

VOLUME 4



JOURNAL OF THE
NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA.

<http://naa-online.com/>

“THE KANGAROO OFFICE” A NINETEENTH CENTURY “STING”

BY JOHN SHARPLES, Museum of Victoria

London was the scene of one of the most successful confidence tricks ever perpetrated upon coin collectors and museums. Not a tacky fraud, but, as the Americans would call it, a classic sting. The numismatic sting was naturally centred around the remote and near mythically wealthy Colony of Victoria in Australia.

In the Hollywood tradition we feel no bitterness towards the perpetrators. Nor do we feel sympathy for those bitten. They allowed their passion to possess rarities to blind them to the true nature of what they were buying. In accordance with the sting tradition, those stung never learned that it happened.

The preliminaries of the sting belong to the period of the Australian gold rush, which began in late 1851. They involved a private mint being sent to Australia by the London medallist W. J. Taylor. The project is commonly called the Kangaroo Office. The sting itself occurred in the 1860's and is carried forward to this day. To achieve such success it had to be quite subtle. It worked because it offered collectors the two things they want most, a good story and some rarities to back it up. Sadly, when one tries to place Taylor's venture in it's Australian context, it does not fit.

- The first two tasks of numismatists are to describe all items belonging to a given series and to place them in a chronological framework. After that, we can interpret, discuss, argue and thoroughly enjoy ourselves.

With the series of Australian trademans' tokens, the first task was largely completed sixty-five years ago when Dr. Arthur Andrews published his study *Australasian Coins and Tokens*¹. Since then, only one important study has been produced, Gilbert Heyde's *Unofficial Coins of Colonial Australia and New Zealand*, published in 1967². Heyde improved on Andrews in his differentiating between patterns, re-strikes, concoctions and issued pieces and through his better understanding of the importance of dies.

To date no attempt has been made to develop a chronology for the undated pieces. It was while undertaking this work on a limited scale that problems were uncovered.

The study was of the early undated tokens of Melbourne, capital of the Colony of Victoria. Melbourne was the city where Australia's first tradesman's tokens were issued. The firm Annand, Smith and Co., family grocers was responsible for this innovation (fig. 1.) The event was well documented. The newspapers of the era picked up the story – one supporting the issue and the other denouncing it. A Melbourne daily newspaper, the *Argus* reported on 20 October 1849³ that the tokens had been issued “to obviate the extreme inconvenience occasioned by the scarcity of coppers”. While on the 29th, the *Melbourne Morning Herald* reported that Councillor Annand was having legal proceedings brought against him as he was the importer and utterer⁴.



Fig. 1. Annand Smith penny (1849).

Today, those legal proceedings cannot be traced. Presumably they were based on the fact that the reverse of the Annand Smith token closely resembled that of the Imperial penny. Indeed, the Soho Mint in Birmingham struck the Australian tokens with the same reverse die used on the Imperial pence of 1806-7. This identification is based on a comparison of the penny and token reverses and is supported by the fact that the Soho Mint Day Book recorded a charge for only one new die⁵. The legal proceedings seem to have failed, if they were ever

1. Andrews, Arthur Dr., *Australasian Tokens and Coins*, Sydney, 1921. Reprinted 1965.

2. Heyde, Gilbert Christoph, *Unofficial Coins of Colonial Australia and New Zealand*, Adelaide, 1967.

3. *Argus*, 20 October 1849, p. 6.

4. *Melbourne Morning Herald*, 29 October 1849, p. 2.

5. Birmingham City Library Archives, Boulton and Watt Collection, *Mint and Coinage Day Book 1834-49*, May 23, 1849.

brought. Annand Smith & Co. soon sent to England for a second issue. In the interim the Soho Mint had closed down and their equipment, including the token die had been acquired by Ralph Heaton. Heaton's has recently announced with pride that its first production was probably the second issue of copper tokens for the Melbourne firm Annand, Smith & Co.⁶

In January 1850, the *Argus* offered further comment on the tokens under the headline "Copper Coins".⁷ It read: "These useful articles continue exceedingly scarce. The supply imported by Annand, Smith & Co. has been all exhausted. These gentlemen inform us, that so highly was the accommodation afforded by these appreciated that they had applications for them not only from all quarters of Melbourne, but also from Geelong and other distant places."

