

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY.

Vol. 5 No. 8.

November 1960.

NEWSLETTER.EDITORIAL

As has so frequently happened in the past, we must start by offering our sincere apologies, since the last number of this Newsletter appeared in April. The delay has been caused by numerous factors beyond the control of your Editor and he can only say in mitigation that he attempted unsuccessfully to find a substitute at the last Annual General Meeting!

But our silence should not be taken as indicating that the Society has gone into a decline; on the contrary, we have gone from strength to strength. New recruits have continued to join our ranks, and every month there is further evidence of increasing interest in our hobby in South Africa. The change-over, early in 1961, to a decimal coinage, with the consequent disappearance from our currency of the Royal effigy, has obviously had the effect of further stimulating interest in the coinage of the Union of South Africa from 1923 to our Jubilee Year 1960. The recent decision, too, that we are to become a Republic on the 31st May, 1961, means that we have reached the end of an era and the coins of the immediate past will, in a few years time, be part of the history of our country. May we therefore take the opportunity of commending once again to your attention, the Union series from 1923 to 1960, and may we at the same time extend our loyal farewell greetings to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of the Union of South Africa.

OBITUARY.

We record with feelings of deep sorrow the sudden passing on Monday the 14th November, 1960, of Mr. K.L.M. Alexander of Claremont, Cape.

"Oubaas" Alexander was associated with the South African Numismatic Society from its very earliest days, and was some years ago elected one of the very few life members of the Society, in recognition of his loyalty to the Society and his long continued service to Numismatics in our country. Never a man of means, he had an extraordinarily well-developed collector's instinct, which he directed into a variety of channels during a long and happy lifetime. As a boy during the Anglo-Boer War he persuaded British servicemen arriving at the Cape Town docks to part with their badges and buttons, and since that time he has collected everything from stamps and bowlers' badges to match-box labels and military medals. At one stage his main love was Philately, but during the last fifteen or twenty years his main attention was turned to coins and military medals, of which he managed to build up a truly remarkable and most comprehensive collection.

Following a heart attack some seven or eight years ago, he had not been in the best of health, but he never allowed his physical condition to get him down and always showed a most cheerful spirit. We feel that the interest which he took in Numismatics contributed in no small measure not only to his happiness during the latter years of his life, but also to his

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successfully passing his three score years and ten. We in Cape Town who knew him best, and his many friends throughout South Africa, will miss him sorely. He was a man who always had a good word to say for the biggest scoundrel, and a man whose obvious sincerity and honesty were an inspiration to all who had the privilege of knowing him. His many friends will be glad to know that he spent his last morning happily showing his beloved coins and medals to a friend, and that only after lunch did he lie down quietly on his bed and pass away.

The esteem in which he was held was evidenced by the large turn-out of members of the Society to bid him a last farewell at the graveside. "Oubaas" Alexander will be remembered as long as there is a South African Numismatic Society.

To his widow, Ruth, and to all his family circle, we extend our heartfelt sympathy. We hope that the knowledge that we share their grief, will ease the pain they feel and comfort them in their great loss.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, AUGUST 1960.

At the Annual General Meeting Mr. Jack McA. Day was unanimously elected to a second term of office as President of our Society. Mr. Day is too well-known, either in person or through his Numismatic work, to require any further introduction. We regard him as South Africa's most knowledgeable Numismatist and are proud to have him as our President. Mr. Bill Hibbard was persuaded to continue in office as Honorary Secretary/Treasurer and, as previously indicated, in the absence of another volunteer Dr. Mitchell reluctantly agreed to continue as Honorary Editor.

At the meeting the doyen of Numismatics in South Africa, Mr. J.T. Becklake, was unanimously elected an Honorary Life Member of the Society. Mr. Becklake is too well-known to require any introduction. Since the opening of the Pretoria branch of the Royal Mint (as it then was) in 1923 when he came out as Deputy Master, he has been a great tower of strength to our hobby in this country. A Past President of our Society and also of the Transvaal Numismatic Society, he is perhaps best known for his "Notes on the coinage of the South African Republic", which remains the standard work of reference on the subject. But perhaps more important is the fact that for the last forty years he has been a constant source of encouragement to anybody he met, who showed the slightest interest in our hobby, and there are many of us who owe our present interest in Numismatics to Mr. Becklake.

At the Annual Meeting we were particularly pleased to welcome Mr. Bill Menne of Louis Trichardt; not only because his presence gave us the opportunity of making his acquaintance, but also because he had brought with him the famous "Menne" Kruger single-shaft half pond of 1892. We had, of course, seen Dr. Stoker's excellent article on this unique coin in "De Nummis II" of the Transvaal Numismatic Society, but some of us remained understandably sceptical. Now, after having had the opportunity of examining this coin, we are happy to confirm that in our opinion the coin is indeed genuine. What fun we will have in years to come looking for another like it!

