

Volume 19

Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



2007 Conference Papers

The demise of the Stuart dynasty through a sequence of contemporary medals

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Using a selection of images of contemporary medallions, this paper outlines the significant events over the 150 years or more that followed the beheading of Charles I (1649) through to the end of the Stuart dynasty. These medals recorded major events and could be considered to be virtual newspapers of their day as many were reproduced in quantity and dispersed throughout the land.

In those times the problems and conflicts were usually religion-based, and today we look upon them as hideous and unthinkable. These led to the eventual deposition in 1688 by the Parliament in London of the monarch, James II, which was backed by William of Orange and an army from Holland. The numerous medallic representations of the events and characters tell the story as seen from both sides of the political divide.

After the ten years or so of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, it was decided to restore the royal line in 1660 with Charles II, the son of the beheaded King, who had already been proclaimed King of Scots on 5 February 1649 by the Scottish Parliament. Charles II tried to secure tolerance for Roman Catholics in deference to his Catholic mother, but Parliament would have none of it and he was forced to agree to an Act of Parliament, excluding Catholics from office under the

Crown, one of whom, his brother James, Duke of York, embarrassingly proved to be the eventual heir to the throne. In Ireland, unrest dragged on due to failure to recover royalist properties confiscated under Cromwell, even though the Catholics had a 5:1 numerical advantage.

It is generally accepted that Charles II was an out-and-out philanderer, on the basis of having fathered at least 50 offspring but, despite marriage, having failed to produce a single legitimate heir. Towards the end of his days this resulted in him having to agonise over a successor. On the one hand there was his eldest son, the Duke of Monmouth, who was supported by Parliament and the public and would have been a popular choice. On the other was his brother James, Duke of York, who had converted to Catholicism in the 1670s after his marriage to Mary of Modena. Despite pressure groups and plots all around, Charles eventually decided in favour of his brother who succeeded to the throne in 1685 as James II.

Religion played such a large part in the national life of the times that, although a worthy and accomplished individual, James was unpopular from the start because he was Catholic. He held the same 'Divine Right of Kings' conviction of his father, and he was determined to restore the country to Catholicism by discriminating



Figure 1. James II (1685) AR, 2.4 inches. This medal shows the standing figure of Justice trampling on the serpent of discord and commemorates the macabre events below. At her feet are the bodies of Monmouth and Argyle, their heads on blocks inscribed with their names. *Inscription: AMBITIO MALESUADA RUIT* (Ill-advised ambition falls).

MI 27 James II.

against Protestants. This did not go down at all well, and provoked the inevitable response which followed. The Duke of Monmouth considered he had a prior right to the throne and, supported by Protestants generally, and an army led by the Duke of Argyle, led an attack, but in the ensuing conflict he was defeated at Sedgemoor and beheaded one week later at Tower Hill. Ironically, a little later, the same fate befell Argyle (Fig. 1).

Catholic royalists suffered strong opposition that was never quelled and which finally came to a head in mid-1688 with the birth of a son to King James. This was dynamite and seen as the greatest threat of all, that is, the birth of a male Catholic successor who would duly have become King James III. The birth was the

catalyst to invite the Protestant William, Prince of Orange, husband of King James' elder daughter by an earlier marriage to Anne Hyde, to take the throne of England. William accepted the invitation and brought along his army for protection; here we see William's army landing at Torbay on 5 November 1688 (Fig. 2).

At this point, King James elected to remove himself and his family from the country, no doubt to the sound of the executioner sharpening his axe. First, the queen and her infant son departed from Gravesend on 9 December 1688 and landed at Calais two days later (Fig. 3). The King himself left on 20 December 1688, by which date he had been effectively deposed in a manner that was dressed up as abdication (Fig. 4).

The next medallion refers to the declaration of interregnum that followed the King's departure (Fig. 5).

There then followed a backlash against Catholicism, the populace believing that James II had acted under the influence of the Catholic Church. William was duly crowned as joint monarch along with his wife, Mary (the elder daughter of James II), Parliament having been forced to accept the situation under threat of William withdrawing back to Holland.

With French support, James II embarked on a futile Irish campaign, echoes of which still resound into the 21st century. In Ireland he commanded an army officered by Catholics and attempted to regain royalist possessions, hoping to go on and regain the English throne. However, he was soundly defeated at the Battle of the Boyne (on the East coast of Ireland) and fled back to France.



