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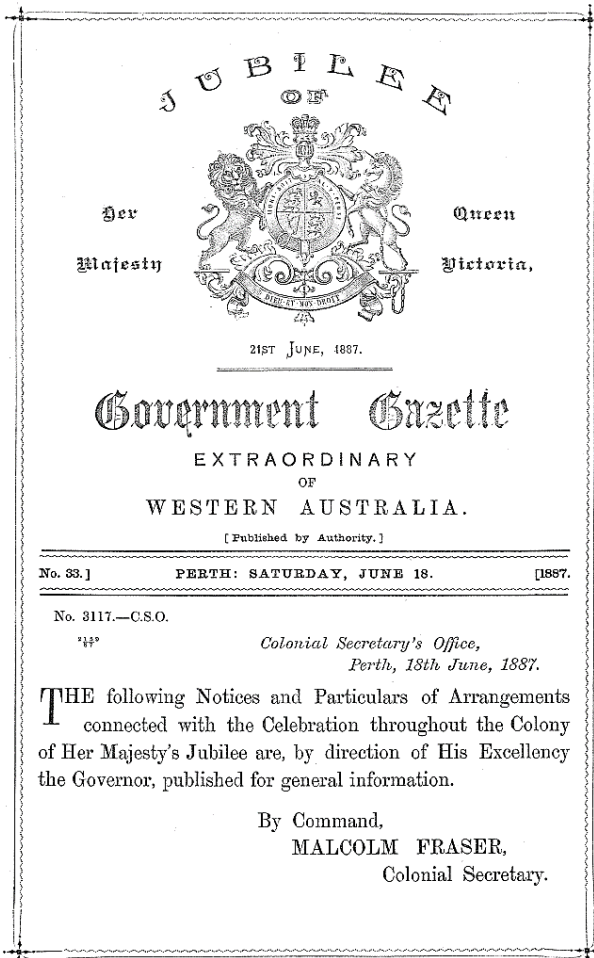
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# QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Walter R Bloom & Steven Sparkman

Queen Victoria (Alexandrina Victoria) ascended to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1837. By the time of her death on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1901, she was the longest serving British monarch. In pre-Federation Australia, both her Golden and Diamond Jubilees were the cause for great celebrations throughout the colonies.



Note the extensive details of the Golden Jubilee in this special issue of the Western Australian Government Gazette.

*The Inquirer and Commercial News* reported on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1885 that:

*'Of all the portions of HER MAJESTY'S most extensive dominions, the Australian Colonies are not the least loyal: and we make bold to say that Western Australia, small as her population may be, will not be found wanting in its expression of loyalty and devotion to the Person and Throne of our EMPRESS-QUEEN.'*

In keeping with those sentiments, the Government of the day sought to have what would now be regarded as a series of localised, community celebrations and events as well as a permanent and enduring public monument to mark the occasion. That sentiment is best summed up by a report by *The Western Mail* on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1897, outlining the very early history of the State Library and Museum. The report stated:

#### *'VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION.*

*To find the beginning of the movement from which was evolved the grand design of a national public library and museum it is necessary to go back to the time, more than 10 years ago, when the people of the colony and the Government of the day were considering what would be a fitting permanent memorial of the Queen's Jubilee. Those were the days when a small and transient boom had stirred the feeble pulse of the colony. The revenue had increased in a degree which was, in 1886 and 1887, marvellous, and though the promise was not sustained—for the succeeding years were some of the most dismal in the history of the colony—for the time the Government was affluent, in fact and in prospect. The days of responsible government had not yet come, and the ideas of the Government in determining how to celebrate the jubilee, naturally, therefore, to some extent centred round London. The Imperial Institute had been decided upon, and the authorities of that Institute were appealing for funds to colonists. The Western Australian Government, though the colony had a population of not more than 35,000, decided to devote £5,000 to the celebration of the Jubilee, and of this sum it was decided that £2,000 should be devoted to the Imperial Institute, while the remaining £3,000 should be used to fund a "Victoria Jubilee Institute" in Perth. The distribution of the funds was at all events possessed of one saving feature—the larger half of the money was retained for the local institution. On the*

*whole, considering the population of the colony and the amounts voted by the other and richer colonies of the group, Western Australia had been liberal indeed.*

*When the Legislative Council met on June 16, 1887, the preparations for the establishment of the library had been made. A committee appointed by the Governor, Sir Frederick Broome, during the recess had prepared a report in which the distribution of the £5,000 on the basis described was advised. In his address to the House the Governor stated these facts, and announced that the foundation stone of the library would be laid on Jubilee Day. It was laid accordingly by the Governor on June 21, 1887, on the block of ground next the Perth Boys' School, which was the site selected out of three mentioned by the committee, and there it remained until it was lately removed and given a place in the walls of the building now in course of erection in James Street."*



**State Library and Museum in the early 1900's**

The Golden Anniversary fell on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1887. The Colony of Western Australia celebrated the occasion with great enthusiasm. Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June were gazetted public holidays. Perth, Fremantle and a number of country towns organised everything from balls, fetes, processions and marches, church services, concerts, fireworks, sporting, recreational and ceremonial events on those two holidays.

