



ORMSKIRK & WEST LANCASHIRE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

'LOCKDOWN' NEWSLETTER

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What have you all been up to? Any chat, photos, news, recent acquisitions etc. by members for future issues please!

WHICH? MAGAZINE SLATES 'INVESTMENT' COINS

In a recent report by the consumer watchdog *Which?Money* their investigators targeted the various issues of modern commemorative coins and ingots being produced and aggressively marketed by some private firms purporting them as a good financial investment.

The report revealed that many of the stated 'investment' coins in gold and silver actually contained less than a fifth of their asking price in metal bullion value. Being made specifically for the collecting public few have any numismatic value at all and the chances of them even reaching a breakeven price would be remote. The report went on to say that such coins or medallions should be acquired for their subject interest and collection alone and treated in a similar way to jewellery. After all, an expensive item of jewellery often contains only a fraction of its retail value in terms of bullion, with its real value being in the craftsmanship and eye appeal. The report also suggested many modern coin issues should be treated in the same way as collectors' trinkets.

A three-month investigation encountered certain worrying practices in the advertising of some commemorative issues which implied possible future profits when the items were not deemed to be appropriate investment vehicles. *Which?Money* made undercover calls to various coin companies and scrutinized their marketing claims and often misleading sales pitches. They also surveyed more than 2,600 *Which?* members for their impression of coin adverts. Concerning phrases such as 'gold investors' and 'gold buyers' featured regularly in adverts, where in fact the so-called 'coins' on offer sometimes contained very little if any precious metal.

In conclusion, the report suggested would-be purchasers do their homework first before buying modern private issues. Bullion coins, by contrast, were seen to be a relatively straightforward way of acquiring precious metal as an investment. Advice was given to amateurs regarding the purchase of 'numismatic' coins. Investigations revealed that many ethical and established numismatic firms cautioned against buying specialist numismatic items for investment alone, stressing that a coin's true value was in its collector interest, rarity, desirability and its historical/numismatic significance.

NO MEETINGS BEFORE SUMMER

It looks doubtful if our regular meetings at the *Eagle & Child* will resume before this summer at the very earliest. Even if the current restrictions are eased slightly by May, it is likely that social distancing will still be in place. This newsletter will keep members informed if the situation changes before then.

HARROGATE COIN FAIR CANCELLED

The annual Harrogate Coin Fair, which was due to take place in April this year, has been understandably cancelled. The large conservatory at the Swan Hotel in Harrogate has been the venue for this prestigious and popular event for a number of years and it hoped the fair will return in 2022. This cancellation is in line with all other coin fairs throughout the UK, as Government imposed restrictions due to the spread of Coronavirus do not allow such gatherings.

SILVER RUSH CREATES SILVER SCAMS

The recent high price of silver bullion has sparked a noticeable increase in fraudulent and misleading advertising. The Chinese are attempting to flood the internet with counterfeit United States 'Morgan' silver dollars. Make no mistake, these fakes are really good and many come with an authentication certificate with some even in a fake NGC grading capsule. With the price of gold and silver dropping, the recent panic buying seems to have eased of late, but the counterfeiters will simply move into other lucrative fields of numismatics.

THE FIRST AMERICAN COLONIAL COIN

After Great Britain first colonised areas of the east coast of North America in the latter half of the sixteenth century it wasn't until almost a century later that the first 'American' coins emerged.

The original thirteen States of the USA were all colonies before the declaration of independence in 1776 and before 1652 they seemingly relied on English and Spanish money for trade. In the year 1652 the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law authorising the building of a mint to make silver coins. As in England, the coins were to be produced by hand hammering; a method which wouldn't be replaced by machinery until early in 1663.

The first home produced efforts by the new mint in Massachusetts were rather strange, as they consisted mostly of a blank flan with just the letters 'NE' (for New England) punched near the edge on the obverse. The reverse was afforded the same minimalist treatment with the denomination value shown as English pennies. This was stamped in Roman numerals in an indented square, again right at the edge of the flan. The denominations struck were twelpence (shilling), sixpence and threepence. These early issues were authorised in 1652 and struck between June and October of that year.