UNION/ . . .

UNION JUBILEE COMMEMORATIVE CROWN.

This crown was briefly described from Press reports in our Newsletter of April, 1960. We retain our feeling of disappointment in it as an example of the coin designers art, but none-the-less welcome it as an interesting addition to the fine series of South African crowns.

It has been observed that there are a number of "varieties" of this coin. We deduce that the initials of the artist responsible for the design "HM", were omitted from the master dies and must have been cut by hand into the working punches. The result is that these initial letters, which appear in the angle between the eastern or right-hand wing of the Union Buildings and the garden in front of the War Memorial, vary considerably in size and also in position in relation to the angle. At least four different dies have been definitely identified and it is probable that more exist. No reply has yet been received to an enquiry directed to the Mint to ascertain how many dies were, in fact, used in the striking of these pieces.

1960 UNION COINAGE.

We are grateful to Mr. J.P. Roux, the Director of the South African Mint, for the information that the half-crown, threepence, halfpenny and farthing of 1960, will be somewhat scarce, but that large mintings of other denominations have been made. The figures supplied by Mr. Roux are as follows:-

Half-crown	-	£400	-	3,200	pieces
Threepence	-	25	-	2,000	"
Halfpenny	-	30	-	14,400	"
Farthing	-	282	-	270,720	"

Mr. Roux has been kind enough to make a small supply of these scarce coins available to the Society and members who are interested may obtain one or two of each at face value (plus 1/- for postage) on application to the Honorary Editor, Dr. F.K. Mitchell.

DECIMAL COIN PRODUCTION FOR 1961.

Through the courtesy again of our friend Mr. J.P. Roux, the Director of the Mint, we were fortunate enough to obtain some of the new one cent pieces struck on the first day of production of decimal coinage at Pretoria the 20th September, 1960. Members who would like one of these pieces should likewise apply to Dr. Mitchell. The Mint is aiming at striking one and a half million decimal pieces per week until D-day. It is estimated that approximately thirty million cent and half cent pieces will be needed on Decimal Day throughout the Union, so as to facilitate sales and purchases where small change is required. It is obvious that the Mint will have to work overtime until the 14th of February, 1961. We understand that the rest of the 1961 series and the specimen sets, will not be struck until after Decimal Day.

The one cent piece itself is a good-looking coin, the exact size of a penny with a nice portrait of Johann van Riebeeck on the obverse and a faithful representation of a

Voortrekker wagon on the reverse. For obvious reasons the colour has been radically altered in order to facilitate differentiation from the penny and we feel that the light yellow colour will take some getting used to. We congratulate Mr. Roux and his staff, however, on achieving a good-looking coin.

FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN NUMISMATIC CONVENTION.

Space and time will not permit us to report in detail on the most successful Numismatic Convention organised in Johannesburg by the Transvaal Numismatic Society on the 17th and 18th May, 1960. A small delegation of members of our Society consisting of Messrs. Day, Hibbard and Mitchell made the trip to Johannesburg and played their part in making the Convention the success it undoubtedly was.

The papers presented at the Convention are due to be printed in the next number of "De Nummis", the journal of the Transvaal Numismatic Society, and in view of their high standard we have no hesitation in recommending that every member should acquire a copy of this journal as soon as it is published. We would like to congratulate the Transvaal Numismatic Society and all who took part at the meeting, and to express the hope that this will be one of many similar gatherings of Numismatists in our country.

ESTATE OF MR. K.L.M. ALEXANDER.

Information has been received that Mr. Alexander directed in his Will that his books on Numismatic and allied subjects should be given to our Society. This bequest will make a very useful addition to our slowly growing library.

Mr. Alexander's Will provides that his Numismatic collection is to be handed to Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Day for disposal by sale in their sole discretion. These two gentlemen have indicated that they are aware of Mr. Alexander's frequently expressed wish that his brother collectors should have the opportunity of acquiring items from his estate for their own collections, and will attempt in undertaking the enormous task of disposal which lies ahead of them, to give effect to that wish. For obvious reasons it will not be possible to circulate complete lists of the whole collection to all members, but in the meantime it would be helpful if any member interested would get in touch with Dr. Mitchell, and indicate to him the items or sections in which they might be interested.

The main sections consist of:-

1. Military Medals and Decorations, British and Foreign.
2. South African specimen sets from 1943.
3. Sovereign-size gold coins,
(Krugers, Union and Foreign.)
4. Crown-size pieces of the World.
5. Commemorative and Prize Medals.
6. Bowling Club and similar badges.
7. Military badges, South African and general.
8. A large collection of miniature British Military Medals and Decorations.