Specifically, as well as Perth and Fremantle, the country towns involved were Albany, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Geraldton (with no fewer than three days of events), Murray, Northam, Roebourne, Vasse and York, which all organised celebratory events. In addition, some thirty-six prisoners received remissions on their sentences and the Governor (Sir Frederick Napier Broome) directed the release of twenty-five “aboriginal native prisoners” from Rottneest Island. *The Western Mail* of 25<sup>th</sup> June 1887 also reported that the Aborigines Protection Board ‘...made arrangements that all the natives throughout the settled districts of the colony, so far as practicable, shall be feasted on Jubilee day’. Clearly, Queen Victoria’s Golden jubilee was celebrated with fanfare throughout Western Australia.

In 1887 several cities, towns, shires and districts throughout the colonies released commemorative medals to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee. Les Carlisle lists just over one hundred medals issued in 1887 where the overwhelming theme was the Golden Jubilee. From a Western Australian numismatic perspective, three localities issued commemorative medalets; Perth, Victoria District and Albany.

## PERTH GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDALS

These medals were given by the Perth Municipality to school children, as reported by *The West Australian* on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1887. At that stage, the gift of the medals was still a proposal and it was planned ‘... that the school-children should be given commemorative medals, and should be feasted and amused...’. According to Carlisle some 3,000 pieces were minted and this number is confirmed by contemporary newspaper accounts. (There was an initial order for 2,000 pieces costing £25, followed by a post Jubilee order for another 1,000 pieces in late June 1887 to reward those people who initially missed out on receiving one.) These numbers are interesting. *The Western Mail* (on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1887) reported on the Perth Municipality ratepayers’ half-year meeting (where the medals were discussed in some detail) that there were only about 1,200 to 1,300 children attending schools in the city. So why 2,000 medals were ordered in the first instance, and later another 1,000, when the number of school children was much smaller is confusing. Nevertheless, at that meeting, the Mayor went on to say ‘... that the tokens were made of an alloy and were exactly similar to those that were distributed by the Mayor of Sandhurst. Upon one side was the profile of the Queen, and on the other side a representation of the Town Hall with the name of the Mayor for the year in small characters underneath.



### **Sandhurst Jubilee (Carlisle 1887/87)**

(Note: until 1891, Bendigo, in Victoria, was called Sandhurst)

A Mr R.W. Hardey voiced his disapproval of the alloy; suggesting that silver (even if only the size of a threepence) was more appropriate. That idea was flippantly dismissed with the suggestion that if Mr Hardey desired a more expensive metal, then he may wish to donate to the cause. A Mr Traylen described the “tokens” as being an enduring memento of the Jubilee and drew some laughs when he ‘... drew a picture of the interest a Jubilee medal would possess for the numismatist in the year 3000.’

Not everybody was happy with these medals. There were some murmurs about the effrontery shown by the Mayor in having his name on the Jubilee medals. Below is a letter published by *The West Australian* on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1887:

*‘TO THE EDITOR.*

*SIR-I notice in the West Australian of this morning that the City Council have determined to have a Jubilee medal struck for distribution amongst the children of Perth. Your description of the medal is as follows, "The medal on the reverse side will have a profile of Her Majesty and on the obverse side an engraving of the Perth Town Hall, with the words ' Shenton, Mayor ' underneath." What I would like to know is whether the medal is to be commemorative of the Jubilee of Her Majesty or of the official career of Mr. Shenton. If of the former all good citizens will be content, but if of the latter I for one shall protest. In paying for these medals the ratepayers will be paying for the glorification of the Mayor rather than of Her Majesty. Against this piece of humbug, please accept the protest of a RATEPAYER, of Perth, April 19.’*





**Perth Jubilee (Carlisle 1887/42)**

**Obverse:** VICTORIA JUBILEE 1887/STOKES & MARTIN  
**Reverse:** TOWN HALL PERTH W.A./G. SHENTON/MAYOR

It is curious that the Sandhurst medals come in two varieties, one with the name of the Mayor (Carlisle 1887/87) and one without (Carlisle 1887/87a). There was no such modesty in the case of the Perth medal!

