

Volume 53 Number 3

August 2021

Perth Numismatic Journal



*Official publication of the
Perth Numismatic Society Inc*
www.pns.org.au

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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

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THOMAS SIMON, MASTER ENGRAVER, 1618 – 1665

Rowley Butters & John Wheatley

Early History

Thomas Simon ('Simon') was probably the finest designer and engraver of British seals, medals, badges and coins. He was also a survivor in turbulent times, serving Charles I, then Oliver Cromwell and finally Charles II, after the Restoration. In official documents his name is sometimes shown as Simons and Simmonds.¹



*Silver Medal, Obverse Only, Half-Length Portrait of Simon c. 1750.
Made by Stuart.*

Image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum

Simon was born in London in 1618 to parents of French extraction. It seems Simon was apprenticed at the age of 17 to Edward Greene, Chief Engraver at the Tower Mint in London where he would have been influenced by the great designer and engraver, Nicholas Briot, who was at the Tower Mint from the late 1620s. Briot would have taught him the technical advantages of the 'mill' over the 'hammer', amongst other skills.

One of Simon's first known works during his apprenticeship was the production of the Scottish Rebellion Medal. This medal was issued to commemorate the signing of the treaty of Berwick on June 19, 1639, ending the inconclusive first Scots war. The obverse shows Charles I astride a galloping horse, the King holds in his right hand the folded document and beneath the hooves of the horse is a scattering of weapons and pieces of armour, one large cuirass bearing Simon's initial upon the shoulder.



Charles I Scottish Rebellion Extinguished Medal in Silver Undated (1639). Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection.

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

Simon's apprenticeship ended in September 1642. By then the Civil War had started and the Tower Mint was taken over by Parliament on August 10, 1642. The mint staff had divided loyalties. Some like Warden Parkhurst and Littleton, the Lord Keeper, declared for the King and left the mint. Simon, by reason of his Puritan upbringing, was loyal to parliament and remained at the Tower Mint along with Greene, the chief engraver. When Littleton, The Lord Keeper, took the Great Seal to the King at York on May 22, 1642, Simon was employed to engrave a copy for the use of Parliament, for which he was paid one hundred pounds.

In 1645, subsequent to Greene's death in 1644, Simon was appointed joint chief engraver with Edward Wade of stamps for coins, seals and royal arms. He signed his works variously as; Simon, -T.S., -T.S., or -THO:SIMON F².

From 1642-49 Simon engraved medals and badges depicting some of the Parliamentary Commanders including Sir John Hotham, governor of Hull, the Earl of Essex and Sir Thomas Fairfax. It is reported that he was sometimes paid in excess of one hundred pounds for a single medal.



Sir Thomas Fairfax, Silver Medal, 1645.

Image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum



Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Military Reward Medal in Silver 1646.

Image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum



Death of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Gold Medal 1646

Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection.

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

Simon is credited with producing the dies for the Group V silver crowns with the sun mintmark, struck between 1645 and 1646. According to Nathanson, Simon was also responsible for producing the die for a proof shilling of Charles I with mintmark P and EYE (1643-1644) ³.



Charles I Silver Crown, 1645, Tower Mint (s2762).

Image courtesy of Spink & Son London

Following the death of Wade towards the end of 1648, Simon was appointed chief engraver to the mint on April 21, 1649. Between 1649-51 Simon produced two Great Seals for the Commonwealth Government, for which he received a fee of three hundred pounds ⁴.



Great Seal of the Commonwealth by Thomas Simon (a cast in silver).

Obv.: Parliament in session. Rev.: Map of England, Wales & Ireland.

Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions Europe

On February 15, 1649 Simon married Elizabeth, the daughter of Cardin Fautrart (originally from Guernsey). They had three sons and two daughters but only three children, Samuel, Elizabeth and Ann survived into adulthood⁵.

After Cromwell's resounding victory over the Scots at Dunbar on September 3, 1650, Parliament decided to present officers and soldiers present at the battle with medals that were to show Cromwell's portrait on the obverse and the House of Commons in session on the reverse. Cromwell was very impressed with his portrait on the medal and later commented; '*Indeed this man is ingenious and worthy of encouragement.*'⁶



Cromwell's Battle of Dunbar Medal, 1650.

Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection.

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

In 1655, in appreciation of his talent, Simon was employed to engrave the Great Seals of Scotland and Ireland and of the Admiralty. He then made the family seals of Cromwell and his brother Henry. The obverse of the Great Seal of the Lord Protector shows Cromwell on horseback against a background of the Thames and London.



The Great Seal of The Lord Protector (Obverse Only).

Image courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group LLC

The reverse depicts the cross of England, the saltire cross of Scotland, the harp of Ireland and the Cromwell family arms.

Hammer Struck Coins of the Commonwealth & the Lord Protector's Medal

In July 1649 Parliament passed an Act describing the new coinage. The weights and fineness of the gold and silver remained unchanged from the issues of James I. The gold was to comprise pounds, half-pounds (double crowns) and crowns, and the silver to comprise crowns, half-crowns, shillings, sixpences, two-pennies, pennies and halfpennies. The Puritan government required plainness in design and the use of English in the legends replacing the popish Latin.

