Perth Numismatic Journal

Official publication of the
Perth Numismatic Society Inc

VICE-PATRON

Prof. John Melville-Jones

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 2018-2019

PRESIDENT	Prof. Walter Bloom
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	Ben Selentin
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT	Dick Pot
TREASURER	Alan Peel
SECRETARY	Prof. Walter Bloom
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Sandra Vowles
MINUTES SECRETARY	Ray Peel
FELLOWSHIP OFFICER	Jim Selby
EVENTS COORDINATOR	Mike McAndrew
ORDINARY MEMBERS	Jim Hiddens
	Jonathan de Hadleigh
	Miles Goldingham
	Tom Kemeny
JOURNAL EDITOR	John McDonald
JOURNAL SUB-EDITOR	Mike Beech-Jones

OFFICERS

AUDITOR	Vignesh Raj
CATERING	Lucie Pot
PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER	Tom Kemeny
WEBMASTER	Prof. Walter Bloom

WAnumismatica website designer & sponsor www.wanumismatica.org.au	Mark Nemtsas, The Purple Penny

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PERTH NUMISMATIC JOURNAL

Contributions on any aspect of numismatics are welcomed but will be subject to editing. All rights are held by the author(s), and views expressed in the contributions are not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor.

Please address all contributions to the journal, comments and general correspondence to:

EARLY HISTORY OF THE BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES, INCLUDING THE OPENING OF BRANCHES IN PERTH AND FREMANTLE

John Wheatley

Major-General Lachlan Macquarie, Governor of New South Wales ('Macquarie') first conceived the idea of the Bank of New South Wales ('the Bank') and developed and implemented it as '*His Favourite Measure*' [1].

Governor Lachlan Macquarie

Macquarie wished to ban local 'Colonial Currency' by providing an adequate supply of sterling as a means of exchange. He recommended the establishment of a government bank to be known as the New South Wales Loan Bank. The authorities in England rejected this idea.

Undaunted, Macquarie was persuaded by the New Judge Advocate, John Wylde, that although his Governor's Commission did not specifically authorise the granting of a charter for a bank, the power was implied [2]. It appears that Macquarie did not tell the Secretary of State of the formation of the Bank until 29th March 1817, only days before the Bank was due to open [3].

The draft rules of the Bank were approved at a meeting held on 7th February 1817 at which seven directors were appointed: D'Arcy Wentworth, John Harris, Robert Jenkins, Thomas Wylde, Alexander Riley, William Redfern and John Thomas Campbell ('Campbell'). Campbell was elected President of the Bank and Chairman of the Board of Directors [4].

In March 1817 the Board leased its first premises from Mrs Mary Reibey (a former Convict) at Macquarie Place at the rental of 150 pounds per annum.

**First Premises, 1817-1822,
Mary Reibey's House**
Image source: Westpac archives

The Bank's first employees were Joseph H. Potts as porter and servant, Edward Smith Hall as secretary and cashier, and Robert Campbell Junior as accountant [5].

Edward Smith Hall ('Hall')

Hall's salary as cashier was 200 pounds per annum. He was required to provide to the Bank a bond of 1,500 pounds and was obliged to sleep every night at the Bank and '*Never be out of Sydney after dark*'. His job at the Bank involved the supervision of the office and the settling of accounts with the three directors who attended the Bank daily [6].

Hall's time at the Bank was not easy. His request for permission for his assistant, Robert Campbell Junior to live on the premises instead of him was refused. In January 1818, the Board rejected his request for an increase in salary, and in March 1818, after an argument with the President, Hall resigned [7]. He subsequently founded the Monitor Newspaper and was frequently in trouble for libel and fined hundreds of pounds. Whilst at the newspaper, Hall participated in shareholders' battles '*over the form and future of the Bank*' [8]. Hall can rightly claim the position as '*Chief Officer of the Bank*' for 1817-1818.

The Early Years

The Bank was established as a corporation and as a joint-stock company with a nominal capital of 20,000 pounds divided into 200 shares of 100 pounds each, with 39 people taking up the subscription offer [9]. A charter of incorporation was granted, prepared and delivered to the President of the Bank on 22nd March 1817. It was granted for a period of seven years and incorporated with the title of the President and Company of the Bank of New South Wales [10]. The Bank opened for business at 10 am on Tuesday 8th April 1817. The first deposit of 50 pounds from a Sergeant Jeremiah Murphy of His Majesty's 46th Regiment of Foot was actually taken three days earlier on 5th April [11]. The first day of business was very uneventful, as the staff of three served only one customer during the four hours of trading [12].
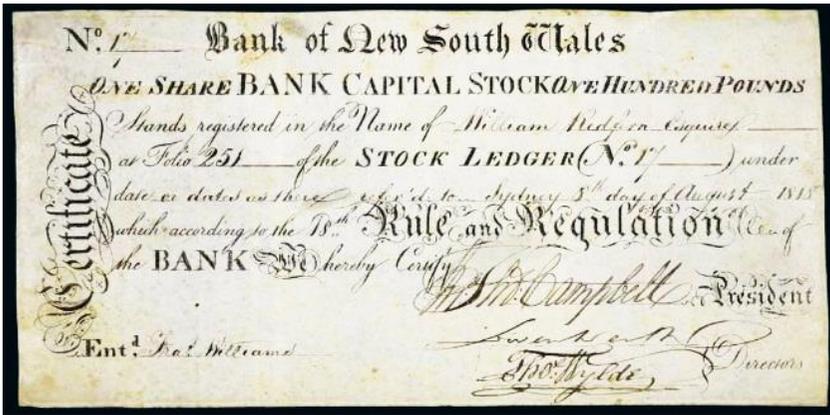
Share Certificate No. 17, William Redfern Esquire, 8 August 1818
Image source: Noble Numismatics

At the Board Meeting on 6th May 1817, the directors approved loans ranging from 25 pounds to 100 pounds to four landowners. All four were issued with Mortgage Deeds on 22nd May [13]. The first approved loan was for 25 pounds secured by mortgage to Owen Connor of Minto, an emancipist [14].

A rule in the Bank's Charter stipulated that the Banknotes to be issued by the Bank were:

> Two shillings and sixpence,
> Five shillings,
> Ten shillings,
> One Pound, and
> Five Pounds.

Each note was to be signed by two directors and the cashier and counter-signed by the principal bookkeeper.

As Governor Macquarie had issued a proclamation on 23rd November 1816 declaring that 'Sterling' was to be used from that date, values were initially in sterling.