New England shilling, 1652

The surface of these first North American coins is mainly blank and the design, if that is what you could call it, so simple that fears about counterfeit copies were rife. Also, the blank flan without a defined edge was an open invitation for 'clippers' to illegally shave off small amounts of silver. It has also been noted that the 'NE' is very similar to colonial touchmarks used to mark items of silver flatware at the time. This can hardly be put down to coincidence given that the directors of the newly established Massachusetts Mint, John Hunt and Robert Sanderson Snr, were in fact the first established silversmith partnership in the colony.



Irish 'Inchiquin' halfcrown, 1642 and 'Dublin' halfcrown, 1642 (not to scale)

The idea of a simple punched denomination on a flan of otherwise plain silver was echoed exactly a hundred years later in Irish 'coinage of necessity' during the Great Rebellion, i.e. Inchiquin Money and Dublin Money. Unlike the New England coinage, both of these were made under wartime conditions. The first Inchiquin issues show the value in pennyweights and grains and the numbering is in Arabic numerals. Strangely, both obverse and reverse use the same dies.

With the American 'NE' issue design being so bland; with neither date of issue or issuing authority appearing on the coins, there was an understandable reluctance amongst traders and the public to accept them. After a few months they were replaced by the Willow, Oak and Pine Tree coinages, which at least displayed the name of the colony and had a border to the flan. In defense of their unusual appearance, the 'NE' issues were made from silver, were round in shape and did have a denominational value. They were issued as coins, not bullion, and were intended to circulate as a medium of exchange. Unattractive to the eye they may be, but historically they certainly deserve rightful recognition as the earliest of North America's colonial coins.



2021 - YEAR OF THE OX

February 12th marked the start of the Chinese 'Year of the Ox'. The Chinese zodiac of animals has a twelve-year cycle, which means the last year to commemorate the ox was 2009. The personality of those born in the Year of the Ox is supposed to be diligent, hardworking, intelligent and reliable as these are characteristics associated with oxen. In Chinese element theory, each of the zodiac signs is associated elements: Gold (metal), Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. The ox is associated with metal. This has brought about the issue of a plethora of commemorative coins, from various countries, in gold, silver and base metal.

COIN QUIZ No.11

QUESTION 1. What coins are sometimes called 'Black Money'?

QUESTION 2. What is a Chuckram?

QUESTION 3. What do 'Mudie's medals' commemorate?

QUESTION 4. In what year was the first English silver florin struck?

QUESTION 5. What date is shown on the Perkin Warbeck groat?

QUESTION 6. Why do coins of Charles II show the portrait facing right?

QUESTION 7. In whose reign was the 'rose noble' introduced?

QUESTION 8. What form of early currency is referred to as 'Obeloi'?

QUESTION 9. How did the American dollar (\$) symbol originate?

ANSWERS (Quiz No.10)

Q1. Another name for a 'mascle' is lozenge.

Q2. Simon Passe produced a series of medalets featuring various English monarchs.

Q3. There was no national coinage in Scotland before the reign of David I (1124-53).

Q4. Third farthings were first struck in the reign of George IV (1827) for use in Malta.

Q5. The 'Tealby' hoard was discovered near the village of Tealby, Lincolnshire in 1807.

Q6. Anchor money was the name given to small silver coins, struck between 1820-1822 for Mauritius and other British colonies. The reverse shows a crowned anchor.

Q7. The 'triakonta arguria' or thirty pieces of silver, as mentioned in the Bible, would have been tetradrachms or the Jewish term shekels.

Q8. The three dates found on Edward VI crowns (the first silver crowns) are 1551, 1552 and 1553.

Q9. Charles Roach Smith (1807-1890) was a famous archaeologist and numismatist. He pioneered the statistical study of Roman coin hoards.



QUESTION 10.

Can you name this famous English coin collector?



USELESS COIN FACTS No.11

Expanding on the answer to a previous quiz question: Later issues of silver pennies from the reign of Henry I (1100-1145) often have an official edge incision or 'snick'. This practice stems from the Assize of Moneyers held at Christmas 1124 when there was a general purge of dishonest moneyers who were blamed for the poor quality of coins in circulation. They were allegedly severely punished by amputation of the right hand and exposure over the mint-smithy or castration. Some accounts suggest that up to 100 moneyers were mutilated, although others say that the sentence was sometimes commuted on payment of a hefty fine. Nevertheless, news of the purge must have sent a clear warning to mints throughout the country.

