

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY.

Vol. 5 No. 4.

September, 1957.

NEWSLETTER.

EDITORIAL :

There is nothing wrong with Numismatics in South Africa - in fact we feel the hobby is thriving. There are of course many people more or less interested in coins and medals who are not known to us, and who, if contacted, might swell the ranks of the established Numismatic Societies. The recent crop of recruits may come from this unplumbed pool. But we do know of a number of collectors who have only recently interested themselves in our hobby, and of even more somewhat aimless collectors who have had their interest stimulated and who can now claim to be "numismatists" and not just "coin-collectors".

The three very excellent contributions by members to this number - on three widely divergent branches of numismatics - are tangible evidence that more and more of our members are making a serious study of their subjects. That augurs well for the future. We congratulate our contributors, and hope that other members will be stimulated to follow their excellent example.

MEETINGS :

For the June meeting, members of the Society were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. E. Heinrich - a special treat as it was some time since we had had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Heinrich's most interesting collection. He is particularly strong in early German thalers and has a good representative collection of "Early Cape" Dutch coins. We had an exceedingly pleasant evening and thoroughly enjoyed browsing through his collection. In July, we visited Dr. Mitchell's home. He had decided to give us a change, and had put out a display of South African Commemorative Medals such as we did not realise he possessed. These ranged from some nice items from the Republican series, to the medallion commemorating the first Springbok Rugby Touring Team captained by Paul Roos, and the long series of municipal medals struck at the time of the Coronation in 1953. In a short address, our host explained the classification he had used in the display, and told some interesting stories about certain of the medals. South African Commemoratives certainly constitute a large and interesting series - and one which badly needs proper writing-up. Subsequent to the more formal part of the meeting, members had the opportunity of looking once again at Dr. Mitchell's War Medals and Kruger and Union coins.

In August, the Society met for the Annual General Meeting at the home of Mr. Day. A full report on that meeting will be circulated to members in due course.

NEW MEMBERS :

Once again the list of members has shown a very healthy increase, and we bid a sincere welcome to the following gentlemen who have been elected :-

Mr. W. A. Iyon, Goodwood Hotel, Grahamstown, C.P.

Mr. C. J. Allers, 2 von Plettenberg St., Van Riebeeck Hoogte,
Uitenhage, C.P.

Mr. C. E. Kachelhoffer, P. O. Box 374, Bloemfontein, O.F.S.

Mr. W. H. Pretorius, P. O. Box 157, Nylstroom, Tvl.

Capt. R.J.V. Bailey, P. O. Box 121, Que Que, S. Rhodesia.

Mr. J. C. van der Vyver, c/o Barclays Bank, Touwsrivier, C.P.

Mr. J. Grobler, 185 Caledon St., Uitenhage, C.P.

Mr. J. A. van Eeden, 10 Colmet Flats, De Aar, C.P.

Mr. J.J. de Klerk van der Walt, 16 Ripley Rd., Grand Prix,
Greenfields, East London, C.P.

ROMANCE OF THE COINS OF TARENTUM.

(M. G. Hibbard)

Those who first turn a fine Greek coin over in their fingers, must do so with a sense of wonderment - used as they are to our current coinage with its flat relief and often unimaginative design.

Coins were the pride of the Greek city-states; emblems of their independence and liberty; executed by the most skilled and sensitive artists of the day. They show the inspired realism, the vigour and imagination which we cannot help but admire in this people.

To the man of ordinary means, whose interest and excitement has been aroused by fine illustrations in books and sale catalogues, it will soon become apparent that the scope of Greek coinage is so great that specialisation is inevitable.

Of all the city-states which issued a coinage, perhaps Tarentum affords the would-be collector a more complete and continuous series than any other. The essential character of its type remained unchanged for over two hundred and fifty years.

Tarentum, or as the city is known today, Tarento, is situated at the top of the "heel" of Italy in the Gulf of Tarento. It was, and is still, the safest harbour for very many miles along that rocky coast. The city is thought to have been founded in 708 B.C. and there are several charming legends that have come down to us dealing with its origin.

The story as told by Pausanias names Phalanthus, a Spartan, as the founder. Before he set out from Sparta to found a colony, an oracle came to him and told him that he

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would win a country and a city only when he should feel rain under a cloudless sky. He paid little attention to this prediction and set out on his conquests. But despite all his victories he could not take any of the barbarian cities, and it was then that he remembered the words of the oracle. Never, surely, could rain fall out of a cloudless sky. His wife, who accompanied him on his campaign, seeing his despondency, laid his head in her lap and caressed him and in the manner of all women, shed tears over him. As Phalanthus felt her tears falling on his head, he understood the meaning of the oracle, for his wife's name was Aethra. That night he stormed and took Tarentum.