The drawing below shows what the Perth Town Hall looked like in 1886, just one year earlier. We wonder what models the Stokes & Martin engravers used for the various town halls from around Australia and New Zealand on their Golden and Diamond Jubilee medals.



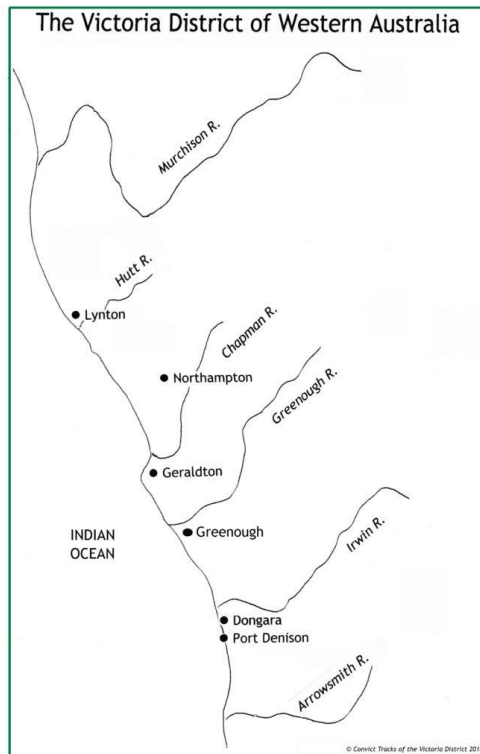
Today these pieces are fairly common to find and are relatively inexpensive in low grade, but are much more difficult to find with full gilding.

## VICTORIA DISTRICT JUBILEE MEDAL

The Irwin Districts Historical Society describes the Victoria District of Western Australia as encompassing the coastal land between the Murchison and Arrowsmith Rivers, currently referred to as the Mid-West.

(<https://irwinhistory.org.au/convict-tracks-of-the-victoria-district/>)

The major administrative centre continues to be Geraldton, but in the late nineteenth century the farming communities of Greenough, Northampton and the Chapman Valley had significant settlements. (Note that Victoria District is not to be confused with the Shire of Victoria Plains. The latter comprises the farming communities which include Calingiri, Mogumber, New Norcia and Bolgart, among other small towns within that general area).



Les Carlisle lists the Victoria District medal as an undated piece with the classification Carlisle G/6. He further describes it as a 49mm, gilded, minted by Stokes and Martin circa 1887 and with an unknown mintage. A contemporary newspaper article however (*Victorian Express* [a Geraldton publication] 30<sup>th</sup> April 1887 stated that:

*‘The offer of the Melbourne firm. Messrs. Sands & McDougall, to strike and supply 500 special medals for distribution to the children on Jubilee day for £32 was accepted, and the Secretary was instructed to wire for fifty silver medals, to be sold, on arrival, to persons desirous of securing a special memento of the occasion.’*

From the article above, it is clear that 500 were ordered. What is also clear is that there were reportedly fifty silver medals, but none are known! In addition, it can be asserted that the gilt medals were clearly minted in 1887, as evidenced by the following article which was published in the *Victorian Express* on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1887:

*‘The Special Jubilee Medals arrived by the ss Albany. They are of bronze in the shape of the Victoria Cross, and have on the four tongues on one side the inscription ‘Victoria District, Western Australia,’ with the Australian Arms in the centre; and on the other side ‘God Save the Queen,’ surrounding the bust of Her Majesty. They are both neat and massive in appearance, and will form a unique and handsome souvenir of the Jubilee.’*



**Carlisle G6** (49.23mm x 49.10mm)

Image courtesy of Downies.

<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/77506>

Today, we might describe the “four distinct tongues” as forming a Cross-Pattee-Alisee, but with notches rather than points in the cut-outs.

:



It is known that some of the original medals have been made into brooches. An article in the Victorian Express on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1887 reported:

*‘The business of the meeting was to decide in what manner the sum should be expended. The readiness which was displayed on the part of the ladies of the committee to assist in the work of cooking the provisions assures us that success will attend the catering, and from the quantity of things which it was calculated could be provided for the £30 no anxiety need be felt as to the children being substantially fed. **It was decided at this meeting that a Jubilee Brooch be given to the lady who succeeds in collecting the largest amount of subscriptions towards the Jubilee funds.**’ (our emphasis.).*

Could the following piece be an example of the brooch referred to in the article?



**Victoria Districts Jubilee medal made into a brooch**

It is quite remarkable that this brooch is mounted in such a way that the Queen's bust is hidden from view, one would have thought that completely unacceptable given that all Western Australians were British subjects at the time.

The following advertisement refers to Jubilee brooches in gold and silver, but it is not clear if these resemble in any way brooches made from the official medals.

