



VOLUME 2



JOURNAL OF THE  
NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION  

---

OF AUSTRALIA.

<http://naa-online.com/>

# THE NUMISMATIC COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF VICTORIA

by JOHN SHARPLES  
Museum of Victoria



Library, Art Gallery and Museums Circa 1925.  
At this time the collection contained 13,454 specimens.

Museum based numismatic collections present complex problems. To the visiting public their purpose is to be used in displays, to entertain and to educate. To scholars on the other hand, they are storehouses of the material evidence upon which theories of history are based. To this group their purpose is to be available when required in order that the theories might be tested. To the first group any item which is not on display is wasted while to the second any item which is on display is wasted.

Collectors, as a group do not fall into either category. Indeed, they can only be classed as a group under the heading of "collectors". Individuals who collect can fall at the extremes of these other

groupings, and can add another dimension to attitudes to museum collections — one which varies from hate to love. Some see museums as unthinking, unemotional institutions which would lock away items which the collector loves, understands and desires to possess. Extremist members of this group even see stealing of museum objects as liberating wrongly imprisoned items, not as theft. Others see them as places which have preserved the life efforts of earlier collectors so that they can be consulted. Members of this group often hope that a museum might some day offer this service to their prized area of study giving it, and them, a sort of immortality and earning them the respect of future generations as they have respected the great collectors of the past.

Then there is the museum management for whom the numismatic collection is just one of many vying for the limited resources of money and gallery space. If the numismatic collection can fulfil the management's expectations it will receive support and prosper, if not it will fade and die.

The curator is the person responsible for guiding the collection through these often opposing forces. In addition, the curator has responsibilities to the future and the past. This examination of the history of the numismatic collection of the Museum of Victoria indeed stresses the role of its past curators. It examines the forces which they faced and the way they coped with their problems. The major donors of material each deserve a paper studying their contributions, here I can offer only their place in the larger flow of the history of the collection and offer them thanks for their forethought.

In addition to success, the history of this collection also has its share of failure. The lesson of that failure must be understood so that it might not be permitted to occur again.

Australia is not a new nation in the museum field. No nations had public museums as we know them today when this continent was settled by Europeans. By the 1850's some of our major museums were already in operation. Numismatics was there at the beginning of the museum movement in this country.

Naturally, we lacked the collections of the noble houses which often formed the core of today's European public collections, but this is not of great concern. Australia's place in history should be our primary concern. While we cannot ignore the evolution of coinage, it is its development since 1788 that should have our attention. That period happens to encompass some of the most significant developments that have ever occurred.

The Museum of Victoria houses a numismatic collection which is recognised

as the best general collection in Australia. The Museum itself was only recently formed by the joining of two earlier institutions, the Science Museum of Victoria and the National Museum of Victoria. The Science Museum brought with it the numismatic collection. Yet it, in turn had only just finished building that collection by joining the collections of two other institutions, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Melbourne Branch of the Royal Mint. The collection of the former was transferred to the Science Museum in 1975 and the latter in 1978. Between these dates, in 1976, the first full time curator was appointed.

The collection had been curated before that. Indeed, the first curator was none other than Johann Joseph Eugene von Guerard. He developed the holding between his appointment in 1871 and his retirement in 1881. However, numismatics was not his only charge, he was at the same time the Master of Painting at the National School of Art and Curator of the National Gallery.

When von Guerard began his period as curator, he inherited some 797 numismatic items. These had been collected since, it would seem, May 1859 when the Premier, Hon. John O'Shanassy set aside five hundred pounds, part of which could be used to purchase coins from England to form the basis of a collection. The money was allocated also to the purchase of casts and photographs. No record of exactly how it was spent has survived but an examination of the earliest holdings of the numismatic collection suggests that little was spent on real coins. Of the 797 pieces in the collection in 1871, only 45 were of Australian origin; 35 tokens, 7 medals and 3 pieces of paper money. The main bulk of the collection at the time were casts of European Seals and Roman coins. In 1871 a *Catalogue of coins, medals, etc., in the Museum of Art at the Melbourne Public Library* was published. The coins described in it do not give the appearance of having been purchased in London, while the casts clearly were.



Plate 1. Australia, New South Wales. Holey Dollar, 1813 struck on Lima 1782 Eight Real (Eugene von Guerard Collection).

Von Guerard's numismatic knowledge and contacts are sadly not known. He was a coin collector, and the sale of his own collection to the Institution was his main development of its holdings. The three volume catalogue of the collection which he built while in Melbourne is still held in the numismatic library of the Museum. Von Guerard carefully listed every purchase he made, including the sources of every piece he acquired. This listing of his sources was sometimes only of the initials of the individuals concerned. This is unfortunate, as almost nothing is known of collectors in Melbourne in this era. However, it does offer some clues and adds to the hope that we may someday discover more.

