

RNA News

March - April 2013

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On January 31st, I received an email from the U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security. My first take on it was...this can't be real, thus it must be a hoax. What on earth would they want with me or the RNA? The gentleman got my email address and John Vicaretti's from our web site. That's easy enough for anyone to do, so the skeptic in me still says...hoax. After a little investigation and a phone call I realized this request was real and the person WAS from the U.S. Secret Service.

Brad Jacobs was looking for the assistance of the RNA in identifying what he believed to be a cache of counterfeit coins. The Secret Service has always been involved with identifying counterfeit currency, beginning when it was formed in 1865. That was when William P. Wood was sworn in as the first chief of this agency. In addition to identifying currency counterfeiters, the agency was later charged with identifying people involved in perpetrating fraud against the U.S. Government including those that

counterfeit coins. I offered to bring several of our resident experts together if he brought the coins to one of our meetings.

On February 7th, Brad brought the coins in prior to the beginning of the meeting and we set up a table where members such as John Zabel, Gerry Muhl, Dan White, Art Cohen, Steve Eisinger, Chip Scoppa and many more pored through the coins - from poorly struck LS Half Dollars and Peace Dollars to slabbed Morgans and a certified 1916-D Mercury Dime. The final consensus was they were all forgeries. We learned how to identify counterfeit slabs and a host of other markers. Brad learned a lot and many of our members did.

This was a rare opportunity to take what we have learned in the hobby and use that knowledge to assist the U.S. government. Hats off to those that took the time to assist and to Brad for volunteering to return and give a talk on other topics that are of interest to our club!

John Lighthouse

Report of the Ad Hoc Auction Committee	page 3
The Story of the George Eastman Medal	page 4
The Coinage of Sherlock Holmes	page 5
Club News and Notes	page 9
Twenty-First Century Numismatics	page 10
RNA Historian Looks Back at an Earlier Philadelphia Coin Show	page 11
And more -	

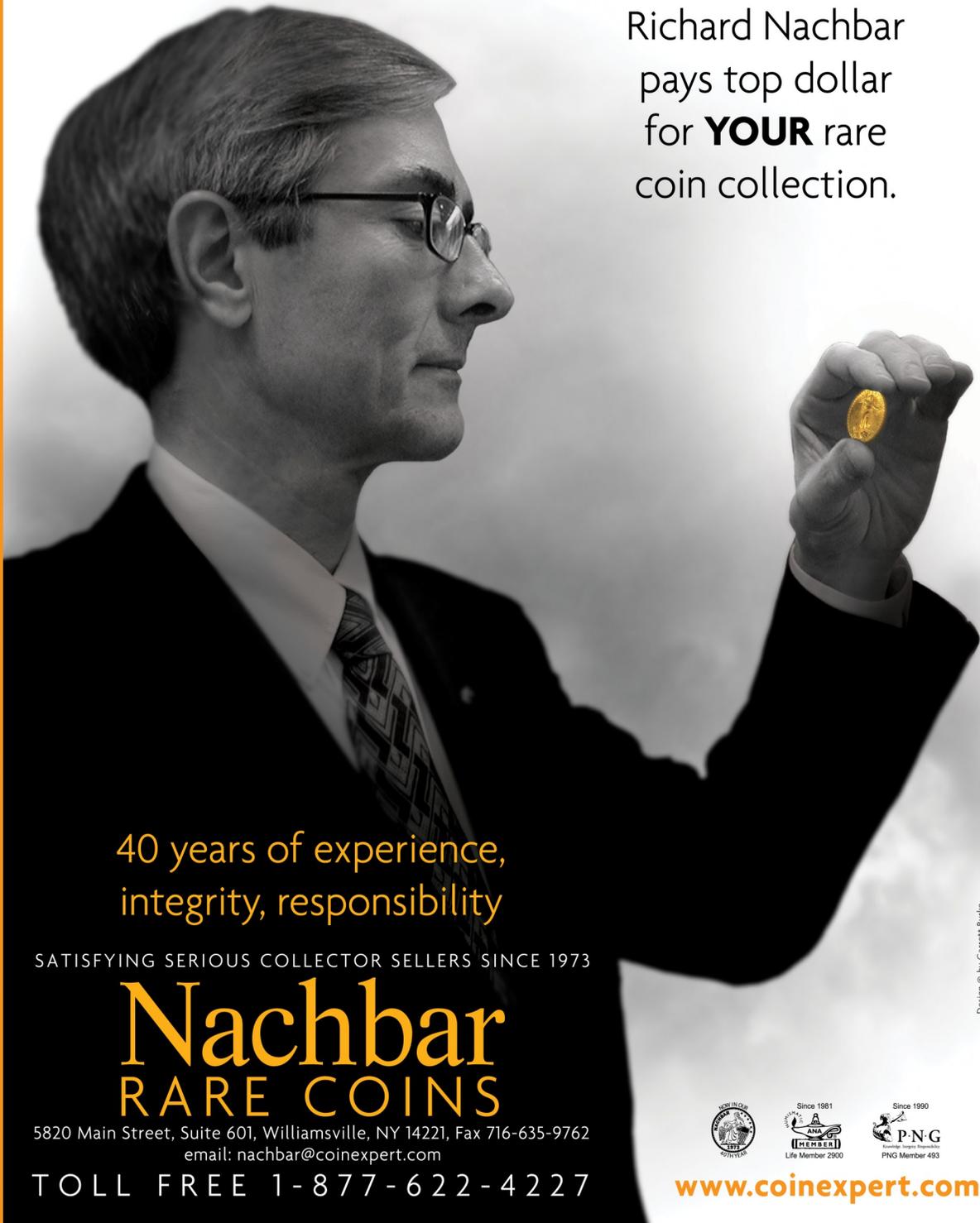
Visit our website at <http://www.the-rna.com/>