Another legend of the foundation of the city is that told by Ephorus. When ten years had elapsed after Sparta's war with the Messanians, the Spartan wives and maidens, who had been deprived of their menfolk for all that time (for the men swore an oath that they would not return until they had conquered), sent word of protest. Recognising their need, the Spartan leaders sent back the youngest of their soldiers, who were not under oath, with orders to live with the unmarried women. Children born as a result of these alliances were later known as Partheniae and were not honoured as they were conceived out of wedlock.

In later years these Partheniae revolted against the unjust stigma attached to their names and Phalanthus, who was their leader, conceived of a plot to overthrow the city government. The intrigue however, was discovered and it was decided to send them away, under the leadership of Phalanthus, to discover a new colony. And so it was that they came to Tarentum.

Tarentum first started to mint coins of their own about 530 B.C. The inhabitants, being of Spartan origin, modelled the political constitution of the city on similar lines to that of Sparta. Reference to the Spartan legend of Hyacinthus, the son of King Amyclas, who was unintentionally killed by Apollo during a game with the discus, can be seen on the earliest of these extremely rare coins which depict Apollo Hyakinthios, naked and resting on one knee, and holding a lyre and a flower. The reverse is a similar design, incuse. Others show Phalanthus (or Taras) riding on the back of a dolphin. The reverse again incuse. Ancient tradition tells us how Taras, the son of the sea-god Poseidon, was saved from a ship-wreck when his father sent a dolphin to rescue him and carry him safely to the shore.

The legend must have been particularly acceptable to the Spartan colonists for Taras on the dolphin remained as the reverse type of the silver didrachms until Tarentum was finally deprived of her rights of mintage by the Romans in 228 B.C.

About the year 450 B.C. the "horsemen" type for the obverse of the didrachms makes its appearance. The subject was chosen partly in allusion to the ancient games connected with the Hyacinthian games, and partly as being popular among the horse-breeding peoples of the plains round Tarentum. The connection with the games is clearly seen in most of the types, the commonest being a naked boy, or jockey, astride a horse holding a crown over its head. On some didrachms issued in times of war, the rider is armed with shield and javelins. One particularly lovely specimen in the writer's collection shows a galloping rider, known as a Hippokontist, aiming his dart at some imaginary enemy. These specialist horsemen were

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employed something after the fashion of the small motorised columns which roamed about in the Western Desert during the last war, shooting from a distance and avoiding coming to too close quarters.

Although the horsemen type allows of a great deal of variation, it would perhaps have become somewhat monotonous were it not for the introduction of the many and varied symbols that appear either in the field or held in the hand of Taras.

Because of its geographical situation, Tarentum enjoyed a great deal of commerce with the East and with Egypt. From these parts came the "wanderers" who claimed the power of cleansing men of their sins. The sixth century B.C. saw tremendous innovations in religious beliefs. Previously all religions had been tribal or national; the new idea embraced a religion open to all men. The new teachers, called "Vagabonds", travelled the districts professing to purge men of their guilt. They usually moved about on an ass carrying with them, something after the fashion of a witch-doctor, the impedimenta of their profession. From their influence brotherhoods were formed and members were called Mystae and their rites Mysteries, and they belonged to the Company of Iacchus.

Iacchus was called a son of the wine-god Dionysus and was the giver of a brighter life beyond the grave, and Dionysus was received into the myth owing to the symbolism of wine as a revivifying power.

The mystic emblems that appear so frequently on the coins of Tarentum are the distaff with spirally twisted wool; Taras, not as an athletic figure but in the guise of the plump figure of Iacchus; the kantharos or wine cup with its connection to Dionysus and the twin riders, the Dioscuri reminding use of their powerful connections with the underworld.

Still another source of interest on these Tarentine coins is the presence, in many instances, of the signatures of the artists who cut the dies. Although they did not attain the brilliance and superb technique of Kimon or Euainetos, who cut such perfect dies for Syracuse, nevertheless some of their dies are among the most beautiful of any produced by Greek artists.

Fine Greek coins are not cheap, but for that matter no work of art is cheap. The fact that a certain amount of classical knowledge is required is not denied: but surely it is the desire of every collector to know about the things he collects? Classical mythology and classical history are part and parcel of our daily lives and there is still much we can profitably learn, from a study of this long-dead civilisation.