At the first Directors' meeting held on 12th February 1817, a decision was taken to instruct an engraver to prepare plates for the Bank's notes [15]. Samuel Clayton, a former convict, was appointed to engrave the plates, and the notes were printed at the offices of the Sydney Gazette.

To protect against forgery until banknote paper arrived from England in 1820, the back of each note was inscribed by letterpress with a legend unique to the colony. The legend reads '*When we cease to render strict and impartial justice in the Administration of the Affairs of the Bank, as it regards the Public on the one hand, and the Proprietors on the other, be our Names and Characters branded with perpetual Infamy*' This security measure had been established earlier in 1815 when the Sydney Gazette printed the NSW Colonial Police Fund notes, of which only unissued forms now exist. The verse on these notes was in Latin from Cicero [16].

The left margin device used on the Police Fund notes is virtually identical with these early banknotes of the Bank, showing wavy lines interspersed with stars, the guiding light to the colony. The border device on the back of these early banknotes is also identical to that on the Police Fund Notes [17].

On the date the Bank opened, 100 ten shillings notes were issued [18]. A decision is recorded in the Bank's minutes of the day, that all notes were payable to J. Lee or bearer. The Colonial Secretary Index 1788-1825 records that John Lee was rewarded from the Police Fund ten pounds on 10th February 1816 as '*a reward for himself ... for catching two horses belonging to Assistant Surgeon Redfern*' who was a founding director of the Bank [19].

Although security provisions for the issue of the notes appeared adequate, on occasion in the early days of the Bank, notes were wrongly signed and had to be destroyed, and 5 shillings notes were lost between the printer and the engraver [20].

An investigation following defalcations by the cashier Francis Williams, in 1820, revealed that whilst directors carried notes home for signature, no regular account of the notes had been kept by the cashier. Such a procedure was considered unnecessary amongst 'gentlemen' [21].

Cheque books and passbooks were issued to depositors, with the stationer's costs of one shilling and ninepence each, being debited to customers' accounts on 18th June 1817. The use of accounts as purely cheque accounts was not encouraged [22].

The volume of bank notes in circulation at the end of 1817 was 5,635 pounds, according to the balance sheet. A year later it had more than doubled at 11,577 pounds [23].
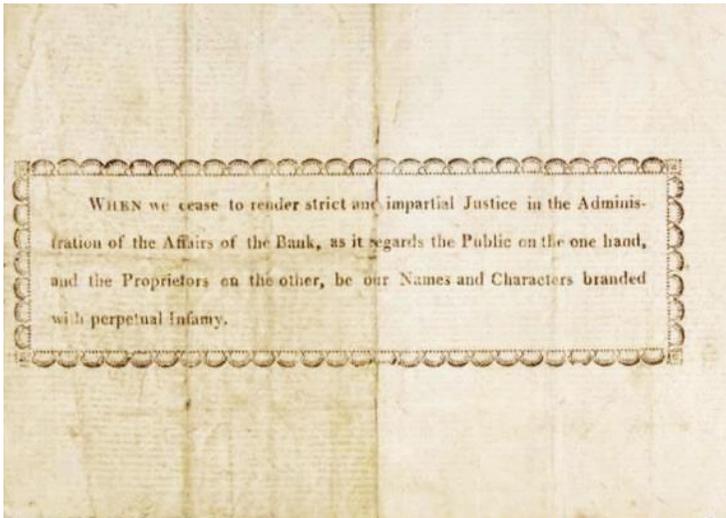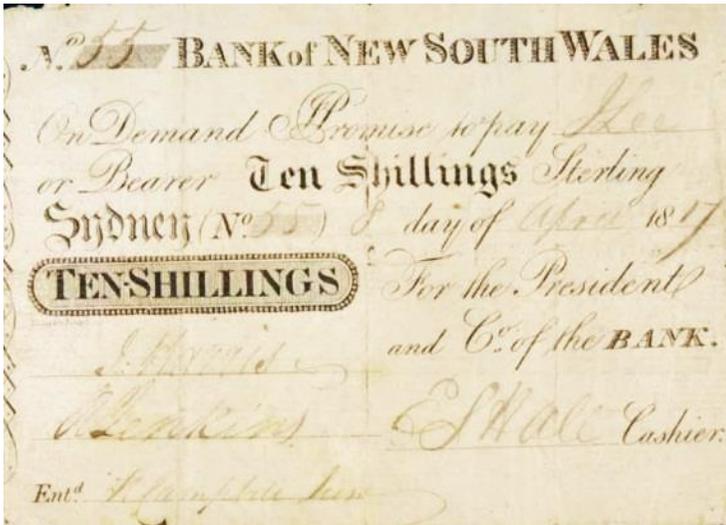
Australia's First Banknote, Ten Shillings, Dated 1817
Image source: Noble Numismatics

The most important part of the Bank's lending was the discounting of Bills of Exchange. Other loans were limited to a maximum of 500 pounds from the commencement.

Mortgage loans on land or on land and houses were allowed for no longer than the term of 12 months, and loans against bullion or plate could be made for 9 months up to half the estimated value. No loans were allowed against the security of the Bank's share certificates. The rate of interest for all bank lending was not to exceed 10 per cent [24].
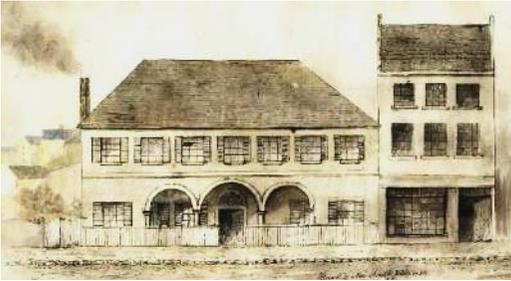
***The Crown and Thistle Inn,
George Street Premises 1822-1853.***
Image source: Westpac archives

In June 1822 the Bank moved to new premises, 'The Crown and Thistle Inn' owned by James Chisholm in George Street. The Bank remained in George Street until its own premises opened in 1853 at the corner of George and Wynyard Streets. In 1971 new head office premises were occupied at 60 Martin Place.

Joseph Hyde Potts ('Potts'), 1793-1865, First Employee of the Bank

Potts commenced his duties as '*porter and servant*' on 1st March 1817. He was required to sleep at the Bank and his remuneration was a weekly ration at the government commissariat plus a sum of 25 pounds per annum for his extra time [25]. Potts was bright, hardworking and possessed fine penmanship. In 1821 his work was to present bills for payment and to collect cash for them. That year his 'Tables of Factors for Interest at Eight and Ten per cent' was printed [26].