From the relative rate of survival of the two Annand Smith issues, it would appear that the original number struck for each issue was about the same. The Soho Mint Day Book related to the first issue gives sufficient information to calculate the actual number struck for the first issue as 15,400 pieces. The mint struck 5 cwt. at 27.5 tokens to the pound. The issue left Birmingham on 27 May 1849.

Given the date of the Soho mint auction, late April 1850, and the time required by Heaton's to set up their mint and obtain Foreign Office approval, which did not arrive until November, it is likely that the actual striking of the second Annand Smith issue was late in 1850. With the four to five months needed to ship the tokens to Melbourne, the issue date should be put in 1851. Even with this delay, it is probable that Annand, Smith & Co. still had a monopoly on token issue in Victoria (fig. 2).

By the end of 1851 gold had been officially discovered in the Colony. This may have led to an increase in token issues, but not a dramatic one. The maximum number of issuers by the start of 1854, including Annand Smith, was

four. This can be established simply by reference to the Business directories of the era.⁸ No other token issuing firms existed up to that date.



Fig. 2. Annand Smith Heaton & Son Reverse (1851).

The second Melbourne issuer appears to have been J. McFarlane, a Scot, who had arrived in Melbourne in 1841. He described his business as "wholesale and Retail Grocer" on his tokens and this is useful in dating his issue. McFarlane's business gradually changed from a grocer to a wine and spirit merchant in the early 1850's. Reference to the wine trade appeared in conjunction with groceries in his Directory entry in 1853 and in 1854 all reference to groceries stopped. The McFarlane issue therefore must belong in the period 1851 to 1852. This can be further fine tuned to an extent, as by late 1852 when entries for the 1853 Business Directory were being canvassed, McFarlane was already involved in wine and spirits.

The third issuer was also a grocer, E. DeCarle & Co. His pence tokens are believed to have been struck by Pope & Co., Birmingham. This issue predates 1855 when DeCarle had become an Auctioneer. It could belong to 1854, but that is very unlikely as orders from England seem to have taken about 10 months to fill. DeCarle has no entry in the 1854 Directory but is an auctioneer by the end of the year. This hardly leaves enough time for the issue to be arranged. In 1853 he was a partner with a Mr. Holme in a wine and spirit trade. Again therefore the issue seems to belong in the 1851 to 1852 bracket.

6. Sweeny, James O., *A Numismatic History of the Birmingham Mint*, Birmingham, 1981, p. 8, and Appendix VI.

7. *Argus*, 14 January 1850, p. 2.

8. Unfortunately, Business Directories for Melbourne from this period have not survived for each year. The following have been traced and are referred to in the body of the text by their year.

1849 Port Phillip Squatting Directory

1850 Not traced

1851 The Victorian Directory

1852 Not traced

1853 The New Quarterly Melbourne Directory

1854 Melbourne Commercial, Squatters & Official Directory for 1854, Compiled by Joseph Butterfield

1855 Melbourne Commercial Directory for 1855, compiled by Joseph Butterfield.

The final early issuer was Isaac Booth. His token issue is more difficult to date. He described himself on his token as a “Draper, outfitter &.”

Unlike his counterparts, he was fairly successful in that trade. He occupied the one shop from 1851 until 1855 and made no change to what he did⁹. That his issue belongs to the first part of that period is argued from his employment of the Britannia reverse. Britannia in the form employed on Imperial pence, only occurs on three Melbourne issues; Annand Smith & Co., E. De Carle & Co. and Isaac Booth. Two of these belong before 1853 and it is suggested that the third should also be placed when this Britannia was in fashion.

It was into this fairly simple context of early issues that W. J. Taylor’s Kangaroo Office had to fit. When the Kangaroo docked in October 1853 there was a total of four token issuers in Melbourne. Three were grocers and one was a draper and all had issued only copper pence.

Forrer, in his *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* gives a reasonably succinct account of the people involved and the purported aims of the Kangaroo Office.¹⁰ In the entry for W. J. Taylor he states that “in November 1852, Taylor sent out a coining press and complete plant to Melbourne. The undertaking was financed by a small syndicate, and Mr. W. R. Scaiffe was in charge . . . Dies for Port Phillip gold pieces of 1853 and Victorian shilling and sixpence of the same time were probably made by Taylor and sent out . . . Taylor’s plan to mint gold into pieces stamped and of convenient weight fell through because by the time his mint was ready the banks were buying gold at full value. The press was bought by Mr. Thomas Stokes in 1857!”