Figure 2. James II (1688) AR, 1.5 inches. *Obv*: Bust of William III. *Inscription*: GVILIELMVS III D G PRIN AVR HOL ETWES GVB. *Rev*: Prince William mounted at the head of his army on the beach at Torbay. In the foreground is a warrior raising the fainting figure of Justice. *Inscription*: TERRAS ASTRÆA REUISIT (Justice revisits earth). *Edge*: NON RAPI IMPERIUM UIS TUA SED RECIPIT (your power does not seize the empire but receives it). MI 64 James II.



Figure 3. James II (1688) AR, 2.3 inches. *Obv*: The warrior Prince is welcomed by Britannia, his fleet in the distance. *Inscription*: M BRIT EXP NAV BAT LIB REST ASSERTA. (Great Britain delivered, restored and supported by the Navy). *Rev*: An eagle casting a young bird out of the nest [Prince James] with a fleet in the distance. The remaining eaglets represent the retention of James II's daughters by his previous marriage. *Inscription*: INDIGNUM EIICIT (It ejects the unworthy one). MI 73 James II.



Figure 4. William & Mary (1689) AR, \mathcal{A} , 1.9 inches. *Obv*: A satirical bust of King James which shows him wearing a bag-wig [worn for travelling]. *Inscription*: IACOBUS II BRITAN: REX FUGITIV (James II King of Britain fugitive). *Rev*: Lightning issuing from the name of Jehovah [Hebrew] strikes a column on bank of the River Thames. *Inscription*: NON ICTV HVMANO SED FLATV DIVINO (Not by the blow of man but by the blast of heaven). *Exergue*: SPONTE FUGIT JACOB:II ANG: REX L.20 DEC: CAPTUS 23 D.1689. ITERUM FUGIT 2 JAN:1689 (James II King of England voluntarily fled from London on 20 Dec 1688 taken 23 Dec [having been blown back] and fled again 2 Jan 1689).

MI 3 William & Mary.



Figure 5. William & Mary (1689) AR, 1.9 inches. *Obv*: A bear [James II] being stung by bees from three hives [England, Scotland & Ireland]. The sting is a vote by the House of Commons on 28 Jan 1689 that excluded Roman Catholics from office, and the throne was declared vacant. *Inscriptions*: PENA COMES SCELERIS (Punishment the companion of crime). *Exergue*: SIC LIBERTATEM RELIGIONEMQ :BRITANNI A SPOLIANTIBUS VINDI-CANT. MDCLXXXVIII (The British avenge their liberty & religion from the spoilers 1688). *Rev*: A bear [The Pope] wearing a rosary and Jesuit cap is driven by the hands from heaven. *Inscription*: FORTEM VIS FORTIOR URGET (The strong a stronger power constrains). *Exergue*: BRITANNIA A DUPLICI ARBITRAR: PAPALIQ: OPPRESSIONE LIBERATA (Britain freed from oppression, etc). MI 16 William & Mary.

Queen Mary died of smallpox in 1694 and William was left to rule alone as King William III. The period that followed was punctuated by a series of medallions proclaiming the legitimacy of the deposed monarch, and these were countered as frequently as possible in support of King William, as the medallion below portrays (Fig. 6).

In 1701 Parliament passed the Act of Settlement declaring that every sovereign must in future be a member of the Church of England; and this is still in force. This was because in the eyes of Catholics the Prince of Wales (the would-be James III) remained the true heir upon the demise of James II, and Parliament anticipated no issue from the future Queen Anne. Soon after the Act was passed, James II died and, in the following year, 1702, King William also died. As decreed, it was the Protestant Anne who succeeded to the throne.

There followed a period of relative peace until, in 1708, there was an attempted invasion of England by the French accompanied by Prince James (now aged 20). Louis XIV had dispatched a squadron of vessels carrying 13,000 troops, and the day after they reached the Firth of Forth in Scotland, the English fleet appeared and the French fled.

