

RNA News

The Official Journal of the Rochester Numismatic Association

January-February 2021



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The John Jay Pittman Memorial Library is available at every regular meeting.
Members can select from 600 titles with new ones added regularly.
See the RNA Librarian to sign for and borrow material.
A complete, searchable library inventory is available on the RNA website.



RNA

One of America's Oldest Local
Coin Clubs

Memberships

American Numismatic Association
Branch #2, Life Club #8

Established January 1912

American Numismatic Society

Royal Canadian Numismatic
Association

Token and Medal Society

Meetings

Rochester Museum &
Science Center

- Eisenhart Auditorium -

Board of Directors

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Sheryl Zabel [2020-2023]

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Dennis DeYoung

Assistant Curator

Gerard Muhl

RNA News

Sheryl Zabel, Editor

John Zabel, Production

Gerard Muhl, Contributing Editor

Rochester Numismatic Association

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Membership

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Dennis DeYoung
John Stephens

Endowment

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Earl Gurell [2018-2021]

John Lighthouse [2018-2021]

Jason Childers [2019-2022]

Steve Eisinger [2019-2022]

Ted Vaccarella, Treasurer [Ex-Officio]

John Zabel, Chair [RNA Curator]

Auditing

Dennis DeYoung

John Lighthouse

Chip Scoppa

Ted Vaccarella, Chair

John Vicaretti

RNA Committees

RNA Bylaws designate several committees appointed by the President and Board of Directors.

Above are the current active committees:

President & Editor Email Addresses

president@rochesternumismaticassociation.org
vicepresident@rochesternumismaticassociation.org

editor@rochesternumismaticassociation.org
curator@rochesternumismaticassociation.org

Regular **RNA** meetings are held from September to June at 7:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month (see Calendar for possible schedule exceptions at Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays) at **Eisenhart Auditorium** of the **Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607**. The auditorium is the glass front building behind the Museum. **During the pandemic, enter and exit through the main entrance, and turn left to go up the ramp to the ballroom. FOR THE PRESENT, THE RNA IS HAVING MEETINGS ON ZOOM.**

Rochester Junior Numismatic Association (RJNA) meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Eisenhart Auditorium on the lower level; for up to date information, contact RJNA advisor Joe Lanzafame at 585-314-1240.

From Our President

By Scott Annechino

Happy New Year members. We have finally reached 2021 and gotten through a very tough 2020. Most of us never imagined a year like 2020. Hopefully none of you have been too personally affected by this as far as loss of loved ones. I did lose one friend as a result of the pandemic and feel very sad about this. I have taken this issue seriously and I hope that you continue to take it seriously even with new vaccines coming to use as I write this. Even if you have not lost anyone to this disease, all of us have been affected in some way, or many ways. Our club did attempt a few in-person meetings, with Zoom streaming included. But given the restrictions, we have been conducting meetings online via Zoom only. I would really like to see more new faces at these meetings. We will continue to incorporate Zoom streaming along with our in-person meetings going forward. This is one positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. By using Zoom along with live meetings, we can allow members to join meetings when they can not make the trip for some reason. And in Upstate NY that could mean not making it to a meeting when weather is too dangerous for some to travel. The other benefit is that we are able to host potential members from anywhere in the world. We are currently looking into ways to expand our membership well beyond the local areas. I am working with the American Numismatic Association to see how they can help us spread information about joining our illustrious and historical club from virtually anywhere.

When will live meetings begin again? I do not have that answer for you at this time. But I continually work with the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC) to coordinate this issue. The RMSC did make reasonable accommodations for us in the ballroom on the main level of the Eisenhart Auditorium before the last shutdown. Many members who did attend told me that they felt safe and comfortable at these meetings, while some did not. Please do not feel obligated to attend if you do not feel safe. Join on Zoom though if you can.

We will continue to hold meetings via Zoom on regular Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. until the restrictions are lifted. John Zabel has continued to host the meeting on Zoom and provides a link to the meetings on the club's website calendar.



Just click on the appropriate link and it will take to straight to the meeting. I must thank John for handling this important task. These meetings have helped keep many members connected and involved during these many months of shut downs. If you know anyone who needs help figuring out how to access the Zoom meetings, let someone know.

