



Top: Andries Waterboer medal, 1825 Left: Junk Keying medals, 1848
 Middle: Dinizulu medals, 1885 Right: Livingstone medals, 1885

Commemorative Medals *L. J. de Wet*

The distinction between medals and coins is one that frequently confuses the layman, because of their physical similarities. Indeed in the past the term medal was also used to signify coins which were preserved by numismatists and collectors as curiosities, because they were no longer in circulation as currency. Today, however, the distinction has become firmly established and the term medal, or medallion, does not refer to coins whether in circulation or not, but to metal pieces which were never intended for circulation as currency, but were issued to commemorate some historical event or personage or as rewards for personal prowess and service.

Although it is true that the ancient Romans are known to have issued metal pieces that were not intended to be used as coins, the origin of the medal as a new artistic product is to be found in the Italian Renaissance in the fourteenth century, when a series representing important persons in the history of Christianity was made. Only two of these survived. The medals made in the following century in Italy were usually portrait medals of individuals made by artists of renown, who modelled directly in wax, from which a mould was made into which the metal was poured, thus making a cast. The relation between the artist and the finished medal was therefore that of a sculptor and his sculpture, a very close artistic relationship. It was not long before mass production methods began to be invented, because of the slowness of casting.

At first dies were hand-engraved, then they were made by driving hand-carved punches, carved in relief, into the die. A blank medal would be placed between two dies, one for each side of the medal, and literally struck with heavy hammers to force the soft metal of the blank into the die. Then a screw press was used to drive the blank into the die. By this time the art of medal making had spread from Renaissance Italy to the rest of Western Europe until by the seventeenth century medals began to assume a more general and less personal character and served

to record not only individuals of importance, but to record events, or serve as an award for personal service. Though medal designers were still frequently creative artists, the art of die-making became more and more a craft handled by craftsmen's guilds. The technicalities of medal making are far too complicated to be entered into here. It must suffice to say that each step made towards speedier mass production widened the gap between the original design of the creative artist and the finished product; and when it was discovered in modern times how to reduce the model, mechanically, to the size of the die required, the creative art of the medallist received its greatest blow. More medals than ever are being produced today by these mass production methods, and it is pleasant to be able to say that many are of a high artistic standard in spite of this mechanisation.

Although commemorative medals are much older than military medals (which date from the nineteenth century), the latter are much more popular among collectors. A glance at any dealer's sales catalogue will show that although some items may be rather expensive, military medals are much more numerous than commemorative medals. Because they are officially issued, they are so well-documented that the numbers awarded, the symbolism of the design, the name of the designer and die-engraver, the metals of which they are made, the occasion of the award, (all of which the numismatist needs to know) are easy to come by. It is not so as far as commemoratives are concerned - each of these facts has to be searched for in a widely scattered field, in histories, biographies, newspapers and magazines, for there is very little literature devoted to the subject of Africana commemoratives apart from a few articles in periodicals and two catalogues issued by the Africana Museum, Johannesburg. One is a general one describing 175 medals in the Museum's collection in 1946 compiled by Miss H.G. Oliver, the other deals with ZAR Commemorative medals compiled in 1958 by Anna H. Smith. These are now out of print. The prospect of research should not deter a collector from commemoratives, for he will find that there is nothing so satisfying as playing detective and unearthing the historical background of such a medal, the more elusive it is, the more exciting the chase becomes.

A collector must also become conversant with the language of medals, the terms to be used in the cataloguing of his specimens, and which will be used in the medals described here.

A medal has two sides, the obverse and the reverse. The obverse is the upper or most important side, that which bears the head of the sovereign or the person being honoured, or the chief design. The reverse

is the under side or back of the medal. It is often impossible to decide which side is which in a commemorative medal, and it does not really matter. When an inscription, date, artist's name, or a motif appears in a space often ruled off from the main design, at the foot or bottom section of the medal, it is said to be *in exergue* which means *outside the work*. The wording on the medal is called the legend. The edge, on which the name of the recipient may sometimes be engraved, is that part of the medal between the two sides, its thickness as it were. A medal is said to be *pierced* when a hole has been made at the top within the rim, so that a ring may be inserted for suspending the medal from a chain or ribbon. A circular medal is measured across the diameter, usually in millimetres. The metal of which it is made - gold, silver, bronze or copper - is important to note. Many medals are described as being made of white metal, usually of a silvery colour, but whiter than silver. This is a cheaper, softer metal, and wears badly as a rule.