Potts designed both issues of the Spanish Dollar notes of the Bank in 1822 and 1824 [27].

## The Spanish Dollar Issues, 1822-1824 & 1824-1826

The first series of the Spanish Dollar notes contained the denomination in a small dark oval near the centre and were smaller than the second series issued between 1824 and 1826 [28]. Although it was originally thought that there were only two denominations of 1 dollar and 6 dollars issued, I have recently discovered the existence of two further denominations of 48 dollars and 4 dollars.
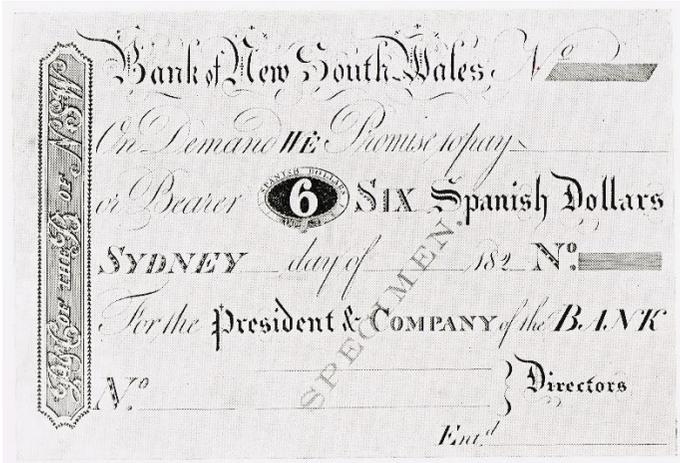
6 Spanish Dollars Note, First Series
Image source: Mick Vort-Ronald

At the beginning of 1824, the First series of notes were called in and new notes (the Second Series) issued for 1 dollar, 3 dollars, 5 dollars, 10 dollars, 20 dollars, 50 dollars and 100 dollars [29]. The notes for the Second Series were larger in size than the First Series and did not contain an oval with the denomination [30].
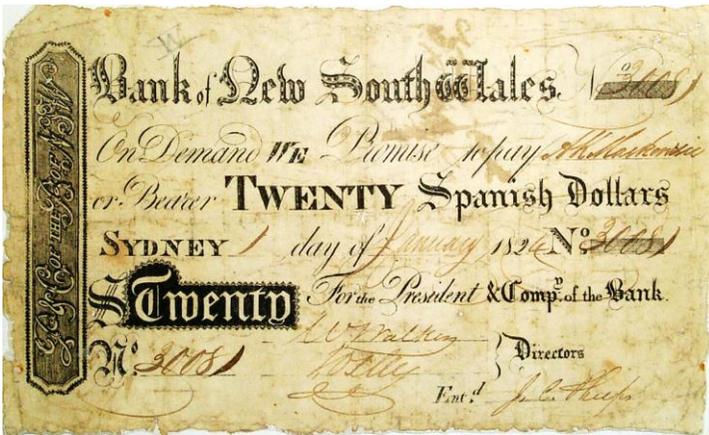
*20 Spanish Dollars Note, Second Series*
Image source: Westpac Archives

Reversion to Sterling, 1826

In 1826 the Colony had reverted to a Sterling basis and in February new notes in sterling designed by Potts were in circulation. The first issue of these notes was red to distinguish them from those previously issued, but in April instructions were issued to print the notes in black with the word 'Sterling' added. Denominations of 1 pound, 2 pounds, 5 pounds, 10 pounds and 20 pounds were issued [31].

The Sydney Gazette was very complimentary about these notes, stating:

'These notes are well executed, and they were designed, as usual, by Mr. J.H. Potts of the Bank establishment, who, we should suppose, must eclipse every other penman in the country. The twenty - pound note is a most superb display of that which man is able to effect with nothing more than his pen, and common writing ink. There is a simplicity and beauty about the note which renders it enchanting [32].
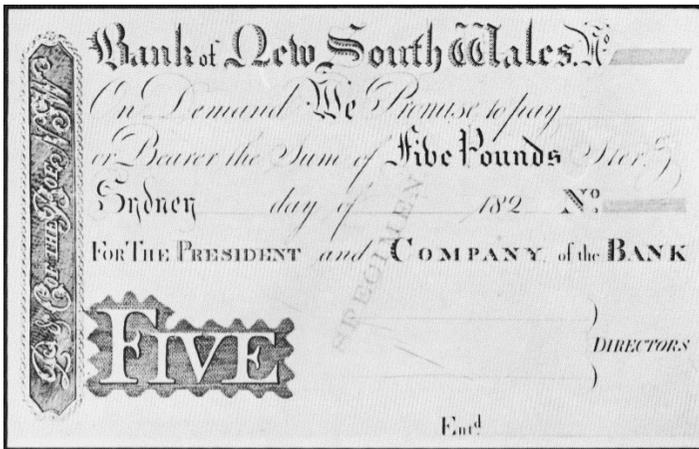
Potts' 5 Pound Note in Sterling
Image source: Mick Vort-Ronald

Equipment in the early days of the Bank included an iron chest which was the vault for cash and valuables. The cost of the iron chest of 30 pounds 19 shillings and 7 pence was considered exorbitant [33]. In 1818 a blunderbuss and case of pistols were requested from London. These firearms supported the Bank's security system [34].

Recapitalisation & Consolidation

In 1826, the Bank suffered a liquidity crisis forcing the Directors to seek a government loan of 20,000 pounds. In December 1828, the bank's cash position was weak again and it was forced to seek a new government loan. This loan was granted on condition that it wind up its affairs within a year, however the loan was quickly repaid, and both parties ignored the condition to wind up [35]. For the next two decades, the Bank made steady progress [36].

In March 1850 a committee appointed by the Board of Directors, recommended a new, less restricted Deed of Settlement plus incorporation through the Legislative Council. The proposed new document was presented in June and agreed by the proprietors in September. The Act of Incorporation was passed and received assent on the 23rd September 1850 [37].

The new bank opened to the public on the 4th October with a capital of 125,000 pounds in 20 pound shares, in the old Crown and Thistle Inn in George Street, Sydney. The 'old' bank continued to exist alongside the 'new' bank until it paid a final dividend on 1 February 1852 and came to an end [38].

On 14 November 1850, the Bank opened its first branch at Moreton Bay (Brisbane).

Banknote Issued for Moreton Bay Branch.
Image source: Westpac Archives

**Branch Premises, Collins Street
Melbourne, 1858**
Image source: Westpac archives

The Bank then opened its second branch in Melbourne on 15 April 1851, just 3 months before Victoria became a separate colony and 4 months before gold was found in Ballarat [39].

