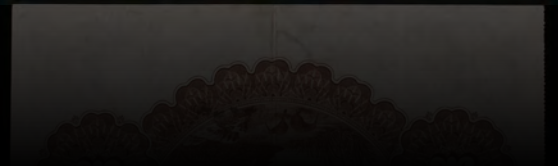


Volume 29

Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



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President's Report

Our eighth biennial international numismatic conference (NAAC2019) was held at the State Library of New South Wales. National Organiser Walter Bloom and the local Organising Committee of Ken Sheedy and Gil Davis put together an interesting program, the fruits of which can be seen in this current volume of the Journal. Highlights included keynote speakers, Ross MacDiarmid, RAM Director (*The future of collecting and the role of the Royal Australian Mint*) and Claire Rowson, Perth Mint (*Mint Condition: New directions for numismatic conservation in Australia*). We were pleased to see a strong New Zealand contingent in Sydney and for the first time in some years the conference ran at a (slight) profit.

I am delighted to advise the winning of the 2019 Paul Simon Memorial Award by Graeme Petterwood. Graeme has been very active on the Tasmania numismatic scene, even when the Tasmanian Numismatic Society had spent a significant time in hibernation. Over this crucial period he kept the Society on the numismatic map with his publishing of the bi-monthly newsletter *Tasmanian Numismatist*. Graeme's contribution to the Society has been recognised with the McDonald Encouragement Award, 1994; R V McNeice Literary Award 1995, 1996; Lockwood Medal 1998; Tasmanian Numismatic Society Bronze Medallion 1996, 2000, 2003; TNS President's Award 2000; TNS Distinguished Service Medal 2013; and TNS Life Membership 2014. Graeme also won the André Fecteau Prize (Association des Numismates Francophones du Canada; <http://anfc.info/>) literary award. Congratulations Graeme from the Australian numismatic community.

The NAA website has experienced some serious issues, well beyond my expertise as Website Manager. After many unsuccessful attempts at fixing the problems, both through the hosting company and the website developer, the Association is looking to pay an expert to get the website back on-line.

We continue to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. However expenses are rising and receipts are falling, even with the steady level of membership. On the positive side, many continue to take out ten-year memberships which is certainly good for the short to medium term.

I am appreciative of the support of Council and other NAA members throughout the year, and particularly our Secretary, Jonathan Cohen, and Treasurer, Lyn Bloom, who are pivotal in the running of the Association, and our Managing Editor, Gil Davis, for his ongoing work with the journal. The Association is looking to hold its 2020 AGM in Perth with those members in the Eastern States invited to skype into the meeting. With 15 NAA members in WA including three Office Bearers, we should have no difficulty making a physical quorum.

Finally, I was sorry to miss this year in Sydney (due to illness), my first missed conference since their inception in 2005, and also my first missed AGM since I took up the Presidency in 2006.

Professor Walter R. Bloom

President, NAA

www.numismatics.org.au

Editor's Note

This journal is the showcase of the Numismatic Association of Australia (NAA), the peak body for numismatics in the country. It provides a venue for excellent scholarship with a requirement that all articles either offer new material or fresh interpretations. All submissions are required to undergo a rigorous, double-blind peer review. The 29th volume is the largest we have produced and comes as a result of a decision to combine 2018 and 2019 into one volume, with many of the articles generated from the biennial NAA conference held on 6-7 April 2019. Once again, there is a good balance of modern and ancient interests reflected in a remarkably diverse range of topics. It is pleasing to see the contributions made on New Zealand numismatics.

We have a strong international editorial board who contribute their wisdom, experience and help. I thank them and mourn the premature loss of one of our number, the late Professor Matthew Trundle whose obituary appears at the end of the volume. I thank Professor John Melville-Jones and Mr John O'Connor for their skill and application in proof-reading the articles and Mr Barrie Newman for his dedication in producing the volume. As always, I thank Professor Walter Bloom, President of the NAA, for his personal support and encouragement in dealing with the myriad of matters that editing a journal entails.

This volume has some changes from its predecessors. At the conference we ran a session in which a number of speakers gave a short presentation on a 'Numismatic Gem'. This was highly successful and amusing. Two of the presentations have been turned into brief articles including the winning entry by Darren Burgess on a 'humble' token from the English Civil War, and a charming story by Barrie Newman on his first coin, which led him to a lifelong interest in collecting. We have also included a review by David Rampling of the important book by Peter Lane on the South Australian 'Coin Cabinet'.

There are five articles on modern topics. The first two are about New Zealand with Andrew Clifford and Robert Tonner presenting a history of New Zealand banknotes, superbly illustrated from Robert's own collection, and David Galt following up with medals issued for the New Zealand Wars. Richard and Carmel S. O'Hair take us into the world of early Australian medals issued by a Geelong Highland society, while Darren Burgess provides a full listing and discussion of the Centenary of Sydney and Melbourne Commemorative medals. Yuri Rapoport suggests, perhaps controversially, that there is a fifth variety of the 1931 penny.