The intense pleasure I receive from my modest collection of Tarentine coins and the study they encourage, more than compensates for the stormy interviews I occasionally have to endure with my bank manager! In my opinion no coins can possibly compare with the Greek for their beauty and for the historical interest they arouse. If this article can make any non-collector of Greek coins pause over the Ancient Greek section of his next sale catalogue, its purpose will have been achieved.

SIR HARRY SMITH'S MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

(B. L. Cairncross).

Newsletter No. 4 Vol. 3, May 1951, contains a very interesting article by Dr. Mitchell on the Sir Harry Smith Medal for Gallantry, 1851; and twelve specimens of the medal are described and allocated to dies.

In November and January last I was fortunate enough to obtain two Sir Harry Smith medals, not among those described. They are both unnamed. One is from Obverse Die No. 1 and Reverse (cracked) Die No. 2. The other is from Obverse Die No. 2 and Reverse Die No. 4. The latter has a ring suspender.

This brings the number of described medals to 14, and the following table shows the die allocations and whether the medals are named or unnamed :-

Obverse Die No.	Reverse Die No.	Medals Named	Medals Unnamed	Total of Medals
1	1	2	1	3
1	2	1	5	6
1	3	3	-	3
2	4	1	1	2
		7	7	14

The fact that 5 out of 6 medals from Reverse Die No. 2 are unnamed suggests, to my mind, that they were not awarded, but were surplus to requirements. The die is badly cracked and the crack marks show up very clearly on the medals. It is at least possible that Sir Harry distributed these unnamed specimens among friends who wanted them as souvenirs. It seems that all the medals awarded were issued unnamed, and if so, it was to be expected that some of the recipients would not trouble to have their names added; but it is hardly credible that five of them would have had medals from the cracked die. The only cracked die medal which is named is that of John McVarrie. Two characteristics of this medal are noteworthy. One is that the date, 1851, has been carefully removed. Why? It seems a childish thing to do. I think it more likely that it was done because the date was wrong, i.e., that this medal was not awarded in 1851 by Sir Harry, but at a later date by someone else. Perhaps this person, a friend of Sir Harry, had had his life saved by McVarrie and had given McVarrie the medal in gratitude? The second characteristic is that this medal is named in sloping script, while four of the other named medals have upright capitals, albeit, as Dr. Mitchell has pointed out, of different types, which, however, could have been done by one engraver, though I think it unlikely. Three are plain; one, that of Hendrick Ferrara, has some fancy scroll-work added. A fifth named medal, that of Piet Jan Cornelis, has been very crudely named in script, in a style, if style it can be called, all of its own. It is certainly not the work of a trained engraver. (My remarks are based on plaster casts. I have not seen either medal or cast of No. 6, that of Frs. Meades, C.M.R.).

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With regard to the engraver of the dies "Hopkins", Mr. Crail of Newlands, Cape, has supplied me with a note reading: "The Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Annual Register for 1850 has an entry 'Hopkins, Thomas, copper plate printer, 1 Market Square, Cape Town.' He does not appear in the Almanacs for 1851 and 1852. The Librarian, Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, says, i.a., 14.3.57: 'I am afraid I could find no trace of Thomas Hopkins, except that, in the Almanac for 1853, a Thomas Hopkins, engraver, was living at No. 72 Long Market Street, Cape Town.' " This strongly supports Dr. Mitchell's suggestion that some of the dies, if indeed not all, were sunk in Cape Town. There is also a recent advertisement by a London bookseller of a proof of a trade card of the Masonic Hotel at 22 Grave Street, Cape Town, engraved by "T.B. Hopkins", no doubt the same man.

{ Congratulations to Mr. Cairncross on obtaining not one, but two differing specimens of this great rarity. It seems doubtful whether the mystery of the unnamed medals will ever be finally solved. Meanwhile, his guess is as good as mine. I was thrilled to learn about Hopkins - I've been searching for a reference to him for years. Now I see that the Catalogue of the Medal Exhibition at the Africana Museum (referred to elsewhere in this Newsletter) also refers to him as being in Cape Town in 1853 and records that Thomas Hopkins was known to be an engraver of banknotes. I'll believe that Sir Harry Smith's medal was struck in Cape Town until somebody produces very convincing evidence to the contrary!! Editor. }

THE "GLÜCK AUF TRANSVAAL" MEDAL, 1892.

(E. A. Hohmann)

Mr. J.T. Becklake refers to a medal struck in Berlin in 1892 to commemorate the opening of the Pretoria "Staatsmunt", and in his "Notes on the Coinage of the South African Republic" writes on page 6, "The two examples I have seen are struck in copper or bronze, and the medals were doubtless produced in Germany and presented at the opening of the Mint, by the contractors, to various persons interested".