We need your Article for the newsletter. Earn Fame; win a writers medal. Tell us a numismatic experience; write about a favorite coin or series. How about a biography of a worthy numismatist?

Send articles to Gerry (and email them to Ted).

In a rapidly changing world, one thing remains constant:

Richard Nachbar
pays top dollar
for **YOUR** rare
coin collection.



40 years of experience,
integrity, responsibility

SATISFYING SERIOUS COLLECTOR SELLERS SINCE 1973

Nachbar RARE COINS

5820 Main Street, Suite 601, Williamsville, NY 14221, Fax 716-635-9762
email: nachbar@coinexpert.com

TOLL FREE 1-877-622-4227



www.coinexpert.com

Design © by Garrett Burke

R eport of the Ad Hoc Auction Committee

The Ad Hoc Auction Committee met Monday, January 14th at Steve Eisinger's house. In attendance were: Paul Taylor, Bill Coe, Art Cohen, John Lighthouse, Gerry Muhl, John Bixler, Scott Fybush, Chip Scoppa, and the host Steve Eisinger, who served ice wine and Port in acknowledgement of RNA meetings of old, but asked that no cigars be smoked.

Many issues were discussed and fully aired. The point was made emphatically by several present that the Auction is not an official function of the RNA. It takes place after the meeting is closed, and represents a private sale of an item by one individual to another. The purpose of this arrangement is to avoid tax implications. The RNA *supports* this activity, and *advises* it but does not *run* the auction.

A number of suggestions were voted on, yes or no, for submission to The Board of Directors of the RNA. Here is a summary of those items which the Ad Hoc Committee has decided to recommend to The Board, for their consideration.

1. The Board of Directors will create an Auction Advisory Committee, consisting of a Chair and two or three members. (The Committee is *Advisory* for the reasons stated above—the RNA does not actually run the auction.) The duty of the Auction Advisory Committee will be to oversee the auction, implement certain changes in the auction believed to be desirable, try some innovations in the auction on a trial basis, and poll the RNA membership for opinion and feedback regarding the function of the auction. It is acknowledged that The Auction is intended to meet the needs and pleasure of the largest portion of the membership as possible. The Auction Advisory Committee will report to The Board and the membership at regular intervals.
2. The following ideas will be implemented **on a trial basis** (these changes will not be attempted all at once but tried one at a time throughout the year, and each trial will be well-publicized in the meetings, newsletter, and website) These ideas are not in any particular order
 - A. Run the auction at the beginning of the meeting
 - B. Limit items to a minimum reserve (\$5 or \$10)
 - C. Limit items to a maximum reserve (\$1 or \$5)
 - D. Limits trays to five items to shorten the auction on certain occasions
 - E. Place the trays in random order at the start of the auction instead of placing them on a first-come-first-taken basis
 - F. Invite dealer-members to submit items for the auction
 - G. Have a drawing at the end of the auction for a \$20 dollar item—must be present to win
 - H. Encourage certain standards of auctioneers, and reward them with some token of appreciation such as a medal at the banquet. Try to designate auctioneers in advance of the meeting.
 - I. Try a silent auction
 - J. Encourage members to advertise their auction items in advance in the newsletter and on the website, especially for high-end items, and for the “big” auctions that occur twice a year

The Auction is for the members. Your voice has been heard, and will continue to have weight as these trials of new ideas occur.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Eisinger

Chair of the Ad Hoc Auction Committee

The Story of the George Eastman Medal

By **Donovan Shilling**, RNA President - 1975

Although most RNA members collect coins, there are some that are attracted to medals. We might regard the medals as a kind of distant cousins to the world's coinage. The story behind one such medal is that of George Eastman. The tale may be of interest to local collectors. In 1937 a memorial to George Eastman was unveiled at Kodak Park.

