

Volume 53 Number 2

May 2021

Perth Numismatic Journal



*Official publication of the
Perth Numismatic Society Inc*

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Printed by Uniprint

First Floor, Commercial Building, Guild Village (Hackett Drive entrance 2),
The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, Western Australia 6009



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Registered Australia Post, Publ. PP 634775/0045, Cat B

WAnumismatica website: www.wanumismatica.org.au
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DESCRIPTION OF THE SILVER RUPEES OF INDIA AS USED IN THE EARLY AUSTRALIAN COLONIES

Graeme Stephens and Walter R Bloom

Introduction

This article describes the various types of silver Indian rupees which were used as coins in colonial Australia in the first half of the 19th century.

The general usage of foreign coinage in New South Wales before 1815

The first fleet in 1788 brought no government supplied coinage with it but many of the marines and the convicts had brought some saved English coinage with them and it was not long before this was being used in the colony for small daily transactions. In addition, during the first decade of the colony a large number of foreign vessels started making Port Jackson a port of call for provisioning and rest in their voyages across the Pacific or from the Indian Ocean and they left silver and occasionally gold coinage from Spain's South American colonies, Holland, Brazil, and India after buying or selling a variety of goods in the colony. This coinage included Dutch *guilders* and *ducats*, Brazilian *johannas* and *half-johannas*, Indian *pagodas*, *mohurs* and *rupees*, and Spanish (*pillar*) *dollars*.

These foreign coins then circulated at various unofficial values related to their metal content and weight. The values were continually disputed by the soldiers, the settlers, the convicts and the local traders and even this small supply of coin was continually being syphoned off by the traders in visiting ships. Philip Gidley King did receive a shipment of Spanish Dollars from England in 1790 which he proclaimed at five shillings value, but heated disputes continued to exist over the value of the other foreign coins circulating.

By 1800 the population of the Port Jackson colony, by then known as Sydney Town, had passed 5,000. Philip Gidley King had become the Governor and was determined to sort out the economic shambles of the colony caused by the wide variety of circulating coinage.

Governor King became the first to play an important role in Australian numismatics when he handed down his historic proclamation on 19th November, 1800. The proclamation had two objectives: the first was to establish official values for each commonly used coin, the second was to try and prevent those coins from being taken out of the colony. He did this by establishing inflated values for all of the commonly used coins; for example, the value of an English copper penny was proclaimed at double its nominal value. The rationale was that few traders would want to take them out of the colony at their inflated value. His proclamation gave values for eight commonly used foreign coins and three English coins with the valuation of relevance for this article being that of an Indian rupee at 2 shillings and 6 pence.

As a further measure, in 1813 Governor Macquarie introduced the Holey Dollars and Dumps by stamping out a plug valued at 1 shilling and 3 pence from the Spanish dollar which in holed form was then valued at 5 shillings, but this did little to alleviate the small change problem.

Just prior to a huge shipment of copper home coinage from England arriving at the colony a proclamation by Governor Macquarie dated 7th December 1815 terminated Governor King's Proclamation of 1800 and returned all copper coinage to its face value after a three-week grace period. But the lack of small change in the colony remained a serious problem and was the prime reason why foreign coins such as the rupee continued to circulate long after the Proclamation of 1800 had terminated.

The Indian rupee in particular went on to play a long and important role in the coinage history of the Australian colonies after 1815 and this usage will be described in a later article.

The origin and development of the Indian rupee

The word *rupee* is derived from the Sanskrit word *rūpya*, which means "wrought silver", and refers to something stamped with an image, or a coin. As an adjective it means "shapely", with a more specific meaning of "stamped", "impressed", whence "coin".

Rupee is derived from the noun *rūpa* meaning “shape, likeness, image”. Arthashastra, written by Chanakya, prime minister to the first Maurya emperor Chandragupta Maurya (c. 340–290 BC), mentions silver coins as *rūpyarūpa*.

The mighty Mughal Ruler Sher Shah Suri during his five-year rule from 1540 to 1545, set up a new civic and military administration and issued a coin of silver, weighing 178gr troy (11.53 grams), which was termed a *rupaiya* and eventually *rupee*. The *rupee* became a standard coin of exchange throughout the Indian sub-continent and was subsequently issued over the following two centuries in numerous smaller Indian States and by many lesser Indian rulers in similar weights and values.

In 1793, the Bengal Regulation No. XXXV mentions that there had been some 27 varieties of the Indian *rupee* minted.⁽¹⁾ Though these coins in many instances carried an indication of the name of the reigning Mughal Emperor at their time of issue, their variety of minting authority, design, weight and fineness caused a great degree of confusion to the British Administration and the numerous foreign traders coming to India's shores from East Africa, Arabia, Persian Gulf, Ceylon, Malaysia, Indonesia and China.

As the British East India Company established its colonial presence in India in the mid 17th Century its administration of “British India” became based in three autonomous regions which were known as Presidencies. These were the Madras Presidency founded in 1640 with its capital at Madras, the Bombay Presidency founded in 1687 with its capital at Bombay, and the Bengal Presidency founded in 1690 with its capital at Calcutta. In due course, the East India Company developed a separately designed *rupee* for each of these Presidencies.