It is obviously impossible to discuss and describe more than a very small number of the whole body of Africana commemorative medals. I have therefore chosen only the earlier ones issued up to the end of the nineteenth century, and of these only the most interesting, for the last decade or so of the nineteenth century saw a great increase in the number of medals struck. I have also chosen to exclude the large number of commemorative medals associated with the history of the old Transvaal Republic, President Kruger and the War of 1899-1902. These are eminently collectable, but the greater majority have been fully documented in the Africana Museum catalogue mentioned earlier, which may be consulted in most South African libraries.

Some of the medals I shall list are not available to collectors, it is true, and some have little if any documentation, but I hope they will serve to stimulate interest and perhaps persuade someone to undertake the research that may solve some of the problems and so lead to a catalogue of the whole field of Africana commemorative medals.

The earliest three medals of Africana interest, as far as we know, were all issued towards the end of the seventeenth century, and are preserved in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. All three, as one would expect, are Dutch in origin.

Goske Medal 1677

Jan van Riebeeck established the refreshment station for the Dutch East India Company at the Cape in 1652. That event was not regarded as being memorable enough to merit the issue of a medal, but some twenty-five years later the Dutch East India Company recognised the services of an important servant of the Company whose long career

ended in acting as Governor of the settlement from 1672 to 1676. Isbrand Goske, or Gotske as his name was sometimes spelled, had an intimate association with the history of the Cape even before his Governorship. During his service as Commissioner, in 1665, he visited the Cape in order to select a site for the stone castle which was to replace the wooden fort erected by Jan van Riebeeck. It was first occupied in 1674 and completed in 1679. The Dutch East India Company presented him with a medal, presumably shortly after his retirement as Governor, as a token of esteem for his services to the Company. It is an engraved silver gilt medal, suspended from a long neck chain. The chain is dated 1677. On one side is depicted a Dutch East India Company's ship, on the other, below the inscription *'t Casteel d'Goede Hoop* is a bird's-eye view of the Castle with an inscription below, eleven lines in length, in which the reasons for the award of the medal and chain are given. These include his governorship of the Cape and the building of the Castle. (The medal and chain are described in *Catalogus van Goud en Zilverwerken*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1952, p70.)

Bax Medal c.1678

The second is a medal commemorating the death and burial of a Governor of the Cape of Good Hope in 1678. He was buried on 4 July on the site where the new church was to be built. In accordance with Dutch custom a silver medal was issued. It is an engraved oval medal bearing the coat of arms of the Governor on one side, and a long inscription on the other which includes his date of death and funeral. It was presumably made in Holland some time after Bax's death.

Gouden Buys Medal c.1695

The third seventeenth century silver medal (described and illustrated in the continuation of Van Loon: *Beschryving van Nederlandsche Historie-Penningen*, vol. 4, p153, illus. p154) commemorates the adventures of two members of the crew of a Dutch East India Company ship which came to grief near St Helena Bay in 1693. The *Gouden Buys* left Holland on 4 May 1693 with 190 men on board. Sickness struck them almost immediately and by 19 October they anchored off the coast because there were not enough men fit enough to handle the ship. On 11 November seven went ashore in a desperate effort to find help. Of these, five perished of starvation, one reached Saldanha Bay, and one was rescued after seven weeks of wandering. The harrowing account of the survivors is a rare Africana publication, a copy of which is in the Strange Library of Africana, Johannesburg Public Library. *Ongelukkig, of Droevig Verhaal van 't schip De Gouden Buys* is based on the report



Top: De Suffren medal, 1784 Second from top: Captain Cook medal, 1776
Third from top: Imhoff medal, 1743 Foot: Dutch East India Company Centenary medal, 1702

of the survivors, Lourens Thys and Silleman, to the authorities in Cape Town. A fast boat was sent from the Cape to the stricken ship. One man was found alive, but he died almost immediately. The two survivors eventually boarded a Dutch ship for Holland, but it is sad to relate that Lourens Thys died on the way home.

Van Loon says that the D.E.I. Co. Chamber of Enkhuyzen presented the medal and chain as a token of condolence to Thys's father, who was a ship's captain in the service of the Company. The legend on one side, translated from the Dutch, reads: *In memory of the disaster when Lourens Thys and Silleman alone survived out of 190 men. On the other: Helen's Bay sheltered the Gouden Buys while God spared him and protected him he sought help with six others - he reached the Cape with only one.* Two minutely detailed scenes are engraved on the medal. One side shows the stricken ship at anchor, with a boat containing seven men making for the shore. On the other Thys is seen seated, with an open book in his hands, on the banks of a river. Three Hottentots stand nearby in a protective manner. An elephant is on the other side of the river, with two lions and an antelope in the distance.