In his dedication address Dr. Rush Rhees, President of the University of Rochester, announced "an action of the Company's board of directors, of which he is a member: On this day, a bronze medal with George Eastman's portrait on the face, and on the back the name of the recipient, is being given to each employee who has been in the service of the Company for twenty-five years or more, as a constant reminder of Eastman recognition of the part played in Kodak's success by the whole body of loyal colleagues in the factories, business offices and the sales centers throughout the world.

Every year, new medals will be struck from the same dies, for an award to those who have completed their twenty-fifth year as members of the Kodak organization. This gathering is thus the occasion of the fourth annual presentation of medals, in token of the bond of which Mr. Eastman's portrait is the most fitting symbol."

The George Eastman medal has on its reverse the following:

PRESENTED TO (name in script)
IN REGOGNITION OF
MORE THAN A QUARTER
CENTURY OF LOYAL
SERVICE WITH THE
EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY
(Year in script)

The medals were struck and signed by the Medallie Art Company of New York City. The artists' name does not appear on them. A black Tenite II base, molded by the Tennessee Eastman Corporation, holds the medal. At a later date the presentation medal was encased in Lucite and given as a paper weight. Before the medal project was terminated the medals were extruded in bronze-colored plastic and put in the Lucite block. (photo below: eBay)

A few of these medals may be discovered in local antique shops and occasionally at flea markets. Prices of the Eastman medals range from twenty to thirty dollars, and some might be sold for even less.



RNA 2012-2013 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues unpaid as of January 31 may result in suspension of membership including eligibility for the presidential medal & mailed newsletters. Dues: Family or individual - \$25 (life member none); please pay the Treasurer.

National Coin Month

For the entire month of April the RNA will have a display of "Odd and Curious" money on display in the new Bausch and Lomb Public Library Building of the Rundel Library at South Avenue and Broad Street downtown. The display, including material from the RNA Collection, will be located in the history department on the third floor. Park for about a dollar in the garage adjoining the building.

Speaking of Libraries...

The *John Jay Pittman Memorial Library* is available at every regular meeting. There are over one thousand titles to pick from. See the RNA Librarian to sign for and borrow materials.

The Coinage of Sherlock Holmes

By Steve Eisinger, RNA President, - 2011

Sherlock Holmes was the fictional consulting detective of Victorian England invented by the author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Immensely popular in the days of his publication, Sherlock Holmes remains an icon of literature, detective procedure, and adventure, known to almost everyone today through the original stories and numerous modern adaptations in literature and on the screen.

Money and its surrogates—coinage and notes, stocks and bonds, wills, inheritances and dowries, and gems of all kinds—frequent the stories. Of course Sherlock Holmes solves crimes, and frequently the crime is theft. Or murder, fraud, counterfeiting, or blackmail with money as the motive. Money may be the actual driving feature of the plot, or it may be mentioned casually; dispensed to assistants, or offered as a reward to solve a crime, or paid as blackmail, or gambled away, or discussed as the earnings of a beggar or the salary for governesses and crime bosses—in short, money is woven densely into the fabric of Victorian life and into these wonderfully rich stories.

But what about the actual money? I have chosen two stories to highlight the money itself; what it was made of, what it looked like and where it was made, and how much it was worth, then and today.

Silver Blaze is the first story in the volume *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. It was published in 1892. It is a lively story of betrayal and murder, horse chicanery, infidelity, and greed, all set in the world of upper crust English horse racing. Holmes is at his scintillating best, with Watson his stodgy but steady sidekick. Briefly, a famous racehorse named Silver Blaze, owned by Colonel Ross, disappears shortly before the big race. The trainer, John Straker, lies dead of a blow to the head on the moor near the stable. Holmes, through clever field work and deduction, realizes that the horse bolted free just as Straker was about to nick the horse's tendon, which would render him slightly lame. In bolting, the horse himself inflicted the fatal injury on Straker, entirely in self-defense, it must be said. Silver Blaze had been found wandering free upon the moor by a neighboring horse trainer, who alters his appearance by dyeing the silver blaze on the horse's face, and plans to keep him out of the race for his own personal gain of course. Holmes confronts the conniving neighbor, forces him to race the horse, but allows him to do so without changing the horse's appearance back (this is a little payback by Holmes for Colonel Ross' skeptical attitude toward Holmes). Colonel Ross wins the race, and is reunited with his horse.