In the Bengal Presidency, after the stewardship of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was delivered to the British (the East India Company) in 1765, the Company introduced a new standard *rupee* coin in 1773. This new *rupee* coin was called the *sicca rupee* (from the Arabic *sikka* meaning coin) and was proclaimed to be current in the Bengal Presidency. The *sicca rupee* had a weight of 180gr (11.66 grams) and a silver content of 176gr (11.40 grams).




Bengal Presidency 'Sicca Rupee' of 1793

Image courtesy of Nova Marketing Numismatica (www.novamarketing.ch)

(Note: All images in this article are shown at about 1.5 times natural size)



This cinquefoil symbol  is not a particular mint mark as it is found on many more Bengal Presidency coins of different mints in this period. Earlier a 'trisol' (trident) was used. The privy marks which may indicate the mint and date period, are to be found in Pridmore.^[2]

The obverse side of the *sicca rupee* had a legend in Persian to the effect '*Emperor Shah Alam, defender of Mohammed's faith, shadow of grace of Allah, has struck this coin to be current in the seven climes*'. Though the *sicca rupee* was minted on many occasions at Dacca and Calcutta, the reverse impressions never varied and declared that it was '*minted at Murshidabad (capital city) the 19th year of the auspicious accession*'.

The reason for the appearance of a constant unaltered reverse impression is that money changers and minor government officials like tax collectors would always apply a discount on older coins minted elsewhere than in the capital city.


In the Madras Presidency, in 1759, the Company started minting the *rupee* of the Nawab of Carnatic which was originally minted at Arcot and later at Madras and Calcutta. This *rupee* was called the *arcot rupee* and though at first it was lighter in weight it was raised to 180gr (11.66 grams) with a silver content of 165gr (10.69 grams) in 1818. The two faces bore the inscriptions '*the auspicious coins of the heroic monarch Azizuddin Mohammed Alamgir*' and '*struck at Arcot on the 20th year of his auspicious accession*'.



Madras Presidency 'Arcot Rupee' of 1830-1835

Image courtesy of Nova Marketing Numismatica (www.novamarketing.ch)



Note the rose found on the Calcutta-minted coins in comparison with the lotus-like trisul  used by the Madras Mint. Again, these symbols are part of the respective designs rather than mintmarks *per se*.

In the Bombay Presidency, the East India Company in 1800 commenced minting the *rupee* issued by the Nawab of Surat and this coin was generally referred to as the *Bombay rupee* or more popularly as the *Surat rupee*. Before the Company started copying the Nawab *rupee* in 1800 it weighed from 175gr to 178gr (11.34 to 11.53 grams), but in 1800 this was raised to 179gr (11.60 grams) with a silver content of 160gr (10.37 grams), and then in 1825 it was raised to 180gr (11.66 grams) with the silver content at 165gr (10.69 grams) to make it the same fineness as the *arcot rupee* of Madras. On one side of the *surat rupee* the legend was '*the auspicious coin of the heroic monarch Shah Alam 1215*', while on the other '*the 45th year of his auspicious accession*'.



Bombay Presidency 'Surat Rupee' of 1832-1835

Image courtesy of Nova Marketing Numismatica (www.novamarketing.ch)



The symbol is a five-petal flower with stem (looking like a sixth petal at the bottom) placed in the loop of the letter 's' of *juloos*.



Some earlier rupees had a seven-petal flower with a well-defined stem. Both the *surat* and the *arcot rupees* varied in sterling value compared to the *sicca rupee*, due to their lower silver content, and when the sterling value of the *sicca rupee* was given in 1825 as 2 shillings 1 pence the value of both the *surat* and the *arcot rupees* (at 180gr) averaged 1 shilling 11 pence.

A puzzling question in this story is why the British East India Company in India, having decided to mint a standard 180gr (11.66 grams) *sicca rupee* with 176gr (11.40 grams) of silver for the Bengal Presidency in 1773, then decided to persist until 1835 with existing local *rupee* types and weights for the other two British Presidencies, the *surat rupee* at Bombay and the *arcot rupee* at Madras, each at about a 10% lesser silver fineness than the *sicca rupee*.

This decision meant that for 62 years, instead of the three most prolific *rupee* types in India being entirely interchangeable, not only throughout India, but in all of England's Far Eastern colonies, including the Australian colonies, the distinction was made that the *sicca rupee* would be acceptable for trade or exchange purposes, but the *surat* and *arcot rupees* would not, or would only be accepted at a significant discount. Because the silver *rupee* at the time was the most common trade coin in the British Far East this decision must have caused the East India Company, as well as colonial administrations and private individuals, considerable expense and inconvenience.

It would also have taken most non-Indian persons a considerable amount of time and effort to distinguish between the various types of *rupee* displayed in what was, for them, a totally indecipherable script on the face of the coin. It should have been a simple matter to ensure that soon after 1773 the *surat* and *arcot rupees* were minted at the same fineness and size as the *sicca rupee*. This would have proven to be of considerable economic benefit to the English colonies throughout the Far East over a long period of growth of their Empire.