The death of Queen Anne in 1714 and the lineage-jump to George I, a German, was the catalyst for serious unrest amongst Catholics and an uprising in Scotland in 1715. This was not helped by lowland Scotland remaining loyal to King George. The Earl of Mar assembled an army of 10,000 in the hope of re-establishing the House of Stuart and, on 13 November at the Battle of Sherrifmuir (near Dunblane), he lost to a numerically inferior force of only

3,500, led by the Duke of Argyle for the King. In December, Prince James, the Old Pretender, landed at Peterhead, Scotland, in an unsuccessful attempt to rally support, because many of the Jacobite leaders had been executed earlier. James had no alternative but to flee back to France.

By 1718 James, now aged 30, was ready for marriage, and an Irish soldier, Charles Wogan, was commissioned to secretly tour Europe to assess likely candidates. Most were too old or unsuitable in some other way until, eventually, he came across the Sobieska family, of which three were grand-daughters of the King of Poland. He selected 15 year old Clementina, struck a deal with her father, and proceeded to Rome with his prize. However, King George discovered this and arranged for Clementina to be arrested at Innsbruck, where she was detained under house arrest. Wogan and his associates hatched a daring escape plot involving a maid passing the guards to tend Clementina, switching clothes with her, and then Clementina passing the guards unnoticed in the other direction (Fig.7).

The Old Pretender, James, was away in Spain at the time and had arranged for a proxy marriage of Clementina to James Murray on 10th May 1719. He calculated that Clementina intensely disliked Murray, and this minimized any risk of the arranged marriage between the Old Pretender and her being compromised. Upon his return to Rome, James was obviously very happy with what he found, as Wogan was rewarded with a knighthood, and the union soon produced a son.

The son, Charles Edward Louis John Casimir Silvester Xavier Maria Stuart (later, commonly known as Bonnie Prince



Figure 6. William III (1696) Ar, 1.7 inches. *Obv*: Busts of Louis XIV and James II. *Inscription*: HERODES ATQVE PILATVS (Herod and Pilate), likening Louis and James in trying to murder King William to Herod and Pilate plotting against Christ. *Exergue*: ACTOR IV 26. *Rev*: A netted enclosure of Louis and James with a purse holding 100,000 pistoles. A fleet in the distance. *Inscription*: IRRITA CONSPIRATIO (Fruitless conspiracy) [alludes to a plot to assassinate King William]. *Exergue*: ADVERS GVILIEL-MVS III ANGLIAE REGEM 3 MART 1696 (3 March 1696 against William III King of England). MI 414 William III.



Figure 7. George I (1719) Ar, 1.9 inches. *Obv*: Bust of Clementina. *Inscription*: CLEMENTINA M BRITAN FR ET HIB REGINA. *Rev*: The Princess in a cart drawn at speed by two horses, rising sun and Rome in the distance. *Inscription*: FORTVNAM CAVSAMQVE SEQVOR (I follow his fortune and his cause). *Exergue*: DEC-EPTIS CVSTODIBVS MDCCXIX (The guards being deceived, 1719).

MI 49 George I.

Charlie), was born on 31st December 1720, and so now we have an Old Pretender (James) and a Young Pretender (Charles). Some time later, in 1725, there was born a second son with the given names of Henry Benedict Thomas Maria Francis Xavier Stuart and with the title 'Duke of York', bestowed by his father. Later, after converting to Catholicism, he eventually became Cardinal Bishop of Frascati. Henry publicly referred to himself as Cardinal-Duke of York.

The next medal was issued in 1729 and proclaims the legitimacy of the Stuarts. The inscription implies Charles' presence would disperse the clouds that obscured the fortunes of the family (Fig. 8).

To ensure that both Charles and Henry would be suitable to rule, James had insisted upon them being brought up as Protestants. This caused huge conflict with the Catholic Clementina, who confined herself to a nunnery and literally withdrew

from life, dying in misery at the age of only 33.

Bonnie Prince Charlie had all the qualities of a king. He was bold, possessed boundless energy, was totally fearless and restoration to the English throne was his sole ambition. He made an early impression on Louis XV and had experience of war in Spain at the age of only 13. Despite a previous treaty agreement by the French not to support the Stuarts, the idea of invasion of England was never far away. Charles waited with great patience for the promised call and eventually, in 1743, he was asked to join an invasion fleet assembled at Gravelines under Marshal Saxe. However, during the final stages of preparation, a great storm struck causing such huge devastation to the fleet that the invasion had to be cancelled for that year.