Critics have panned the plainness of the design and some have called them 'downright ugly'. Some commentators have suggested that the design could not be the work of Simon and that the design must have been the work of two minor engravers, East and Burgh. Yet, Michael Day says '*...there seems to be little reason to suppose that Simon, himself a Puritan, would have delegated such an important commission to his assistants.*'⁷

These coins have an elegant simplicity in design. To quote Day; '*The main strength of the design is that it perfectly reflects the Puritan ethos in both religion and politics. The use of English for the legends to replace the popish Latin, recognized the right of the common people to understand the simple messages on the coins.*'⁸

Gold unites (20 shillings), Double-crowns (10 shillings) and crowns were issued from 1649 – 1657.



Commonwealth Gold Unite, 1651

Image courtesy of AMR Coins

Silver crowns, half-crowns, shillings, sixpences, half-groats (two-pence), pennies and halfpennies were also issued during this period. Only two mintmarks were used on coins of the Commonwealth; a sun (1649-57) and an anchor (1658-60). It is worth commenting on the designs of the Commonwealth silver crown in detail as they were used on the rest of the silver coin series. The obverse has an undecorated shield bearing the cross of St. George surrounded by branches of laurel and olive. The obverse legend is: THE.COMMONWEALTH.OF.ENGLAND.

The reverse consists of two conjoined shields one with the cross of St. George and the other with the harp of Ireland. The shields are surmounted by V to indicate value (5 shillings). The reverse legend is: .GOD.WITH.VS. The date is shown in Arabic numerals.



Commonwealth Silver Crown, 1652

Image courtesy of Spink & Son London

On December 16, 1653, in order to commemorate Cromwell's elevation to the Protectorate, he commissioned Simon to engrave a new medal. On the obverse of this medal is a bust of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector. On the reverse a lion sejant laureate, supporting the shield of the Protectorate.



Gold Medal of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector c. 1655-8
Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection.

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

One of the most beautiful medals designed by Simon was the Naval Reward for Captains gold medal of 1653. This is popularly known as the Blake Medal, named for Robert Blake, General at Sea of the Commonwealth of England and one of the greatest of all naval commanders. This medal was awarded at the successful conclusion of the last naval battle of the First Dutch War under Blake's command. The obverse displays the shields of England, Scotland and Ireland. On the reverse British and Dutch ships battle it out. The stern of the Dutch ship sinking in the foreground is signed SIMON.



Naval Reward for Captains Gold Medal of 1653
Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

Milled Coins of Oliver Cromwell, 1656 – 1658

Simon's career blossomed under Cromwell's patronage. In February 1655 he was granted the title of '*sole chief engraver for the mint and seals*', followed in July 1656 by an appointment which assured him tenure for life as '*sole chiefe Engraver of ye irons and ye moneyes of us and our successors.*'⁹

In 1656 the government decided to issue a new coinage bearing the portrait of Cromwell from dies prepared by Simon and struck by mill machinery supervised by Peter Blondeau, a French mint engraver who claimed that he had invented a new technique for engraving inscriptions around the edge of coins. These pattern coins were minted in 1656/57 and comprised gold fifty shilling pieces and broads (twenty shillings), and a silver half-crown. The gold coins show Cromwell with draped shoulders, much in the style of a Roman Emperor.

These pattern coins [were](#) of great beauty and craftsmanship and Blondeau demonstrated his edge lettering techniques on the 50 shilling piece and the half-crown, and with graining on the edge of the broad.

According to Michael Day; '*... the portrait of Cromwell on these coins is widely regarded as one of the finest of all likenesses appearing on English coins and Simon followed the Protector's previous instructions to the artist Sir Peter Ley to depict him without flattery "warts and all" and the wart on Cromwell's lower lip is clearly shown on the coins.*'¹⁰

Simon shaded the face and neck of the portrait with delicate frosting or '*mezzotinto*', an art that was not revived until the early 19th century¹¹.

The contrast between the coins of the Commonwealth and the new coins of Cromwell could not be starker. The designs on the Commonwealth coins were plain and simple and the legends were in English. In the new Cromwell coins, the portrait of Cromwell on the obverse is very regal, almost like a Roman Emperor, and the design on the reverse is just as regal, a royal crown over the Commonwealth shield. Incidentally, the Latin legend on the obverse translates as 'Oliver by the grace of God, Protector of the Republic of England, Scotland and Ireland' and on the reverse, 'Peace is sought by war.'



Oliver Cromwell Halfcrown, 1656. Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb



Gold Pattern Fifty Shillings of Oliver Cromwell, 1656

Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

A larger issue of coins was made in 1658. No gold coins were struck, the only pieces issued were silver crowns, half-crowns, shillings and a small number of sixpences. Cromwell's death in September 1658 meant the cessation of further issues of his coinage.

The silver crowns of Oliver Cromwell are all struck from one pair of dies. The reverse is dated 1658, with the last number of the date amended from 7 to 8, indicating that the work on the dies began in 1657. The obverse die cracked early in use, resulting in a flaw across the neck in the form of a line that widened and increased in length with continued use ¹². The edge lettering on the silver crown and its companion half-crown is; .HAS.NISI.PERITVRVS.MIHI.ADIMAT.NEMO which translates as 'Let no one remove these (letters) from me on pain of death'.