Some additional information was supplied by W. S. W. Vaux in his publication of the Kangaroo Office gold pieces!¹¹ The pieces were introduced to the Numismatic community in the 1864 *Numismatic Chronicle* with the lines “I have much pleasure in calling your attention to four curious pieces in gold, struck in the year 1853, when it was proposed to erect a separate mint for Port Phillip (Melbourne), in South

Australia. They cannot indeed be considered specimens of art, but they will serve hereafter as an interesting record of what the most prosperous colony England ever founded intended as the type of their national coinage.” He then described the pieces and continued.. “These pieces are now preserved in the British Museum; and I am informed by Mr. William Morgan Brown, from whom they were purchased during the last year, that twenty-seven sets were originally struck, and that of these all have been melted down except one which is preserved in Melbourne, and the one I have described above.” (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Kangaroo Office Obverse.

William Morgan Brown was the technician sent out to assist Scaiffe. Like all sources of information published in numismatic literature for the Kangaroo Office he was, apparently, a reliable eye-witness. Yet, despite this general apparent reliability there are discrepancies, particularly with information relating to the chronology of events. The chronology is crucial. After all the profit from the scheme was to be achieved by purchasing cheap gold on the fields and then releasing it at full value in token form. The opportunity to do that was very limited, to be successful the enterprise had to be active quite early in the gold rush period. Only cheap gold would make the venture profitable according to its stated aims. Forrer, presumably basing his information on Dr. Bousfield, a Taylor specialist, gives November 1852 as the date of departure of the venture. Yet Scaiffe, whose recollections were recorded in 1893, gives November 1852 as the time when the concept was first conceived!¹² Scaiffe states that the equipment arrived in Melbourne on a ship called the Kangaroo on 23 October 1853.

9. Gardner, Frank. “Trade Tokens and the Firms that issued them” *Australian Storekeepers and Traders Journal*, 23 December 1910, pp. 11-12.

10. Forrer, L. *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists etc.*, London, 1916, Vol. VI, pp. 41-43.

11. Vaux, W.S.W. “Proposed Coinage for Port Phillip, Australia”, *N.C. New Series*, Vol. IV, 1864, pp. 64-65.

12. Andrews, *op.cit.* pp. 124-125.

Given the name of the ship, the dates of departure from London and arrival at Melbourne are not a matter for debate. The Kangaroo sailed from London on its only voyage to Australia on 26 June 1853. It went via the Cape and arrived at Melbourne on 26 October 1853. Listed among the passengers were a Mr. and Mrs. Scaiffe. Among the cargo it carried was one bale of ironmongery.¹³

There is no doubt that in the early days of the gold rush there were opportunities to purchase raw gold on the fields at very low prices. There were a number of reasons for this. Among them was uncertainty of the quality of the gold;¹⁴ the costs and dangers involved in transporting the gold to London where it could be coined; a refusal by the banks to take a direct interest in gold-buying (which left the field open to often unscrupulous private gold buyers); and finally, there was not enough coin in the colony to pay for the tons of gold being found.

At that time news took three to four months to reach London from Australia. That is, a syndicate forming in London would be acting on events which had occurred some four months earlier. Therefore, if the equipment and personnel for the Kangaroo Office had been sent in November 1852 the expectations would have been based on prices on the fields in July of that year. Indeed, in July gold was selling in Melbourne at sixty shillings an ounce.¹⁵ At Ballarat fifty-five shillings would not have been uncommon. This was a figure mentioned by Scaiffe.

However, the ship Kangaroo did not sail until the end of June 1853. Over four months before that date the price in Melbourne had stabilised at seventy seven shillings, a mere tenpence halfpenny under the Royal Mint price.¹⁶ Taylor need only have read the London Times to know of this development.

The reasons for the rise in price are clear, and most were spelled out in the London Times throughout 1852 and early 1853. Firstly, it was ascertained that the gold was of very high purity. Then, still in 1852, the Adelaide Assay Office opened and began to purchase gold and strike its own tokens (fig. 4).¹⁷ In September 1852 the Times reported large numbers of sovereigns were being sent to Australia and there was a widely held belief that a Branch of the Royal Mint would soon be in place in Australia which would naturally be paying full price for gold.¹⁸



Fig. 4. Adelaide Assay Office £5 Obverse.