The Bank purchased gold and established several branches to service both the goldfields and the growing needs of commerce in Melbourne [40].

Many of the branches and agencies in the goldfields were no more than a tent and staff were frequently working in appalling conditions, subject to extremes of temperature and rainfall with the additional danger of being held up by bushrangers. Many humorous stories abound of those days, none more so than the following:
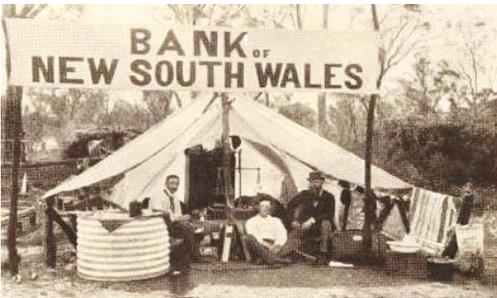
Tent Premises, West Wyalong, 1894
Image source: Westpac archives

'*One of the staff of a branch in quiet periods, prospected portion of the 'office' earth floor and found traces of gold*' and '*gold scales often had glass cases to prevent Chinese miners blowing on or otherwise tampering with them during weighing*' [41].

Until secure branches were built on the gold diggings, successful gold diggers, merchants and banks naturally wished to send their gold to Sydney for safe keeping. Doing so risked the danger of the gold being stolen by bushrangers. Even secure branches were held up by bushrangers. On 6 February 1879 Ned Kelly's gang held up the town of Jerilderie New South Wales, robbing the Bank of 2,140 pounds [42]. To avoid the threat of bushrangers it became common for people to cut bank notes in half, sending one half with one mail coach and the other half on a later coach [43].

Victorian Issue of Banknotes

There are two series of these notes. The first series were engraved by Thomas Ham of Melbourne and have only been seen in printer's proof form.

Originally, it was thought that only two denominations for these notes, a 1 pound and a 20 pound, were produced. However, according to an article by Andrew Morris, there may be additional notes in denominations of 5 and 10 pounds [44].

In support Morris refers to Bank of New South Wales Board Minutes dated 19 April 1851 and 31 October 1851. The first minutes contain an order to Messrs Bacon & Petch (London) for 20,000 one-pound notes and 5,000 five-pound notes for use at the Victorian branch of the Bank. The second minute contain an order for additional banknotes for Melbourne, including 30,000 one-pound notes, 5,000 five -pound notes and 1,000 ten-pound notes.

One Pound Note Engraved by Ham.
Image source: A. Morris

The second series were the 'Gold Rush Issue' printed for the Mt. Alexander Agency. Again, this series has only been seen in printer's proof form for the denomination of 5 pounds.

Morris mounts a strong case for the proposition that this series of notes was never issued [45]. An image for this note has been seen imprinted 'Engraved by J. Carmichael Sydney.' My research has shown that a John Black Carmichael (1803-1857), artist and engraver, lived in Sydney

Mt Alexander 5 Pounds Engraved by J. Carmichael, Sydney
Image source: T. James

Expansion in the 1850's

New Head Office, Sydney, 1870
Image source: Westpac archives

The 1850s was a decade of rapid expansion by the Bank shown by growth in business, increase in the number of branches and an increase in capital.

The Bank completed and occupied its new head office at the corner of George and Wynyard Streets, Sydney in February 1853.

***London Branch, 64
Old Broad Street.***
Image source: Westpac archives

A London Branch was opened at 37 Cannon Street, London, that same year, headed by Donald Larnach [46]. The bank remained at Cannon Street, London for 13 years and then moved to a new building at 64 Old Broad Street, London, where it remained for 45 years. In 1911 the Bank moved to 29 Threadneedle Street, London [47].

The terms of the deed governing the London Board of Directors enabled them to engage in banking and bullion dealing as well as acting as exchange merchants within the City of London. Larnach managed the London branch superbly, for more than 40 years [48].

The Bank continued to expand and grow. By 30th September 1860 the Bank had 27 branches and agencies, its paid-up capital was 750,000 pounds and total deposits exceeded 3 million pounds [49].

The Bank opened its first New Zealand branch in Auckland in 1861. Branches were subsequently opened in Adelaide, South Australia in 1877 and Perth, Western Australia in 1883 [50].

Opening of the Perth Branch

The Bank's first link with Western Australia was in 1854 through an agency agreement with the Western Australian Bank [51].

The Bank instructed Marinus Francis Alfred Canning ('Canning') to go to Perth in 1882. He bought land for the Bank at Perth and at Fremantle and Bunbury [52]. The land purchased in Perth had a 45 feet frontage on to St. Georges Terrace and cost 1,400 pounds [53].

Canning advised the Bank that the renovations for the Perth premises would cost 930 pounds and that it would open for business on 23 April 1883. The Board consented to this and thereupon gave notice to the Western Australian Bank that it would be terminating its agency agreement [54].

Perth Branch, 1883
Image source: Westpac archives

Legal questions regarding the Bank's powers under Western Australian legislation delayed the opening of the Perth Branch until the end of August 1883 [55]. Canning inserted a classified advertisement in the local Perth newspaper on 11th September 1883, advising that a branch of the Bank had been opened for the transaction of all customary business in St Georges Terrace Perth, on 31st August 1883 [56].

The bank granted a bonus of 200 pounds to Canning plus an allowance of 154 pounds 13 shillings and 1 penny to meet expenses incurred and fixed his annual salary as acting manager at 500 pounds, together with an annual servant's allowance of 50 pounds [57].

R.E.A. Wilkinson, the Bank's acting manager, Sydney office, was sent to inspect and report on the Perth office in December 1883 [58]. His letter to the general Manager, Sydney, Shepherd Smith makes interesting reading.

'The branch is going on steadily, but of necessity slowly. To get business in a small community the wealthy people of which are nearly all intermarried and tied to established institutions, without making concessions while at the same time asking large margins of security, is not an easy accomplishment or quickly attained, and we must be content to jog along slowly as beginners. I think that under the circumstances Mr Canning has done very well.'

And

'Perth is a pretty place with a large extent of salt water frontage but laid out on a scale sufficient for a couple of hundred thousand whereas its people amount to about six – thus it has a very scattered, straggling appearance and there is only one street with continuous buildings and that but for a short distance. Our Bank is the most 'imposing' and the best arranged for an office. The more comfortable and well-off people seem glad to welcome an introduced stranger and have proved very hospitable to me...