## **THE JUBILEE PRESENT**

**EVERY** Lady should wear one of Jackson's JUBILEE BROOCHES, manufactured expressly for the occasion by A. T. Jackson at Geraldton from Kimberley Gold, and from Coin Silver at 10/6 and 12/6 each.

See opinion of *Victorian Express*.

A.T.J. mounts the Victoria District Jubilee Medals as either pendants or brooches.

Advertising (1887, June 11). *Victorian Express* (Geraldton, WA), p. 4.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article212630346>

Today, the Victoria District pieces are relatively scarce.

## **ALBANY JUBILEE MEDAL**

The Albany medals come in two types and two different metals (Carlisle 1887/45 and 1887/45a).

Carlisle describes the 1887/45 as being minted in both gilt and silver; 31mm, produced by Stokes and Martin, with an unknown mintage. The obverse is inscribed VICTORIA R. JUBILEE, whilst the reverse has WESTERN AUSTRALIA. 1887. / ALBANY.

The 1887/45a is available only in silver; identical in size, also minted by Stokes and Martin according to Carlisle, with an unknown number produced. The reverse is identical to the 1887/45, but with a slightly different obverse; QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE / 1887.

It has generally been believed that these were presented to local dignitaries.

The most common type is the 1887/45 in gilt. These were most likely presented to school children from within the Albany district. The Government Gazette (as reported in *The West Australian* on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1887) stated that Albany would be celebrating by the:

*'Presentation of Address to Her Majesty, procession and singing of National Anthem, **presentation of medals to children** (our emphasis), planting of trees, children's feast, distribution of presents to Aborigines, laying of foundation stone to new hospital, Government Resident's luncheon to Mayor and Councillors, children's sports and public ball.'*



### **Carlisle 1887/45**

No known silver examples

What is interesting about the Albany series is that the medals (or at the very least, some of them) were privately funded. The *Albany Mail and King George Sound Advertiser* of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1887 reported on a public meeting that was held to consider '*... the most desirable manner of celebrating Her Majesty the Queen jubilee in the town*'. At that meeting, the mayor (who occupied the chair) stated that he thought it was a good idea for each child to be presented with a Jubilee medal. Unfortunately, however, it was pointed out that '*... there was no time wherein to order (the) Jubilee medals*'.

*'Cr. Hare mentioned that though the Council had not remembered the medals in time, one public-spirited councillor (Cr. Muir) had had the foresight to order at his expense which he proposed distributing to the children. (Applause.)*

Clearly those medals would have been the gilt Carlisle 1887/45.

The more interesting type is the 1887/45a. Most have the initials of recipients inscribed, and in one instance, the name of a recipient has been engraved.

Readers could well make educated guesses about the recipients (with initials) from contemporary documents of influential people from the area, at that time. Significantly also, the silver 45a's were municipally funded, and undoubtedly post the actual day of the jubilee.

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## GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

| ABSTRACT of Receipts and Expenditure of<br>Albany Municipal Council by General Re-<br>venue for the year ending 31st October, 1887 :— |     |                             | CASH Accou<br>year endin; |                |
|---|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| DATE.<br>1887.  | DR. | RECEIPTS.                   | AMOUNT.<br>£ s. d.        | DATE.<br>1886. |
|   |     | „ Jubilee Silver Medals ... |                           | 6 5 0          |

Also supporting that contention of municipal funding is a contemporary newspaper account published in the *Albany Mail and King George Sound Advertiser* (on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1887):

*‘Mr. Galle here came in and brought a telegram from Messrs. Schlank of Adelaide, offering Jubilee medals at 16s. per 100 with an extra charge of £3 for the die. It was resolved to procure 1000 medals and leave the further arrangement for procuring them to Mr. Galle. Mr. Hamilton proposed, that the medals should be sold to all who required them except the children. Mr. O’Keefe seconded this proposal which was carried.’*

Later in the same article:

*“The Mayor said he had ascertained that the proposed Jubilee medals to be procured from Adelaide, had the Queen’s effigy and the words “Victoria’s Jubilee” on the face, and that he had ordered 1000 to be struck.”*

Conventional wisdom is that the Carlisle 1887/45a medals were minted by Stokes and Martin of Castlemaine with Schlank’s of Adelaide acting as agents.

Some examples follow:



**Carlisle 1887/45a**

Inscribed J H (*JH*)



**Carlisle 1887/45a**

Inscribed J K (*JK*)

Image source Noble Numismatics, Sale 111, Lot 679 (Aust. Historical Medals)



**Carlisle 1887/45a (31.40mm)**

Inscribed W T M<sup>c</sup>NEE

In 1882, William McNeer was listed as a Custom's Officer in Fremantle. In 1886 William Thom. McNeer was initiated into the Freemasons in Albany.