There appears to be no justification, for Taylor to send his Kangaroo Office to Australia. In his defence however, it should be noted that the Times did act as somewhat of a scandal sheet, giving undue coverage to the occasional occurrence of very low prices paid for raw gold. For instance, on November 6, 1852 a price of fifty-six shillings an ounce was quoted from new diggings at Tatiara. However this fact should have been associated with an earlier comment that the gold was pale and believed alloyed with silver.¹⁹ One cannot imagine that Taylor was so blind as to base a 13,000 pound venture on such reports.

So we are left with the problem of why Taylor went ahead with his impossible Kangaroo Office project.

13. *Argus*, 25 October 1853, p. 4, col.a and 28 October 1853, p. 4, col. a-b.

14. *The London Times*, 8 September 1851, p. 7, col e, and Searl, Geoffrey, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne University Press, 1963, p. 23.

15. Gold prices, unless specified otherwise, are drawn from the weekly article in the *Argus* "Melbourne Gold Circular" by Edward Khull. This is the same Khull mentioned below in relation to the Kangaroo Office gold pieces.

16. *The London Times*, 6 October 1852 gives the price of gold at the Royal Mint, London as £3.17.10½. On 13 January 1853 the paper reported "... In one respect the goldfields of New South Wales are certainly inferior to Victoria. The Victorian gold is fine and pure. . . New South Wales gold sells at £3.7.6. oz. Victorian fields at Mt. Alexandra, Bendigo and Ballarat sell their yield at £3.10.9 even at Sydney?"

17. *op. cit.* 13 January 1853, p. 5, col.d.

18. For shipments of coin to Australia see *The London Times*, 13 September 1852, p. 6, col.e. Plans to establish a Branch of the Royal Mint in Melbourne began in 1852. By 1853 pattern coins for the Sydney Mint had already been struck in London.

19. *The London Times*, 29 December 1852, p. 5, col.a.

According to Scaiffe, it took six months for the press to be removed from the wharf and set up. It was therefore late April or May 1854 before any local striking could have been undertaken. The suggestion, apparently made by Scaiffe, that the price of gold rose during this six months has already been debunked. The report in Andrews also states that the Kangaroo Office was in Franklin Street West.²⁰ Indeed, the Melbourne Business Directory of 1854 does show Mr. Scaiffe occupying an address in Franklin Street West. However, he was not a medallist, nor gold buyer, or assay office. He was a merchant and commission agent.²¹

At the turn of the century, Thomas Stokes, who purchased the press in 1857, stated that he thought that the first time the press had been set up was at the Melbourne Exhibition of 1854.²² That would place its earliest use around the end of September 1854; the closing date for entries for the Exhibition was the 20th of that month.

Numismatic evidence, however suggests that Stokes' recollection was incorrect and that the press was in operation for a time from late June or early July 1854.

There were only five merchants who employed Scaiffe to strike tokens. Two of these are important for establishing the start of his minting operation in Melbourne. The first merchant to deal with Scaiffe was James Nokes, a grocer. Nokes had a special commemorative die prepared for the reverse of his issue. He commemorated the arrival of Sir Charles Hotham in the Colony on 22 June 1854 (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. James Nokes ½d, 1854.

During 1854, Nokes sold his company to T. W. Thomas. When Thomas took over, he had a new obverse cut (fig. 6), but continued to employ Nokes commemorative die. Thomas'

production then should not have been too far removed from June 1854. It is most unlikely that both the Nokes and Thomas issues were squeezed into the last months of 1854. Far better to allow the press to be set up before Thomas Stokes suggestion of September.



Fig. 6. W. Thomas ½d, 1854.

Scaiffe's other three issues are of little use for this argument. Both the Thrale and Cross issue and that of Crombie, Claperton and Findlay can only be bracketed to the period 1854-56. While the last issue, Adamson, Watts and McKechnie belongs after 1 May 1855, the date of the formation of the partnership.²³

The press may have been set up earlier than the Nokes commemorative issue. There are two issues that cannot be accurately dated which may precede June 22. One was a small issue for Nokes, struck with one of the standard dies Scaiffe brought out from London, the seated Australia. This is a quite rare token however which might be placed in the short period between the preparation of the Nokes obverse die and the commemorative reverse. Such a suggestion however is difficult to sustain if the tokens are examined. Two forms of the Nokes/Australia type can be identified; a proof-like specimen striking and a working strike. All examples of the latter examined were struck with the Nokes obverse die in a very deteriorated state (fig. 7). Only on the specimens is it perfect. Thus the Nokes/Australia



Fig. 7. James Nokes cracked die obverse.

20. Andrews, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

21. 1854 Directory, p. viii.