'...We shall have to sit down at Fremantle, as there is as much business done there as here: it is a rather miserable place but must remain the port of this district at least for some time. The Swan can never be used for anything more than lighterage' [59].

It appears that Canning was not given any 'settling in period' since Shepherd Smith in his March 1884 report said, '*I do not like the appearance of the advances. The sooner a more experienced man is in charge of the branch the better*' [60].

Wilkinson returned to Perth to take over the Perth branch from Canning in May 1884. It appears that Canning would not at first, vacate the house, although he handed over the branch [61]. Relationships between Canning and Wilkinson were strained for some months before Canning was recalled to Head Office in September 1884. Canning was forced to relocate his family to Fremantle and to commute to Perth until his departure. His discontent fuelled hostility encountered by Wilkinson from local residents [62]. None the less, by September 1884 Wilkinson had turned the Bank's business around so that its deposits were 35,000 pounds and advances and discounts 44,000 pounds [63]. Shepherd Smith congratulated Wilkinson after his next balance on '*The generally excellent form of his returns and reports. What we now want to see is the branch a profit* (sic), *not a large loss. That is we want more safe business*' [64]. Two years after opening, deposits had reached 50,000 pounds and advances and discounts 90,000 pounds [65].


Fremantle Branch, 1886
Image source: Bank of NSW - views of premises

The bank initially had purchased land in Fremantle for the sum of 1,500 pounds with frontages on both High and Cliff streets [66], however when the Fremantle branch opened in 1886 it was in rented premises on Cliff Street [67]. Apparently, it was not successful and it was closed in 1889 [68].

Land was also purchased in Bunbury, at the corner of Stephen and Victoria Streets, for 500 pounds [69].

However, a Bunbury branch was not opened until 1923 and was situated in part of premises leased on Victoria Street [70].

What became of Canning?
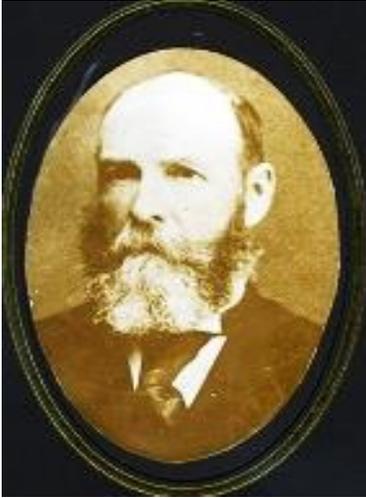
M. F. A. Canning
Image source: Biographical register of MP's of WA.

After his recall to Sydney on 26th September 1884, the Board sanctioned an allowance of 100 pounds to him for relocating his family to Sydney [71]. He resigned from the Bank in 1885 and returned to Western Australia where he opened a mortgage agency [72].

Canning was elected to the W.A. parliament at the first general election to be held for the Legislative Assembly in 1890, winning the seat of East Perth. He died in Perth in 1911 aged 82.

William (Bill) Ralph Boucher Hassell, one of his great grandchildren, was a prominent Perth lawyer and a member of Parliament [73].

Fremantle Branch Reopened

As Fremantle's importance as a port became established, the branch was re-opened in Cliff Street. On 22nd August 1896 the local newspaper reported:

'*Bank of New South Wales. A branch of the Bank of New South Wales has been opened in Fremantle. The directors have secured rather small but suitable and presentable premises in Cliff Street, nearly opposite Mr. Lilly's new buildings. Mr. E.A. Cameron, late accountant in Adelaide is the manager and Mr. A.P. Hamilton late of Wangaratta is the accountant*' [74].

In 1899 new bank premises at 7 High Street (corner of Cliff Street) were designed by Wilkinson & Smith and built for the Bank with one chamber and three rooms. It was in use as a bank until 1926 [75].

Fremantle Branch, 1907
Image source: Westpac archives

The Wikipedia website erroneously stated that Pearse and Owston (the owners of 7 High Street Fremantle in 1876) '*sold a share to the Bank of New South Wales*' in 1883. However, the records of Landgate (formerly the W.A. Land Titles Office). revealed that the whole of the land was sold by William Silas Pearse, George Pearse and William Owston to Alfred Canning for 1,500 pounds and the latter nominated that the land was to be transferred to Shepherd Smith (the senior Sydney manager of the Bank). It was transferred twice more to subsequent senior Sydney managers of the Bank before being finally transferred to the Bank itself on the 4th June 1901.

Why the land was not transferred to the Bank from the outset is mystifying since it would have had to rely on each manager either executing a declaration of trust in favour of the Bank or devising the land to the Bank under each manager's will.
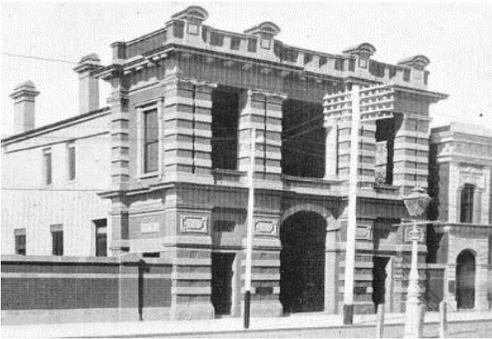
Perth Branch, 1907
Image source: Westpac archives

In 1897 the Board of Directors gave approval for the building of a new head office in Perth. The Bank rented temporary offices in Moir's Buildings, demolished the old bank premises in St. Georges Terrace and constructed a new two storey premises costing more than 815,000 pounds.

The new premises were to contain electric light throughout and all fittings were to be imported direct from England [76]. The architect for the project, William Salway F.E.I.B.A., had acted as the Bank's architect for the previous 15 years and had erected substantial bank premises at Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Fremantle [77]

Managers of Perth Branch

1883-1884   M.F.A. Canning
1884-1890   R.E.A. Wilkinson
1890-1893   S.C. Steuart
1893-1899   H. Salmon
1899-1907   W. McCullough
1908-1925   J.M. Fegan

Managers of Fremantle Branch

1886-1889   G.S.C. Norman
1896- 1899   E.A. Cameron
1899-1902   W. Birnie
1902-1925   C.H.Pinninger [78]
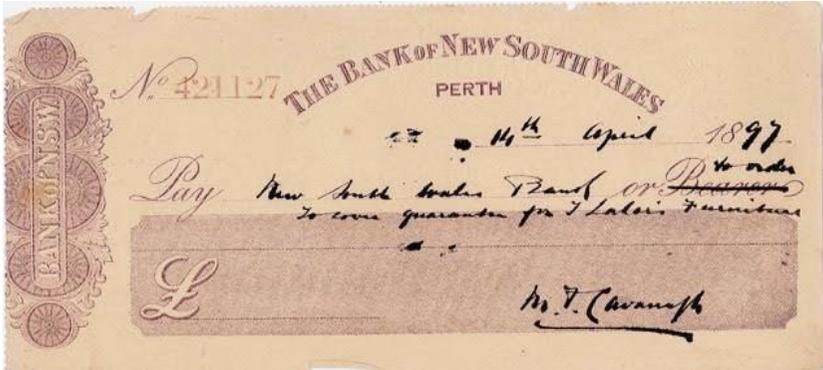
One of the First Cheques issued by the Perth Branch, 1897
Image source: Westpac archives

One Pound Note with Perth, Western Australia Domicile
Image source: Mick Vort Ronald

Amalgamation

In 1925 Mr. A.C. Davidson, subsequently Sir Alfred Davidson, was sent to manage the Perth Branch.