Dutch East India Company Medal 1702

The Dutch East India Company celebrated its centenary in 1702 and a large silver medal (65 mm) was issued in commemoration. On one side is depicted a Greek sailing ship of olden times, making for the East which is symbolised by the rising sun. On her decks are six helmeted oarsmen, each bearing a shield on which the coats of arms of the six chambers of the D.E.I. Co. are depicted. Crossed hands on a seventh shield symbolise the co-operation between the chambers. Neptune with his trident stands beside the helmsman. The pillars of Hercules are on the left of the ship. The other side is as full of allegorical symbols. A seated female figure personifies the Company sitting on a throne marked with one Roman letter C (representing 100 years). Her right hand holds a sword with a wreath round the tip, the arms of Batavia; her left hand holds the charter of the Company. The throne also bears the lion from the arms of the Netherlands. Spices flow from a cornucopia on the right. Brief Latin legends are on each side.

There is no need to draw attention to the fondness of allegory and classical symbols. These enabled the designer to express much within the small compass of the medal.

Godée Molsbergen in his *South African History Told in Pictures*, (Amsterdam, 1913, p45) reproduces both the medal and a painting by Nicolaas Verkolje on which the design of the medal was based. The medal bears the name of Régnier Arondeaux, a Flemish medallist,

considered one of the best of his time. There are about thirty known medals by him.

Imhoff Medal 1743

26 January 1743 was a great day for the colonists at the Cape. All the ships in Table Bay were gaily dressed with flags and pennants and from early morning people from Stellenbosch, Drakenstein and Roodezand began to converge on the town in order to join in the celebrations, for on this day the new Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies was to be inaugurated. It was the first time that so important an event had taken place on Cape soil, and all the pomp and ceremony of which the settlement was capable was provided. (Krom, N.J. *Gustaaf Willem van Imhoff*, Amsterdam, Van Kampen, 1941, p98.)

For Baron Gustaf Willem van Imhoff, the new Governor-General, then thirty-eight years of age, it was also a great day for more than one reason. Two years earlier, when he was Governor of Ceylon and a member of the Council of India, he had passed through the Cape in deep disgrace after his arbitrary arrest and deportation by the then Governor-General Valckenier. The inauguration day would therefore reinstate him in the eyes of the Kapenaars. He proved to be one of the ablest men ever to fill that high office.

The ceremonies ended with a banquet at the end of which a silver medal was presented to each of the guests (Van Loon: *Beschryving van Nederlandsche Historie-Penningen*, 1827, vol. 3, p170-1). The Governor-General's head appears on the obverse, with his name and office around. On the reverse is a female figure representing the Dutch East India Company, similar to that on the 1702 centenary medal but holding a pair of scales in her right hand. An anchor leans against her and the VOC monogram appears on the seat. A Latin legend meaning *Hope of better times* gives point to the rays of the sun emerging from obscuring clouds. This and the scales are symbolised references to the troubles that had beset the Company during the rule of Imhoff's predecessor Valckenier. The Africana Museum has two versions of this medal in which the obverses are different dies which show slight differences in the modelling of the bust and the placing of the artist's name in relation to the bust.

The medallist was Martin Holtzhey (1697-1764), Master of the Mint at Amsterdam, an excellent medallist, responsible for a great number of portrait medals, according to Forrer's *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*. According to the Koninklijk Kabinet van Munten, Penningen en Gesnede Stenen, 's-Gravenhage, this medal was also sold by Holtzhey to collectors. Although it is not expressly stated in the sources available

in South Africa, it is probable that Van Imhoff ordered the medal at his own expense, as he had ordered another medal from Holtzhey in 1742 at his own cost. This 1742 medal is described by H. B. Zuck in *Africana Notes and News*, vol. 19, p338. It was ordered to celebrate Van Imhoff's appointment as Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. The number was limited as they were intended for presentation to a few dignitaries and the dies were never used again, according to Holtzhey's Catalogue of 1755. A similar but smaller medal (49 mm compared with 75 mm) with much abbreviated legend was struck by Holtzhey and sold to collectors for his own gain.