### OBITUARY.

MR. W. A. T. McNEE.

The funeral of Mr. William Anderson Thom McNee took place on Sunday afternoon, and was largely attended. The remains of the deceased, which were enclosed in a massive polished jarrah casket, with heavy brass mountings, were interred in the Church of England Cemetery, Karrakatta. The Rev. W. F. Marshall officiated at the graveside. The chief mourners were: Messrs. C. F., J. A., Frank, Andrew, Albert, Willie, and Harry Hicks. The pallbearers were: Messrs. Thoams Hall, John Bowra, F. Glaskin, and Thomas Glaskin. The deceased for many years held an important position in the Customs Department at Fremantle, and afterwards at Albany. During recent years, however, he had been in indifferent health, and he passed away on Friday night at the Home of Peace, Subiaco. Mr. McNee was 53 years of age at the time of his death. A

### Obituary of Mr. W. A. T. McNEE.

Western Mail (Perth, WA), August 6 1904, p. 33.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article38686025>



Carlisle 1887/45a (Plate coin)

Inscribed EGSH (*EGSH*)

*'Mr. Edward George Sydney Hare, the well-known barrister, died last night at his residence in Cambridge-street, Leederville. Yesterday Mr. Hare appeared to be in the best of health and spirits. This morning he was found dead in his bed. Dr. Officer, who was called in, gave a certificate of death from heart failure. The deceased was educated in New Zealand and afterwards came to this State and served articles with Messrs. Stone and Burt. He was later admitted to the Bar. He practised as a barrister and*

*solicitor in various parts of the State, and was for many years a member of the firm of Hare and Joddrell on the goldfields. At one time he was a prominent sportsman, and owned the racehorses Paul Pry and Gladness. For some years he acted in the capacity of solicitor to the West Australian Turf Club. He revised the rules of that body as are at present in force. The deceased gentleman was the youngest son of the late Mr. Gustavus Hare, who was for many years Resident Magistrate at Albany.*

<http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/c79a6c3d-bd83-481e-b08b-acb16b976b38>

<http://www.thekingscandlesticks.com/webs/pedigrees/3595.html>



**Silver Albany medal made into a brooch (31.36mm)**

Today, the gilt Carlisle 1887/45 are scarce, but moderately priced in low grade although much more difficult to find with full gilding. The silver Carlisle 1887/45a is scarcer and that, combined with varieties of initials, names and brooch mountings, makes collecting that series a much more challenging proposition.

In terms of collecting early Western Australian numismatic history, Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee of 1887 is a relatively early series which is preceded by the medals of Miller/Mueller, a range of medalets of the 1881 Perth International Exhibition (by Stokes & Martin), and the 1886 West Australian Exhibition medal.

Contemporary newspaper accounts indicate that both the Perth and Albany medals were proudly worn and displayed by school children in both processions and assemblies. Furthermore, the authors are aware of two series (Victoria District and Albany 1887/45a) where pins have been soldered to the pieces allowing them to be worn as brooches.

For the main part, Western Australian medals from Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee have been relatively poorly researched. Most collectors have relied on Les Carlisle’s *magnum opus* for information on this series. Surprisingly, the authors of this paper have found more details about the series in newspaper accounts of the day which have provided additional interesting information. For the average collector, securing a representative example of each of the four pieces [Victoria District, Perth, Albany (bronze) and Albany (silver)] is a relatively difficult task which is readily apparent when records of the major Australian metropolitan and Western Australian regional museums are examined. The writers are not aware of any institution that has all four pieces. A number of the institutions have one or two, as exemplified by the following letter indicating a present of one to the Adelaide Public Library Museum in 1913:

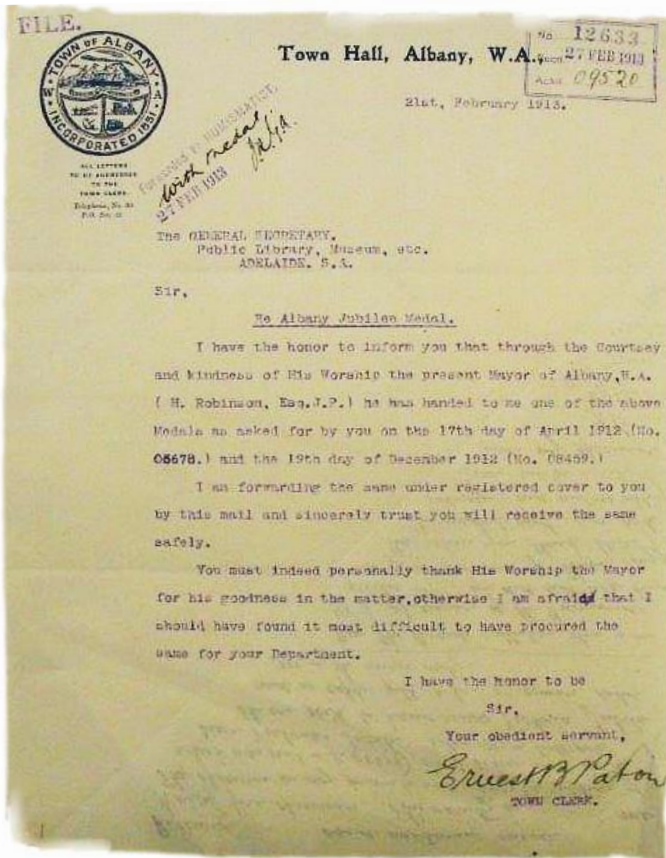


Image source: Art Gallery of South Australia

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## A SURPRISING COIN FIND IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**John McDonald**

Recently, a metal detectorist made an unexpected find near Mount Magnet, over 500 kilometres north of Perth, in Western Australia's Murchison Goldfield. It wasn't a gold nugget, but an ancient coin struck almost 2,000 years ago in Cappadocia, Turkey. It was issued under Roman control in AD 196-197, in a city known to the Romans as Caesarea, but now called Kayseri, which was its original Greek name before the Romans took over.

Because we are not certain what this coin would have been called at the time the convention is to simply label it 'AE25'. AE signifies bronze (as distinct from AR for silver or AU for gold) and 25 is its diameter in millimetres. It weighs 11.6 grams.



**AE25, Caracalla as Caesar, AD 196/197, Caesarea, Cappadocia**

**Obverse:** (AY KAI M AYPC)AI ANTONCINOC

Laureate, draped bust of Caracalla right.

**Reverse:** (METPO) KAICAPI

Mt Argaeus resting on an altar inscribed with ΕΤΑ.

When the coin was struck the Roman empire was ruled by the emperor Septimius Severus (AD 193-211). His elder son, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, better known as 'Caracalla', had been given the title of Caesar (KAICAP in Greek) no more than a year earlier, which officially marked him as his fathers' successor.

The legends on the coin are in Greek and, apart from the young man's principal name and the name of the city, they are heavily abbreviated in the usual way for the time. The obverse legend would expand and translate to 'Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus', and the reverse simply to 'The City of Kayseri'. The 3 letters on the rectangular altar are a date. The first 2 letters are an abbreviation of the Greek word 'étos' (year) and the last (delta, the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet) acts as the number 4. This tells us that the coin was struck during the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Septimius Severus, who took power in April AD 193.

Mount Argaeus (or Mt Erciyes), represented on the reverse of the coin, is a large, multi-peaked volcano that looms over Kayseri and was adopted as the emblem of the city.



***Mount Argaeus & modern Kayseri***

*Image source: Wikipedia Commons*

We can only speculate about how this ancient coin might have found its way across the millennia and halfway around the world to lie in the red dirt of remote Mt Magnet.

Some of the old prospectors and miners who tramped through the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century must have been quite well-educated men. We can tell this from the names of ancient gods and goddesses or characters from classical history that they sometimes gave to their gold prospects, such as Jupiter, Neptune, Hesperus, Croesus, Agamemnon or Xantippe. Perhaps the coin was carried and lost by one of those old students of history.

Or maybe it was a keepsake carried around by one of the ‘Afghan’ cameleers, who played such an important role in opening up the Western Australian goldfields, as a reminder of his distant home. For thousands of years Cappadocia was crisscrossed by trade routes bringing goods from the East to markets in Europe. The region is still scattered with fortified buildings known as ‘*caravenserais*’, mostly dating from the middle-ages, where trade caravans, often made up of camels, could lodge in safety at night. Coins of all ages from Cappadocia would have been spread along these trade routes. Perhaps this one was picked up as an old curio by a camel driver who later came to Australia.

At least 2 other Roman coins have been found in Western Australia. The first was near the Round House in Fremantle in 1835 (*Some Bizarre Coin Finds in Australia*, Perth Numismatic Society Journal, February 2019). The second was found by another metal detectorist in Maylands in 2019 (<https://thewest.com.au/news/perth/treasure-hunter-finds-ancient-roman-coin-in-maylands-park-ng-b881186854z>).

We will never know just how these coins got to where they were found, but one thing we can be sure of is that they were not brought here by the Romans.

### Acknowledgement

Thanks to Bruce Vanderzwan for permission to publish the details of his find and for providing the images of the coin.