The case is full of red herrings and obscure clues. We learn of the gentleman bookie who comes in the night and the gypsies on the moor. We puzzle at the surgical knife found in the dead man's effects. There is a dish of curried mutton laced with opium served to the stable boy. There is the epidemic of lameness amongst the sheep, which Holmes deduces is the result of Straker practicing the tendon-nicking operation. Then there is a famous line uttered by Holmes in discussing the case with Detective Gregory, who asks:

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident," remarked Sherlock Holmes.

Holmes cracks the case when he sees a bill in the dead man's possession for a ladies' walking dress for the sum of twenty-two guineas. Mrs. Straker, the bereaved widow of the dead trainer, denies any knowledge of the dress. Holmes realizes that the married Straker is leading a double life, has a mistress in town and was plunged over head and ears in debt trying to satisfy her expensive taste in haberdashery. Thus, his nefarious plot to sabotage his own horse.

What is a Guinea? The Guinea originated in 1663 as a gold coin bearing the portrait of the current ruler, worth a pound of sterling silver, or twenty shillings. The gold for its minting at least originally came from Guinea, in West Africa—hence the name. But over the years, the price of gold went up in relation to silver, and the relative value of the Guinea changed, achieving at its highest a value equivalent to thirty shillings. In the Great Re-coinage of 1816 the Guinea coin ceased to be minted in favor of the sovereign, and its value was officially assigned to be twenty-one shillings. Since that time it has remained as a sort of specialized shadow currency measure, not represented by any actual coin, but still actively used for various pricing practices such as professional fees, purchase of art, luxury items such as tailored clothing, and most particularly race horses. Auctioned racehorses are sold in Guineas, but the auctioneer pays off the seller in pounds. The difference is his commission. The Guinea has a distinctly quirky and aristocratic air to it, and seems quintessentially British. Oddly enough however, the Guinea has made it to Australia, and even to Egypt where the name of the Egyptian pound is “el geneh.”



(Wikipedia.org)

John Straker, when he died, had five sovereigns in his pocket. Sovereigns and half sovereigns pop up from time to time in the Holmes stories (“*The Church of St. Monica*,” [cries Holmes on jumping into a cab] “*and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes!*” *A Scandal in Bohemia*). The Sovereign replaced the Guinea as the standard gold coin and unit of currency in 1816. It bore the portrait of the reigning monarch on the obverse and the current version has the dramatic Pistrucci engraving of St. George slaying the dragon on the reverse. It is made of 22 carat gold and contains 7.322381 grams or 0.235420 troy ounces of actual gold. This is close in gold content to our own half eagle, or \$5 gold piece. Originally it circulated as a one pound coin, but in modern times has become a bullion coin. Sovereigns have been minted in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Bombay, Ottawa, and Pretoria in times past, and continue to be minted in London. A sovereign was a lot of money in Holmes’ day—a governess could get on quite well with a salary of 60 pounds a year, and Colonel Moran, the evil Moriarty’s right hand man, was paid the exorbitant amount of 6000 pounds per year (“*paying for brains—the American Principle. Even more than the Prime Minister.*” *The Valley of Fear*). Holmes did not comment on this rather large sum of money in Straker’s pocket (the equivalent of several hundreds of dollars in today’s currency) but he did joke to the Colonel that liberal as he was with his servants he doubted that Straker could afford his dashing mistress. Today a modern Sovereign trades near the bullion price of gold, and an uncirculated Sovereign from the date of publication of *Silver Blaze* is worth \$225 in the Catalog of World Coins. Older Sovereigns carry a numismatic premium and are worth quite a lot more. Some people collect Sovereigns by date and mint mark.



(Wikipedia.org)

Silver Blaze wins the race, but with short odds. “*Hum!*” said Holmes. “*Somebody knows something, that is clear.*” Holmes did not apparently bet on him. Holmes does bet on the next race however, saying that he stands to win a little, a shocking disclosure given his abhorrence of blind luck and emotionality. Arthur Conan Doyle teases us with this tidbit, but does not inform us whether Holmes’ horse wins or loses.