Captain Cook Medal 1776

The great explorer and navigator, Captain James Cook, visited the Cape on four occasions in 1771, 1772, 1775 and 1776. On his return to England from his second voyage in 1774 he was elected a member of the Royal Society and in 1776 he was awarded the Copley medal in gold by the Society for his discoveries in the Pacific. The medal was also struck in silver, pewter and bronze. The medallist was Chief Engraver at the British Royal Mint, Louis Pingo (1743-1830). The Africana Museum has a bronze specimen of this medal (43 mm).

The obverse shows the head of Captain Cook. The reverse shows Fortune, leaning on a column, holding a rudder on a globe, and a spear. Near her is a shield. The legend *Nil Intentatum Nostrum Lique* is inscribed around, *Auspiciis Georgi III* is inscribed in exergue.

De Suffren Medals 1784

In 1784 two medals were issued in honour of the French Admiral De Suffren who commanded the French squadron which sailed for the Cape in 1781 to help the Dutch defend the Cape from attack by the English. He had an indecisive battle with the English fleet at the Cape Verde islands, but reached the Cape before Admiral Johnstone, thus saving the Colony from invasion. The medals were issued when he returned to France.

The large silver medal, 80 mm in diameter, issued by the Dutch East India Company bears, on one side, the head of a Frisian maid wearing an ornament on her forehead shaped like an elephant's trunk, symbolising Africa. The VOC monogram appears on an ancient oar below her head. The name of the Company, in Latin, forms the legend around. The reverse of the medal, also in Latin, may be translated: *To a renowned man, De Suffren, a most brave Admiral of the King of France, for his defence and preservation of the Colonies.* It bears the name of the medallist I. H. Schepp.

That this medal is exceedingly rare is borne out by a letter quoted by

authorities such as Van Loon and Milford Haven from Frans Hemsterhuis written in 1785 in which he states that one medal was struck in gold for presentation to the Admiral, three in silver for the Stadtholder and the Company, and three in bronze for Hemsterhuis himself. At the striking of the third bronze the die began to bend. No more were struck and the dies were broken. Hemsterhuis is believed to have assisted with the design of the medal and Schepp was the engraver of the dies.

Johann Heinrich Schepp was Court and Mint engraver at Cassel from 1750 to 1760, after which he became medallist at Frankfort (Forrer).

The smaller medal, 50 mm in diameter, was issued by Provence in silver and bronze, and was made by the famed Augustin Dupré, 1748–1833, goldsmith, medallist and engraver-general of coins under the first French Republic. The obverse depicts the head of the admiral; the reverse bears the inscription which translated reads *The Cape protected, Trincomalee taken, Goudelour set free, India defended. Six glorious battles. The states of Provence have issued this medal.*

Andries Waterboer and Cupido Kok Medals 1825

Andries Waterboer was elected Captain of the Griquas at Griquatown by the people of the mission station in 1819. This settlement, near the junction of the Orange and Vaal Rivers, consisted of people of Hottentot and mixed blood who had adopted the name Griqua. They were therefore neighbours to the Cape Colony who lived mainly by hunting and were governed by an elected Captain. Andries Waterboer was an assistant teacher in the school at the mission, and although his authority was confined to a very small area he proved himself to be so useful and friendly a neighbour to the Colony that in 1825, the Governor Lord Charles Somerset, in the name of the British Government, presented him with a large engraved oval silver medal (92 x 73 mm). Each of his councillors received a smaller one (60 x 49 mm) with his name engraved thereon. (S.J. Halford: *Griquas of Griquatown* p65). The obverse is engraved *Andries Waterboer Capitein van de Griquas. Een bewys van Vriendschap van het Engelsch Gouvernement 1825*. The reverse shows the figure of a white man clasping the hand of a Non-European, with *Wij zyn alle Broederen* below.

Heller in his *Further Researches in Cape Silver* (1953, p63) mentions these medals and adds that it is not known whether any of the medals survived. In 1965 the large Waterboer medal and a smaller one engraved with the name Cupido Kok, one of the Griqua Heemraden or Councillors, were acquired by the Africana Museum from a British coin

and medal dealer. These medals are of great interest for they bear no English silver hall-mark and may therefore have been made by a Cape silversmith. As Heller mentions only one prize medal of Cape silver known to him, this possibility adds much to their importance.

Abolition of Slavery Medals 1834

In 1833 the British Government passed an act pronouncing the abolition of slavery in its possessions, and providing that as far as the Cape Colony was affected slavery would cease on 1 December 1834. There were at the time, according to Theal, 39 021 slaves in the Colony. The emancipation, because of its economic and social consequences, not to mention their effects upon the political thinking of the colonists, was a major event in the history of South Africa, and the Africana Museum has three medals of white metal in commemoration.