The public, and merchants in particular, often cut into the edge of any coin proffered, presumably to determine the quality of the silver. The habit was so widespread that even after the reforms brought about by the notorious 'Christmas Assize' people were reluctant to accept a silver penny unless it had been tested by a snick in the edge. So, the pennies issued by those remaining moneyers and mints were officially cut on the edge before leaving the mint, thereby forcing acceptance and restoring confidence in the coinage.

Lt. Col. WILLIAM DURRANT; AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN - AND A ROGUE

Alan Dawson

A few years ago I was fortunate enough to obtain a nicely bound copy of the 1847 sale of coins belonging to Lt. Col. William Durrant of Lowestoft, Suffolk and of Wimpole Street London. The auction, conducted by *S. Leigh Sotherby & Co.*, boasted that 'This truly choice cabinet of English coins has been formed with great judgement and indefatigable zeal during the last forty years.' The stated circumstances of the formation of this collection could hardly have been further from the truth. Many of the rare and choice coins had been acquired through illegally substituting inferior specimens at the auction viewing of a number of famous collectors' sales. Durrant's light-fingered practice of course played havoc with a coin's provenance and resulted in many buyers at previous sales ending up with a coin which, in terms of grade and provenance, was not as described in the auction catalogue.

Apparently, the major London dealers and auction houses of the day, as well as certain collectors, became aware of Durrant's underhanded proclivity, yet tended to condone his actions, as after all he was seen as 'an officer and a gentleman' of considerable wealth and standing. More to the point; he was spending a lot of money with the London coin trade. There was certainly a conspiracy of silence about his activities until long after his death, although he was all but named in the Numismatic Chronicle of 1847/8. It was left to Keith Sugden of Manchester Museum to finally reveal the truth about this 19th century numismatic scoundrel in articles published in *Seaby's Coin & Medal Bulletin* and in *Spinks Numismatic Circular* in 1978.

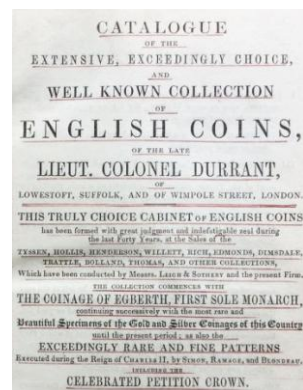
In the 1892 Sotheby sale of the Simpson Rostron Collection, lot 630, was described as Durrant's annotated personal copy of his collection's 1847 sale catalogue. The auctioneer went on to say it was "...enriched by a profusion of remarks showing under what circumstances different specimens were obtained". By then it was known that Durrant had been a notorious coin thief and 'exchanger' so the lot created considerable interest. One such interested party, namely the collector J. G. Murdoch, commissioned Spink to bid on his behalf to obtain this revealing document, at a 'reasonable' price. Spink did manage to be the successful bidder in a hotly contested sale - but paid the astonishing sum of £18. To put this figure in context; in the same sale a *Una & the Lion* £5 gold piece made just £11. Murdoch refused to pay Spink and the annotated catalogue seemingly disappeared, and that is where you might think the saga ended.

Paradoxically, Spink had simply put the catalogue into stock, where it languished for over 85 years until it was re-discovered by the then manager of Spink's book department, Douglas Saville, who passed photocopies on to Keith Sugden.

The information they revealed was explosive in terms of uncovering the true provenances of some well known coins. Sadly, even today there must still be a number of collections, both private and institutional, holding Durrant specimens which are wrongly believed to have an impeccable provenance. Durrant had been careful with his 'exchanges' as few of the coins in his collection were described as unique (and therefore traceable) but its strength lay in the superb condition of each piece. It would appear that his ultimate aim had been to steadily 'improve' each specimen, even relatively common coins, to a point where in this regard his collection would be unrivalled. To an extent he achieved his aim, although at the expense of a shameful notoriety attached to his name which would live on through many generations of collectors.

SAMUEL PEPPYS' OTHER PROCLIVITY

In the last issue, the article by Peter Thompson: *A Sad Event in Southwark* had the phrase *bon viveur* incorrectly substituted by the words *bon voyeur* - a typographical error due to the computer's 'predictive text' feature. However, given Pepys' licentious lifestyle and his self-confessed lust for beautiful women the word *voyeur* seems not, in this case, to have been entirely inappropriate.



Part of the title page of Durrant's 1847 sale catalogue

THE GOLD OF THE HMS DOURO

Chris Leather

If, like many collectors, you enjoy reading lists of coins for sale from the various dealers, you are certain to have come across gold sovereigns offered with the provenance 'ex-Douro.' This cryptic description says almost nothing, and tells almost everything there is to know about the coin in question.