The *Adventure of the Dying Detective* was published in 1913; one of eight pieces in a compilation called *His Last Bow*. Here is the synopsis: Mrs. Hudson, the landlady, appears at Watson’s home and begs him to come see Holmes, saying that he is dying. Watson, horrified at the news, rushes to Baker Street. Holmes, it seems, has been investigating a case down in the docks. He has had the misfortune to contract a deadly Far Eastern disease, a coolie disease from Sumatra (called either Tapanuli Fever or Black Formosa Corruption, we are not sure), little known to western doctors. His appearance is appalling, and his mind wanders in and out of dementia. Holmes’ ramblings are exquisitely painful to Watson, who has recognized Holmes as the ultimate thinker and reasoner. “*Of all ruins, that of*

a noble mind is the most deplorable,” thinks Watson. At one point Watson, aimlessly wandering around Holmes’ room, picks up a cunning little ivory box to inspect it more closely and Holmes shrieks for him to put it down. This bizarre little episode deepens Watson’s impression of the severity of Holmes’ illness.

Watson, who is a doctor, of course wants to help but Holmes refuses to allow Watson to examine him. At first Holmes holds Watson off, warning him of the contagiousness of the disease. But Watson bravely protests that the danger of contagion would not be a consideration even with a stranger, and certainly not for his old friend. Then Holmes insults Watson by saying that which is painful for him to say, but nevertheless fact—that Watson is a general practitioner with limited experience and mediocre qualifications. Watson is bitterly hurt.

Holmes eventually sends Watson for help—not from a doctor but from a planter from the Far East who has studied the disease among his plantation workers. The planter, Culverton Smith, is initially reluctant but upon Watson’s entreaties eventually agrees to see Holmes. The interview is brief. Holmes’ condition has declined, and he appears near death. Realizing that Holmes will not live to testify against him Smith admits to Holmes that he murdered a man for an inheritance by giving him the disease, and has also murdered Holmes by sending him the ivory box. The box is booby-trapped to eject a sharp spring when it is opened, which inoculates the unfortunate individual holding the box with the terrible disease. Smith sees the box on Holmes’ table and pockets it, the only shred of evidence against him, and then waits for Holmes to die.

But Watson is hidden behind the bed and hears all. He can corroborate the confession; then on a clever pre-arranged signal (Holmes gaspingly asks Smith to turn up the gas as the shadow of death falls over his eyes!) the police come in and arrest Smith. Holmes describes to Watson how he realized the danger from the box, and faked all the symptoms of the disease by using make-up and not eating for three days in order to extract the confession. But he had to convince Watson of the gravity of his condition so that Watson would be a determined emissary to convince Smith. Holmes tells Watson that he refused to let Watson examine him because Watson, an astute physician, would have discovered that Holmes had neither a rise in temperature nor pulse and would have realized that Holmes wasn’t dying after all. Their friendship and trust restored, Holmes and Watson go off for dinner.

My favorite rambling of Holmes’ (remember that he is feigning confusion and dementia) is about half-crowns:

“Now Watson,” said he. “Have you any change in your pocket?”

“Yes.”

“Any silver?”

“A good deal.”

“How many half-crowns?”



(Cambridgeshirecoins.com)

“I have five.”

“Ah, too few! Too few! How very unfortunate, Watson! However, such as they are you can put them in your watch pocket. And all the rest of your money in your left trouser pocket. Thank you. It will balance you so much better like that.”

This was raving insanity....

And one more favorite (and fake) rambling of Holmes’ disease-addled mind: *“Indeed, I cannot think why the whole bed of the ocean is not one solid mass of oysters, so prolific the creatures seem.”* And later: *“No doubt there are natural enemies which limit the increase of the creatures. You and I, Watson, we have done our part. Shall the*

world then, be overrun by oysters? No, no; horrible!"

So leaving oysters aside, what about crowns and half crowns? Half crowns (worth two-and-a-half shillings or one eighth of a pound) were the largest circulating silver coin of the era. In 1913 the half crown was made of sterling silver, and contained 0.4204 troy ounces of silver. It was therefore slightly larger and heavier than our American silver half dollars. When Holmes defeated the evil planter Culverton Smith in 1913 lightly circulated coins from 1911 and later carried the portrait of George V facing left, but slightly older coins, from 1902 to 1910 carried the portrait of Edward VII facing right. And older coins than 1902 had Queen Victoria on them, facing left. By convention, every time the crown succeeded to another king (or queen), the portrait on coins faced in the opposite direction. The portraits of the male monarchs were stately but conventional. Victoria's portrait since 1893 was the very matronly "Mature draped bust left," but previous to that the young Victoria had some really gorgeous portraits.

Mintages of half crowns were modest in the early years of the 20th century, mostly in the range of one to four million, with a couple of low mintages in the Edward VII series. Watson had five half crowns in his pocket. We can guess that a couple of them were nice Extra Fine or about uncirculated George V's worth between \$80 and \$300 today. A couple of them were probably Very Fine to Extra Fine Edward VII's. Maybe one coin was an older Fine or Very Fine Victoria half crown piece, most of which have modest catalog value in the present day. The most valuable half crown of the 20th century would be the 1905 issue in Uncirculated, with a mintage of 166,000, worth \$10,500 today. Little did Watson know....