The largest (AM 53/939) shows a slave standing with broken fetters in his hands, his feet on a cat-o'-nine-tails, against an African background of date palms and a peculiar mud hut. The date appears below him and a quotation from Psalm 118 is the legend around *This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes*. The reverse reads: *In commemoration/ of the/Extinction/of/Colonial Slavery/throughout the British Dominions/in the reign of/William the IV/Aug. 1 1834. Davis Birm.* is inscribed at the foot. 43 mm. Pierced for a ring.

Joseph Davis was a manufacturer of gilt toys in Birmingham, and began to work as a die-engraver in about 1828. In 1845 he was described as *Die-engraver to H.R.H. Prince Albert and H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent*. He died in about 1857. Forrer's *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* adds to this information that Grueber, an authority on medals claimed that *Davis was not a die-engraver himself but merely struck medals from dies cut for him*.

The second (AM 45/446) shows a group of seven slaves, male and female, dancing in a ring round a palm tree, with an inscription below *Slavery Abolished by/Great Britain/1834*. On the other side is the figure of William IV (?) seated, with four men in attendance. The inscription below reads *I advocate this Bill as a/measure of humanity*, 40 mm.

The third (AM 45/445) shows a male slave standing, a woman and a child kneeling among broken chains. *Give Glory to God* is the legend around. The artist's name *Halliday* appears below. The reverse reads: *Jubilee/in Commemoration/of the/Abolition/of/Slavery/in the/British Colonies/in the Reign of/William IV/Aug. 1. 1834*, 32 mm, pierced.

The medallist Thomas Halliday, born in about 1780, worked in Birmingham from about 1810 to 1842. He engraved dies for the trade, and also engraved and made tokens and medals at his own works for

traders. He also manufactured buttons and studs. He was responsible for some of the best commemorative medals of national and personal events in England (Forrer).

The progenitor of the famous Wyon family, Peter Wyon, of German birth, was an apprentice of his, and Peter's son William Wyon, RA, first learned the art of die-engraving under Halliday. The Wyon family of die-engravers and medallists dominated the art in Britain for some 150 years.

Junk Keying Medals 1848

This Chinese Junk was purchased in 1846 in Canton by a group of Englishmen who succeeded in evading the Chinese law which prohibited the sale of Chinese vessels to foreigners. The vessel left Hong Kong on 6 December 1846 with a crew of thirty Chinese and twelve Englishmen, and the Mandarin Hsing as passenger, and was seen off by the Governor, the Admiral, the Commander-in-Chief and most of the principal residents of the British Colony. She rounded the Cape on 31 March 1847 and landed at St Helena on 17 April. The intention was to carry on for London, but she was carried off course by adverse winds, supplies began to run short, and the crew became so discontented that the captain decided to make for New York. She created a great sensation there, about 7-8 000 people visited the ship daily. She finally arrived at London, after a voyage of twenty-one days across the Atlantic, on 27 March 1848, where once again she received an enthusiastic reception and was visited by Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales. The story was told in the *Illustrated London News* of April 1848, which illustrated and described the ship in great detail with particular attention to the Chinese furnishings, ornaments and murals.

On 20 May 1848 an engraving of the ship was published in London by Roch Brothers and Payne, entitled *The Chinese Junk Keying Captain Kellett: the first Junk that ever rounded the Cape of Good Hope, or appeared in British Waters*. No artist's or engraver's name is given.

An extraordinary number of medals was issued in commemoration of this voyage. The Africana Museum possesses no less than six, not one of which is a duplicate. Five are white metal, one is bronze. All the obverses are different; five depict the ship; one has the bust of the Mandarin Hsing. All the reverses have a long description, three are identical in wording and tell the story of the voyage including the rounding of the Cape; the remaining three concentrate on the dimensions and construction of the ship. Halliday, mentioned earlier, was responsible for four of the medals. His name appears on three

different ship obverses and the Mandarin obverse.

The names of Davis of Birmingham and Allen & Moore also of Birmingham appear on the obverses of the other two. With regard to Allen & Moore, Forrer remarks that they were the best nineteenth century artists of the Birmingham school.

All the ship obverses bear so close a resemblance to the engraving, though only one shows three sails, that the medals may have been based on the picture. Indeed the medal showing three sails perpetuates an error made in the engraving. All three sails are on the same side of the masts, whereas on a junk of this type one sail is always on a side opposite to the other two.

