



VOLUME 5



JOURNAL OF THE
NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

OF AUSTRALIA.

<http://naa-online.com>

“EDDY”

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Princess Alexandra, wife of Edward The Prince of Wales, gave birth to Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward on January 8th 1864. Nicknamed “Eddy”, the child was second in line to the throne of England after his father Edward, eldest son of Victoria and Albert. The child was named Albert out of respect to Edward’s late father and to appease the express wishes of Queen Victoria. Eddy seemed from an early age, not to be the robust male child that his brother George, born in 1865, proved himself to be.

Eddy’s formal education began in 1871. Under the watchful guidance of the Reverend John Neale Dalton, Eddy and George commenced their education. The Reverend Dalton was perhaps, the ‘complete’ master in that he ensured the boys’ formal learning stretched not only from the normal subjects of Mathematics, English, History, Music and Geography, but also encompassed horse riding, swimming and many other sporting activities.

Unfortunately, Eddy, although taught by a dedicated and competent tutor, showed very little aptitude for his academic studies. On a number of occasions the Reverend Dalton sadly reported to the Prince of Wales that his charge had, quote:- ‘an abnormally dormant condition in his mental powers’. Strong words indeed, but nonetheless true. Eddy’s lethargy in most of his endeavours created concern for his parents. Dalton’s answer to the problem was the recommendation that Eddy and George should follow a career in the navy.

After much discussion and planning and with the ultimate consent of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the two boys set forth as midshipmen in the small corvette HMS BACCHANTE. Dalton offered to resign from the position as tutor to the boys but was coerced into remaining their mentor and subsequently joined the two young Princes aboard BACCHANTE. They left Spithead on September 17th 1879, Eddy was just 15 years old.

The small 4000 ton corvette became home for the boys for almost three years, their first voyage having lasted eight months. In the

summer of 1880 they voyaged to Spain and Ireland. Their last trip lasted almost two years and brought them to Australia and New Zealand. It was on the 17th May 1881 that Eddy and George landed at Albany in Western Australia. They subsequently visited Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Wherever the boys went they were greeted with sheer enthusiasm. At this time there was no hint that Eddy’s later suspected behaviour would create argument and speculation which would last for over 100 years, indeed, to the present day.

After obtaining for themselves tattoos in Japan, the Princes left BACCHANTE in 1882. Their tutor Dalton had married Miss Catharine Evan-Thomas in the interim. Dalton’s opinion of Eddy was that he had made precious little progress education-wise during his cadetship at sea. This being so, Eddy and George were immediately sent off to Lausanne in Switzerland in order to learn the French language. Eddy’s results at the end of a six month period were of little merit.

Shortly after their return from Lausanne, the two boys, for the first time in their lives, were separated. George was sent off in the corvette HMS CANADA. Dalton openly expressed the view that Eddy hardly knew the meaning of the words ‘to read’. It has been suggested however that Eddy suffered from deafness and this, in part, hampered his learning capabilities.

He was eventually given a commission in the 10th Hussars, but even this high station did nothing to enhance his ability to learn. Reasoned to be a polite and likeable sort of person, Eddy was nonetheless, invariably late for appointments, had little self discipline and in short, fell far below the expectations of a future King of England.

In the months of August, September and November of 1888, there occurred in Whitechapel, London, England a series of events which, by their gruesome and horrific nature, created mystery and intrigue and world wide abhorrence. These events were to engulf the entire country in fear and loathing for a

creature who became known universally as Jack The Ripper.

Mary Nicholls, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Kelly were the unfortunate victims of the butcher at Whitechapel. Many authors have given varying accounts and seemingly endless solutions as to the identity of Jack The Ripper but none has shown actual proof beyond doubt as to who the perpetrator or perpetrators of these murders might have been.

There has been over the years, a number of recommended suspects and all, according to their accusers, have been given the odious label of the 'real' Jack The Ripper. Prime suspects being, George Chapman real name Severin Klosowski, a Pole, Montague Duritt a barrister, Sir William Gull a surgeon, John Netley a coach driver, James K. Stephen and, as many have mentioned on numerous occasions, to the Highest in the Land, namely Prince Albert Victor Duke of Clarence and Avondale (Eddy).

Investigations into the facts behind these hideous murders have shown that, in fact, precious little documented material is available for perusal, relevant material that is. And it is also fact that files and papers concerning the case have been systematically removed or destroyed. It has been suggested that collusion on a massive scale has been perpetrated in order to conceal the truth behind the 'Jack The Ripper' murders of 1888. Some authors are convinced that authorities have known the identify of the Ripper all along.

Files of this nature must remain closed for 100 years. However, the files on Jack The Ripper murders are not due for release until 1992, not 1988, as might have been expected. Coincidentally, 1992 marks 100 years since the death of the Duke of Clarence.

In 1890, Queen Victoria created her grandson Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale. At about this same time he offered his hand in marriage to Alexandra of Hesse. She turned his offer down and was to later marry Nicholas II of Russia. The following year in the December, Eddy was betrothed to Princess May of Teck.

Eddy's 28th birthday fell on the 8th January 1892. On the previous day, after a strenuous

shooting trip, Eddy had caught a chill which rapidly turned into a bad bout of influenza. He struggled down to open his gifts on the morning of his birthday but it was obvious that he was very ill. The affliction worsened, causing inflammation of the lungs. Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, second in line to the throne of England, died on the 14th January 1892 at Sandringham.

Numismatically, the Duke of Clarence is not well recorded. The most common piece to this Prince is the small bronze medallion often advertised with the label "Jack The Ripper?", beside it. It is 24mm in diameter with a full face portrait of Eddy in military uniform on the obverse and the wording:- H.R.H. THE . DUKE . OF . CLARENCE . & . AVONDALE., a rather flattering effigy. The reverse has a wreath around with the words:- IN MEMORIAM DIED AT SANDRINGHAM - . - JAN.14.1892., centrally placed.

Rather more attractive is the 39mm in diameter white metal medallion struck in memoriam. The obverse again shows a full face portrait of Eddy with the wording around:- BRITISH & FOREIGN SAILORS SOCIETY, PATRON 1892 DUKE OF CLARENCE K.G., and beneath the portrait (IN MEMORIAM). The reverse depicts the ship "BACCHANTE" in which Eddy served with his brother George. In the exergue:- BACCHANTE 1882.92. with beneath:- "JESUS SAVIOUR PILOT ME", and around:- "SO HE BRINGETH THEM UNTO THEIR DESIRED HEAVEN".

Some have written that Eddy did not, in fact, die at Sandringham, but at Ascot in a home where he was constantly given increasing doses of a soporific drug. If this were so, then why?