We can speculate what silver Watson might have carried in the other pocket to counter-balance the five half crowns. There were florins (two shillings) made of sterling silver and only slightly smaller and lighter than the half crowns. The florin from 1911 had one of the most attractive reverses in English coinage: the cross of crowned shields with scepters in the angles, by Bertram MacKenna. Florins and half crowns were minted right up to 1967, although they were debased to 0.5000 fine silver in 1920 and lost their silver altogether in 1947.

And then there were crowns. This was an imposing silver coin, weighing almost an ounce, and containing 0.8409 troy ounces of silver, more than a Morgan dollar. It was valued at five shillings or one quarter of a pound. The last crown minted for circulation was dated 1902, a one-year issue with Edward VII on it. The reverse was the famous frieze of St. George slaying the dragon, by Pistrucci. Only Proofs and commemoratives were minted after that. Eventually even the crown was debased, first to 0.5000 fineness and then to copper-nickel. Watson might have had a crown in his pocket. For the sake of the balancing exercise, it was exactly the weight of two half crowns.

Small British coins were still sterling silver in 1913, including the shilling, the six pence, and even the three pence. The four pence and two pence were issued in silver in that era but as proofs only. So I agree with Holmes that five half crowns were likely not enough to achieve good balance.

And what about the planter from Sumatra, the evil Smith, who murdered by disease? Sir Arthur Conan Doyle does not inform us what was in his pockets. But he may have been carrying coins from that most mysterious coin-issuing entity, the Straits Settlements, whose coinage remained legal tender in the British and Dutch held Straits of Malacca area (the important waterway between Sumatra and Malaya) well after Sherlock Holmes' era, until 1952.

Contest - Win Big Prizes!

John Stephens and Gerry Muhl are teaming up again for this year's scavenger hunt contest. You have until March 7, 2013, to complete the hunt. It is simple this year: the person with the most coins (all different) with turtles on them wins. First, second and third prizes will be provided. See if you can find some of those elusive creatures.

(Are there any turtles on coins issued in the US?) A complete set would count more than 50 coins!



BLACKJACK MORGAN COINS

BUYING & SELLING ALL
COINS & PAPER MONEY

Hours:
January - April

Monday - Friday
10:00am - 7:00pm
Saturday
1:00pm - 5:00pm

794-0939

1530 Elmwood Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620

www.blackjackmorgan.com

Hours:
May - December

Mon, Wed, Thurs,
10:00am - 4:00pm
Tuesday
10:00am - 7:00pm

RNA News

Established January 1912

One of America's oldest local coin clubs

American Numismatic Association,

Branch #2, Life Club #8

Meetings:

Rochester Museum &

Science Center

Member:

American Numismatic Society

Royal Canadian Numismatic

Association

Token and Medal Society

Editor and Reporter at Large:

Gerard Muhl

Production and Assoc. Editor:

Ted Vaccarella

tedvacc@yahoo.com

2012-2013 Officers:

President: John Lighthouse

jlighthouse1@rochester.rr.com

Vice Pres.: John Vicaretti

jpvdds@aol.com

Treasurer: Jerry Vaccarella

Secretary: Sharon Miller

samiller07@rochester.rr.com

Curator: John Zabel

Librarian: Michael Luck

Historian: Gerard Muhl

Board of Directors:

Jim Ford, Paul Taylor

(2010-2013)

Steve Eisinger, Scott Fybush

(2011-2014)

Roger Kuntz, Andrew Mantione

(2012-2015)

Visit the RNA Web site:

www.the-rna.com

P.O. Box 10056

Rochester NY 14610-0056

Material published in RNA News is Copyright by its authors or by the Rochester Numismatic Association, and may not be reproduced without permission of the author or the RNA. All

Club News and Notes

In December, Richard Jozefiak "...declared his candidacy for a seat on the American Numismatic Association board of governors in the 2013 election," according to an article in *Numismatic News*. Find the article at: <http://www.numismaticnews.net/article/Jozefiak-seeks-seat>. Richard joined RNA in 2005 and subsequently moved to Alabama. He was in Rochester in January 2012 to attend the 100th anniversary banquet.