Oswell Medal 1849

William Cotton Oswell (1818-1893) first came to South Africa in 1844 and between that year and 1852 undertook five expeditions to explore central Africa, several with David Livingstone. On his third expedition he reached Lake Ngami on 1 August 1849. In 1852 the Paris Geographical Society awarded a large silver medal (68 mm) to Oswell. The obverse shows a seated female figure in classical draperies, representing France, holding out a laurel wreath in her right hand, with a second wreath in her left hand on her lap. The reverse has the name of the Society around, and in the centre in French, *To Mr W. Cotton Oswell for the discovery of Lake Ngami 1849*.

This was the annual prize awarded by the French Society for the most important discovery of the year in geography. A similar medal was awarded at the same time to his fellow traveller David Livingstone.

Oswell was, according to his biography written by his son W.E. Oswell (London, Heinemann, 1900) a most shy and modest man who never sought public recognition of his achievements. When he was told that the Royal Geographical Society in London would award him its gold medal if only he would agree to publish his journals or read a paper to the Society, he refused, saying (vol. 2, p9) *No I won't write a line; I know quite well that Livingstone is working hard at his book; he wants the medal, let him have it; it means more to him than it could ever mean to me*. Indeed he felt so strongly about the matter that when he was very ill with fever, and feared that he might not recover he went so far as to destroy the relevant pages of his journal lest they should be published after his death.

The Africana Museum has two electrotype copies of the medal bearing the inscription *Copy R.M.P.*

Livingstone Medal 1873

David Livingstone, missionary explorer, died in Africa in 1873. To

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

mark the occasion of his death a bronze medal (42 mm) was issued in London. His portrait, three-quarter face, appeared on the obverse, with the legend around: *David Livingstone born Blantyre 1813 died Ilala 1873*. The reverse depicts a group of six classical figures at an altar in a temple. The engraver was Allan Wyon (1843–1907) who was appointed Chief Engraver of Her Majesty's seals in 1884. Allan Wyon was a member of the famous Wyon family which for a century and a half produced many of Britain's best-known medals.

The Great Gale Medal 1878

The winter gales in Table Bay led to frequent shipwrecks, but the storm that raged for several days from 18 to 23 July 1878, and drove eighteen ships ashore, must have been one of the worst ever recorded. A newspaper account described the scene as follows: *The scene alone, the Beach from Cape Town to Salt River, was of the most exciting kind. Crowds of people were standing about. The sea had a most angry look, the bay was covered with breakers and a strong current was driving landwards. The sky was like an inverted pewter pot, its ashy line being reflected on the waters below. The whole of the road between the town and Salt River was at an early hour thronged with pedestrians and equestrians, in fact, all sorts.*

Early on the morning of 19 July some fishermen at Woodstock found *The Caledonian* aground. They launched a life-boat, but were driven back by the violence of the sea. Volunteers were called to man the boat and fifteen men came forward. They reached the ship and had taken some of the crew on board when a huge wave broke over the ship, rushed across the deck and into the life-boat swamping it. The captain drowned while trying to save one of the volunteer crew – three of his own crew were lost – but all the volunteers together with the rest of *The Caledonian's* crew were later rescued by the Port life-boat.

On 3 August a benefit concert in aid of the wrecked seamen of the eighteen lost ships was held in the Theatre Royal in the presence of the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere. The fifteen life-boat volunteers, who were seated together in the circle, were called to the stage. Sir David Tennant, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and the Dean of Cape Town addressed the audience and then Sir David pinned a silver cross on the breast of each of the crew. The fifteen men were then taken to the Governor's box and introduced to him.

The Africana Museum has one of these medals presented to G. A. Buyskes. The cross, in shape reminiscent of a Maltese cross is inscribed *The Great Gale in Table Bay July 1878. Presented to G. A. Buyskes for personal bravery.*

Prince Imperial Medal 1879

One of the tragedies of the Zulu War was the untimely death of Louis Napoleon, Prince Imperial, the son of Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie. Exiled in England, he received a commission in the British Army and prevailed upon the authorities against their better judgment to allow him to serve in Zululand. With a small group of British officers and other ranks, he was ambushed and killed, under circumstances which have been debated ever since because of the lack of precautions taken when the group dismounted and their failure to guard his life. He died bravely facing overwhelming odds. A bronze medal (32 mm) commemorates his death. The obverse depicts his full-face bust, with the legend around: *Eugene Louis Jean Joseph Napoleon, Prince Imperial*. The reverse reads, within a wreath (translated from the French) *Born at the Tuilleries at Paris on 16 March 1856, died on the field of honour at Itelezi on 1 June 1879*.