22. "Mr. Stokes reply to Mr. Chitty", *The Antiquarian Gazette*, 26 August 1906, reprinted in *A.C.R.*, Vol. 11, No. 9, March 1975, p. 5.

23. Gardner *op. cit.* 23 December 1910, p. 11.

token seems to exist as a rejected pattern and as a later working strike. The adoption of the Australia reverse follows the development of a crack in the commemorative reverse die. This crack was ignored by Thomas when he began to strike and is found on all examples of his tokens. The chronological importance of the Nokes/Australia type does not therefore argue for Scaiffe operating the press at an earlier date than late June 1854.

The other possible early striking was that by Scaiffe himself employing the stock dies he had brought out from London, Australia and the Kangaroo with exergue reference to the 1851



Fig. 8. Scaiffe's Stock 1/2d.

London Exhibition (fig. 8). This is a very complex issue employing many dies which can be identified only from corrosion variations which they suffered on the trip out. There were also prooflike specimens struck in London. In time, die linking might develop a relative chronology for the series but there seems to be no

way other than a chance controlled archaeological discovery that any of these tokens can be given a specific date which could help determine the beginnings of token production in Melbourne.

In any case although an exact date cannot be given it is fairly clear that the press came into use in mid 1854 to strike token halfpence. Subsequent employment of the press can also be traced.

Many of the dies brought out on the Kangaroo are preserved in the collection of the Museum of Victoria. These include the dies for the Kangaroo Office gold pieces (fig. 9), tradesman's tokens and advertising pieces for the Kangaroo Office. The collection also includes one of the medal dies prepared in Melbourne for the 1854 Exhibition.²⁴

The 1854 medal die is quite informative. The working face has been well cut and prepared for striking, but the shaping of the steel to fit the press was very crude indeed (fig. 10). It was not produced from a blank die brought out from London. As one would expect in 1854 Melbourne, the quality of available steel was not very high. The preserved die is in fact the second prepared for the Exhibition memento medal. The first cracked even though only striking a few tin medals on a hand powered press.



Fig. 9. Die for Kangaroo Office, One Ounce.



Fig. 10. Die for 1854 Exhibition Tin Medal.

24. The dies were donated by Messrs. Stokes and Sons Pty. Ltd. in 1933. See Kenyon, A. S., "Report of the Honorary Numismatist", *Report of the Trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria for 1933*, p. 57.

With the exception of the gold piece dies, W. J. Taylor sent only halfpenny sized dies to Australia. Five new issues of penny tokens were made by Melbourne firms during the period that Scaiffe could have been active, 1854-56. All were manufactured in England with at least one by Taylor himself in London. This is another reflection of the lack of die quality steels in Melbourne.

Taylor supplied his Australian mint with a variety of halfpenny sized dies. Some were fully engraved and hardened before shipping, some were partly made up with space left for additional legends and some blank dies were included. There was also a set of text punches for simple preparation of the blanks.

The numismatic evidence so far shows that Scaiffe set up the press about eight months after his arrival in Melbourne. This was explained in the oral tradition by the delays in getting the press moved from the wharf mentioned above. At that time he began to strike halfpenny tokens employing the finished dies sent out from London and making simple working dies from the blanks he had brought with him. Yet, even if attracting five traders to issue tokens could be conceived as a success, this has nothing to do with the Kangaroo Office. The Kangaroo Office was to purchase raw gold and strike gold tokens.

The British Museum purchased what they were led to believe was one of twenty-seven sets of Kangaroo Office gold pieces. They bought them as patterns for a proposed coinage. Yet, we have just established that the press was not in operation till around July 1854, while the "patterns" were dated and supposedly struck in Australia in 1853. Add to this the fact that the project was already doomed before it left England and that the entire known history of the enterprise can be traced back to eye-witnesses who stood to profit from the acceptance of the story, and an examination of other accounts of the project is clearly needed.

On 15 September 1854 both the *Argus* and the Melbourne Morning Herald carried relevant articles which have been ignored because the established story was so good. The *Argus* said:

"At the Chamber of Commerce yesterday, several tokens of pure Victorian gold were exhibited by Mr. Khull, bullion broker. They

were manufactured by Mr. Scaiffe, and are to be exhibited at our Palace of Industry on the 20th inst."