Oliver Cromwell Pattern Silver Crown, 1658

Image courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd



Death of Cromwell Medal In Gold, 1658

Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

The Restoration and Hammered Coins and Medals Struck for Charles II

When Charles II returned from exile on May 29, 1660, Simon petitioned the new king for the position of chief engraver. Simon must have been worried because he had supported the enemies of Charles I and had committed treason by copying the Great Seal of England. Charles II appointed Thomas Rawlins as chief engraver, that gentleman having been appointed to the position by Charles I in 1645.

In May 1661 Charles II appointed Simon as: ‘*one of the Engravers of the King’s arms, shields and stamps.*’ Simon busied himself on seals, medals and coin dies for the new king, engraving the Great Seal depicting Charles II on horseback with a view of London below, and in 1661 producing the elegant Coronation medal showing Charles II being crowned by the winged figure of peace. In that same year Simon also produced the beautiful silver Household or ‘Cooks & Musicians’ medal.



Charles II Coronation Gold Medal, 1661

Image courtesy of Stacks & Bowers



Charles II, Household or 'Cooks & Musicians' Medal in Silver, 1661

Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

Simon was instructed to engrave dies for new hammered coinage. The first hammered coinage comprised gold unites, half-unites and crowns and silver half-crowns, shillings, sixpences, two-pence and pennies. Silver crowns, although mentioned in the indenture, were not struck. With the exception of the lower denominations, most of these hammered coins bear the crown initial mark. This was the last time that initial marks appeared on English coins.



Charles II Hammered Second Issue 1660-62 Gold 'Pattern' Unite, Undated

Image courtesy of Spink & Son, London



Charles II First Hammered Coinage, issued 1660-62, Silver Shilling

Image Courtesy of Noble Numismatics Pty Ltd

Although the dies for the coinage were finely engraved, a lot of the fine workmanship was lost when struck during the hammering process. Pepys recorded in his diary on February 19, 1661, that ‘... we met with Mr. Slingsby, that was formerly a great friend of Mons. Blondeau, who showed me the stamps of the King’s new coyn; which is strange to see, how good they are in the stamp and bad in the money for lack of skill to make them. But he says Blondeau will shortly come over and then we shall have it better, and the best in the world.’¹³

Milled Coins and Medals Struck for Charles II

Simon engraved the dies for the milled gold Broad dated 1662. This was the last broad coin as it was succeeded by the Guinea. John and Joseph Roettier engraved the new dies for the guineas and for the silver coins of Charles II. These had a safeguard against clipping. The larger coins were made with an edge inscribed DECVS ET TVTAMEN and the regal year. The medium sized coins were given a grained edge.



Gold Broad, 1662. Ex North Yorkshire Moors Collection

Image courtesy of Dix Noonan & Webb

We were most interested when we discovered the sale of an earlier Charles II Gold 'Pattern' Broad dated 1660 by Ira & Larry Goldberg Auctioneers at their auction of June 7, 2016, in Los Angeles, California (lot 2285). The obverse of this coin shows Charles II's portrait to the right instead of the usual left. The description of the coin draws attention to the fact that; *'One feature of Cromwell's coins that had never appeared before on any English coin was the cameo effect created by the frosted texture given to the portrait, and importantly this appears on our gold pattern of 1660 as well.'* A previous paper by Marvin Lessen¹⁴ revealed that Simon made several gold milled pieces similar to a broad dated 1660, 1661, and 1662, but that the 1660 and 1661 pieces were in fact medals. The 1662 dated broad (20 shilling piece) of which there were approximately 3,500 struck, was the coin issued for currency purposes.

Contest Between the Rottier Brothers and Simon to Design the New Milled Coinage

In May 1661, Charles II ordered that all future coins should be made by machinery as soon as possible. Simon was sent to France in November to persuade Pierre Blondeau to return with Simon to the Mint to set up Blondeau's machinery to produce the new milled coinage. During Simon's absence Charles II encouraged the Roettier brothers, John and Joseph, from Antwerp, to settle in England and work at the Mint to produce the new milled coinage. Simon returned with Blondeau in 1662. It was Charles II's intention that Simon and the Roettier brothers work together to prepare the dies for the new milled coinage. Friction and jealousy developed between them, making any collaboration impossible.

To resolve the problem, Charles II directed that trial pieces, as samples of their work, be submitted to him for inspection. According to Linecar and Stone there are at least two known silver crowns by the Roettier brothers dated 1662, described as patterns or proofs, that may have been offered singly, or together, as examples of their work¹⁵. One of these crowns has the DECVS et TVTAMEN edge motto, whilst the other has a plain edge.

It is thought that Simon did not produce a crown piece for the trial, with the result that Charles II accepted the Roettier brothers' crown and appointed John Roettier as one of the chief engravers on the proviso that he prepared the dies for the new milled coinage.