There are also five large articles on topics spanning a thousand years of ancient history. Lloyd Taylor provides an exemplary study of the Alexander tetradrachms that he attributes to the Phoenician port city of Karne. From there, we segue into the vexed question of the so-called Porus medallions of Alexander, explored in detail by Michael Habicht and his colleagues. Staying in the ancient East, Rachel Mansfield reattributes a previously incorrectly identified coin type minted in the Levantine port city of Jaffa under the Severan emperors. Bruce Marshall discusses the introduction of slogans to Roman republican denarii. Finally, Christian Cuello discusses the extent to which imperial authority was conveyed in the 'imitation' coinage of 'barbarian' rulers in late antiquity.

All the articles contain significant research providing the volume with enduring value. They are well written and informative. I hope you enjoy reading them.

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Book review

The Coin Cabinet - A cultural history of the numismatic collection in the Art Gallery of South Australia by Peter Lane. Art Gallery of South Australia. 223 pages, illustrated throughout. \$50. Reviewed by D. J. Rampling

This beautifully presented book is a landmark publication in Australian numismatics. It documents the gradual assemblage and curatorial oversight of one of the largest numismatic collections held by an Australian public institution.

Peter Lane, the Honorary Numismatist at the Art Gallery of South Australia since 2007, has assiduously gleaned a wealth of information from an assemblage of primary sources to produce a chronological account of the development of the Gallery's coin and medal collection since its inception in the mid-1850s. Individual chapters focus on epochs, each period of time coming under the jurisdiction of successive notable numismatists. The strengths, weaknesses and travails of each are interestingly portrayed, along with accounts of the numismatic items they garnered for the collection. The incumbencies of Alfred Chitty, Sedley Towler and James Hunt Deacon are afforded separate chapters, but the numismatic contributions of their predecessors and those who followed are well covered.

Understandably, the curatorship of James Hunt Deacon occupies a proportionally large segment of the book as he was actively involved with the Gallery's numismatic collection for all of his adult life. The three chapters dealing with his career exemplify the creative energies employed both by himself and by former and subsequent numismatic incumbents to advance the Gallery's holdings of coins, medals and related items. Their procurement activities were but a part of other duties that included cataloguing, answering queries from collectors and the general public, overseeing visitors, and in the case of Deacon, giving occasional lectures. These tasks were all carried out against a background of negotiations with an administration that waxed and waned in its enthusiasm for its numismatic holdings, and that appropriated to itself decisions that involved expenditure. The two World Wars also impinged upon Gallery operations, imposing financial restraints, but also yielding numismatic opportunities as returning soldiers brought back medals and even coins found in the trenches, some of these items ending up in the collection.

An ongoing issue was the location and display of the collection. Lane documents its peregrinations across various buildings and administrative structures. The Board's jurisdiction also manifested in other ways, such as conferring an appropriate title of office for the numismatist, an issue that caused Deacon angst from time to time, as prestige and seniority were implicated with what one was called.

Deacon's possessiveness of the collection was remarkable, on one occasion refusing to allow the visiting Controller of the Royal Australian Mint access to the Australian coins.

This assumed ownership of the collection seems to have been a trait he inherited from Chitty who is reported as having been outraged that a distinguished numismatist wished to hold the coins he examined. Chitty, according to Lane, claimed that he was ‘the father of the collection ... that I look upon it as my child’. Unfortunately, such sentiments while possibly affording protection of collections, are a hindrance in public institutions that have been established for the enjoyment and edification of the populace.

Donations, purchases, and exchanges were all means of obtaining specimens, and were all actively pursued. Illustrations of a selection of coins, medals and banknotes procured in each epoch are interspersed throughout the text of the relevant chapters, with details of their procurement and their significance for the collection. Included are many items sourced from Australian collectors whose names will be familiar to many readers. The biographical details of these benefactors are of particular interest as there will be present day collectors who have a coin bearing a provenance from one of these sources.

The seven hundred and seventy-three end notes referencing the book’s factual content give an indication of the dedication and thoroughness with which the author has approached his task. His enthusiasm for the subject matter is infectious, especially as humour, personal anecdote and recognition of the social significance of what he refers to as ‘humble’ pieces, convey a sensitivity to the enchantment of numismatic pursuits.

A reviewer feels obliged to cast some shadows when offering an otherwise glowing review. This is particularly so when the book’s author is a friend, lest the opinions expressed seem unduly tainted by bias. I confess that I found the Preface and Introduction the least readable parts of the book. Being familiar with the contextual background of his subject, the author makes assumptions of shared knowledge. Thus, in these early pages the reader is unclear how the South Australian Institute and the South Australian Museum are related to the Coin Cabinet. A propensity to expand on textual material by including subjoined information in brackets is unnecessary and disruptive to the narrative. Much of this initial confusion becomes clear in later chapters, where only the very occasional omission of a word or a *non sequitur* interrupts an otherwise fascinating story. These are, however, minor quibbles and should not deter anyone from acquiring the book.

The book closes with a distillation of an assessment of the Gallery’s collection made in 1992 by Dr Robert Carson, a former Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. He wrote: “...if space can continue to be found to store the collection, it is always possible that future circumstances might make it possible to re-activate work on this large and quite important body of numismatic material.”

It is sad to report that the collection remains in storage, and that it receives no mention on the Art Gallery of South Australia’s web page. Let us hope that Peter Lane’s book will provide the necessary stimulus “to re-activate” interest in this wonderful assemblage of material.

Copies of the book are available to purchase from Peter Lane – pnj.lane@bigpond.com



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