It then described the gold pieces and continued:

"We cannot speak too highly of the excellence of the workmanship. It is perfect and is a most satisfactory and most pleasing proof of the great advancement of the art in Melbourne. We understand the artist intended to prosecute the manufacture of such tokens as a circulating medium, but the high price of crude gold prevents this for the present. As objects of curiosity, however, we doubt not they will be in demand, and certainly, the talented artist deserves every possible encouragement!"

The *Melbourne Morning Herald* carried the story in their Commercial News section. They add that they were intended for the Exhibition and were struck with gold of superior purity supplied by Mr. Khull, and that they were at present in his possession.

What a wonderfully complex situation! Here is a group of "objects of curiosity" which were "intended for the Exhibition" of 1854 the purchase of which, the inhabitants of Melbourne are told will give the "talented artist" the encouragement he deserves. They are not told that the dies were cut in London. Yet while the defunct plan to "manufacture . . . tokens as a circulating medium" is mentioned there is clearly no intention to proceed with this programme nor is there any suggestion that the pieces struck are considered as pattern or experimental strikings. They are mementos of the 1854 Exhibition, medals!


There was even an illustrated advertisement in the *Argus* of October 28, 1854. - "Pieces of 1/4, 1/2, 1 and 2 oz. of pure Australian gold, on sale at the Medal Press, in the Exhibition and by Mr. Khull, Bullion Broker, Collins Street." Sadly, no price was quoted (Fig. 11).

There was no Kangaroo Office. Nor was there ever an attempt to establish one. The ship *Kangaroo* carried one bale of ironmongery, but the £13,000 invested in the venture had little to do with that. The main business was in colonial stores. Bale after bale are listed on the ship's manifest. Scaiffe set up as a merchant in Franklin Street West to sell that merchandise. This was why the venture continued even after it was clear in London that the price of gold

had risen. The primary purpose of the voyage of the *Kangaroo* was to bring Colonial goods to Melbourne. The secondary thought was that of multiplying their profit by converting the cheap gold dust which they would have accepted for their goods into full gold value tokens was of minor importance. Unfortunately, Hodgkin, Taylor and Tyndall, the men who chartered the *Kangaroo*, were not the only nor the quickest to send goods for sale in Melbourne. By 1854 the storehouses of Melbourne were bursting with unsold Colonial goods. This was the true nature of the venture, and where the loss really occurred.

belonging to the bullion broker Khull. At the Exhibition the press struck tin commemoratives (fig. 12) and after the Exhibition closed it was used mainly for agricultural prize medals such as those of the Port Phillip Farmers Society (fig. 13).²⁵

Miscellaneous.

GOLD

TOKENS.

PIECES of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1 and 2 oz of pure
Australian gold, on Sale at Metal Press, in the
 Exhibition, and by Mr E. Khull, Bullion-Broker, Collins
 street. 64

Fig. 11. Advertisement for Kangaroo Office pieces.

A private mint was established employing the press sent out by Taylor. Its main work was the striking of medals, though it was employed to strike some halfpence tokens. The earliest medals were the gold pieces usually called the Kangaroo Office patterns, the gold probably



Fig. 13. Port Phillip Farmers Silver Medal.

The “sting” occurred in England. William Morgan Brown convinced the British Museum that the gold medals were patterns for a Port Phillip coinage. Taylor also capitalised. He struck proof-like copies of the token halfpenny, and muled it with the U.S. Washington Cent reverse (fig. 14). He also produced pattern sixpences and shillings in gold, silver, bronze and tin, with and without edge milling, and muled the shilling reverse, a pattern fourpence, also muled this time with a Tasmanian Token, and at least two pattern twopences (fig. 15), one of which he also muled with a Tasmanian halfpenny token. Then there were special trials on old pennies, off-metal strikes, and an 1854 two ounce piece in gold and copper struck for Murdoch who would buy almost anything rare. The list could go on but this makes the point well enough.



Fig. 12. 1854 Exhibition Tin Medal.

25. Australian Coin Review, Vol. 12 No. 9, March 1975, p. 5.

Collectors will have their rare coins and tokens. They will not pay as much for medals because. . . private mints cannot be trusted perhaps? There would have been no need for the minters to break any laws. The story of the Kangaroo Office could sell any number of “patterns”. It is a good story, perhaps it improves as we come to fully understand it. And it has a moral as it clearly shows that as long as collectors are willing to buy without understanding and are willing to pay a top price, somebody will be happy to oblige them.



Fig. 14. Taylors “United States” Reverse.



Fig. 15. Taylors “Two Pence” Patterns.