THE SYDNEY MINT SOVEREIGNS AND HALF-SOVEREIGNS
AS PART OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COIN CABINET.

by S. E. EDWARDS.

It may not be generally realised that Sydney Mint sovereigns and half-sovereigns should form part of the South African coin cabinet. By a proclamation dated the 10th November 1866 published in Govt. Notice No. 31 dated 24th January 1867 in the Cape of Good Hope Gazette of Friday 25th January 1867, these sovereigns were proclaimed legal tender in Natal and the Cape Colony. The proclamation is reproduced below:-

" AT THE COURT AT WINDSOR,
the 10th day of November, 1866.

PRESENT:

THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

LORD PRESIDENT.	EARL OF DERBY.
LORD CHAMBERLAIN.	MR. SECRETARY WALPOLE.

WHEREAS there was read this day, at the Board, the Draft of a Proclamation declaring Gold Coins made at the Branch of the Royal Mint at Sydney, New South Wales, a legal tender in certain of Her Majesty's Possessions abroad specified in a schedule attached to the said Draft Proclamation:

Her Majesty, having taken the same into consideration, was pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to approve thereof, and to order, and it is hereby ordered, that the said Proclamation do take effect and come into force in each of Her Majesty's Possessions abroad specified in the aforesaid schedule, upon and from and after such day as shall be for that purpose limited by the Governor or Officer administering the Government of each of the said Possessions by any Proclamation to be by them for that purpose issued in each of such Possessions:

And the Right Honourable the Earl of Carnarvon, one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, is to give the necessary directions for causing publication to be made hereof within Her Majesty's Possessions abroad.

(Signed) EDMUND HARRISON.

BY THE QUEEN. - A PROCLAMATION.

For declaring Gold Coins made at the Branch Mint at Sydney, New South Wales, a Legal Tender throughout such parts of Her Majesty's Dominions as are specified in the Schedule hereunto annexed.

WHEREAS by an Order in Council, bearing date the nineteenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, we have thought fit to order that a Branch of our Royal Mint should be established at or near Sydney, New South Wales:

And, whereas, in the eighteenth year of our reign, by an Order in Council, dated the eighteenth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, we have thought fit to

order/.. ..

order that certain pieces of gold money should be coined at the said Branch of our Royal Mint, to be called respectively, Australian sovereigns, and Australian half-sovereigns, and to be of the same respective weights, fineness, and values with the sovereigns and half-sovereigns now current within this our Realm:

And whereas, pursuant to and in virtue of the powers given in our said Orders in Council, it is provided that a coinage of the said Australian sovereigns and half-sovereigns shall be made, and that every such Australian sovereign shall have for the obverse, our Effigy, with the inscription "Victoria D.G. Brittanniar: Regina F.D.," and the date of the year, and for the reverse, the word "Australia", placed in the centre of the piece, encircled by a laurel wreath, and surmounted by the Royal Crown, with the inscription "Sydney Mint, One Sovereign," and with a graining on the edge; and that every such Australian half-sovereign shall have the obverse in every respect similar to that of the sovereign, and for the reverse the same word "Australia" in the centre, encircled and surmounted in like manner, but for the inscription the words "Sydney Mint, Half Sovereign," and a graining on the edge:

And whereas pieces of gold money have been and will be coined at our said Branch of the Royal Mint in pursuance of Orders issued and to be issued:

And whereas by an Act passed in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth years of our reign, entitled "An Act to enable Her Majesty to declare Gold Coins to be issued from Her Majesty's Colonial Branch Mints a legal tender for payments, and for other purposes relating thereto," it is provided that "It shall be lawful for Her Majesty from time to time by Proclamation, issued with advice of Her Privy Council, to declare that for such period, subject to such conditions as may be specified in such Proclamation, Gold Coins made at such Colonial Branch Mint, of designs approved by Her Majesty, and being of the same weight and fineness as are required by law, with respect to Gold Coins of the same denominations made at Her Majesty's Mint in London, are to be a legal tender for payments within any part of Her Majesty's Dominions, to be specified in such Proclamations, in which Gold Coins issued from Her Majesty's Mint in London shall, at the date of the issue of such Proclamation, be a legal tender, and upon such Proclamations being issued Gold Coins made of such designs, and being of such weight and fineness as aforesaid, shall be a legal tender for payments accordingly:

And whereas Gold Coins issued from our Mint in London, are at present a legal tender in such parts of our Dominions as are specified in the schedule hereunto annexed:

We, therefore, by and with the advice of our Privy Council, have thought fit to issue this our Royal Proclamation, and we do ordain, declare, and command that, from and after the date of the publication of this our Proclamation by the Governor or other Officer administering the Government of such part or parts of our Dominions as are specified in the schedule hereunto annexed, Coins made at the said Branch Mint, of designs approved by us, at Sydney aforesaid, and being of the same weight and fineness as are required by law with respect to Gold Coins of the same denominations made at our Mint in London, shall be a legal tender for payments within such part or parts of our Dominions as are specified in the said schedule, until such period as this our Royal Proclamation shall be revoked, by and with the advice of our Privy Council aforesaid.