Charles II Pattern Silver Crown, 1662, by John Roettier, Long Haired Laureate Bust Facing Right, with Two Tie Ends and no Drapery, with the DECVS ET TVTAMEN Edge (Ex Slaney Collection)

Image courtesy of Spink & Son London

According to Lessen ¹⁶, Simon then produced his famous ‘Petition and Reddite Crown’ dated 1663 as a protest to Charles II after the decision had been made in favour of the Roettier brothers and probably after the first issue of the milled silver coins. It seems that Simon’s Petition/Reddite crowns were made to the same specifications as the Roettiers’ crown but Simon’s treatment of the design is quite different; the large bust of the King and the reverse design being finely engraved in high relief. Simon placed his signature in bold type beneath the bust of Charles II. Simon’s petition is arranged around the edge in two lines of minute lettering and reads:

THOMAS SIMON MOST HVMBLY PRAYS YOUR MAJESTY TO
COMPARE THIS, HIS TRYALL PIECE WITH THE DVTCH, AND IF
MORE TRVLY DRAWN & EMBBOSS’D MORE GRACEFULLY
ORDER’D AND MORE ACCVRATELY ENGRAVEN, TO RELIEVE
HIM

The Petition Crown is generally regarded as one of the finest coins ever produced.



Simon’s Petition Crown (formerly owned by Rowley Butters)

Image Courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Limited



Rim Inscription on the Petition Crown

Image courtesy of The Royal Mint

From the same dies, Simon also struck a small number of pieces, known as the Reddite Crown, with the edge description: REDDITE. QVAE. CAESARIS. CAESARI. & CT. POST (Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's etc.).

This inscription is followed by the sun rising from behind clouds. The word POST indicates the quotation POST NUBILA PHOEBUS (the sun shines after the storm) in allusion to the Restoration of Charles II after the dark days of the Commonwealth.



Simon's Reddite Crown (formerly owned by Rowley Butters)

Image Courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Limited



Rim of Reddite Crown (ex the Glenister Collection), Showing Word 'Post' and Image of Sun Behind Clouds,

Image courtesy of Spink & Son London



***Obverse of Reddite Crown (ex the Glenister Collection)
Showing Simon's Signature***

Image courtesy of Spink & Son London

A few Reddite crowns in pewter were struck with the edge inscription in English: RENDER. TO. CAESAR. THE THINGS. WHICH. ARE. CAESAR'S. &c ¹⁷. There is also a Petition Crown in pewter with a plain edge which, according to Linecar & Stone, is unique ¹⁸.

According to Lessen ¹⁹, Simon struck fewer than 30 pieces from his pair of dies for the Petition/Reddite Crowns, of which about 15 were Petition Crowns in silver, 5 silver and 3 pewter Reddite Crowns, 2 or 3 Reddite Crowns with the edge in English and 1 plain-edge pewter Petition Crown. It seems that Charles II examined Simon's piece as it was reported that an example of the Petition Crown, in a case, was presented by Charles II to Lord Chancellor Clarendon ²⁰.

Interestingly, in the Spink sale of the Lariviere Collection on November 12 2003, Spink offered a Petition Crown in silver, a Reddite Crown in silver, a Reddite Crown in pewter, a Petition Crown in pewter with a plain edge and a trial piece of the obverse only of the Petition/Reddite Crown, in lead; a truly wonderful and unique collection of Simon's Petition/Reddite Crowns. The Reddite Crown in silver, probably the second finest of this coin in private hands, was housed in its wonderful silver box engraved with its provenances with the famous names of its collectors such as 'Brice', 'Montague', 'Willis', 'Rhodes', etc., all names that are synonymous with their great collections.

Final Years

Notwithstanding Simon's unsuccessful appeal, he continued his work at the Mint presenting Charles II with his new Great Seal of Office and also preparing dies for the new Scottish coinage. In addition, he was still employed for some time on the production of dies for groats, threepences, half-groats and pennies. *'These small coins are particularly well struck and considered to be amongst the gems of English milled coinage.'* ²¹.



***Charles II, Silver Maundy Set, Undated First Milled Issue
Groat, Threepence, Twopence and Penny (believed to be made by Simon)***
Image courtesy of Sovereign Rarities Limited

Simon collaborated with his brother Abraham in producing several beautiful portrait medals in silver, the images of two of which are set out below, both courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



Medal of Lady Lane, 1662

Medal of Thomas Wriothesley, 1664

One of Simon's last known works is the Dominion of the Seas Medal commemorating the English naval victory over the Dutch on June 3, 1665.



Dominion of the Seas Silver Medal, 1665

Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Forrer considers that; '*Simon had the advantage of working from the admirable wax models of his brother Abraham but his own work on coins and seals proves that he was an accomplished designer, endowed with a keen sense of what was appropriate for the circular "flan" of the coin and seal. His technical skill is triumphantly evinced by his Petition Crown and taken altogether he must be pronounced the finest medallist who ever worked in England.*' ²².

In conclusion, Simon was probably the finest medallist, maker of seals and engraver of dies that England ever produced and his legacy endures today. His work received national recognition in 1753, when the publisher Vertue was instructed by act of parliament to produce a major account of his work²³. Simon's sketchbooks containing figure, portrait and animal studies, and the designs for his seals and coinage which passed to his daughter Mrs. Hibberd, were sold at Christies, London on July 14, 1987 ²⁴.

Acknowledgements

To Steve Hill from Sovereign Rarities Ltd for his help and assistance throughout, and to Michael Wade for his assistance in tracking down elusive images for the article.