By the 1870s, the sovereign had become what Dr Kevin Clancy has described as 'the Chief Coin of the World' in demand for trade right around the globe. Many transactions were made using bills of exchange, but a proportion required physical gold, and from time to time it was necessary to move bags and chests of bullion across the oceans. The only possible method at the time was by sea, and vessels chosen were usually the passenger ships, being the quickest, best and safest of what was available, which plied between the major ports and cities. One of the principal routes was between South America and Great Britain, and a favoured ship on that service was the Royal Mail Steamer *Douro*.

Douro had been built on the Clyde in 1865, an iron-hulled, screw-driven vessel of 2,824 tons. As was typical of ships of that era, the Douro also carried two masts for auxiliary sails. Owned by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, Douro was popular among passengers, reputedly being the choice of epicurists and gastronomes on account of the quality of the catering provided to the occupants of the 253 first class cabins. In addition to the passengers, the Douro carried a limited amount of freight and, as much of this comprised high value items, a special Bullion Room was constructed on board. The Douro's sixty-second transatlantic voyage, and her last, commenced as she left Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro in March 1882, heading for Lisbon and Southampton. Leaving Lisbon on 31st March, the Douro passed Cape Finisterre under a full moon on the evening of 1st April. A Spanish steamer, the *Yrurac Bat*, was sighted some two miles away, but due to confusion on the Douro no action was taken until a collision became inevitable and the *Yrurac Bat* rammed the Douro which sank thirty minutes later in 1,500 feet of water. All 112 passengers, and most of the crew survived, but the Captain and five officers went down with the ship. On-board the Douro, the Bullion Room contained a quantity of diamonds, bullion, and some 28,000 sovereigns and other gold coins, and with the speed of events none of the contents were saved. Given the uncertainty of the wreck's exact location, and the great depth of the ocean, salvage at the time was impossible, and the Douro and its cargo were considered to be a total loss. Although the ship and its cargo were lost, their memory remained, and with new technologies available a search was started in 1993 which resulted in the wreck being found and identified on 4th July 1995. Once the century of snagged fishing nets had been cleared away, the Bullion Room was located, and with great relief the salvors determined that the gold remained in its original packing, and was not distributed around the sea bed. Within three days, using equipment borrowed from the oil industry, some 93% of the Douro's cargo of gold coins and bullion was recovered.



RMS Douro (inset) and some of the sovereigns in situ.

A year and a day after the find was registered with the Receiver of Wrecks, the salvors were entitled to begin the sale of the coins. Much of the stock was sold through Spink in November 1996; some 1,700 lots of coins were sold, raising around £1.5million. The coins recovered comprised a good cross-section of the gold in circulation at the time. There were quantities of new sovereigns from Australia, which had never been to Great Britain, and there was a full range of varieties from the Royal Mint in London, some of which had been in circulation for years, and some of which were nearly uncirculated. Wreck coins of all descriptions have a unique fascination, but the coins from the Douro, being 22ct gold and more-or-less impervious to corrosion, can be found still in pristine condition after more than a century at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

Did all the psychics and horoscope writers actually predict Covid 19 in their 2020 predictions? If not, we can perhaps ignore all psychics and horoscopes forever.

Who would have guessed that the current pandemic would lead to so much dog walking?

OUR UNUSUAL NUMISMATIC HISTORY

Eric Hodge

For well over one thousand five hundred years Britain has been producing its own coinage. What is especially interesting, however, is that during this time there was at least one occasion where the regal coinage was a foreign coin. The coin in question was the Spanish 8 reales which in 1797 and 1804 was officially countermarked with an oval and an octagonal mark and issued at 4/9d and 5s respectively and so became a legally sanctioned part of our numismatic history. What is especially intriguing to me is the Spanish history denoted on the reverse of this coin.