For Charles, the subsequent delay seemed to drag on interminably and he decided to proceed alone with the help of



Figure 8. George II (1729) AR Æ, 1.65 inches. *Obv*: Bust of Prince Charles, the star indicating his princely origins. *Inscription*: MICAT INTER OMNES (He shines in the midst of all). *Rev*: Bust of Prince Henry. *Inscription*: ALTER AB ILLO (The next after him). *Edge*: DIE XXXI DECEMBR MDCCXX EXTVLIT OS SACRVM COELO. MI 34 George II.



Figure 9. George II (1745) Æ, 1.4 inches. *Obv*: Prince Charles in highland dress points the way. *Inscription*: CAROLUS PRINCEPS. *Rev*: Fame flying with trumpets and crown over the fortified city of Edinburgh. *Inscription* on banner: SUUM CUIQUE (To each his own). MI 254 George II.

his Jacobite sympathisers. Disguised as a divinity student, he embarked on the eighteen-day journey to Scotland in two ships, but again misfortune intervened when they met the English ship HMS Lion. They were engaged and such serious damage occurred to the other of Charles' two ships that it had to return to France. Charles arrived at Loch Nan, Eriskay, Scotland on 25th July 1745 with his famous Seven Men of Moidart and, despite initial resistance, established a base where supporters began to gather. Within a few weeks a small army had assembled, which then proceeded towards Edinburgh, increasing in strength *en route*. There was only minor opposition on the way, which was easily dealt with. Meanwhile, government forces under General Cope were manoeuvring to engage, but failed. Edinburgh was taken on 17th September; Charles' father, James, was declared King of Scots (Fig. 9).

Soon after, at Prestonpans of which he had local knowledge, Charles engaged and defeated Cope. Charles' army had safely crossed a bog during the night and

massacred the government forces as they slept. Following this, the Jacobites marched south to England, choosing the western route via Carlisle, after hearing that more government forces under General Wade were making their way north from the east. Also, Charles was hopeful of gathering more support, especially as his army passed through Lancashire which was known to be sympathetic to the Jacobite cause.

On 15th November 1745, the Jacobites arrived at Carlisle and the city succumbed without resistance. Charles declared his father King of England at Carlisle Cross in the market square, still in the same position today where it was in 1745. He then marched on and arrived at Manchester on 22nd November, where his army was joined by the Manchester Regiment. News arrived that a battle-hardened force under the Duke of Cumberland had just arrived from France and was manoeuvring to engage. However, this was averted by Lord George, one of Charles' military commanders, who with great skill succeeded in diverting Cumberland towards Wales. Charles was thus free to advance yet further to a point



Figure 10. George II (1745) Æ, 1.35 inches. *Obv:* Bust of Duke of Cumberland. *Inscription:* HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS WILLIAM DUKE OF CUMBERLAND. *Rev:* Prince Charles at the head of his retreating army. *Inscription:* THE PRETENDER'S LAST SHIFT OR REBELS RACE FOR LIFE 1745. MI 263 George II.

just south of Derby, some 130 miles from London. Here, news arrived that an army was being formed at Finchley to block the advance but, in fact, this comprised untrained and poorly armed rabble. There was chaotic activity in London itself with shops closing and being boarded up, and the King preparing to evacuate. Secretaries of State, judges and civil servants generally were all preparing to switch their allegiances. Also, the Bank of England stopped issuing all monies except sixpenny coins to prevent a run on the currency.

It was at this point that Charles' generals became overwhelmingly concerned about the circle of government forces surrounding them and, after several long and bitter arguments with Prince Charles, a retreat began. The retreat was conducted as skilfully as had been the advance, with conflict being avoided apart from a minor rearguard action at Clifton (Cumbria) where the Jacobites succeeded in beating off an advance party.

The following medal is thought to have been struck during the retreat from Derby to Carlisle, as suggested by the reverse inscription (Fig. 10).

Upon arriving at Carlisle, the Duke of Cumberland found serious resistance in the form of a small garrison left there by Charles, with local support. The advance was held, awaiting the arrival of cannon from the coast with which to bombard the city which was eventually forced into surrender on 30th December 1745. This proved to be an historic event in itself as it was the last military action on English soil (Fig. 11).