To Dix Noonan & Webb our special thanks for their permission to use several images from their recent auction of the wonderful North Yorkshire Moors Collection of British Coins formed by Marvin Lessen, Part IV. Marvin Lessen's contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the coins and medals of the Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell and the early years of Charles II, with particular reference to the works of Thomas Simon, is unparalleled.

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End Notes

¹ Forrer L., Biographical Dictionary of Medallists Vol.V, page 519

² Ibid at page 532

³ Nathanson, Alan J, Thomas Simon His Life and Work 1618-1665, page 46

⁴ Ibid at page 19

⁵ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, article on Simon, Thomas

⁶ Selby, Peter, Engravers of the Civil War (3) Thomas Simon, in Coin & Medal News, June 1985 at page 25

⁷ Day, Michael, English Silver Crowns at page 74

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Selby, Peter, Engravers of the Civil War (3) Thomas Simon op. cit. at page 26

¹⁰ Day, Michael, English Silver Crowns, op. cit. at pages 81 and 82

¹¹ Nathanson, Alan, Thomas Simon His Life and Work 1618-1665 op. cit. at page 29

¹² Day, Michael, English Silver Crowns op. cit. at page 82

¹³ Ibid at pages 88 and 89

¹⁴ Lessen, Marvin, Simon's Mill Gold Coins and Medals of Charles II (1660-1662) BNJ Vol. 65 (1995) at pages 151-168

¹⁵ Linecar, Howard W.A. & Stone, Alex G, English Proof and Pattern Crown – Size Pieces 1658-1660, Spink & Son Ltd, London 1968, page 6

- ¹⁶ Lessen, Marvin, Notes on Simon's Pattern (Petition) Crown of Charles II, BNJ Vol. 75 (2005) pages 91-112
- ¹⁷ Linecar & Stone, op. cit., 7C. Pattern Crown at page 11
- ¹⁸ Linecar & Stone, op. cit., 8. Pattern Crown at page 11
- ¹⁹ Lessen, Marvin, Notes on Simon's Pattern (Petition) Crown of Charles II, op. cit. at pages 91-112
- ²⁰ Linecar & Stone, ob. cit., 6- Pattern Crown at page 9
- ²¹ Seaby, Peter, The Story of British Coinage, pub. Seaby 1985 at page 120
- ²² Forrer, ob. cit. at page 522
- ²³ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Simon, Thomas ob. cit. page 3
- ²⁴ Ibid at page 3



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A 1892 Double Shaft 5 Shillings PCGS MS63 coin. The coin is dark and shows the profile of a person, with the text "5 SHILLINGS" and "1892" visible.

1892 Double Shaft 5 Shillings PCGS MS63

THE USE OF THE INDIAN RUPEE AS CIRCULATING COINAGE IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA, 1816-1850

Walter R Bloom & Graeme Stephens

In our previous article we described how the serious lack of small silver sterling coins available to the Australian colony of Sydney Town in the period 1788 to 1800 had led to Governor King's Proclamation of 19 November 1800 in which 11 commonly used foreign coins were given temporary inflated values to bring some stability into the local trading scene.

Table of specie	£ s. d.
A Guinea	1 2 0
A Johanna	4 0 0
A Half-Johanna	2 0 0
A Ducat	0 9 6
A Gold Mohur	1 17 6
A Pagoda	0 8 0
A Spanish dollar	0 5 0
A Rupee	0 2 6
A Dutch guilder	0 2 0
An English Shilling	0 1 1
A Copper coin of One Ounce	0 0 2

Local values specified by the proclamation of 1800

The denomination relevant to this article is the *rupee* and its fractions/multiples. But before we get to the denomination itself, it should first be mentioned that there were close links between India and Australia throughout the 19th century. Some of these are widely known and the connections still evident. For example, the town of Australind in Western Australia had its name made up from those of the two countries in the belief that the area could be used for breeding horses for the British Indian Army, as was done later at Cervantes, Northampton and Madura. Then there is the suburb of Travancore situated five kilometres north of the Melbourne CBD. And the one most relevant to this article is Surat, a rural town in Queensland approximately 450km west of Brisbane. In 1849 Surveyor Burrowes named it Surat after his former place of residence in India.

It seems that Governor Macquarie started trying to stop the use of ‘*currency*’ (apparently meaning all coinage and means of exchange other than sterling) almost as soon as he took up his appointment at the beginning of 1810 but was hamstrung by the severe shortage of sterling coinage. According to Butlin (4), a proclamation Macquarie issued in November 1816:

‘And whereas to put an End to the Evils and Mischiefs of a Colonial Currency, from continual Fluctuation in real Value, by unlawful Combinations in that respect or otherwise; it now seems expedient to authorise and permit the Circulation of Sterling Money, or Promissory Note or Notes for the Payment of the same in Sterling Value and Amount only.’

prohibited all ‘*currency*’ but a later order only specified the withdrawal, revaluation and reissuing of the copper coinage. Foreign silver coins like *rupees* and US dollars remained in circulation in NSW and continued to be accepted for official Government transactions until August 1829.