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## ENGLISH NUMISMATICS

### Jonathon de Hadleigh

In the year 2019 a significant change occurred in English numismatics. Up until then the standard catalogue of English coins, first published by Seaby and later by Spink, contained all coins in a single volume. Then a section dedicated to decimal coins appeared as an appendix. As time moves on and many more coins are issued and collected, the 'decimal section' will no doubt become its own hardback volume. I am sure that we shall soon hear talk, as we already do here in Australia, of 'pre-decimal' and 'decimal' English coinage.

The English pre-decimal book will take you back over about 2,000 years of coinage history. The most recent period is known as '*Late Milled*' coinage, issued between 1816 and 1970, since when England has had decimal coins.

Prior to 1816, the period back to 1660 is called '*Early Milled*'. However, during this period there were Bank of England tokens, which were an anomaly. They are not really treated as part of the Early Milled coinage even though they appear broadly similar and were struck in the same way. This may be because they were issued by the Bank of England rather than by Royal Prerogative through the Royal Mint, despite the possibility that some might have actually been struck in the mint building. However, they do look somewhat different and have a distinct rim.

Two brothers, John and Joseph Rottieres, Dutchmen who came to England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, brought with them a unique machine that could mark the edge of a coin, a process known as 'graining'. So, letters began to appear on the edge of the King's coinage and, for example, crowns of Charles II are grained with the words DECVS ET TVTAMEN (honour and security) and the regnal year.

Before 1660, English coins were struck by hand, the power coming from a large mallet or hammer. Consequently, they are known as '*Hammered Coinage*'. There were some so-called 'milled' pieces struck around 1560-1570 and a few others made by Briot under Charles I (1625-1649). In these cases, the term 'milled' relates to a screw mill or horse-powered mill used to strike them.



Both of these ‘milled’ issues are similar to their hammered counterparts, being rather thin in the planchet. However, they were not milled on the edge in the way we are now familiar with. Both obverse and reverse were simply marked with a set of short lines around the periphery, similar to what we would call ‘denticles’ on later milled coins. They were put there in an early attempt to counteract illegal clipping, which was rampant even though it was treated as treason and a capital crime.

Official clipping could take place in order to deal with inflation. For instance, in 1412 the groat (fourpence) went from 72 grains (4.7 gm) of silver to 60 grains (3.9 gm) and in 1464 it was further reduced to 48 grains (3.1 gm). Official clipping was used to bring older coins into line with new weight standards. Inflation continued and there was a ‘great debasement’ under Henry VIII, continuing into the reign of Edward VI. Following that, a coin of 48 grains in the restored silver coinage had become a sixpence and it remained so until 1920.

Of course, English numismatics goes back even further than the hammered coinage, to the Roman conquest and ultimately into the Iron Age.

To compile a collection of one coin of each English monarch back to the ‘Kings of all England’ and the 10<sup>th</sup> century would be a mammoth task and involve some very rare coins. So, it is best to compile a collection within some limits. If you have deep pockets, then pre-Henry II short-cross coins could be for you. However, not everyone likes the simplistic designs of Anglo-Saxon coins which were struck from dies that were not engraved, but created using punches. This form of die production continued through the Middle Ages, with crudely symbolic portraits of the monarchs.

Reading medieval coin legends takes time and practice but is worth the effort. Early milled coins are easier to read and the coins are larger. From 1660 the half-crown became common, the silver coming from the Americas via Spain and then through trade into England, although half-crowns of Charles II are not as common as those of William III and the ‘Great Recoinage’ of 1696. It was at that time that old hammered coins that were unclipped and of full weight were centrally pierced to allow them to remain in circulation. These are not so popular to collect as the marketplace has turned to high grade specimens the world over.

The silver coins of this period worked hard as the circulating medium in which everyday transactions were made, so worn specimens are easy to find. But collectors tend to seek out extremely fine or uncirculated specimens and are often shocked by the prices asked. The 1787 shilling and sixpence are an exception as they were commonly hoarded at the time.

The Late Milled coinage from 1816 is generally quite plentiful. It was produced by new steam-powered machinery at the Royal Mint on Tower Hill, just outside the Tower of London. Eventually, this mint produced coins for about 25% of the earth's surface. Sterling currency circulated around the world, truly a global currency with the gold sovereign at the top. It was legal tender everywhere that was coloured red on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of the world.

However, English coinage is often detached from countries that once used it, which I fear diminishes their numismatic history. For example, Canada used sterling until it went decimal in 1858, but although Nova Scotia moved to decimal accounting and introduced copper cents and half cents from 1861, it continued to use sterling silver with a shilling being taken as 25 cents. In Canada it was almost 24 cents and when Newfoundland decimalised in 1865 a penny equalled 2 cents and English halfpennies often circulated as cents. As a final note, Canadians occasionally found English shillings in their change passing as quarter dollars up to the 1940's.