*** I must once again repeat this important club essential need: we are in serious requirement of someone to fill the position of treasurer. Kerri Klajbor has agreed to take over as interim treasurer from Ted Vaccarella until we can secure someone to take this over for a long-term assignment. We have a large enough membership that someone should be able to volunteer their time and efforts for the good of the club. If you are a newer member, don't be afraid to inquire about a position like this, as well as to serve on the Board. We are always open to fresh ideas and new ways of approaching the evolution of the club. If you are interested in any position, please let one of us know at any time. We will always be in need of officers to continue to run our club's activities. Those who have worked so hard over the years, I would like to personally thank you, as I know how much work some people have done for the good of this club.

On one fun note. A dealer in Belgium reached out to me about a coin that I have been trying to find for over 20 years. We made a deal for the purchase and I am now just waiting for the coin to be shipped.

On that note, please try to enjoy this new year by making the most of coin collecting and your other hobbies, as well as spending lots of quality time with your loved ones.



From the club collection.— Notgeld



RNA Online Resources

 www.rochesternumismaticassociation.org
 www.facebook.com/groups/21533643632
 [@RocCoinClub](https://twitter.com/RocCoinClub)

Social Media Chair: David Gottfried
Webmaster: John Zabel

Maximizing your remote viewing experience for RNA Zoom meetings

By Ted Vaccarella, 96th RNA President

As many of you know, when the Covid-19 pandemic led to a shutdown of in-person meetings, RNA continued our semi-monthly meetings using the **Zoom** meeting application available for laptops and smart phones. Many RNA members have taken advantage of this technology to attend our meetings, and several members from around the US attend regularly.

Even as RNA returns to in-person meetings (hopefully sometime during 2021), we plan to continue to utilize the **Zoom** application in combination with a video camera so that we will 1) enable members from anywhere locally, in the US and beyond to participate in our meetings and 2) enable RNA to keep a permanent record of meetings.

The meetings are best accessible by going to the RNA website prior to 7:30 pm of the meeting date and selecting the "Calendar" tab, then selecting the "Attend the Meeting" link. Ensure that you have the latest **Zoom** application installed on your device. Follow the **Zoom** instructions for showing your name or nickname, select "Join with Video" and "Join with Audio"

FROM BAWBEES TO BODLES

By Douglas Bordon— original published date 1986

"From Ghoulies and Ghosties and Long-legged Beasties, and Things that go bump in the night, Good Lord deliver us." The old Scottish Litany and Psalter abound in quaint and somewhat mysterious words and phrases. They have a lilt which reflects on their being designed to be sung rather than recited. Some of these words are archaic, some are from the Gaelic, and some are just local words. They make



Charles II Bawbee—1678
RNA Collection picture



the language of Scotland interesting and the same can easily be said of the coinage of Scotland.

The Scottish coinage covers the period from David I (1124) to that of Queen Anne who

unified England and Scotland in 1705. Like the early English coinage, the Scots had silver pennies with a few halfpence and farthings up until the time of David II when he introduced a larger groat and half-groat (4d and 2d) similar to those of Edward III in England. By the time of James V (1513-42) there were 12 denominations of coins in use and during the turbulent reign of Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-67) there were 18 different denominations of coins. James VI Scotland (and James I of England) had a long rule and

and when the meeting is activated you can listen or participate as you may choose.

Technical advisories: As noted, **Zoom** works best with a laptop or a smart phone/ iPhone or iPad. The quality of your audio/ video experience will be best, or can be improved, by having a decent *router* that connects your device to the internet. Many people have a combined internet modem/ *router* device that is provided as part of your bill by your cable provider. Others have a personally-owned modem and/ or *router*. Typical routers are made by **Asus**, **Linksys** and **Netgear** brands, among others. If you own your own *router*, you should periodically (every six months) ensure that the **firmware** for your *router* is up-to-date. Log in to your *router* using your original password and follow the instructions for your make and model *router* to update the firmware. Firmware updates are especially important to ensure maximum compatibility with the latest hardware you might own as well as to incorporate important internet security updates so as to provide maximum protection for your system. Up-to-date firmware helps ensure you will have the best audio and video quality for your system (even if you don't use **Zoom**).

there were 54 different denominations of coins as some were based on the English standard. Under Charles I, the coins were mostly related to English coins at a ratio of 12 Scots to 1 English. Thus, a Scots shilling was equal to one English penny and a 12-shilling piece to one English shilling. During the reign of Queen Anne, Scotland and England were united (1705) to form Great Britain and subsequently English coins replaced Scots coins although many were struck on English dyes at Edinburgh with a "E" mint mark. Under George VI and Elizabeth II, some shillings were struck with the lion rampant and crown of Scotland but these were for use in all of Britain. Also, some of the new "round pounds" bear the thistle and arms of Scotland but are for use in all of Britain.