The two most common foreign coins used in the Far East British colonies were the Spanish *dollar* and the Indian *rupee*. Finally, recognising the reality of the situation, on 28 March 1826 the British Government published a Treasury Notice which stated amongst other things that:

‘... throughout the British Colonies... and ensuring a uniform currency in the whole of His Majesty’s Foreign Possessions, His Excellency is also pleased to notify that the Receipt and Payment by the Local Government of all sums of Sterling Amount, the Coin hereinafter mentioned will be taken and issued at the following rates; that is to say – British Money, at its nominal value: Spanish Dollars at 4s 4d each; and Calcutta or Sicca Rupees at 2s 1d.’

Note that both denominations were devalued from the original Australian proclamation. We describe below some examples which illustrate the continuing widespread use of the Indian *rupee* in the Australian colonies after King’s proclamation of 1800 had been effectively (but never officially?) terminated in 1816.

Western Australia

The first example is mentioned in an article by John McDonald (1) describing a case in the Perth magistrates court in 1835 in which John Wood was charged with having counterfeited ‘*certain foreign silver coins called rupees*’

He was found guilty and sentenced to 7 years transportation to Van Diemen's Land. This would suggest that the *rupee* was in wide circulation in Western Australia as nobody would be stupid enough to risk transportation by attempting to counterfeit coins which were not in common use in the community.

The article also pointed out that the actual *rupee* coin that Wood was charged with counterfeiting was known locally as an *Indian dump* or simply a *dump*. This is not to be confused with the *dump* punched from the *holey dollar*; indeed *dump* was a colloquial term for any coin that was small and thick (2). In recent years, both Spink and Baldwins in London have used the term *dump rupee* in their catalogues. As mentioned previously, these were *rupee* coins minted by the Princely States which were usually of smaller diameter and greater thickness than the *rupees* minted by the East India Company. They contained a similar content of silver to the *arcot* and *surat rupees* of the Company but were often cruder in execution, which made them much easier to counterfeit.

Krause lists the weight of hundreds of these Princely State *rupees* as all being in the range of 10.7 to 11.6 gm. Their diameter varies widely but in almost all cases is smaller than the East India Company *rupees* which were current in the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Presidencies.



A 'Rupee Dump' from the Princely State of Hyderabad (1859)

The article also quotes a report from the Western Australian Agricultural Society in 1838 which states that '... the coin in circulation is principally British gold and silver, with a portion of Spanish dollars, and rupees ...'

Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land)

The second example of the circulation of rupees after 1816 is described in an article by Roger McNeice (3) which states that Van Diemen's Land had particular problems with a lack of circulating small coinage. Because the colony was still under the overall administration of New South Wales it was of course included in the Proclamation of 1800 by Governor King. While that proclamation may have helped the early situation, Van Diemen's Land was only settled in 1803 and had local problems caused by its geographic isolation. It appears that while the colony was supplied with a certain amount of small silver sterling coinage from England in the 1820s and 1830s the existing banks always hoarded this because of its stable valuation.

After 1816, Van Diemen's Land also soon developed a small tourist trade as many Anglo-Indians came to the island instead of the Cape of Good Hope for leave and relief from their tropical workplaces in India, bringing only *rupees* with them. But the Circulating Medium Act of 1826 which returned the island to a sterling exchange standard had the unwanted effect of draining the island of specie. In March 1826, the *sicca rupee* was accepted at a value of 2s 1d. The situation then became chaotic, and quoting from the McNeice article:

'...the Rupee circulated in Sydney at varying rates from 2 shillings down to 1/9 pence. Rupees began to flood into the Island. Merchants were buying the rupee in Sydney at 1/9 d and sending their catches to Van Diemen's Land and receiving 2/1d. This state of affairs did not last very long. On 17th July 1830, the local press The Courier reported that it had estimated that half the coin in circulation in Van Diemen's Land was rupees. But soon the local banks began to refuse to accept the rupee for more than 1/6 d and then shipped them to Mauritius to receive 2/1d.'

In July 1830, the Colonial Treasurer in Van Diemen's Land forbade officials to accept rupees in payment due to the great fluctuation. In September 1830, it was estimated that 40,000 rupees were exported in one shipment to Mauritius. The local merchants got together and set a price of accepting the rupee at 1s 9d and by 6th August 1830, the press reported that the 1s 9d valuation had been completely re-stabilised. In doing so it urged the advantages of a stable local value for remittances of capital by these and other residents of India, which were contributing to the colony's supply of coin.'

However further confusion ensued, and in 1834 Lieutenant Governor Arthur established a committee to ‘*investigate whether the sicca rupee and the United States dollar should be legalised*’. At this time *rupees* formed over 60% of the small specie in the colony.

The *sicca rupee* was duly ‘legalised’ on 2 September 1835 and a value of 2 shillings was placed on it. *Surat* and *arcot rupees* were rejected because of their lower silver content. US dollars were also rejected due to the general lack of trade with that country. This official valuation was rescinded in late 1837 notwithstanding considerable pressure to have it stand.

**GAZETTE.
A PROCLAMATION.**

WHEREAS Her Majesty hath been pleased through the Right Honorable Lord Glenelg one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, to signify to me Her Majesty disallowance of the Act of this Island, entitled “An act to promote the circulation of the Calcutta or Sicca Rupee,” I the Lieutenant Governor do therefore, by this proclamation, notify and publish the said disallowance accordingly.