Dinizulu Medal 1885

This bronze medal (45 mm) is still a puzzle in spite of efforts to discover its history. Dinizulu was proclaimed King of Zululand by the Boers of the New Republic on 21 May 1884. A biography of Dinizulu (*Dinizulu* by C. T. Binns, Longmans, 1968) makes no mention of any medal but refers to an event dated 1885 which might have had some bearing on it. This was the so-called treaty, not recognised by the British Government, between a German firm represented by E. Nagel and Dinizulu in 1885. The medal seems to have been intended for award by Dinizulu for services rendered to him. The specimen in the Museum is blank where the name of the recipient should be.

The obverse shows within a laurel and palm wreath a shield containing Zulu assegais and a Zulu shield. The latter is divided in three parts, with a Secretary Bird holding a snake in its beak in the upper part, the pierced slats of the shield in the centre, and a crocodile below. The shield is surmounted by a ball of feathers attached to the stick on which it is borne, and a circlet (perhaps the Zulu head ring) with an ostrich feather on each side.

The inscriptions on the reverse are in Zulu. In the centre *Uku . . . Bgokuba Fanela* (To . . . because deserving). Around: *Dinizulu Inkos Ka Ilizwe Amazulu, Emnyati, 1885* (Dinizulu king of the country of the Zulu, Emnyati, 1885).

S.A. Exhibition, Port Elizabeth, (1885)

This exhibition at Port Elizabeth of South African arts, industries, raw materials and products was a preliminary to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886, to which the best exhibits were to be

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

sent. It was opened by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Hercules Robinson, on 10 December 1885, and closed in January 1886. The Africana Museum has a prize medal awarded for an exhibit as well as the two large bronze medals (47 mm) commemorating the exhibition itself, one with English wording, the other with Dutch. The obverse of both versions shows the arms and motto of the town of Port Elizabeth, with *South African Exhibition of 1885* around. In the centre of the reverse, within a circle, are the words *Peace and Union* around which *Labour Intelligence Secure Success*. Around, in an outer circle *Concordia Namaqualand Cape of Good Hope*. The Dutch version has *Vrede en Eenzaamheid* within *Arbeid Verstand Verzekeren Voorspoed*. The outer legend is the same as on the English version.

No maker's name appears on these medals, though the prize medal is made by A. F. Scher & Co. Port Elizabeth.

Colonial and Indian Exhibition Medal 1886

This was the exhibition prepared for at Port Elizabeth in 1885, at which the Cape of Good Hope, according to the *Illustrated London News*, presented the finest show in the annexe devoted to Africa with its model of a diamond mine, stuffed ostriches, pictures of the Colony, raw materials and manufactured products and heads of game. The exhibition was opened by Queen Victoria in the Albert Hall, London, on 4 May 1886.

The large bronze medal (51 mm) issued for the occasion depicts the head of the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, with the legend around: *Albert Edward Prince of Wales Executive President*. On the reverse, within a wreath of oak leaves are the words *Colonial and Indian Exhibition London 1886*.

The name L. C. Wyon appears on the obverse. Leonard Charles Wyon (1826-1891), the eldest son of the renowned William Wyon, succeeded his father as Chief Engraver of the Royal Mint in 1851, and as such engraved most of the dies for the British military and naval medals issued between 1851 and 1891. He was both designer and engraver.

A second much smaller bronze medal (19 mm) was also issued. It also bears the bust of the Prince of Wales on the obverse. The reverse reads *Struck in Commemoration of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, 1886*.

Victoria Golden Jubilee Medal 1887

Royal occasions (jubilees, deaths, coronations, visits) are nearly always commemorated by medals, both official for presentation to important persons, and unofficial which may be sold or given to school children as souvenirs. The Africana Museum has only two medals celebrating

AFRICANA CURIOSITIES

Victoria's fifty years as queen, and both were issued by commercial firms, one by Bradfield & Co. of Pietermaritzburg, the other by J.W. Irwin of Cape Town. Both are white metal and their condition is poor. These medals appear to be more rare than those of the 1897 jubilee. The medal issued by Bradfield is shaped like a Maltese cross and is simply inscribed *Born 1819 Crowned 1838 Married 1840 Jubilee 1887*. The Irwin medal (38 mm) waxes more eloquent. Around her head on the obverse is the legend *In her reign science and art flourished. The colonies were united. Legislation for the amelioration of the people was enacted*. The reverse quotes lines from Tennyson:

Vivat Regina

Her court was pure her life serene

A thousand claims to reverence closed

In her as mother wife and queen.