It seems hard to believe that there are 31 gold denominations, 43 in silver, 10 in billon, and 4 in copper. That reflects changing politics, inflation, debasement, and a need to have coins equal to those of England and the continent.

Many of the coin names reflect only a denomination such as:

Crown, Noble, Pound, Demi, Ducat, Unit, Pistole, and Guinea for the gold coins; Penny, Merk, Shilling, Dollar, an Ryal for silver coins.

More interesting from the linguistic standpoint are those coins which bear nick-names or common names such as our "two bits". In the Scottish coins we find Testoon (for shilling) in silver, Bawbee for sixpence, Plack for 4d, and Hardhead for 2d. In the copper coins we find Turner and Bodle for 2d or 1½d.

Some interesting names reflect the images on the coins: Bonnet piece for a silver ducat of 1539 and Hat piece for a

similar gold coin of James VI with two very different hats; Thistle Noble (11 merks of 1588), Thistle Dollar 2 merks of 1578, Thistle Crown (gold) of 1603, and Thistle Merk (silver) of 1601 all with thistles in their designs. We have a Lion (5s) of 1437, a Rider for gold coins of 1475 showing the equestrian James III, a Unicorn (18s) gold coin of 1475, an Angel (gold coin) of 1588, a Sword & Sceptre (120s) gold of 1588, a Sword Dollar (silver ryal of 30s.) 1567-71, a Saltire Plack for its cross saltire and a "nonsunt" billon groat of Mary (1558-59), named for part of the prominent Latin legend on the reverse.

Over the years, inflation ate away at the value of the Scottish coins and the value of the penny which was equivalent to the English sterling silver penny until the 14th century fell so that in much of the 16th and 17th centuries, a Scottish shilling = 1 English penny so that a Scottish 12-shilling coin = 1 English shilling etc. Thus there were many odd denominations of coins required. As with most inflation coinage, debasement was rampant and the fineness of silver quickly fell from sterling standard (.925) to as little as 1/24th. Even the billon coins struck in .500 fine silver or lower were debased and replaced by copper coins with little or no silver in them.

The Rochester Numismatic Association is fortunate to have a fine collection of 53 coins donated by Mr. Horner about 1925 with a few recent additions. These cover many of the silver pence from William the Lion (1195-1205), Alexander III, Robert Bruce, David II; silver groats of David II, Robert II, Robert III, James III, James V; Half groats of the same period; a Bawbee (billon 6d) of James V (1538-42); a billon plack (4d) of James V; a beautiful silver ryal (30s) of

Mary & Henry Darnley before his death (1565); a groat or "nonsunt" of Francis & Mary (1559); a lion or hardhead (1½d) of Francis & Mary,.

We also have a nice Sword Dollar or ryal of James VI (1567) counter stamped with a thistle in 1578 to revalue it at 36s 9d. When one examines our crude billon placks of James VI and the copper turners, it is easy to see why they were so despised.

In contrast to the crude billon and copper coins, we find some very attractive silver coins struck to the English standards using early machinery to roll the flans and cut the blanks and a screw press to strike the coins. Nicholas Briot had used the machinery and struck coins at the Tower Mint in London but after Charles I left London at the start of the Civil War, Briot went to Edinburgh (August 1635) and struck some early milled coins there. Later (1646), his son-in-law, John Falconer, struck more of them. In our collection we have a lovely Sixty-shilling piece of 1637 by Briot and also one of his 20d pieces with the Briot bust of Charles I and a thistle on the reverse. We also have a Twelve shillings and a Forty Pence piece of Charles I struck by Falconer with his "F" initial on them.

Although we do not have any "Ghoulie" or "Ghostie" coins, we do have a marvelous group of Scottish coins which reflect the tragic history of strife, hard-times, broken promises and marriages, and general mystery.

Douglas Graham Borden. RNA President (1974), Curator (1975--1982).

References: A book of enlarged photos of the RNA Scottish coins is in the RNA library as well as Seaby's "Coins and Tokens of Scotland" by Frank Purvey (1972).