WITH reference to the Proclamation dated 1st November 1837, notifying Her Majesty's disallowance of the act of this Island, entitled “An Act to promote the circulation of the Calcutta or Sicca Rupee,” the Lieutenant Governor directs it to be announced that the Government will receive the Sicca Rupees at the rate of two shillings each, for one month from this date, upon their being presented to the Colonial Treasurer in Hobart Town, or to the Assistant Treasurer in Launceston.

GAZETTE. A PROCLAMATION (1837, November 7).
The Austral-Asiatic Review, Tasmanian and Australian Advertiser
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article232475982>

A trawl through the National Library of Australia's TROVE website reveals a host of articles and advertisements mentioning the rupee, dating from 1825 through to 1857. We present a selection of these which gives a useful overview of the chronology of the rupee in Tasmania.

1827, July 27, *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser* (Hobart),
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2450611>:

'The late arrivals from India, have brought to the Colony a large supply of rupees. The first appearance of them, they being new and untarnished, excited some suspicion in several shop-keepers as to their genuine quality. We have heard of a man being taken into custody, by a constable who saw him with several of these shiners, who entertained this belief. The arrivals from the Mauritius however, account to us for their appearance as bona fide rupees. – Monitor.'

1830, July 17, *The Hobart Town Courier*,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4208255>:

'Rupees have lately become so numerous in Hobart town that they form at the least one-half of the silver currency. They pass as 1s 9d each, and are found very convenient in the common transactions of buying and selling. We believe this large proportion arises from a considerable sum which had arrived from India having been some time ago paid into one of the banks, and which has since come into circulation'.

Over the years it is clear that *rupees* were still widely held, as evidenced by the number of people charged with stealing them! Of interest is that there seemed to have been an exchange rate difference between Launceston and Hobart:

1847, July 14, *Launceston Examiner*,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article36252533>

'Currency – The Attorney-General had to lament the fact, elicited by the trial in the Supreme Court, that five-franc pieces "only go for three-and-sixpence in Launceston", whilst in Hobart Town they are current at four shillings. Rupees, current here at eighteen pence, are worth two shillings on the other side of the island. Perhaps something will come of the discovery. The number of either coin in circulation is, however, gradually diminishing.'

From 1847 advertisements appeared seeking silver coin with rupees highlighted:

1847, July 23, *Colonial Times* (Hobart),
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8761162>:

**Bank of England Notes
Discounted.**

RUPEES and Old Silver wanted, of every
description, and the utmost value given,
at Mr. Bryant's, No. 33, Murray-street, near
Liverpool-street.

Foreign Coins bought.

July 23, 1847. 1705

This advertisement ran almost daily for a month. Perhaps the looming demise of the *rupee* as accepted currency gave profit seekers a chance to cash in on their increasing unpopularity among the merchants?

Dollars were in the same boat.

1848, September 22, *Colonial Times* (Hobart),
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8763559>:

DOLLARS and RUPEES!

THE BANKS having refused to receive **DOLLARS**,
the undersigned are purchasers.

R. LEWIS & SONS.

Collins-street, September 21, 1848. 2053

1848, September 28, *The Britannia and Trades Advocate* (Hobart),
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article226536939>:

‘DOLLARS.

It is proper to add, that all dollars continue to be received at four shillings each, excepting the French five-franc piece, and that the East India rupee is also shut out of the money market. The whole disarrangement of the week is only another proof of the liberties which may be taken with the people of this colony. –Poor slaves!!!’

By 1857 the public in both Hobart and Launceston were being warned against taking *rupees* and French 5 franc pieces.

1857, April 23, *The Courier* (Hobart),
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2458989>:

‘DEPRECIATED CURRENCY. – *Persons obtaining change for gold or notes should be particular in examining the silver coins they receive in return. A quantity of French five-franc pieces and Indian rupees are in circulation; the former, which we presume find their way into the Australian colonies from Tahiti and New Caledonia, are likely to be mistaken for English crown pieces; the latter for half-crowns.*’

1857, April 25. *Launceston Examiner*,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article36301154>:

‘SILVER CURRENCY. – *The Courier cautions the public to guard against deception by French five-franc pieces, and Italian (sic) rupees, a number of which are in circulation. We hear that some of these coins have found their way to Launceston.*’

In summary, despite the tendency for currency speculation by the merchant class as the unofficial sterling value of the *rupee* oscillated between Van Diemen’s Land, New South Wales, India and Mauritius, Butlin (4) states that the legalisation of the *rupee* and its official valuation in Van Diemen’s Land in 1835, when the colony was suffering an acute shortage of small silver coinage, helped to stimulate badly needed trade between the island and India, as well as act as an inducement for Englishmen in the service of the East India Company in India and Mauritius to holiday and to settle in Van Diemen’s Land.

The information in this article provides an overview of a foreign coin special to our country, the silver *Indian rupee*, being officially declared as legal currency in colonial Australia at three different sterling values on three separate occasions in our nation's history.

The first was on 19 November 1800 in Governor King's proclamation at a rate of two shillings and sixpence, the second was in the British Treasury's Notice of 8 March 1826 at a rate of two shillings and a penny, and the third was in Governor Arthur's proclamation of 1 September 1835 at a rate of two shillings.