Obverse of Spanish 8-reales of 1789 showing oval countermark on George III

Spanish 8-reales, reverse

The wording round the reverse reads, in Latin, 'Hispan et Ind Rex' translated as 'King of Spain and the Indies', all surrounding a Royal crowned shield. In the centre, superimposed within an escutcheon, are three fleur de lis, the arms of the Bourbon Dynasty initiated in Spain in 1700 on the crowning of Philip V. The charges of the heraldic device on the shield are the lions and castles of the Kingdom of Greater Castile. In the middle ages, Spain actually consisted of several smaller kingdoms. The Kingdom of León (lion) in north western Iberia and the Kingdom of Castilla (castle) in central Iberia joined to form Greater Castilla. The Kingdom of Aragon in eastern Iberia absorbed the Kingdom of Cataluña and the County of Valencia. In 1469 Isabella of Castilla married Ferdinand of Aragon, and together, in 1492, they conquered Granada, the last Moorish kingdom in Iberia. At the bottom of the shield, in the centre, is the representation of a pomegranate (Spanish granadino) to symbolise this victory. When 'Spain' colonized the new world, it was in the name of Castile instead of all of 'Spain', and this is reflected in the arms on all of the Spanish colonial coins.

After Rex is the abbreviation for Mexico City **M** where this coin was minted. Many Spanish words are abbreviated using the first and last letters of the word, hence M and o for Mexico. Following this is **8R** referring to the value of the coin as eight reales. It is this number that is the source of the pirate tales because when the coin was cut into pieces, as was the case for small currency in the West Indian islands, then those were called Pieces of Eight.

The letters **F.M** are the initials of the first names of the chief and assistant assayer, which were placed on the coin as a guarantee that the silver was of the proper fineness. For Mexico City between 1784 and 1801 these are believed to represent Francisco Arance Cobos and Mariano Rodriguez. At the sides of the escutcheon, or shield, stand two pillars, representing the Pillars of Hercules or the Straights of Gibraltar, marking the limit of the world previously known before the discoveries of Christopher Columbus. The motto on the pillars, 'Plus' on the left and 'Ultra' on the right, is Latin for 'more beyond' or further worlds to discover to the west.

IT'S MY ROUND - IN 1969 OF COURSE

It is now 52 years since the fifty pence piece in our pockets was first introduced. Nowadays, 50p won't get you very far, maybe a banana or a small carton of milk. Back in 1969 it might have bought three pints of milk or six loaves of bread or four packs of cheese. It could even have stretched to a short round of drinks in the pub! How times have changed.

What if this virus is actually spread by people clapping?

THE BIG SLEEP

The life stories and deeds of hundreds of Christian saints have developed more by conjecture than hard fact. This has sometimes led to a bizarre twisting of the truth to enhance the myth. Many have been duly venerated by being afforded special days in their honour and one such day is July 27th, which is dedicated to the 'Seven Sleepers'.

The well known Feast of the Seven Sleepers used to be widely observed throughout Eastern Europe, with devotees firmly believing the legend. The story, which has been modified and repeated in a number of other religions, is based on the persecution of Christians during the brief reign of the Roman emperor Trajan Decius (AD 248-251). Seven young men from Ephesus, in modern day Turkey, evaded capture and torture at the orders of the Emperor by hiding in a cave on Mount Coelius. Decius was so angered at their escape that he ordered all caves in the area to be sealed. The legend continues to relate that all seven, protected by their faith, fell into a deep sleep which would last until it was safe to venture out from their entombment.

Nearly two centuries passed until on July 27th, AD 447, workmen digging foundations for a stable broke through into the cave; waking the seven men. They were then taken to the current emperor, who was Christian, and told him their story. They still had coins in their purses from the time of Trajan Decius and this convinced the Emperor that a true miracle had happened, as the base silver antoninianii of Decius had not been circulating for nearly two hundred years. The seven men then suddenly died. And that is where to legend ends, except even today the names of the seven are sometimes evoked by those people desperately seeking yet another cure for chronic insomnia (I haven't tried it yet).



Base silver antoninianus of Trajan Decius (2:1)

Twentieth century theology scholars have studied this myth carefully and have concluded that there could be some factual basis to the story.

It all hinges on the wording used to describe the events and its subsequent translation and re-telling over the years. Versions of the tale can be found in at least nine medieval languages and preserved in more than two hundred manuscripts. In all the translations the date of the discovery varies widely from two to three hundred years although the Greek version is the one most generally accepted. This gives the year AD 447 for the opening of the cave, yet calendar dates again vary between April and October but with the subsequent changes to calendar months and lunar years thrown into the mix it is impossible to be exact.