Before our February 7 meeting Secret Service Special Agent Brad Jacobs visited to obtain information about counterfeit U. S. Coins. He was investigating a scam whereby bogus slabbed silver dollars were sold to city pawn shops. One shop owner suspected fraud and called the police who arrived to arrest the perpetrator. Since the case dealt with counterfeit coins, it was turned over to the Secret Service. The question then became how to definitively prove (in court if necessary) that the coins are bogus. Five members offered their expertise, particularly as to how to identify counterfeit plastic slabs. The club members had a good time looking through suspected counterfeit samples, and Special Agent Jacobs also seemed pleased with the advice he received. RNA member Mick Luck expressed his pleasure that the Secret Service is finally beginning to tackle this problem that threatens our hobby.



Since the January - February issue of *RNA News*, one new member has joined RNA: We welcome David K. Hart of Ontario, New York.

21st Century Numismatics: The Sixbid Auction Platform

www.sixbid.com

By Roger Kuntz, RNA member

During the final decades of the twentieth-century, the most successful collectors of foreign and ancient coins assembled their collections from the fixed price lists and the auction sales of many notable numismatic firms and auction houses located around the world. This endeavor required serious collectors to purchase catalogs from all of these enterprises, a time-consuming and expensive proposition at best, since a substantial number of firms were involved and sale catalogs were and are expensive to produce. Twenty-first century collectors saw the process greatly simplified during the year 2000, by the creation and subsequent rapid growth of Sixbid.com, a German auction platform that unites the largest numismatic auction houses in the world and allows collectors to obtain on-line access to all of their auction catalogs via a single website, the address of which is noted above. This represents a significant innovation for collectors, who are now able to bid on-line at virtually every notable numismatic auction in the world directly through the platform, without the need to purchase expensive auction catalogs. The on-line web pages that have replaced them invariably feature state-of-the-art digital photography accompanied by the option to view enlargements with a single click of the mouse. In addition, the digital photos can readily be copied and stored or made a part of whatever document that a serious collector chooses to make to record his collection. Fully illustrated on-line catalogs usually become available at least one month prior to each sale. Lists of Prices Realized are usually posted on the website within a few days of the completion of each auction. Clicking on the tab labeled “**completed auctions**” will bring up a section of the web page where these are archived, complete with photos and the prices realized. The site also features a sale calendar for the more than seventy participating auction houses, which assists collectors in planning their participation. All of the major American numismatic firms are represented on this website. The success of the auction sales conducted via this website has convinced firms worldwide that conducting sales via this means is the most profitable for the auction firms and by far the least expensive for their collecting clientele.

Research on Foreign and Ancient Coins

The Sixbid webpage features links to a number of sites that are recommended for doing numismatic research on foreign and ancient coins. These include:

The Ancient Coin Search Engine (www.acsearch.info).

The Medieval and Modern Coin Search Engine (www.mcsearch.info).

The Wildwinds site for the attribution of ancient coins (www.wildwinds.com).

The Money Museum (www.moneymuseum.com).

The Catalogue of the Münzkabinett at the Staatliche Museum zu Berlin (www.smb.museum/ikmk/)

The Ancient Coin Search Engine and the Modern Coin Search Engine are used to obtain the records of recent sales of specific coins and the prices realized when the coins were sold. Such data may be used for comparative purposes or to help estimate the value that a coin might realize in the current market.

The Sixbid Seal of Certified Auction Houses



Finally, Sixbid.com has created a system of standards for participating firms and authorized the use of a quality seal for the firms which comply with a set of criteria representing their premium approach. Only the finest auction firms in the world are allowed to use their seal. One of the most significant criteria for its use is that firms must guarantee the authenticity of the coins that they sell and that this guarantee must extend beyond the period provided for in the law. The intent of the provision is that clients must always be able to return an item and recover their cost if the coin is later proven to be fraudulent. The firms that do not act in accord with this provision forfeit their right to use the seal. Sixbid is committed to setting a world standard for numismatic auctions. This can only be viewed as an attempt to bring an entirely new level of integrity to the numismatic marketplace. In so doing, they seek to elevate the worldwide numismatic trade to a level that must certainly please collectors everywhere. It must also please numismatic firms that place a very high value on their reputation for integrity.

RNA Historian Looks Back at an Earlier ANA Philadelphia Coin Show

Reported by Gerard Muhl, RNA Historian

In the fall of 1917 the Rochester Numismatic Association hosted for the second time the national convention of the American Numismatic Association. At that meeting it was agreed that the 1918 convention would be held in Philadelphia October 5 through 9. The five day gathering was to be held at the spectacular Academy of Fine Arts.

At the August 6, 1918 meeting of the RNA, President Fred Merritt invited all members to go to the Pennsylvania ANA meeting. (It is interesting to note that Merritt actually moved to Philadelphia and only conducted meetings when he was in town over the summer).