The East India Company in 1835 finally decided to replace all silver *rupee* coins used in all three Presidencies of India with a uniform *rupee* of the Company ⁽¹⁾.

The new *rupee* did away completely with all its previous relationships to the Mughal Empire and had instead on the obverse the head and name of the reigning British sovereign and on the reverse the denomination in English and in Persian along with the name of the Company in English. This *rupee* was referred to as the *Company rupee* and was 180gr (11.66 grams) in weight with a silver content of 165gr (10.69 grams). The coins were minted in the Bombay, Calcutta and Madras mints of the Company and covered the reigns of William IV and Victoria (1835 to 1849).

Although these coins had several issues, they all bore the year as either 1835 for William IV or 1840 for Victoria, and circulation commenced in September 1835. An example of each is shown below.



East India Company Rupee of William IV, 1835



East India Company Rupee of Victoria, 1840

Images courtesy of Nova Marketing Numismatica (www.novamarketing.ch)

The *rupee* coin was again minted in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras from 1862 onwards, no longer under the East India Company but directly as a British Government issue, and they were termed 'Regal' issues, but as the *rupee* had ceased to be a circulating coin in colonial Australia well before 1862, these 'Regal' coins are not reviewed in this article.

With the introduction of the *Company Rupee* in 1835 came a requirement by the British Government for the East India Company to keep its accounts in India in this new currency. As the *Company rupee* at the time was rated in India at 1s 10½d sterling and the *sicca rupee* rated at 2s, a newspaper article in the 1851 Colonial Times of Tasmania suggested that the simplest(?) way to convert the totals in the East India Company accounts of *Company rupees* to pounds sterling was to divide by 10 and then subtract 6%.

It should be noted that under the very complicated system of administration that the British used in Colonial India, over eighty Princely States and sixteen so-called “Independent Kingdoms” that did not fall within the direct administration of one of the three abovementioned Colonial Presidencies were permitted to mint their own coinage. As listed in Krause, almost all of them produced their own silver rupee coins throughout the period of British Administration, but the weights and silver fineness of these rupees was sometimes up to 10% lower than the *rupees* of the Colonial Presidencies or the later *Company rupees* of the East India Company.



Sikh Empire Rupee of Ranjit Singh, VS 1894 (1837)

Image courtesy of World of Coins (www.worldofcoins.eu)



Note the vine leaf which appeared on almost all Sikh Empire coins. Such *rupees* (Princely States and Independent Kingdoms) of smaller diameter and rougher execution usually weigh between 165gr and 179gr and were commonly called *dumps*.

The *rupee* remained as the standard Indian currency during much of the 18th and 19th centuries, which had severe consequences on the standard value of the currency as stronger economies were on the gold standard. During British rule, and the first decade of independence, the *rupee* was subdivided into 16 *annas* and each *anna* was subdivided into 4 *paisas*.

Early use of the rupee in Australia

For many years from the early-19th up to the early 20th century, the Indian *rupee* was also the official currency in several areas that were controlled by the British and governed from India, such as Mauritius, East Africa, Southern Arabia, Ceylon and the Persian Gulf, as well as both an official and unofficial currency in colonial Australia up until about 1850 in Tasmania.

Governor King's Proclamation of 1800 was silent on a detailed description of the Indian *rupee* and it must therefore be presumed that all extant varieties of the Indian *rupee* that circulated in Sydney Town and Van Diemen's Land during the period 1800 to 1815 were covered by the proclamation, including those of the Indian Princely States and Independent Kingdoms which were sometimes deficient in weight and silver content.

Although it is difficult to find any accurate reference to comparative numbers of the various proclamation coins which circulated in the two colonies at this time, newspaper reports indicate that *rupees* were pouring into Tasmania (which maintained a valuation of 2s. 1d. against 1s. 9d. in Sydney) until the *Courier* estimated they were half the coin in circulation.⁽³⁾

There were two obvious reasons why Indian *rupees* were favoured as a *de facto* small coinage in the Australian colonies. The first was that the minting of the *rupees* was authorised by the British Government and carried out by the East India Company or by Princely States under British rule and therefore had a known silver content. The second was that the direct transfer of large numbers of these coins from India to the Australian colonies across the Indian Ocean occurred naturally as a result of very active trading activities and personnel transfer between the two (by direct sea route) roughly adjacent British colonies.

Because of these trading activities which continued to grow after 1815, the Indian *rupee* once again was destined to become an official and legal coin in Australia's colonies.

This continued use of the *rupee* in the new Australian colonies was due to a serious deficiency in small silver coins being minted by the English Mint in London between 1758 and 1816, largely as a result of the Napoleonic Wars.

In 1815, the Sydney Town and Van Diemen's Land colonies had virtually no small sterling silver coins in circulation to meet the gap in denominations between the cartwheel twopence and the next highest denomination circulating coin, which was the Indian *rupee* with a *de facto* valuation of about two shillings.

This meant that for day-to-day transactions the colony was sorely in need of the small silver denominations of threepence, sixpence and one shilling, which except for one small mintage of sixpences and shillings in 1787, had not been struck in England since 1758. Normal minting of silver shillings and sixpences finally resumed at the London Mint in 1816.