A. C. Davidson
Image source; Westpac archives

In October 1926 he resigned to become the General Manager of the Western Australian Bank and on 29th March 1927 organised the amalgamation of the two banks and was appointed Inspector of the W.A. Division [79].

Two years later Davidson became General Manager of the Bank. As a result of the amalgamation, the Bank's business in W.A. increased from 13% of the total banking to almost 40%. It added 38 new branches and 29 agencies to its existing 21 branches and 1 agency in W.A. after closing some offices [80].

Cheque Showing Amalgamation with The Western Australian Bank
Image source; Robin Hughes

The Black Swan emblem of Western Australia became one of the supporters of the shield in the coat of arms of the Bank issued in 1931.

Coat of Arms of the Bank
Image source: Heraldry of the world

References

Holder R.F., 1970, *Bank of New South Wales 'A History' Volumes 1 and 2.*

Vort-Ronald, Michael P., 1982, *Banks of Issue in Australia*

Westpac Banking Corporation 2017, *200 The Westpac Story*

Westpac Banking Corporation 1992, *This Great Colonial Undertaking – The Story of Australia's First Bank*

Acknowledgement

Endnotes

1   *Australia's First Bank, A Brief History*. Bank of New South Wales, Sydney 1974, at page 2

2-5   *This Great Colonial Undertaking – 'The Story of Australia's First Bank.*
        Westpac Banking Corporation 1992, at page 4

6-8   Bank of New South Wales- '*A History*' by Holder, R.F. Vol.1 at pages 34-35.

9   *200 – The Westpac Story*. Westpac Banking Corporation 2017 at page 13

10-13   *This Great Colonial Undertaking,* op. cit. at page 6

14   *Australia's First Bank*, op. cit. at page 6

15   *Banks of issue In Australia*. Vort Ronald M.P. at page 67 author and publisher 1982

16-19   Noble Numismatics Auction Sale 105 on 25-27 March 2014, description of lot 2799

20-24   Bank of New South Wales – A History by Holder, R. F. Vol. 1 at pages 37, 41 & 45

25-26   *This Great Colonial Undertaking*, op. cit. at page 10

27-31   *Banks of Issue in Australia*, op. cit. at pages 69, 74 & 75

32   *J.H. Potts – The Bank's First Employee,* contained in The Etruscan (Staff Magazine of the Bank of New South Wales) Vol. 6, No. 1, June 1956 at pages 14-17

33-34   *This Great Colonial Undertaking,* op. cit. at page 9

35-38   *Australia's First Bank*, op. cit. at page 10

39-40   *This Great Colonial Undertaking*, op. cit. at page 14

41   *The Bank in Victoria*, Part 1 by Gray, A. C., contained in The Etruscan, Vol.7 No. 4 March 1958, at pages 4 and 5

42   *Ned Kelly Raid on Jerilderie*, Murrumbidgee Council, https://www.murrumbidgee.nsw.gov.au/CP-themes/default/ page.asp?p=DOC-QVR-04-88-50

43   *Life on the goldfields: bushrangers – the lure of gold*, by Jones F. contained in NSW DPI February 2007 Primefact 576

44-45   *The Bank of New South Wales Ventures into Victoria*, By Morris A., contained in Australasian Coin & Banknote Magazine 2001 Yearbook at pages 61-63

46   *This Great Colonial Undertaking*, op. cit. at pages 14 and 15

47   *Bank of New South Wales – A Short Account of the Bank of New South Wales written on the occasion of the opening of the New Building 29 Threadneedle Street London on 24 July 1911*, Printer Waterloo & Sons, London 1911, reprinted from the Bankers Magazine September 1911 at page 13

48-50   *This Great Colonial Undertaking*, op. cit. at pages 15-19

51   *Australia's First Bank*, op. cit. at page 12

52   *Bank of New South Wales- A History*, Holder, R.F., Vol.1 at page 410.

53   Premises ledger of the Bank

54   *Bank of New South Wales- A History,* Holder, R.F., at page 410

55   Ibid at page 410

56   11 September 1883, classified Ad. Trove, contained in The West Australian newspaper, page 2

57   Board Minutes 9 October 1883, contained in accession no. 5761A/1 State Library Western Australia

58-65   *Bank of New South Wales – A History*, Holder, R. F., Vol. 1 at pages 410 - 412

66   Premises ledger of the Bank

67   Westpac archives

68   *The Bank in Western Australia*, Part 1, Suter I.M, contained in The Etruscan, Vol. 16, no. 1, March 1967, page 2

69   Board Minutes of the Bank dated 22 September 1882

70   Westpac Archives

71   Board Minutes 26th September 1884 and 25 November 1884, contained in Accession no. 5761A/1 State Library of Western Australia

72-73   M.F.A. Canning. Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M.-F.-A.-Canning

74   Trove. West Australia Newspaper, Sat. 22nd August 1896, page 5 under heading 'News and Notes'

75   7 High Street Fremantle – Wikipedia and Heritage Council ' Bank of New South Wales (NSW) (fmr) http:inherit.stateheritage.WA.gov.au/PublicInventory/Details/5ea845d1-7335-4f3f-a/f2-bbe2d31b1803

76   Trove. West Australian Newspaper, 21 May 1898, page 6 under heading 'Bank of New South Wales'

77   *William Salway*, Taylor Dr. J. J., July 2014

78   Westpac Archives

79-80   *Bank of New South Wales - A History,* op cit Vol 2 pages 624-630.