This is followed by *Victoria Jubilee, Cape Town 1887, presented by J. W. Irwin*.

S.A. & International Exhibition Medal, 1892

This exhibition, held in the Kimberley Public Gardens, was the largest held in South Africa up to that time. It was opened on 8 September 1892 by Sir Henry Loch, Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa.

The medals issued on this occasion, bronze, gilt and white metal (28 mm) compared with those of the 1885 exhibition, are very poor specimens indeed. No documentation has been traced but it would not be surprising to discover that they were handed out to school children. The obverse bears the full-face bust of Sir Henry Loch with the legend around: *South African and International Exhibition Kimberley 1892*. The exhibition buildings are on the reverse, with the Cape Colony motto *Spes Bona* in exergue.

Kimberley Town Hall Medal, 1899

In September 1899, shortly before the outbreak of the War of 1899-1902, Kimberley issued a medal for school children to commemorate the opening of the new Town Hall.

Of white metal, 26 mm, the obverse depicts the building, with *Town Hall* above, and *Kimberley* below. The long legend on the reverse reads, around: *Presented to the children of Kimberley within the centre By H.W. the Mayor, R. K. Henderson in Commemoration of the opening of the Town Hall Kimberley September 1899*. A circle of petal-like points surround the medal.

Medals Awarded for Saving Life

Medals awarded to honour or commemorate the saving of life form a

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

special group. The earliest in the Africana Museum is a large silver one awarded by the Royal Humane Society to Captain F. Skead, RN, in 1852 for saving a boy from drowning. Captain Skead later settled in South Africa and was Port Captain at Port Elizabeth from 1866 to 1887. The obverse depicts a child blowing on a torch trying to rekindle the flame, which is the emblem of life. The Latin legend *Lateat Scintilla Forsan* means *A little spark may yet lie hidden*. The reverse also in Latin describes *The Society established in London for the recovery of persons in a state of suspended animation*. The Society was founded in 1774. Then comes the name of the recipient and the words (translated): *he obtained this reward for having saved the life of a citizen*. The Africana Museum has a second medal awarded by the Royal Humane Society in 1882. This is a smaller bronze medal with the name of the recipient on the edge. It was reduced in 1869 to conform with the size of war medals. Ronald Maclean, the recipient, was born at Fort Murray near East London in 1849, the son of Col. Maclean, one-time Lieut. Governor of British Kaffraria. Ronald Maclean had an extraordinary record of life-saving at East London during the years 1870 to 1887. Most of these achievements were concerned with shipwrecks when Maclean on at least seven occasions not only swam with a life line to the wrecks but often plunged into stormy seas to save the lives of drowning crewmen. On 11 November 1882 two lighters being towed into the river were struck by a heavy sea and capsized. Maclean saw the mishap from the jetty, half a mile away, rushed to the spot, flung himself into the breakers and rescued three men of the twenty who had been on the lighters. Only eleven were saved in all. For this he received the medal. His last recorded rescue was of a Newfoundland dog in 1887 which tried to cross the river and was carried out to sea. At great personal risk he entered the sea and succeeded in bringing the dog to the breakwater wall, where spectators assisted both to safety.

Two privately awarded medals to the same man are dated 1864 and 1865 respectively. The earlier one is a handsome silver medal shaped like a Maltese Cross within a laurel wreath with an eagle above. At the centre of the cross is a circle engraved, rather crudely, with a picture of a man saving a child in the sea. The reverse is inscribed *Presented to Mr H. Christensen by James Murison for saving his dear daughter from drowning on the 3rd July 1864 at Cape Town*.

The second medal is a crude one of the kind stocked by jewellers of the period and often used as prize medals by various societies and clubs. Roughly oval, it is decorated with an engraved 'cut-out' design, with a centre shield depicting the same scene described above of a man saving

AFRICANA CURIOSITIES

a child in the sea. The reverse is inscribed *Presented to Mr H. Christensen by John W. Taylor for saving his dear son from a water grave on the 17th May 1865 at Port Elizabeth.* The maker's mark appears to be of Birmingham, but the date letter was used only in 1889-90 in an oval cartouche, which is very puzzling. The incidents described have not been traced in any records.