It is very difficult to obtain accurate information on the amounts and frequency of shipments of sterling silver coinage to the Australian colonies after 1815, but it is obvious that they were infrequent and limited in quantity.

In addition, there is considerable evidence that the colonial banks and government treasuries hoarded any sterling silver coinage as soon as it arrived and the banks dealt with customers mainly in colonial bank notes, Spanish *dollars* and *rupees* ⁽⁴⁾ so that the unofficial use of *rupees* in the developing colonies was by this approach essentially condoned by the banks.

In a forthcoming article the authors will document the continuing and widespread use of the Indian *rupee* in the Australian colonies after 1815, with an emphasis on Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

End Notes

1. *Currency Museum Circular No 8*, Currency Department, Central Bank of Ceylon, March 26th, 1984 (http://coins.lakdiva.org/silver_rupee.html).

2. Pridmore, F, *The Coins of the British Commonwealth of Nations to the end of the reign of George VI 1952, Part 4: India Volume 1: East India Company Presidency Series c.1642-1835*. Spink and Son, London, 1975.

3. Butlin, S J, *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, Melbourne University Press, 1953, page 180.

4. *Ibid*, page 181.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PENNY PART II - FROM WILLIAM I TO ELIZABETH II

John Wheatley

Following the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror continued the Anglo-Saxon coinage system. Most pennies of William I and William II show a front-facing bust of the king on the obverse, which is in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon kings who used a sideways-facing bust. The reverse of their pennies mostly showed a cross surrounded by a legend providing details of the mint and moneyer.

William I, 1066-1087

William retained the services of most of the moneyers who had minted coins for Edward the Confessor and King Harold. William appointed a Norman goldsmith, Otto, to supervise the national coinage. William ordered that the manufacture of master dies for new coins should be undertaken under Otto's supervision at the London Mint.

The first of William's pennies shows his profile left portrait with William usually holding a sceptre. On the reverse is a small cross fleuree or floriated cross.



William I, Silver Penny, Profile / Cross Fleuree Type, Hastings Mint, Moneyer Kolsveinn

Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, LLC

The next five types of William's pennies have different full-faced portraits being: Bonnet type, Canopy type, Two sceptres type, Two stars type, and Sword type. These were followed by a profile right portrait and finally a full-faced portrait and, in the angles of the cross pattee on the reverse, the letters 'PAXS' meaning peace.



William I, Silver Penny, Canopy Type, London Mint, Moneyer Aegelric

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London



***William I, Silver Penny, Two Sceptres Type, Steyning Mint,
Moneyer Dermon***

Image courtesy of AMR Coins



***William I, Silver Penny, Sword Type, Shaftesbury Mint,
Moneyer Godsbrand***

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London

Henry II, 1180-1189

In 1180 Henry II produced pennies with a small voided cross on the reverse known as the ‘short-cross’ series and this design continued to be featured on the coins of Richard I and John. In 1247 Henry III extended the cross so that it reached the edge of the coin, known as the ‘long-cross’ series. This was done to safeguard coins against clipping. The cross also served as a guide for the separation of a coin by cutting into fractions (quarters and halves) to meet a growing demand for coinage of a lower denomination than the penny.



Henry II, 'Short-Cross' Penny, Winchester Mint, Moneyer Gocelm

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd



Henry III, 'Long-cross' Penny, Canterbury Mint

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd

In 1257 Henry III issued a gold penny valued at 20 silver pence and twice the weight of the silver penny. The gold penny was not a success, probably because it was undervalued, and it ceased to be minted after a few years. Few gold pennies have survived.



Henry III, Gold Penny, London Mint, Moneyer William

Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions

Obverse: full-length figure of Henry, crowned and robed and seated on his throne. Legend HENRIC REX : III :. This design is similar to that of Edward the Confessor, who Henry took as his role model.

Reverse: Long cross, pellets in each angle with a rose between them. The legend gives the moneyer's name and the mint location as WILLEM: ON LVNDEN (William at London)

Edward II - Henry VIII, 1307 – 1547

Pennies of Edward II had a full-face portrait on the obverse and a long cross on the reverse with three pellets in each quarter. Henry VII introduced a new 'sovereign type' penny with the obverse showing a full portrait of him, crowned and throned, and the reverse featuring the royal shield centrally positioned over the long cross.



***Henry VII Sovereign Type Penny, York Mint,
Archbishop Rotherham Issue***

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd

Sovereign type pennies were issued in the first and second coinage issues of Henry VIII, however the third coinage saw a return to the bust style of portrait.



Henry VIII, Facing Bust Penny, Posthumous Third Coinage, Tower Mint

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd

Edward VI, 1547 – 53

A fine silver portrait penny was issued during the first period (April 1547-January 1549) with the crowned bust facing right on the obverse and the legend E.D.G. ROSA SINE SPINA (Edward by the grace of God a rose without a thorn). The reverse has a shield over a cross with the legend CIVITAS LONDON (City of London).



Edward VI, Silver Penny, Portrait Type, City of London

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London

In the third period (1550 – 1553) a base penny was issued with a Tudor rose on the obverse.



Edward VI, Base Penny, City of London

Image courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Ltd.