EARLY COIN FORGERY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

John McDonald

The first official European settlement in Western Australia was established in December 1826 at King George Sound. Initially called Fredrick Town, it was later renamed Albany. It began as a penal colony, but the convicts were withdrawn in 1831 when administration of the area was transferred from Sydney to the infant Swan River Colony that had been founded at Perth on 11 June 1829. It wasn't until 1850 that convicts arrived in Western Australia again, at a new penal establishment in Fremantle.

Despite the Swan River Colony being made up of free settlers for its first 20 years or so, it didn't take long for crime to rear its head. Before the year 1829 was out Governor Stirling was obliged to appoint Justices of the Peace who presided over a court that commenced hearing criminal cases in October 1830. Coin forgers were among those who quickly got to work and were hauled before that court during its first few years of operation.

The Currency Problem

Like most other British colonies in the early 19th Century, economic development in the fledgling Swan River Colony was held back by a severe shortage of official coinage or 'specie'. The official response, in January 1834, was to issue local paper money in the form of Promissory Notes with a face value of one pound. But this failed to address the need for small denomination coinage that was essential for everyday trade. As a matter of necessity, various foreign coins entered circulation and became widely accepted.

On Saturday 13 October 1838, the 'Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal' (page 163) contained a report on the deliberations of a Committee appointed by the Agricultural Society in August, 1838 to examine; '... *the present State and Condition of the Colony of Western Australia*'.

This report noted that:

'… *the coin in circulation is principally British gold and silver, with a portion of Spanish dollars and rupees ...*'

24

Example of a British East India Company Bengal Rupee
One of the types that circulated in Australia in the early 19th Century
Image source: Sterling & Currency

Some Indian rupees produced by small, princely state mints were relatively crude and were often referred to at the time as 'dumps'.

Example of a 19th Century Princely State 'Dump'
Image source: Ephesus Numismatics

The value at which non-British coins should be exchanged was often uncertain. An earlier report in the same newspaper (Saturday 11 August 1838, page 126), had referred to this problem:

'*The Directors of the Bank have thought it advisable to decline receiving the Rupee at the value put upon it by usage in the Colony, namely, 2s. We understand it will become a matter of discussion at the next Board meeting whether they shall be taken at 1s. 8d., or 1s. 9d. They are refused altogether at the Commissariat Office in payment for Treasury Bills.*

The Rupee has obtained in the Colony a fictitious value, which gave the importer a great advantage ....'

The subsequent report of 13 October, previously referred to, went on to state that:

'... the former (Spanish dollars) *are current at 4s. 4d., and the latter* (Rupees) *at 1s. 8d. each ...'*

The general scarcity of coinage would have been an incentive for counterfeiting. But the relatively crude fabric of many of the rupees and 'dumps', coupled with their strange calligraphy, completely meaningless to the vast majority of the population, would have made counterfeit versions somewhat more difficult to recognise compared with more familiar coins.

Consequently, the rupee seems to have become a preferred target for forgers, not only in Western Australia, but also in the older colonies of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land.

The Case of John Wood

On Saturday 28 November 1835 'The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal' (page 606) published a lengthy report on an indictment heard by the Perth Magistrates Court on the previous day.

'John Wood was charged with having feloniously forged and counterfeited certain foreign silver coins called rupees'.

Witnesses gave evidence of a few occasions on which Wood had passed single counterfeit rupees in payment for small quantities of 'goods' or in one case for a glass of porter. Another witness claimed to have seen Wood at work:

'... casting a white-colored metal, like silver, in a cuttle-fish mould, composed of two cuttle-fish shells. I happened to call in at his house, by accident, several times during the day, and saw him pouring the metal out of a ladle into the mould, I asked him what he was about. He said, "Oh! nothing particular." As soon as the metal in the mould was cool, he placed it under the bench, and did not begin casting again while I remained. I did not suppose he was melting silver, because he had only a slow fire, but silver requires a blast and a smart fire'.

Several comments indicate that Wood's rupees were obvious, crude forgeries. One witness said that:

'... when my wife was counting the contents of the till, she found a rupee, and pointed it out to me as a bad one'.

And the newspaper report stated that:

'The circulation of the forged rupees, we are inclined to believe, is not very extensive; we would, however, recommend the public, to be on their guard. The forged coin is easily detected, not alone, by the weight, but on a slight examination'.

Given the improvised and primitive moulding method described by the witness it is not surprising that Wood's cast counterfeits were probably obvious to anyone who bothered to pay much attention.

Wood was sentenced in January 1836. A report in the same newspaper on Saturday 9 January (page 631) stated simply:

'John Woods, charged with coining rupees. Verdict—Guilty. Recommended to mercy, on the ground that the offence had not been carried on to any extent by the prisoner, and was so easy of detection as practised by him'.

Unfortunately for Wood, the magistrates' concept of mercy was to sentence him to 7 years transportation, apparently to Van Dieman's Land.

The Significance of Wood's Forgeries

Over the years both the extent and the impact of Wood's rather crude forging efforts seem to have become considerably exaggerated. For example, an article titled '*Chapters from the Early History of Western Australia*' published in the Perth newspaper 'The Inquirer and Commercial News' of Friday 30 June 1893 (page 16) included the following:

'There was a great scarcity of provisions and money felt at this time. ... An inventive genius named Woods devised a scheme and temporarily came to the rescue. Woods bought up as many German silver spoons, tea-pots, etc., as he could obtain and forged a coin, what was then known as 'Indian dump,' varying from Is. 6d. to Is. 8d.

Dumps were then the common currency of India, prior to the introduction of the rupee. These coins were neither round nor square, rather resembling a pentagon in shape. Probably these coins resembled old English coins which were minted centuries ago. Western Australia may therefore be rightly complimented as having established the first mint in Australia, though of a primitive kind. The coins were found to be very useful and partly superseded the promissory note. Woods, after rendering so much assistance in a financial point of view for about six months, was charged with issuing spurious coin and was transported to Van Diemen's Land for seven years, the then only Bank in the colony having discovered, greatly to its loss and detriment, the spurious coinage'.

Many of these comments are not consistent with the original reports of Wood's trial. Only three instances of him passing individual counterfeit rupees were attested by witnesses. The contemporary reports stated that; '*The circulation of the forged rupees, we are inclined to believe, is not very extensive'* and he was, in the end '*recommended to mercy, on the ground that the offence had not been carried on to any extent by the prisoner'.* It seems clear that Wood's forging efforts were neither as sophisticated nor as extensive as was later suggested.