At the two September 1918 meetings RNA members discussed attending the ANA convention and 15 signified that they would be going. Then the flu pandemic struck. The minutes note that Vice President Dr. Sigmund Handler and Mr. Wolff were ill and in the hospital. Dr. George French was also very ill. All would recover.

The October issue of *The Numismatist* (mailed in September) called for every ANA member to be in Philadelphia in October. Three RNA members were officials of the ANA at that time: George French, 1st Vice President; Harry Yawger, Librarian (the ANA Library was in Rochester); and Fred King as member of

the ANA Board of Governors.

Then tragedy struck. At 2 p.m. October 3, less than two days before the ANA Convention was scheduled to start, the Philadelphia Board of Health banned all public assemblies due to the flu. Telegrams and letters were sent to members pre-registered but at least 17 members showed up. Fred Merritt and Harry Yawger went even though they received telegrams.

In Philadelphia small social gatherings were held at the Hotel Stenton, and at homes of committee members. Coins were shown and traded, acquaintances renewed, and a group photo was taken. Yawger, Merritt, Howard Newcomb Henry and S. H. Chapman among others were in the photo. All avoided the flu and returned home safely.

The ANA convened December 11, 1918 for its annual meeting held in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was decided that the 1919 ANA Convention would try again for Philadelphia. A sad note pervaded the meeting as *The Numismatist* editor Frank Duffield's daughter and ANA President Carl Wurtzback's wife had both died of the flu.

By autumn 1919 the flu had burned itself out and the Philadelphia convention was a success. The only question remaining is, should the 2012 summer ANA meeting be numbered 121 or 122 in memory of those intrepid numismatists who made it to Philadelphia in October 1918?

At the **Board meeting** held on February 21, the Board discussed the report by the Ad Hoc Auction Committee (see page 3). Comments are welcome from all members and should be directed to the Auction Committee, members of which will be announced in the next newsletter and the next regular meeting on March 7.

Chip Scoppa updated the Board on progress of the Nominating and Numismatist of the Year committees.

The Board also reviewed a plan drafted by VP John Vicaretti about how to notify members when annual dues are payable and the consequences of allowing one's membership to lapse. The procedure includes notifications and the manner of follow-up concerning dues in arrears, as defined in the By Laws of our Association. Dues are payable each year beginning on July 1st.

The next Board meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 2, before the regular RNA meeting.

Regular RNA meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of every month, except July and August, at the Eisenhart Auditorium of the Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Avenue. The auditorium is the glass front building behind the Museum. Enter through the Eisenhart or Gannett School doors and follow the signs downstairs to the lower-level meeting room. All are welcome! If you have difficulty with stairs ask the receptionist in the auditorium for elevator directions.

Rochester Junior Numismatic Association (RJNA) meetings are also held in the lower level meeting room at Eisenhart Auditorium; for more information, call RJNA advisor Joe Lanzafame at 585-314-1240 for more information.

The Calendar March - April 2013

- **Thursday, March 7:** 8 PM - RNA Meeting: **John Stephens** - The Turtle Race
- **Friday, March 15:** 7:30 PM – RJNA Meeting
- **Thursday, March 21:** 8 PM - RNA Meeting: **Bill Coe** - A Complete Collection of Six
- **Thursday, April 4:** 8 PM – RNA Meeting: **Paul Taylor** - topic to be determined
- **Thursday, April 18:** 8 PM – RNA Meeting: **John Stephens** - Early Kings of Spain
- **Friday, April 19:** 7:30 PM – RJNA Meeting
- **Friday, May 17: Annual Banquet:** honoring past President **Chip Scoppa** at Rick's Prime Rib House, 6pm
- **Sunday, August 4: Annual Picnic:** 1 PM to 4 PM; White Brook Nature Area Park (Perinton); there will be a *Board meeting* before the picnic at **noon**.
- * *Rochester Area Coin Expo:* next show is March 10, 2013, 10-3, Double Tree Hotel, 1111 Jefferson Road.
- * The *Ontario County Coin Club* meets at 2 pm on the first Sunday of every month at the Canandaigua Elks Club, 19 Niagara Street. Doors open at 1 pm.

The Calendar welcomes meeting notices from other area clubs. Send to Gerry Muhl or email Ted at tedvacc@yahoo.com.

Future RNA News publication deadlines: 4/21/2013 for May-June; 6/23/2013 for July-August; 8/25/2013 for September-October; 10/27/2013 for November-December; 12/22/2013 for January-February 2014; 2/23/2014 for March-April.

Rochester Numismatic Association

PO Box 10056, Rochester NY 14610-0056