Mary Tudor, 1553-1558 and Philip of Spain, 1554-1558

A silver penny of Mary was issued in 1553 with her crowned bust facing left on the obverse and the legend M.D.G. ROSA SINE SPINA (Mary by the grace of God a rose without a thorn). On the reverse a shield over a cross with the legend CIVITAS LONDON. A base penny was also issued with a Tudor rose on the obverse.



Mary Tudor, Silver Penny, Tower Mint, No Initial Mark

Image courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Ltd.

Upon Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain in 1554, both silver and base pennies were issued. The silver penny again showed on the obverse Mary's crowned bust facing left with the new legend PZMDG ROSA SINE SPINA (Philip and Mary by the grace of God a rose without a thorn).

The base penny again displayed a rose on the obverse with the same legend as on the silver penny.



Philip and Mary, Silver Penny, City of London
Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London

Elizabeth I, 1558 – 1603

The pennies of Elizabeth I were very thin and as a result many are found creased or bent. The obverse displays a left facing bust of the queen with the legend EDG ROSA SINE SPINA (Elizabeth by the grace of God a rose without a thorn) whilst the reverse has the usual shield over a cross with the legend CIVITAS LONDON. No Milled pennies were produced during the reign of Elizabeth I and the pennies produced during her reign had no mark of value and were all undated.



Elizabeth I, Silver Penny Second Issue, Mintmark Cross Crosslet
Image courtesy of London Coins, Auction 156 lot 1762 (ex Lockett)

James I to Charles I, 1603 – 1649

The first pennies of James I had on the obverse the royal portrait facing right and a new feature, the value, a Roman one, positioned behind the king's head. The cross was deleted from the reverse and the shield now included the symbolic Scottish lion and Irish harp.

The first issued penny of Charles I had an uncrowned rose on either side, and later issues were redesigned to show the king facing left with the value numeral behind his head whilst the reverse showed the royal arms on an oval shield.



James I, Portrait Penny, King Facing Right

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd



Charles I, Portrait Penny, King Facing Left, Tower Mint under the King

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd

The last hammered pennies were produced in the reign of Charles II, after which machine struck pennies were made.

William and Mary, 1689-1694

Two obverse designs appeared on pennies of William and Mary. One in 1689, with the legend extending over the royal heads, and the second during the period 1690-1694 with the legend placed to either side of the royal heads.



William and Mary Silver Penny

Image courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Ltd.

After the death of Mary, pennies issued during 1698-1701 showed the bust of William facing right with the crowned numeral one on the reverse. The pennies of Anne continued with the same design except that the bust on the obverse faces left.

George III, 1760-1820

During George III's reign, the first copper penny, the famous cartwheel penny, was struck by Matthew Boulton at the Soho Mint, Birmingham, in 1797. It weighed a full ounce (28.3 gm) with a diameter of 36 mm and was extremely heavy for the pocket. A new, less heavy design was issued between 1806 and 1808 weighing only 18.9 gm. As with the 1797 issue these pennies bore the laureate head of the king facing right. The reverse shows Britannia, with an olive branch in her right hand and a trident resting in the crook of her left arm.



George III, Cartwheel Penny, 1797

Image courtesy of Colin Cooke Auctions (The Copthorne Collection, lot 3)

Normally the cartwheel penny is found in copper or bronzed copper, the best of these being proofs struck by the Soho Mint for collectors. In gold the design is sensational. This proof penny in gold must have been struck as a special presentation piece.



***George III, Proof Penny, 1797, struck in gold
by C.H. Kuchler, late Soho, possibly four known***

Image courtesy of Baldwin's of St James's (Auction 49, Lot 1047).



George III, Penny, 1806

Image courtesy of London Coins Auctions

George IV, 1820-1830 and William IV, 1830-1837

Copper pennies were produced dated 1825, 1826 and 1827. These coins were of a new design. The obverse shows a left facing laureate head with the date below. The reverse shows a helmeted Britannia facing right with her right hand supporting the shield.



George IV, Penny, 1827

Image courtesy of London Coins Auctions

Three copper issues of a similar design to the pennies of George IV, were struck in William IV's reign, dated 1831, 1834 and 1837.



William IV, Penny, 1834

Image courtesy of London Coins Auctions

Victoria, 1837-1901

– ‘Young Head’ Issues in Copper, 1838-1860

Copper pennies of Victoria issued between 1839-1860 had an obverse showing the splendid Wyon portrait of the young Queen facing left, with the reverse showing Britannia facing right.

There are some interesting varieties involving the design of the trident and the spacing of the colons in the inscription. Usually, the trident is ornamental but between 1853 and 1875 a plain trident issue exists.

The ‘close colon’ variety has the colon after DEF close to the F, while the far colon variety has it about half way between the F and Britannia’s foot.¹

The 1860 pennies are all 1860 over 1859, and were not issued for general circulation.²



Victoria, Copper Penny, 1843

Image courtesy of Colin Cooke Auctions (ex Peck, ex Norweb)

– ‘Bun Head’ Issue in Bronze, 1860-1894

The first bronze penny was issued in 1860, being struck on a flan of 30.8 mm, with the composition of the metal being 95% copper, 4% tin and 1% zinc.