After the fall of Carlisle, the local assizes saw to it that many of the captured rebels were hanged and that many others were transported to Virginia. The Duke of Cumberland went south to London to reassure his father, the King, while his army made their way north into Scotland in pursuit of the Jacobites. However, he was soon to rejoin to take command after the Jacobites prevailed in an action at Falkirk on 17th January. Eventually the inevitable major conflict took place on Culloden Moor, near Inverness, on 16th April 1746. It was a particularly gruesome affair during which Charles' tired and hungry army was annihilated. The aftermath was equally as cruel, with the captured burnt alive and the injured put to the sword (Fig. 12).

After the battle Charles tried in vain to rally his forces for another assault. So determined was he that he had to be forcibly restrained and his escape engineered. French troops, supposedly on the way under his brother, Henry, had failed to materialise, and it has to be said that if Britain's traditional enemy ever had a chance to deliver a fatal blow it had seriously missed the opportunity.

With this, Charles' escape began. He spent five months as a hunted fugitive with a £30,000 ransom on his head, and



Figure 11. George II (1745) Æ, 1.35 inches.
Inscription: REBELLION JUSTLY REWARDED.
Exegue: AT CARLILE (sic) DEC 1745.

Many medallions were issued to commemorate the fall of Carlisle, one of which is shown here.

Note: At the time of writing, visitors to Carlisle can still see examples of the actual cannons, located in front of the two citadel towers that once formed the southern entrance through the city walls, that were used to bombard the city.

MI 262 George II.



Figure 12. George II (1746) Brass, 1.4 inches.
Inscription: REBELLION (sic) JUSTLY REWARDED.
Exergue: CULLODEN 16 AP. 1746.

As with Carlisle, many medals were struck to commemorate the Battle of Culloden, and the one shown here is only representative of that long series.

MI 274 George II.

showed amazing stamina and fortitude in the wet and cold. This included living in caves, surviving a 70-mile journey over two days in an open boat to Long Island in the Hebrides in a fearful storm, then to South Uist whilst pursued. This was followed by a perilous journey to Skye with the help of Flora MacDonald, while disguised as her servant-girl with the name of Betty Burke. He continued in hiding until 13th September when the news came that two French privateers had arrived in Loch Nan. With this, he travelled the 100 miles or so within a week and boarded *L'Heureux* at Borrowdale on 20th September 1746, departing Scotland for good (Fig. 13).

You would think that this would be the end of the insurgency, but it actually dragged on for quite a few years to follow. First, a year or so later, Charles broke contact with his younger brother, Henry Benedict, the Catholic Cardinal Bishop of Frascati. This was seen as doing great damage to the Stuart cause. A little later, the fearless Charles made a secret visit to London in September 1750 for various Jacobite meetings and a tour of the battlements. A range of medals commemorate these events.

The next significant event was the death of James III in 1766, leaving Charles as *de jure* King. He had, however, by now developed a serious taste for the good life

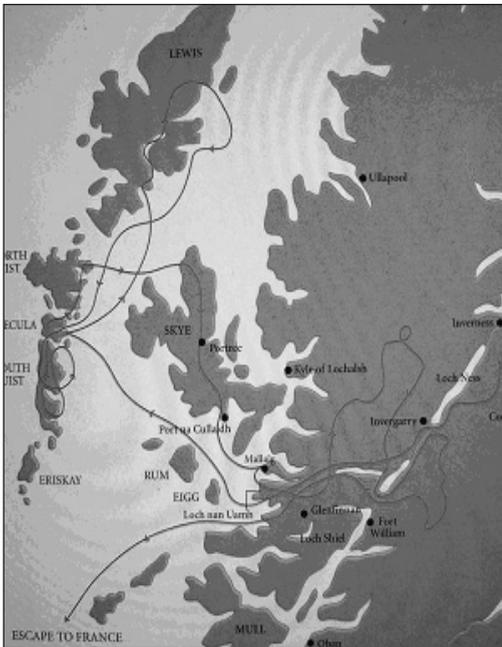


Figure 13. Map of part of the coast of North-West Scotland and the New Hebrides, showing Charles' complex escape route to France.

and was in degeneration. He had always demonstrated the classic symptoms of alcoholism, by appearing sober after his companions had all been drunk under the table. Although he was by now in middle-age, Charles' adherents considered he needed an heir and they set about finding a wife for him in much the same way that his mother had been found. Colonel Ryan was engaged for the task and chose Louise of Stolberg. They were married by proxy in 1772.