The following additional information may be of interest. Dr. Hugo Hammerich in his "Nachtrag I" (Supplement No. 1) dated 1907 to his "Die deutschen Reichsmünzen" writes on page 14, roughly translated into English, as follows:- "To commemorate the opening of the Mint at Pretoria, to which the former Works Inspector of the Royal Prussian State Mint Munscheid was appointed Director, 25 commemorative pieces were struck in copper with the size and weight of the 1 penny pieces. They were struck in the Berlin Medal Mint of L. Ostermann, formerly G. Loos, from plates supplied by the Royal Mint in Berlin.

The obverse shows a "Fortuna" with the circular inscription "Glück auf Transvaal", whilst the reverse carries the inscription "Erste/ Prägung/ auf den/ Münz-/ Maschinen/ 1892" within a laurel wreath.

For the "Fortuna" on the obverse a matrix in the aforementioned Medal Mint dating from the first half of the last century was used. The inscription on the obverse as well as the die of the reverse are the work of "Münz-Medailleur O. Schultz". So far Dr. Hugo Hammerich.

The inscription "Erste Prägung auf den Münzmaschinen" would denote that the medals were struck on the actual minting machinery purchased for the Pretoria "Staatsmunt". I can find no reference in any works dealing with the "Staatsmunt" as to who actually supplied the machinery, all that appears to be known being that it was purchased in Germany. It is known that the first S. A. Republic coinage was minted at the Royal Mint, Berlin, who also supplied all the dies for coins subsequently minted at Pretoria. (Dr. Hammerich - page 83).

It has probably always been assumed that the Royal Mint, Berlin, supplied the machinery, but coupling the assertion on the reverse of the medals that they were struck on the Mint machinery, with Dr. Hammerich's statement that they were produced at the private Medal Mint of L. Ostermann, the question arises whether this private firm did not in fact supply the machinery, with the Royal Mint, Berlin, perhaps acting as agent for the firm in negotiations with the "Staatsmunt".

It is also interesting to note that the reverse die is the work of O. Schultz, who also engraved all the dies for the Transvaal coinage. He is best remembered for the "double shaft" error and the "O.S." under President Kruger's bust on the first Berlin-struck coins.

Dr. Hammerich states that 25 of these medals were struck. I have in my possession two specimens thereof, and whilst the obverses are identical the reverses are slightly different. True, the differences are minute, a slightly different grouping of the leaves in the wreath and different numbers of berries.

Mr. Roux of the S. A. Mint has examined my two specimens and agrees with me that they are definitely struck from different dies, but also agrees with me that both are genuine pieces. In addition both specimens are "pedigreed" in so far as the party I purchased them from obtained one from the collection of the Director of the Royal Mint, Berlin, of that time, whilst the other came from the Estate of one of the employees of the Royal Mint of that time.

Is it not strange that with a total of only 25 pieces struck it should have been necessary to employ two reverse dies? Did the first die crack, causing O. Schultz hurriedly to prepare another, as a result of which the small differences came about?

It would be interesting to ascertain how many of these medals have survived and from which dies they were made. I should therefore be very glad if any collector fortunate enough to have one would let me have details.

EXHIBITION OF MILITARY MEDALS OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTEREST - JOHANNESBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY - 22ND JULY TO 10TH AUGUST 1957.

Easily the most important event in recent years for collectors of South African Military Medals was the magnificent Exhibition held in Johannesburg last month.

The Africana Museum, which is housed in the same building as the Johannesburg Public Library and which shares the same Director (Mr. R.F. Kennedy), recently acquired the

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Victoria Cross and other decorations and medals awarded to Major H. Garrett Moore, 88th Foot. To mark this important event in the Museum's history, it was decided to arrange a special Exhibition of Military Medals of South African interest. And what a wonderful official welcome to Moore's V.C. it turned out to be!!

Major Hans Garrett Moore won the Victoria Cross for his part in the action at Draaibosch on the 29th December, 1877, where he was in command of a small force of the 88th Regt. (Connaught Rangers) accompanied by a detachment of the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police. Although the award was gazetted on 27th June 1879, after the V.C.'s given for the action at Rorke's Drift (22nd January 1879), it was nonetheless the first act of bravery on South African soil for which a Victoria Cross was awarded. Official recognition of Moore's right to distinction as the first South African V.C. was gained a few years ago, and recently a monument was erected on the spot, with the blessing of the South African Historical Monuments Commission. It stands beside the road in the veld near Bleakmoor, between Komgha and King Williamstown.