The young head on the obverse was designed and engraved by Leonard C. Wyon and depicted the queen with her hair finished in a plaited coil. On the reverse, Britannia facing right was joined by a lighthouse (left) and a sailing ship (right).

There are two varieties of the 1860 penny with toothed or beaded borders, and scarce mules (obverse toothed, reverse beaded) of both types are known.³



Victoria, Penny (toothed border), 1860

Image courtesy of London Coins Auctions

The Heaton Mint of Birmingham produced pennies for the British Government in 1874 – 1876 and from 1881 – 1882.



Victoria, Penny (Heaton mint), 1874

Image courtesy of London Coins Auctions

The 'H' mint mark is shown below the date on the reverse.

– ‘Old or Veiled Head’ Issues in Bronze, 1895-1901

The bust of the Old or Veiled Head Issues was designed by G.W. De Saulles. There were two main varieties: 1mm or 2mm spacing of the trident from the 'P' of PENNY in 1895, and a scarce 'high-tide' version of 1897. The two 1895 designs differed in other respects including tide height.⁴



Victoria, Penny, 1895 with Low Tide and 'P' 2mm. from Trident

Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions

Edward VII, 1901 – 1910

The nine pennies of Edward VII, 1902 – 1910 include the 1902 low horizon variation, but otherwise the design features follow the old or veiled head series of Victoria.

George V 1910 – 1936

George V produced a variety of pennies. The Heaton Mint produced pennies for 1912, 1913 and 1919. The Kings Norton Metal Company also minted pennies for 1918 and 1919 which have a small ‘KN’ on the left in the exergue. The KN pennies are much scarcer than the H pennies.⁵



George V, KN Penny, 1918

Image courtesy of Baldwin's Sale List March 2020

Pennies of Edward VII and of the reign of George V prior to 1922 were affected by ‘ghosting’ caused by too high a relief obverse design. Ghosting showed as a vague outline on the reverse sides because of metal displacement during the striking process. Several attempts to prevent this were carried out by modification of the bust design, the most significant and successful being the second issue of 1926; the ‘ME’ (modified effigy) variation.



George V, Penny (modified effigy), 1926

Image courtesy of Colin Cooke Auctions (The Copthorne Collection)

Rare 1933 Penny

The Royal Mint had no plans to issue pennies in 1933 as it had a surplus of pennies dated 1932. Following special requests for a commemorative coin to mark the year, a small number, thought to be seven, were produced. Three of the coins were created for the King to place under the foundation stones of important buildings then under construction.

It is known that two of the coins were presented to the British Museum and two fell into the hands of private collectors.⁶



Rare George V Circulating Penny, 1933

Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions

Four pattern prototypes of the 1933 penny, which use a design created by the French artist Andre Lavrillier, were also made.

Edward VIII

No pennies bearing the name and portrait of Edward VIII were issued for currency in the United Kingdom, but a certain number of bronze proofs dated 1937 were struck.



Extremely Rare Edward VIII Pattern Proof Penny, 1937

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London (the Waterbird Collection)

George VI, 1936-1952

The pennies of George VI are distinguished by the re-appearance of a lighthouse to the rear of Britannia's seated figure. In 1949, a further change occurred when the title 'IND:IMP' (Emperor of India) was discontinued. Although some proof pennies were issued dated 1952, no pennies dated 1952 were struck for general issue.



Unique George VI Proof Penny, 1952

Image courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Ltd

Elizabeth II, 1952 –

As there was a continuing lack of demand for pennies, none were struck for circulation during Elizabeth II's reign until 1961.

In 1954 there was one substantial change to the penny with the omission of the words 'BRITT:OMN' from the obverse legend. The single known specimen of the Queen Elizabeth II penny dated 1954 was sold at auction by Spink & Son, London, on 25th November 1991 for the sum of 24,000 English Pounds. The description of the coin as lot 316 of Spink Sale No. 89 reads as follows:

'No pennies bearing the date 1954 were ever issued for circulation but the Royal Mint confirmed that a small number were produced for 'testing purposes.' According to the Royal Mint's records, all of the pieces, together with the reverse die, were subsequently destroyed. One single specimen however survived and sometime later turned up in circulation. How this could have happened still remains a mystery although there has been much speculation as to what may have occurred. The coin was acquired in 1956 by Spink & Son who sold it to the late C. Wilson Peck, author of 'English Copper, Tin and Bronze coins in the British Museum' published by the Trustees of the British Museum.

In 1963 Mr. Peck sold the coin to the Empire Coin Company Inc. who issued a leaflet stating that the coin had not been exhibited publicly, and that the Directors of that Company were to make it available for viewing in selected exhibits 'thereby giving numismatists the opportunity to see one of the world's rarest and most valuable coins.



Unique Elizabeth II Penny, 1954

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London

Steve Hill, a leading English and International coin dealer, made this interesting observation in a description of the unique George V 1952 penny; 'We also find it interesting to note that there is one extremely rare or unique rare proof pre-decimal Penny for each monarch of the House Of Windsor, George V has the 1933 Penny, Edward VII the 1937 proof Penny, George VI the unique 1952 Proof Penny and Elizabeth II the unique 1954 currency Penny.'