The RNA in the 1930's **By Gerard Muhl**

November 15, 1930

Joint meeting in Jamestown, NY with Rochester, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Youngstown, Buffalo, Beaver Falls and Jamestown.

November 18, 1930

Harry Wardell dies: RNA member, assistant Director of Rochester Museum, and NY State Geologist.

November 3, 1931

Barney Bluestone of Syracuse becomes RNA member.

November 14, 1931

RNA has joint meeting with Buffalo in Batavia.

November 19, 1932

RNA hosts joint meeting with Buffalo, Jamestown and Medina.

November 25, 1932

Dr. George French dies. (First RNA President in 1912). He graduated Columbia Medical School in 1888 and interned at St. Mary's, Rochester. He was felt to have the most complete set of Large Cents, most in uncirculated condition.

November 5, 1935

RNA meeting notices to be sent twice a month.

November 28, 1937

RNA does radio show over WHAM (6:45-7p.m.) Members created a 15 page script.

Foreign Coins In your 1850 Pocket

By Gerry Muhl, first published in 1986

The early 1800's must have been a most traumatic time for American merchants attempting to engage in commerce. The US Mint seldom produced enough coinage for the growing economy, thousands of overweight pre-1834 coins were being exported annually to Canada and Europe, and the monetary panics of 1837 and 1857 in which virtually all hard currency disappeared from trade, all must have added to the confusion. To remedy this situation, Congress passed the Act of March 3, 1843 that gave legal tender status to numerous foreign gold and silver coins already circulating in America.

Evidence of the pervasiveness of foreign coins circulating freely in this country is the fact that prices, wages, and fees were often expressed in terms of foreign coin. Using Rochester, N.Y. as an example it will be noted that through the 1860's subscription prices for the Daily Advertiser newspaper were always expressed in shillings. Welfare work during the 1858 recession was also expressed in the British denomination - three shillings being paid for each day's work hammering rock into street paving stone. Even counterfeiters were trying their hand at duplicating coins of other nations which they seemed to have little trouble passing on the unsuspecting populous.

An example of such counterfeiting activity happened in 1845 in suburban Rochester where Federal Marshalls surrounded a house on the complaint that a band of counterfeiters was producing bogus Mexican and Spanish 2 and 8 reale pieces. After laying in wait for 24 hours, the local press reported that the Marshalls burst into the home and after a substantial brawl arrested four men and a woman and confiscated nearly one hundred partially made Mexican dollars, as well as dies for making these and other Spanish coins. It is interesting to note that two of the counterfeiters, Elbridge and Selden Williams, were members of a local Committee to suppress counterfeiting! For over a year these two brothers had inside information on all activities of the committee and lead its members after meaningless clues in the wrong direction.

But what foreign coins might a Rochester merchant actually expect to find in his till after a busy day? The 1849 City Directory hints at this answer by publishing conversion tables for thirty-seven foreign gold and silver coins. The following chart lists the coins a merchant might encounter, and their conversion into U.S. Dollars:

1849 Rochester, N.Y. City Directory Foreign Coin Conversion Table into United States Dollars

Gold Coins US

Eagles	\$10.
½ Eagles	\$5
Quarter Eagles	\$2 .25
Old Eagles (pre-1834)	\$10.50
Old Half Eagles	\$5.25
Old Quarter Eagles (pre-1834)	\$2.62
Carolina and Georgia \$5 gold coins at	\$4.75.

English

Sovereigns all dates 5 dwt 8 grs. \$4.84 (here the directory notes that the "dragon" sovereign is worth only about \$4.80. Presumably these were the Charles I piece and before, showing St. George killing the dragon).

½ Sovereigns	2 dwt.	13 grs.	\$2.42
Guinias	5 dwt.	7 grs.	\$5.00

English bullion gold - 94¢ 6 mills per dwt

Spanish

Doubloons (should weigh the same as a good U.S. Dollar or two U.S. Half Dollars).	17 dwt.	8 grs.	\$16.00
½ doubloons	8 dwt.	16 grs.	\$8.00
¼ doubloons	4 dwt.	8 grs.	\$4.00
One eighth doubloon	2 dwt.	4 grs.	\$1.87

Spanish bullion by Act of Congress 89 cents 3 mills per dwt

Gold Coins French

Napoleons (20 franc) all dates	4 dwt	3 grs	\$3.83
Louis d'or all dates	4 dwt	20 grs.	\$4.50

French gold by Act of Congress is 92¢ 9 mills per dwt

Mexican and South American

Doubloons all dates	17 dwt.	8 grs.	\$15.50
½ Doubloons	8 dwt.	16 grs.	\$7.75
¼ Doubloons	4 dwt.	8 grs.	\$3.87
1/8 Doubloons	2 dwt	4 grs	\$1.87

Mexican bullion by Act of Congress 89¢ 9 mills per dwt

Next came a listing of what the editors called "promiscuous" coins in 1849. (One collector said that name might have been given because these coins "really got around".)