Of course, the relationship between the *rupee* and the other circulating currencies was much more subtle than the official proclamations would indicate. For a comprehensive discussion of this the reader is referred to the excellent work by Butlin (4) which covers in detail the circulating currencies in the Australian colonies up until the late 1830s.

The authors are grateful to Editor John McDonald for his useful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

References

- 1 McDonald, John. *Early Coin Forgery in Western Australia*, PNS Journal, November, 2018.
- 2 Room, Adrian. *Dictionary of coin names*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.
- 3 McNeice, Roger. *The circulation of the sicca rupee in Van Diemen's Land 1820-1850*, NAA Special Publication No 2, 2000.
- 4 Butlin, S J. *Foundations of the Australian Monetary System*, Melbourne University Press, 1953.
<https://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit/pdf/sup0003.pdf>

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT, 2020-2021

The last twelve months has seen a continued period of prosperity for the Perth Numismatic Society Inc, in membership and activities, but the latter were somewhat curtailed due to COVID lockdowns; we had to cancel our meetings for April and June this year, and our fair for August last year. Monthly meetings continue to be strongly supported, with 55-60 attending each night.

The Society had five invited talks in the last twelve months:

23 September 2020 – Graeme Stephens: *Some medallions from Charles I to Edward VII*

28 October 2020 – Jonathon de Hadleigh: *An introduction to mediaeval coins*

25 November 2020 – Ed Robinson: *Commonwealth medals*

27 January 2021 – Robert Russell: *Arthur C Clarke, a shipwreck odyssey*

24 February 2021 – Robert Russell: *How to value coins and banknotes and why prices differ.*

I am most grateful to the Perth Mint for its donations of substantial door prizes for our fairs. and for the regular donations of coins, medals and catalogues from Mike McAndrew of Phoenix Auctions which have supported our tender sales and the Coins for Kids programme.

Many members have contributed so much to the Society during the year and have helped in a variety of ways, not just those on the Management Committee. I would make special mention of our Treasurer Alan Peel who has fulfilled this role wonderfully for many years, even during illness. Alan has now stepped down to enjoy a well-earned rest from this activity, but not from the Society as he is now a committee member.

I thank our Membership Secretary Sandra Vowles, John McDonald who continues to edit the Journal with outstanding articles, Lucie Pot for handling the catering, and Dick Pot for running the tender sale. And I also thank our advertisers, Mike McAndrew (Phoenix Auctions WA), Dick Pot (Rainbow Rarities), Jamey Blewitt (JB Military Antiques), Andrew Crellin (Sterling & Currency), Jonathan Cohen (Imperial Numismatics), John Godfrey (Coin Aus John) and Keith Elliot (Australian Specialty Coins) for their support of our Journal.

Walter R Bloom, President, Perth Numismatic Society Inc.

A STRONG NUMISMATIC MARKET

A few months ago, major international dealers Classical Numismatic Group informed clients about the current strength of the numismatic market for coins that predate the machine struck era.

'We find ourselves in the midst of the strongest ancient and world coin market in the last 20 years. Over the past year, the average hammer price for coins sold in our auctions increased by over 35%. At the same time, the number of bidders in our sales has increased by an average of 30% per auction.'

They also commented that the strongest areas for ancients seemed to be Greek silver and gold, Roman Imperial coinage and Byzantine coins. In all areas, prices for high quality coins and the more famous emperors and types were very strong, up 50 to 100% or more from as little as a year ago. But medieval coinage has been a mixed bag with prices generally stable or up slightly, although British coinage has seen strong growth.

PERTH MINT GOES CASHLESS

Perth mint has announced that it will no longer accept cash for any transactions. This seems ironic for an institution that owes its very existence to manufacturing cash!



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 | Cancelled (Covid lockdown). |
| 26 May | Short talks & quiz. No-reserve Tender Sale. |
| 30 June | Cancelled (Covid lockdown). |
| 28 July | Annual General Meeting. No-reserve Tender Sale. |
| 25 August | Invited speaker (John McDonald: <i>The Rebel British Empire of the 3rd Century, history revealed by coins</i>). Tender Sale. |
| 29 September | No-reserve Tender Sale. |
| 27 October | Tender Sale. |
| 24 November | Invited speaker (Sandy Shailes: <i>Fifty cents worth of history – A history of Australia as told by the 50c piece</i>). No-reserve Tender Sale. |

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

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Adult	\$25
Pensioner	\$20
WA Country	\$20
Associate	\$10
Junior / Student	\$10
Nomination Fee	\$10
Fully Paid Life Membership	\$400

Membership fees have been increased after remaining unchanged for more than 27 years. The new fees, shown above, will apply from March 2022.

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.



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CALENDAR OF FAIRS

Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Medal and Banknote Fairs:

- 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 19th September 2021
- Sunday 5th December 2021

JB Military Antiques Auctions:

- Sunday 17th October 2021

Annual Historic Arms and Militaria Fair:

- Saturday 11th – Sunday 12th September 2021.

Militaria Swap Meet:

- Sunday 21st November 2021

During this year several fairs and shows have been cancelled due to restrictions associated with the Covid virus pandemic. Those scheduled for the remainder of the year are listed above, but they may or may not proceed on the dates shown.

For updates and further details goto: <http://www.pns.org.au/events/>

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