The last issued penny of Elizabeth II was dated 1967.



Elizabeth II, Penny, 1967

Image courtesy of allcoinvalues.com

As part of the decimalisation from 1971 to 1982 the British penny was replaced by the 'New Penny'. The new decimal pennies struck on bronze flans, were a radical departure from those introduced in 1860. Britannia was replaced by a crowned portcullis surmounted by the legend NEW PENNY.

The first decimal pennies were dated 1971 but were made available to the public before this date in presentation sets. They did not become legal tender until 15th February 1971.



Elizabeth II, New Penny, 1971

In 1982 the word 'NEW' was omitted so we are finally back to the original name of 'ONE PENNY'. The humble English Penny had come full circle and reclaimed its original name.



Elizabeth II, Penny, 1982 (reverse)

Image courtesy of coin-brothers.com

Acknowledgements

To Steve Hill of Sovereign Rarities Ltd. for the provision of several images and for his help and assistance throughout.

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- Spink, *Coins of England & The United Kingdom, 47th Edition – Standard Catalogue of British Coins*, London, 2012.
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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History-of-the-English-penny_\(1485-1603\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History-of-the-English-penny_(1485-1603))

End Notes

¹ 'Coins of England and Great Britain ('Coins of the U.K.')

 by Tony Clayton. The Penny. (<http://www.coins-of-the-uk.co.uk/penny.html>.)
^{2,3,4,5} Ibid.

⁶ Daily Mail Australia Monday, February 10, 2020 'Yours for 50,000 pounds, a 1933 penny: Rare coin set to fetch record price at auction' by Sean Poulter published 23 April 2016 updated 24 April 2016. (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3554776/Yours-50-000-1933-penny-Rare-coin-set-fetch-record-price-auction.html>).

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA VIOLET DAY

Walter R Bloom

The original aim of Violet Day in the other States where it was held was to fund the wounded from World War I, as can be seen from the first such appeal held in Adelaide after ANZAC DAY 1915:

HELPING THE WOUNDED. *The West Australian*, Perth, July 3 1915, p. 7.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article26947558>

'VIOLET DAY IN ADELAIDE. ... the proceeds of the sale of the flowers will go towards the erection of a clubhouse for wounded soldiers.'

The first appearance in Western Australia of Violet Day was on Friday 28 July 1922 to raise funds for the Kindergarten Union in its push for free kindergartens for pre-school children.

FREE KINDERGARTENS. *The West Australian*, Perth, July 24 1922, p. 8.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article28174751>

'Throughout there will be a special street appeal known as "Violet day". Fifteen different centres have been selected throughout the city from which a band of enthusiastic lady-helpers will descend upon a generous public who, it is hoped, will not be unresponsive. A special feature of the day will be the selling of violets. All growers of violets are appealed to assist in this connection by any gifts of this floral tribute, and, if addressed to Mrs. B. H. Rischbieth, Perth railway station, by any of the late Thursday night's trains, arrangements will be made to pick up same. Any local Perth gifts may be addressed to the Kindergarten Training College, 1186 hay-street, West Perth, or will be called for in response to ringing A4632.'

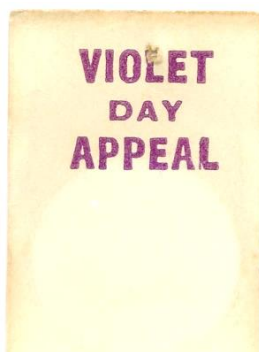
The following year saw the next Violet Day on Friday 24 August; see.

VIOLET DAY. *The West Australian*, Perth, August 23 1923, p. 8.
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22629295>

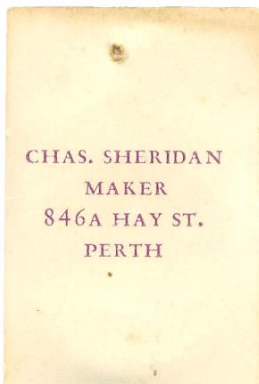
The Violet Day badge shown below has been adapted from the 1922 version



By 1933, presumably because of the difficulty in obtaining a suitable supply of violets, the flower was replaced by an English farthing. This would have been quite novel as the farthing was never part of Australian coinage (and neither was the half-crown).



Note the effect of the chlorine in the printed card on the reverse of the 1933 farthing over 88 years!



Sheridan's claim to be the 'maker' of an English farthing was accidental; an earlier card was used.

TO HELP THE KINDERGARTEN



Today was the annual Violet Day appeal of the Kindergarten Union, but in place of violets the collectors used farthing badges. The picture shows Miss Nancy Ward-Hughes pinning a brooch on Douglas Brown.

Violet Day.

Although greatly hampered by boisterous weather in the city yesterday, the Violet Day appeal for free kindergartens (the concluding effort of the annual appeal) met with considerable success, the progress total of the collections made up to last night being £185. It is anticipated that about £50 is yet to come in from various other sources. Braving the high winds which swept the streets, helpers took up their positions in the city at 8 o'clock in the morning and, although many stalls in exposed positions had to be abandoned, badges were still being sold at about 6 o'clock. "While the results achieved this year are not in keeping with the figures of previous years," said the chairman of the committee (Mrs. A. E. Joyner), "the response of the public, in view of the weather, was excellent. The committee is full of praise for the helpers who worked in such unpleasant conditions, and our thanks are due to those people in the country who sent us so many beautiful flowers for the appeal."