Many contemporary or earlier reports from other Australian colonies indicated that significant numbers of counterfeit rupees were in circulation everywhere in the country in the early 19th Century. For example, the Sydney newspaper 'The Australian' of Saturday 28 October 1826 (page 2) cautioned that:

'Shopkeepers and others should he on their guard just now, in taking silver monies. There is a good deal of counterfeit *coin in circulation in the country; it consists generally of Spanish dollars, rupees and dumps'.*

Similar warnings appeared from time to time in other papers in Sydney and in Hobart Town.

It seems highly likely that the majority of counterfeit rupees circulating in the Swan River Colony in the 1830's would have been imported along with genuine coins, rather than being the product of small-time local forgers like John Wood.

The Elusive Earlier Case

The newspaper report on the indictment of John Wood ended with the intriguing statement that:

> *'This is the second attempt at forgery since the establishment of the Colony; in both instances the same coin has been chosen. In order to render the offence liable to the heaviest punishment the law can inflict, it will most probably be, found requisite, before long, to make the rupee the legal coin of the country'.*

No reports of an earlier case could be located in the press of the time (as available through the National Library's 'Trove' website). However, the original minute books of the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace, sitting in Perth and in Fremantle, were available on microfilm in the State Records Office of Western Australia. Disappointingly, a search of these failed to yield much information.

In July 1832, a certain Charles Smith was indicted on a charge of forgery in Perth. But the case was declared '*No true bill*', a legal term indicating that the jury found that there was insufficient evidence to support the charge. The court minutes then simply stated; '*Prisoner forthwith discharged*'. No other details were recorded, so we do not know if that alleged forgery involved rupees, other coins, or perhaps documents such as promissory notes or cheques.

It remains uncertain whether or not Charles Smith was the earlier forger of rupees referred to in the 1835 newspaper report. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the records of Perth sittings of the court between December 1834 and September 1836, a period that includes the date of the John Wood trial. Because of this gap, and the poor legibility of some of the very earliest, old handwritten pages, it remains possible that another prosecution for forgery might have taken place sometime before November 1835.

References

Court of General Quarter sessions of the Peace, *Minute Book – Court of Quarter Sessions, October 1830 to April 1838*. State Records Office of Western Australia AU WA S204 – cons3577 1.

Court of General Quarter sessions of the Peace, *Minute Book – Court of Quarter Sessions, January 1830 to December 1834*. State Records Office of Western Australia AU WA S204 – cons3577 2.

National Library of Australia, Trove website. *The Australian, Saturday 28 October 1826, Page 2*.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/37071999.

National Library of Australia, Trove website. *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, Saturday 28 November 1835, Page 606*.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/640644/633.

National Library of Australia, Trove website. *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, Saturday 9 January 1836, Page 631*.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/640595.

National Library of Australia, Trove website. *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, Saturday 11 August 1838, Page 126*.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/639437.

National Library of Australia, Trove website. *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, Saturday 13 October 1838, Page 163*.
http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/639369/1279

SOME COINS AND MEDALS OF EDWARD VIII

Graeme Stephens

Most of us know the story of Edward VIII and how he inherited the English throne on 20th January 1936 and abdicated on 10th December 1936 without being crowned, so that he could marry Mrs Simpson.

In anticipation of his reign the London Mint produced patterns for a penny, threepence, half crown and crown all dated 1936, but no coins were ever minted or circulated in England and on his abdication all dies for these coins were destroyed. Some of the patterns still exist but are very rare.

On the other hand, Fiji, New Guinea, East Africa (roughly modern Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and British West Africa (now Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia) actually started minting coins in his name dated 1936. Those coins commenced limited circulation but were immediately withdrawn after the abdication and were not thereafter considered as legal tender.

Five Cent and Ten Cent pieces from East Africa

In addition, a number of medals were minted and circulated in late 1936 and early 1937 celebrating his forthcoming coronation which was scheduled for May 12 1937, but never occurred, as well as a medal marking his actual abdication.

Coronation Medal of 1937

Abdication Medal of 1937

A number of fantasy 'coins' were also produced after his death in 1972. I have examples of some of these coins, medals and fantasy pieces which are all now quite rare.

Fantasy Australian Crown, dated 1937

Fantasy Straits Settlements Trade Dollar, dated 1936

CALENDAR OF PNS MEETINGS FOR 2019

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 2019 are as follows:

January 30	Meeting.
February 27	Meeting.
March 27	Meeting.
April 24	Meeting.
May 29	Meeting.
June 26	Meeting.
July 31	Annual General Meeting.
August 28	Meeting.
September 25	Invited speaker (John Wheatley, *Australian Superscribed Banknotes 1910-1914 including the One Pound Emergency Issues of 1914-1915*).
October 30	Meeting.
November 27	Meeting.

More details of invited speakers and other matters will be provided as they become available.

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.

CALENDAR OF FAIRS

Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Medal and Banknote Fairs:
  Saturday 29th December 2018
  Saturday 16th February 2019
  Saturday 18th May 2019
  Saturday 10th August 2019
  Saturday 12th October 2019
  Saturday 28th December 2019
Peel Region Numismatic Group / Mandurah Philatelic Society Fair:
  To be advised
Perth Money Expo
  Saturday 9th – Sunday 10th February 2019
Perth Stamp & Coin Show:
  Friday 29th – Sunday 31st March 2019
  Friday 1st – Sunday 3rd November 2019
Phoenix Auctions:
  Sunday 17th March 2019
  Sunday 23rd June 2019
  Sunday 22nd September 2019
  Sunday 1st December 2019
Cannington Antique and Collectors Fair:
  Tuesday 1st January 2019
  Sunday 10th March 2019
  Sunday 30th June 2019
  Sunday 8th September 2019
Militaria Swapmeet (Cannington):
  Sunday 7th April 2019
  Sunday 16th June 2019
  Sunday 17th November 2019
Annual Militaria Fair (Cannington):
  Saturday 14th – Sunday 15th September 2019
JB Military Antiques Specialist Militaria Auction
  Sunday 28th April 2019

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

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-
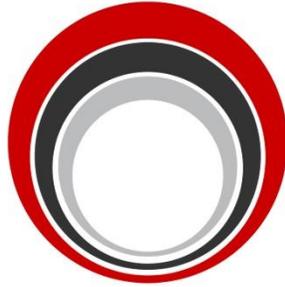
WA Coins
Quality Numismatics

WE BUY AND SELL

Coins and Banknotes
Accessories
Australian Stamps
Gold and Silver
Medals and ingots
Gold Nuggets

Shop 1/250 Beaufort St
Perth WA 6000
9328 1410
tom@wacoins.com.au

www.wacoins.com.au