Australia has a neglected period of 'pre-federation' coinage when sterling coins produced in London circulated as small change for gold sovereigns struck in Sydney, Melbourne and later Perth.

English coinage separated from the world as its empire came to an end. India gained independence in 1947 with many other countries following suit. It was never a policy of the British Colonial Office to hang on to the empire, but rather to encourage independence, and many currencies were born out of the era when sterling was a global coinage, the sovereign being used at the top of the Hong Kong dollar, the Indian Rupee and the dollar currencies of Canada and the Caribbean.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century arrived English coins lost a good deal of their silver content. The rest of the world continued to use pure silver, but England could not because it had to use silver to pay some of its war debts. This foreshadowed what would happen in other countries as the price of silver rose.

Ultimately England introduced cupro-nickel coins, and this period of its pre-decimal coinage is not a popular theme for collectors. Many of them came to the hobby using such coins to purchase silver from earlier periods and later collectors tend to neglect that base metal circulating coinage in favour of the guaranteed quality of decimal proof and uncirculated coins now produced mainly for the collector market.

With a larger population, many new collectors seek out the many different designs that have been introduced on various denominations in recent times, such as the alphabet 10 pence coins.

English collectors are now very diverse in their tastes and there are a wide variety of issues available; silver sets, Britannias or historical coins. One theme that remains popular covers the time period from the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 to the present day, and I speak of course of the Maundy set of 1,2,3 and 4 pence pieces. It began with an undated set in 1660 and from 1670 onwards a set is available for almost every year. All the coins are 925 (sterling) silver except for a few years around the 1920's. Every Maundy Thursday these very popular little silver coins are distributed by the reigning monarch to deserving individuals who have given public service. They are now the only coins that remain unchanged from pre-decimal days, but they have received legal status as decimal denominations, the only coins in the English system to do so.

With decimalisation, 2 shillings became equivalent to 10 pence but there was a reduction in size and the old coins were demonetised as legal tender. Even large 50 pence coins from the early days of decimalisation have gone this way. They can still be paid into bank accounts, although not all banks will accept them. The latest coin to pass this milestone was the 'old' 1 pound coin first introduced in 1983.

English numismatics is moving forward rapidly. With the publication of a dedicated pre-decimal catalogue I am sure it will diverge and another numismatic subject will be born, if it is not already in its infancy.

The world of English numismatics is one of diversity and excitement, with something for everyone, and is well worth looking into.

*Dedicated to the memory of Mike McAndrew (1954-2023)*

## CALENDAR OF PNS MEETINGS

PNS meetings are held at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month, except December, at John McGrath Hall, 97 Hensman St, South Perth.

Remaining meeting dates for 2023 are as follows:

30 August Annual General Meeting. Topic: Numismatic errors and forgeries. Tender sale.

27 September Topic: English numismatics. Tender sale.

25 October Topic: Irish numismatics. Donation sale.

29 November Topic: Scottish numismatics. Tender sale

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



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## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

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

### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| John Wheatley     | 2004 |
| Prof Walter Bloom | 2013 |
| Joe Brizzi        | 2022 |
| Rowley Butters    | 2022 |
| Sandra Vowles     | 2022 |

### 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 |
| Prof Walter Bloom | 1988-1991 |
| Jiri Just †       | 1991-1994 |
| Colin Meikle      | 1994-1997 |
| Haydn Powell †    | 1997-2005 |
| Prof Walter Bloom | 2005-     |



# CALENDAR OF FAIRS

Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Banknote & Stamp Fairs (South Perth Community Centre):

- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Militaria Swap Meet (Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds):

- Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Annual Historic Arms & Militaria Fair (Cannington Exhibition Centre & Showgrounds):

- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023

For updates and further details please refer to the Perth Numismatic Society website: <http://www.pns.org.au/events/>

## THE COMMONWEALTH COINAGE.



The Shilling  
obverse side.



The Florin  
Reverse.



The Shilling  
Reverse.

By proclamation, which will come into force on March 1, the Commonwealth Government announces that the dimensions of the new Australian coins shall be the same as those of the corresponding British coins now in circulation; the design on the obverse side shall be the head of His Majesty the King, with the inscription:—"Edwardus VII. D: G: Britt: omn: Rex F: D: Ind: Imp:": and the design on the reverse side shall be the coat of arms of the Commonwealth of Australia, with an inscription of the denomination of the coins and date.

Observer (Adelaide), Saturday 26 February 1910, Page 30

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