Given at our Court at

this

day of

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

SCHEDULE of Her Majesty's Possessions abroad referred to in the Order in Council, dated 10th day of November, 1866, and in the Draft Proclamation, the issue of which is ordered by the said Order in Council.

Antigua	Malta
Barbados	Montserrat
Bahamas	Nevis
Bermuda	Natal
Cape of Good Hope	St. Helena
British Columbia	Sierra Leone
Dominica	St. Vincent
Falkland Islands	St. Christopher, and its Dependencies
Gold Coast	St. Lucia
Gambia	Trinidad
Gibraltar	Tobago
British Guiana	Tark's and Caicos Islands
Grenada	Vancouver Island
Honduras	Virgin Islands.
Jamaica	"
Lagos	"

This proclamation refers to sovereigns and half-sovereigns with the words "Sydney Mint" and "Australia", with "One Sovereign" or "Half Sovereign", on the reverse. They were minted at the Sydney Branch of the Royal Mint from 1855 to 1870. (From 1871 ordinary Imperial sovereigns were struck at the Sydney Mint with only a minute letter "S" to differentiate them from those struck in London. They were automatically legal tender in Britain and throughout the Empire).

There are two varieties of Sydney Mint sovereign. The first was minted in 1855 and 1856, the dies being by James Wyon. It is described by Andrews as follows:-

- "O. Plain filleted head of Queen Victoria to left with date under. "VICTORIA D: G. BRITANNIAR: REGINA F: D:" round.
- R. "AUSTRALIA" under a Royal Crown, within a wreath of laurel, above "SYDNEY MINT," and below, "ONE SOVEREIGN".

Edge milled.

A pattern of this piece with the date 1853 is in the London Mint Museum. "

The second variety was minted from 1857 to 1870 inclusive, except that half sovereigns were not issued in 1864, 1866, 1868 and 1870. The dies were by L.C. Wyon. The reverse is the same as the first variety but Andrews describes the obverse as follows:-

- "O. Has "VICTORIA D: G: BRITANNIAR: REG: F:D:" with the Queen's head to left wreathed with waratah round the hair, which is plaited, the date below."

The first variety appears to be considerably scarcer than the second. Both are hard to come by in first class condition.

Before this proclamation, Sydney Mint sovereigns were not accepted as legal tender beyond the borders of New South Wales. Melbourne and London banks would only receive them at a

discount/.. ..

discount of one shilling. The London Mint took them only as bullion, each worth 19/10, although, being alloyed with silver instead of copper, as were the Imperial issues, there was a balance in favour of the Sydney sovereigns of about 10d per ounce. It was only in 1864 that legislation made "Australian" sovereigns legal tender in Victoria.

Incidentally, the reference on page twenty-six in the Barclay's Bank brochure "Shells to Shillings" is misleading regarding certain silver and copper coins being legal tender. These coins are not mentioned in the proclamation referred to above. The wording of the paragraph is such that the reader might think that these silver and copper coins were struck at the Sydney Mint. Silver and copper coins were not struck officially anywhere in Australia until the first World War.

SEASON'S GREETINGS.

Our President, Mr. Day, would like to take this opportunity of extending to all members the Compliments of the Season. He hopes that 1961 will see further progress in Numismatics in our country and wishes you all the best of luck in your hunt after additions to your collections. Your Editor associates himself wholeheartedly with these sentiments.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

Hon. Editor.

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

POSTSCRIPT:

OUR DECIMAL COINAGE.

Since writing this Newsletter, we have been privileged to examine an advance uncirculated set of our 1961 decimal coinage consisting of the half-rand, twenty, ten, five and two-and-a-half-cent pieces in silver, and the cent and half-cent in bronze. The design of these coins is very pleasing indeed and we would like to congratulate the Director of the Mint, and his staff, on producing work which is a credit to our Mint and our country. The obverse design is identical with the one-cent piece already described; it being noted that Afrikaans and English are given the place of priority on the left on alternate denominations. The reverse designs of the silver coins are identical to those of 1960, except for the disappearance of the old values and the appearance of the new. The five-cent piece has only five faggots on the reverse, in place of the six on the present sixpence. It is perhaps a pity that the resulting rearrangement has made it necessary to move the Protea flower a little above centre. The faggots have disappeared altogether from the reverse of the two-and-a-half-cent piece, and the resulting picture of the Protea on a plain field is delightful. The reverse of the half-cent piece is a slightly enlarged version of the two-sparrow reverse of the present farthing and is very pleasing.