The Exhibition consisted of the combined collections of the Africana Museum and the South African War Museum, Johannesburg, together with items and groups loaned by private persons and South African War Medal collectors. Members of the South African Numismatic Society were well to the fore, with loans by Mr. Cairncross of George, Mr. Forsyth of Johannesburg and Messrs. Alexander and Kelly, and Dr. Mitchell, of Cape Town.

Pride of place was naturally given to Moore's group (V.C.; C.B.; Indian Mutiny, bar "Central India"; Ashanti Medal bar "Coomassie"; South Africa, bar 1877-8; Egypt bar Tel-el-Kebir; Khedive's Star; Order of Osmanich, 3rd Class), but there was a wealth of other medals on show. Not the least interesting were the groups to Col. M.J. de Beer (D.T.D., D.S.O., Anglo-Boere Oorlog, Three Great War, and Africa Service Medal) and to the Air-ace, Group Captain A.G. (Sailor) Malan (D.S.O. and bar; D.F.C. and bar; 1939-45 Star bar "Battle of Britain"; Air Crew Europe bar "France and Germany"; Defence Medal; British War Medal with oak leaf; Legion of Honour (France); Croix de Guerre (France); Croix de Guerre, with Palm (Belgium); War Cross (Czechoslovakia)).

Mr. Cairncross lent his unique family group consisting of 52 medals, ranging from the B.S.A. Co's Medal for Rhodesia 1896 to the South African Korea Medal, to eighteen South African Cairncross's!! Dr. Mitchell lent a nice selection of groups to South Africans, including several rarities, and two Sir Harry Smith medals. Mr. Kelly lent an interesting series of 1939-45 groups to South Africans.

Perhaps most important of all is the fact that a most comprehensive catalogue of all items on the Exhibition was prepared (both English and Afrikaans). This remarkable and bulky document contains not only a complete record of every medal and decoration on show, but also a detailed description of practically every important South African medal. In many cases the original Government Notice authorising the medal is quoted in full. References are quoted wherever possible and an exceptionally detailed index is provided. Miss Anna Smith, of the Johannesburg Public Library, who was responsible for compiling this Catalogue, deserves the highest praise for producing a volume which is a "MUST" for every collector of South African Military Medals. Her effort

is even more praiseworthy when it is remembered that she was not previously an expert on the subject. From now on her status as an Authority must be assured!!

Our thanks are due to Miss Smith, to Mr. Kennedy and his staffs of the Library and Africana Museum, and to the Johannesburg City Council, for a great contribution to South African Numismatics. Our only regret was that the vast distances in South Africa prevented most of us from taking full advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

F.K.M.

R E V I E W.

"THE GOVERNMENT NOTES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC"

by R.F. Kennedy. Reprinted from "The South African Bankers' Journal" of August 1957.

Collectors of South African Banknotes - and students of our Banking History - will be grateful to the South African Bankers' Journal, and to Mr. Kennedy, for a second most valuable contribution to the limited literature on the subject.

It will be recalled that two years ago the Journal published a most interesting and well illustrated article by Mr. Kennedy on the old Banknotes in the collection of the Institute of Bankers - which fortunately was reprinted in Booklet form. Now Mr. Kennedy, who is Director of the Africana Museum, has written up the various notes issued by the Government of the South African Republic - from the Mandaten of 1857 to the "GOUVERNEMENTS NOTEN" printed at the "STAATSDRUKKERIJ TE VELDE" at Pelgrim's Rust in 1902, during the last days of the South African War.

This excellent reprint, which consists of six pages of typescript and no less than eight pages of first class illustrations, is almost identical in form to its predecessor and with it makes a most valuable "pair". Through the courtesy of Mr. I.A. Henry, Editor of "The South African Bankers' Journal", we have a very limited number of copies available which we can supply to interested members at 2/6d. each.

F.K.M.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S :

WE WANT TO BUY - Coins in silver or bronze of the Union of South Africa (George V and George VI) in Extremely Fine - Uncirculated condition. Mr. D. McDonald, 38 Nel St., Roodepoort.

WE WANT TO SELL -

Kruger Pond 1892, Double shaft. F.D.C.	£12. 10. 0.
Kruger ½ Pond 1892 Double shaft. F.D.C.	£12. 10. 0.
Kruger Pond 1893 V.F.+.	A very desirable coin. Scarce. £9. 0. 0.
Kruger Penny 1893. V.F.	Scarce. £4. 0. 0.
Other Kruger Gold, Silver and Bronze also available.	
Dr. F.K. Mitchell, P. O. Box 1073, Cape Town.	

Editor :

Dr. F. K. Mitchell,
P. O. Box 1073,
CAPE TOWN.