Ten Thalers all dates	8 dwt	10 grs.	\$7.80
Fr d'or Denmark or Prussia	4 dwt	5 grs.	\$3.90
10 Guilders	4 dwt	7 grs.	\$4.00
Johannes John V	18 dwt	7 grs.	\$17.00

(about the coins of John V the Directory editors note - ½ Joes are light. They should be taken at a rate of 80¢ for the weight of a 5 cent piece".)

Moidore (Brazil)	5 dwt	4 grs.	\$4.87
Ducat (Netherlands, Denmark, Prussia)	2 dwt	5 grs.	\$2.20
Crown (Portugal) Maria. II	6 dwt	4 grs.	\$5.80
Zervonitz (Russia)	2 dwt	2 grs.	\$2.00
Xeriff (Turkey)	2 dwt	7 grs.	\$2.30
Pistole (Italy)	3 dwt	11 grs.	\$3.25

Silver Coins

Unblemished Spanish pillar dollars 2% premium over U.S.

Spanish halves, quarters, etc. par with US

Mexican Dollars - ¼ ... ½% premium over US

5 Francs: piece	93¢
2 Francs	36¢
1 Franc	18¢
French Crowns	\$1.06
English Crown	\$1.15
½Crown	57¢
English Shilling	23¢
Thalera	65¢
Pistareens (Head)	18¢
Pistareens (With Cross)	16¢
One Guilder	36¢

Just seeing some of these pre-1850 coins listed should whet the modern collector's appetite, and apparently that was also the case in the 19th Century when a few bankers and local industrialists began building their own personal collections. In fact, the first coin show held in Rochester was a one-day event on April 4, 1839! John Park exhibited for discussion and sale a collection of ancient and biblical coins at the Rochester Athenaeum. The newspaper noted that admission was free and that all were welcome.

With the passage of the Currency Act of 1857 foreign coins no longer had to be accepted as legal tender in this country. Many two Reale pieces, however, seemed to have surfaced during the currency shortage of 1861-1871. Counterstamped by local merchants they were used in Rochester trade until the 1870's.

With the United States mints able to produce enough coin for expanding business demands of the 1880's the colorful era of foreign coin as US legal tender came to an end. Only the collector, I am sure, would mourn its passage.

From the Editor

Hope you enjoy reading the January-February RNA newsletter. We have two older articles from 1986 newsletters. But I would like to invite you (lots of you!) to send submissions to the March-April newsletter. These submissions do not have to be researched articles, although articles would be most welcome.

So I am inviting you to write one or two sentences about your favorite numismatic periodical. Why is this periodical your favorite, and how does reading it benefit your collection and increase your knowledge of numismatics?

Please send your thoughts to editor@rochestenumismaticassociation.org by February 24th.

And please join us for our meetings, if you have access to Zoom

Sheryl Zabel
Editor

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Web Page - icoins50.com over for QR code to profile

For the LOVE of Coins

RNA Events Calendar

RNA Meeting “Norse American Centennial Medal” by Gerry Muhl	January 13
RNA Meeting	January 27
RNA Meeting	February 10
RNA Meeting	February 24
RNA Meeting	March 10
RNA Meeting	March 24
RNA Meeting	April 14
RNA Meeting	April 28

RNA and RJNA meetings at the RMSC are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-9:30 p.m..

*Members are welcome to attend RNA Board meetings.

☛ ☛ ☛ *See the RNA Website for Additional Event Details* ☛ ☛ ☛

Ontario County Coin Club
First Sunday, Monthly Canandaigua Elks Club
Meeting at 2:00 p.m. 19 Niagara Street
(Doors open at 1:00 p.m.) Canandaigua, NY 14424

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RNA News Deadlines

March—April 2021: February 24, 2021

Rochester Numismatic Association
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