Some references indicate that the marriage went well for the first few years, but it ended up in disaster. Charles was aged 52 and Louise only 19. Charles was back on the bottle within two years and

Louise transgressed with a suitor, was discovered, and ran off to Rome to seek the help of the Pope and of her brother-in-law, Henry Benedict.

Charles continued to degenerate, and eventually died on 31st January 1788. Henry assumed the Stuart right of accession as Henry IX and styled himself as such, but it was an empty title and everybody knew it.

Henry lost most of the Stuart wealth in the ensuing French Revolution, and the British government came to his rescue. They saw to it that he reached the safety of Venice, where George III sent him a generous gift of money. Eventually he returned to the family home at Frascati where he died in 1807, bequeathing to George III's eldest son the few remaining crown jewels in Stuart possession. Henry's remains were taken to Rome for burial, and the Pope agreed that Charles' coffin should also go. Henry and Charles now lie beside their father in St Peters. Above them is a handsome marble monument which was placed there on the instigation of the Prince Regent, the future George IV (Fig. 14). The Houses of Stuart and Hanover were reconciled at last, and apart from a long series of illegitimates the Stuart line was now complete.

In conclusion, Figure 15 shows the result of a 'pull' taken in 1928 from a set of rusty paper money plates found in a bog some 40 miles south of Culloden after the battle. They were apparently engraved by Robert Strange, a gentleman of Prince Charles' lifeguard, and demonstrate a style consistent with a Jacobite medal issued in 1750.



Figure 14. The marble monument, sculpted by Antonio Canova, that was placed over the graves of King James II, Charles Stuart and Henry Benedict.

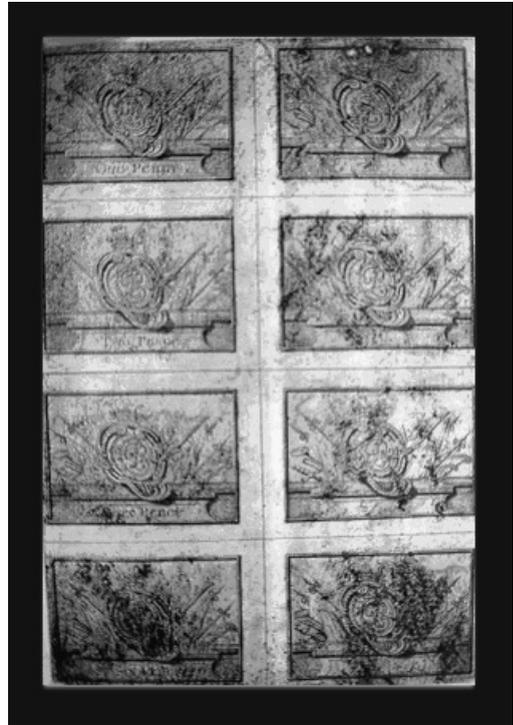


Figure 15. Print of a 'pull' taken in 1928 from a set of rusty paper money plates found in a bog some forty miles south of Culloden.

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Charles Rodney Stewart-Farthing is a native of the city of Carlisle in Cumberland (Cumbria from 1974), one of the locations central to the Jacobite quest in 1745 to regain the throne of England. He joined the Royal Navy at a young age and served in the Fleet Air Arm for 36 years before retiring from active service in 1991. Charles served on a number of aircraft carriers including HMS Bulwark, Albion, Centaur, Ark Royal and Invincible, and visited Australia in 1959 (Albion) and 1983 (Invincible) as part of this service. Charles took every opportunity to further his education before being commissioned

in 1969, and eventually served as the Deputy Air Engineering Officer of HMS Invincible and held various senior posts during his 15 years in the Ministry of Defence.

With a life-long interest in numismatics and being an avid collector of coins, medals and tokens, Charles has formed a huge collection including the entire spectrum of Cumbrian material and, at the present time, is engaged in cataloguing the numismatics of Cumbria for eventual publication. Another of his projects is to produce a detailed paper on the Norman mint of Carlisle, the mint signature of which is inextricably linked with the mint of Cardiff (and others). Charles joined the British Numismatic Society in 1984, and served as Secretary (1998-2005) and Membership Secretary (2005-2007).