TO HELP THE KINDERGARTEN. *The Daily News. Perth*, August 25, 1933, p. 1. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article83408598>

Nancy Ward-Hughes married Bill McNeil in England in the late 1930s.

Sergeant McNeil was in Singapore when the war broke out and was captured when Singapore fell. His wife Nancy and child Jane were in Perth where they were reunited in 1945, after which the family returned to England.

The boy could have been Douglas Brown of Leederville who died last year at the age of 92.

NEWS AND NOTES. *The West Australian*, Perth, August 26 1939, p16. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article46420115>

Note the "*many beautiful flowers*". Perhaps the locals weren't ready for the numismatic shift to farthings!

In the same column there is a comment on windy weather with a specific comment on the "*boisterous weather*", placing it midway between a storm and a hurricane:

When Wind Becomes a Hurricane.

While Perth's people yesterday toiled against a wild wind, officials of the Weather Bureau, with scientific gravity, studied their measuring instruments and scales. What is known as the Beaufort scale is used by meteorologists to identify air currents, be they gentle breezes or howling hurricanes. Yesterday's wind reached a velocity of 72 miles an hour and was placed midway between a storm and a hurricane. The Beaufort scale defines as a "light air" an air movement at two miles an hour. When the air movement develops into a "light breeze" it attains a velocity of five miles an hour. A "gentle breeze" speeds up to 10 miles an hour, giving way to a "moderate breeze" at 15 miles an hour. When the velocity reaches 21 miles an hour the meteorologist applies the term "Fresh breeze." The "fresh breeze" graduates at 27 miles an hour and becomes a "strong breeze." When the wind (it is no longer a breeze) attains a velocity of 35 miles an hour "moderate gale" is the correct definition. At 42 miles an hour the gale takes on a "fresh" quality, which becomes "strong" at 50 miles an hour. From there it is only another blow (precisely nine miles an hour) to a "whole gale." When a wind velocity of 68 miles an hour occurs the term "storm" is applied and at 75 miles an hour a "hurricane" is recorded. And there the Beaufort scale ends, a wind with a velocity about 75 miles an hour apparently defying definition. Incidentally, a wind at 75 miles an hour exerts a pressure of 17lb. to the square foot.

Perhaps the weather on that day in 1939 spelt the doom of the Violet Day Appeal? (I doubt the farthings would have been destroyed quite so quickly!)

After 1939 there is no advertisement in the Perth papers for the Violet Day appeal, which appears to have been replaced by the Kindergarten (Union) Appeal.

There is later reference in southern newspapers to flowers being sent for the annual Violet Day appeal in both 1940 and 1941, and of the Narrogin Infant Health Centre receiving its funds from the annual Violet Day appeals in 1941 and 1943, but after that there is no mention of Violet Day in the Western Australian newspapers. It isn't clear whether Narrogin had its own Violet Day or if it was that its Infant Health Centre was funded from the Perth appeal.



A FORGED USA TWENTY DOLLAR PIECE OF 1898

Graeme Stephens

I should begin by stating that this coin, which I purchased in Ceylon in 1975, is an excellent forgery. Quite a few forgeries of this coin were made. Some, like mine, were very professionally minted to be nearly identical to the original, however the giveaway is the weight. The genuine coin should weigh 33.44 grams, but this coin weighs only 31.83 grams. Of course, the forged coin was lower in weight so the forger could make his margin on the value of the difference.

I paid US\$ 120 for it as a genuine coin in 1975 when gold was \$135/oz. It is identical to the genuine coin other than weight and a small dot at 2 o'clock on the obverse.



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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: <i>Arthur C Clarke, a shipwreck odyssey</i>), no-reserve Tender Sale |
| 24 February | Invited speaker (Robert Russell: <i>How to Value Coins & Banknotes and Why Prices Differ</i>). Tender Sale |
| 31 March | No-reserve Tender Sale |
| 28 April | Invited speaker (John McDonald: <i>The Rebel British Empire of the 3rd Century, history revealed by coins</i>). Tender Sale |
| 26 May | No-reserve Tender Sale |
| 30 June | Invited speaker (Sandy Shailes, <i>Fifty cents worth of history – A history of Australia as told by the 50c piece</i>). 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 |

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Dr Walter Bloom	1988-1991
Jiri Just †	1991-1994
Colin Meikle	1994-1997
Haydn Powell †	1997-2005
Dr Walter Bloom	2005-

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Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Medal and Banknote Fairs:

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Saturday 14th August 2021

Saturday 6th November 2021

Monday 27th December 2021

Perth Stamp & Coin Show:

Friday 29th – Sunday 31st October 2021

Phoenix Auctions:

Sunday 20th June 2021

Sunday 19th September 2021

Sunday 5th December 2021

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JB Military Antiques Auctions:

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