When a story is both translated and transcribed many times into numerous languages it is bound to suffer from enhancement and misunderstanding. To disseminate the essence of the events might reveal some points of truth in the myth. By chance I came across the Greek word for 'sleep of death' which is *koimaomai*. Therefore, if in translation the word was mis-read as simply 'sleep' then the story begins to make sense. As the cave had been sealed up conditions might have been completely airtight and desiccant; a combination of which would certainly delay decomposition of organic material. As with other instances of airtight tombs being opened after hundreds of years the bodies of the seven would have still been reasonably intact, that is until they were exposed to the air when they would quite quickly decompose; a good example being the opening of King John's tomb in Worcester Cathedral in the eighteenth century. This theory would explain the seven 'suddenly dying'. In which case, give or take a bit of enhancement, the story of the 'Seven Sleepers' probably has a sound basis at least in some historical fact.

TREASURE LAW TO BE UPDATED

The British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme has seen an almost 90% increase in archaeological finds being reported in recent years, many of which are coins. Despite the upside of these objects being dutifully reported by members of the metal-detecting fraternity, many are still being excavated illegally then sold on internet sites such as eBay. The law concerning buried treasure of archaeological or national importance is in the process of being reviewed in an attempt to try to plug a number of existing loopholes.

A 'GLISTERING' APOLOGY

Our ever vigilant President, Colin de Rouffignac, was quite right to point out my glaring 'mis-quote' in the headline article on the first page of the January issue of the newsletter. For the title of the article I had written 'All That Glitters....' which alluded to the frequently used quote from William Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Act II/Scene VII. To be correct the word should have been 'glisters' as written by the Bard: '...all that *glisters* is not gold'. Conversely, according to *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable* the word 'glitters' is acceptable in modern English usage, as it has the same meaning as the early 17th century equivalent.

Colin's astute observation set me thinking about the origins of this much used phrase and I thought my findings might be of interest to some readers. The plot of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* centres round the character Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, who has lent a Christian merchant 300 gold ducats, to be guaranteed by a 'pound of the borrower's flesh'. The Venetian gold ducat or zecchino was certainly current in that city state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was used in many international transactions. The obverse of the coin shows the Doge of Venice kneeling before St. Mark and accepting a standard. The reverse depicts Christ standing facing within a mandorla encasing numerous stars. Over the five centuries of issue the design of the Venetian gold ducat remained unchanged, except for legend inscriptions and the number of stars.



Venetian gold zecchino (ducat) of Doge Alvise I Mocenigo (1570-1577)

Back to the aphorism and warning in the phrase; it actually goes back much further than Shakespeare's time, in fact it might even be traced back to the Greek fabulist Aesop (c.620-564 BC). The French monk Alain de Lille, writing in 1175, used the phrase "Do not hold everything gold that shines like gold". Again, Geoffrey Chaucer (c. late 14th century) gave us two versions of the phrase, written in Middle English, in *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale*: "But althyng which that shyneth as the gold, nis nat gold, as I have herd it told" and again in *The House of Fame* he expresses the same aphorism as: "Hyt is not al golde that glareth". Harking back to my possible mis-quote it is worth noting that the poet John Dryden (1631-1700) used the word 'glitter' in his 1687 poem *The Hind and the Panther* as by then the word had generally replaced the antiquated version. In contradiction with this statement another poet, Thomas Gray (1716-1771) chose to use the archaic version of the word in his *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat in a Tub of Gold Fishes*: "Not all that tempts your wandering eyes and heedless hearts is lawful prize, nor all that glisters gold".

But still, all this fails to excuse my incorrect use of the word in the context of the article, which after all was referring to an ancient metal alloy orichalcum. In penance, I have decided to wear a hair shirt and repeatedly whip myself with birch twigs until the next lockdown.

Your humbled Editor

NEW BOOK ON GUINEAS

A definitive guide to one of Britain's most famous gold coins – the Guinea, *A Guide to the Guinea* by Roderick Farey, has just been released by Token Publishing. This hardback book covers every aspect of the coin in detail, from its introduction in the reign of Charles II through to its demise as circulating currency, when it was replaced by the gold sovereign in George III's reign. Despite its termination as a circulating coin the word 'Guinea' lingered on as a unit of account well into the twentieth century. A separate eight-page price guide is included with the book which is priced at £29.95 and available from the publisher.

The next issue of 'Lockdown Newsletter' will be April 2021. Anyone with anything to say is welcome to contribute, as each issue is presenting more of a challenge to fill with suitable articles and numismatic news items.