £18.

W. A. Airways Ltd. have previously established their reputation by operating an air service regularly every week for over seven years, between Perth and Derby, W.A. The distance between these points is 1,467 miles and the service has been continuously maintained without mishap or delay.

During this time, 11,500 passengers have been carried for a total of one and a half million miles, which is approximately equivalent to 46 times around earth; while one and a half million letters and freight matter totalling 25 tons have also been carried.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of this Souvenir: by Air Mail.

O'Keefe, Printer

Perth Numismatic Journal



Finally, the astute reader will detect at least two inconsistencies between the Wikipedia article and the souvenir leaflet.

THE GREEN PAPERCLIP

Miles Goldingham

We all know the story about the pink paperclip that was traded for a house after only 14 moves! I thought I would try something similar at the PNS Coin Fair on the 7th November last year. I started with a green paperclip that I traded for an ordinary \$2 coin, shown in the photo outside the hall.



I exchanged that \$2 coin for an Irish 2 pence coin worth \$5, then I exchanged that for a 1988, \$5 proof coin, which I exchanged in turn for two 1914 Postal Numismatic Covers containing the uncirculated Perth Mint \$1 coin commemorating the centenary of the beginning of World War I, retailing at \$31.



Then I exchanged those for two replicas of 1984 \$100 Australian notes on gold foil, worth \$40. My last exchange was to trade one of those \$100 gold notes for a 'lucky' American dollar note, carrying a serial number starting with 888.



So, from a paperclip to two banknotes worth \$40. Not as good as a house, but I could have done better with more time and more dealers. All a bit of fun.



CALENDAR OF PNS MEETINGS FOR 2021

PNS meetings are held at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month, except December, at The Collins Street Centre, corner of Collins Street and Shaftsbury Street, South Perth. Meeting dates for 2020 are as follows:

27 January	Invited speaker (Robert Russell: Arthur C Clarke, a shipwreck odyssey), no-reserve Tender Sale
24 February	Short talks, Tender Sale
31 March	No-reserve Tender Sale
28 April	Tender Sale
26 May	No-reserve Tender Sale
30 June	Tender Sale
28 July	Annual General Meeting, no-reserve Tender Sale
25 August	Tender Sale
29 September	No-reserve Tender Sale
27 October	Tender Sale
24 November	No-reserve Tender Sale

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Adult	\$15
Pensioner	\$10
WA Country	\$10
Associate	\$7
Junior	\$7
Nomination Fee	\$5
Fully Paid Life Membership	\$250

Subscriptions at the above rates are due and payable in advance on 1st March each year and shall be paid within three months after which time the membership will lapse.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Frank Gare	1977
John Wheatley	2004
Dr Walter Bloom	2013

PAST PRESIDENTS

Brian Siggs †	1965-1968
Edward Rintoul †	1968-1969
Edward Gibbs †	1969-1970
Clive Stronach †	1970-1971
Karl Hawelka †	1971-1978
Haydn Powell †	1978-1988
Dr Walter Bloom	1988-1991
Jiri Just †	1991-1994
Colin Meikle	1994-1997
Haydn Powell †	1997-2005
Dr Walter Bloom	2005-

CALENDAR OF FAIRS

Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Medal and Banknote Fairs: Saturday 13th February 2021 Saturday 15th May 2021 Saturday 14th August 2021 Saturday 6th November 2021 Monday 27th December 2021

Peel Region Numismatic Group / Mandurah Philatelic Society Fair: To be advised

Phoenix Auctions:

Sunday 28th February 2021 Sunday 20th June 2021 Sunday 19th September 2021 Sunday 5th December 2021

Cannington Antiques & Collectors Fairs: Friday 1st January 2021

JB Military Antiques Auctions: Sunday 18th April 2021 Sunday 17th October 2021

For more details see: http://www.pns.org.au/events/



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