The main influences on von Guerards collecting seem to have been his own

interest in art and family background. The three catalogues were: Vol.1 'Greek, Roman, Byzantine', Vol.II 'Tutonic Races' (including Britain) and Vol.III 'English Colonies, Romanic Races, Slavonic Races, America, Asia, Africa etc.'. He spent £293.19.1 on his numismatic collection. Of this, £171.12.9 was on ancient Greek and Roman pieces. For the Australian series he spent £2.2.10½ on coins and 7s.6d. on medals.

This may not seem much, but the money spent on Australian included 5s.6d. for a Holey Dollar of New South Wales on a 1782 Lima Eight Real (Plate 1) and another extraordinary purchase was a trial strike of the Hogarth and Erichson 3d. of 1860 on a French one Franc piece (Plate 2).



Plate 2. Australia, New South Wales. Trial strike of Hogarth & Erichsen Threepence struck on a French 1 Franc of Louis XVIII. (Eugene von Guerard Coll.).

The major donators of the period were the United States Government, which authorised the Philadelphia Mint to strike a series of United States Medals including bronze strikings of the Indian Peace Medals (Plate 3) and supplied an 1871 long proof set; and the Royal Mint who supplied examples of medals they had recently struck. These donations were arranged by Sir Redmond Barry who also started a tradition which still continues whereby staff and friends of the Museum donate any coins they bring back from overseas tours. In 1878 he added 126 pieces to the collection.

By the end of von Guerard's curatorship, the collection had grown to 3,387 pieces (1171 of which were ancient). It was therefore placed to become one of the world's leading public collections. It was, for instance, larger than most public

collections in the United States at that time. Unfortunately, unlike the collections in that country, the collection of the Colony of Victoria lost impetus with the departure of its first curator. He retired due to ill health in 1881. He later travelled to England and died at Chelsea in 1901.

For twenty years the collection was largely ignored. There were occasional donations but no collecting policy. 1887 was a year of some importance, with two interesting donations. The first were two Spanish American eight reals from a wreck of the expedition of the French Explorer La Perouse, and therefore two coins which had been in Botany Bay on the day that the first fleet arrived, and second the exhibition prize medals won by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller.



Plate 3. United States of America. 1870's restrike of George II Indian Peace Medal. Gift of U.S. Government and Philadelphia Mint, 1878. (National Gallery Collection).

Although the Gallery lost interest in numismatics with the departure of von Guerard, from the point of view of the current collection, there was not a complete break in continuity. As it happened, in 1880 the Melbourne Branch of the Royal Mint (Plate 4) was to mount a display at the Melbourne International Exhibition. To support the material being exhibited by the Mint itself, the Deputy Master, V. Delves Broughton, decided to approach London for examples of coins and medals produced there.

The Royal Mint was at that time under the control of C. W. Fremantle. He agreed to prepare the necessary pieces employing the current (1880) dies and earlier dates in order to make the proposed display comprehensive. Two proof examples of each piece were prepared and when boxed and mailed, the whole consignment weighted 2cwt. 19 lb.

A full listing of this collection has been provided by Mr Graham Dyer of the Royal Mint. From this it has been



Plate 4. Melbourne Branch of Royal Mint Circa 1900.

possible to check the current holdings. An example of almost every piece is still held. These include the 1880 Imperial proof set, to the sovereign, the 1879 London Shield sovereign (Plate 5), the 1880 Newfoundland proof set to the \$2 piece and a wonderful variety of other Colonial and Imperial coins and medals.

Why only one example? Broughton appears to have loved ancient coins. At the end of the 1880 Exhibition, he swapped one complete set of the proof coins to a Herr Wilhemj (the writing is not clear on the original document), for a collection of ancient coins and two pounds ten shillings in cash. Sadly, Broughton's love of ancients was not based upon a great knowledge of them. The collection of ancients seems to have been 28 late Roman bronze pieces and ten common denarii.

Happily the episode did not end there. In 1887 George Anderson had taken over as Deputy Master at Melbourne. He too wanted to mount a display at an Exhibition, this time the 1888 Melbourne International, but found that half of the coins were gone. He therefore wrote to

London and asked for replacements. The request was not well received, Freemantle was still in charge at London and appears to have felt that he had already bent the rules far enough for the Melbourne Branch. Fortunately Anderson covered himself in a reply to the rebuttal of his first request. He had been misunderstood it seems, he had not envisaged another restrike of all the old pieces, if any were available he would be glad to have them, but he really would be happy if replacements of the other pieces be made with current productions as and when the Royal Mint was striking them. Freemantle was happy to do that, indeed he went further and arranged for Melbourne to receive specimen strikings of all Colonial coins done by the Royal Mint from that date forward.

These specimen sets began to arrive in 1888. The first shipment included a beautiful Newfoundland 1888 proof set to the \$2 gold to match that of 1880. It is important to understand of course that these specimens were not a donation. They had to be paid for. Although the costs were only the face value of the



Plate 5. United Kingdom, Proof Sovereign, 1879 Shield London Mint. Struck for Melbourne International Exhibition 1880 (Melbourne Mint Collection).

pieces Melbourne had to find the money. This meant that regular efforts had to be made by the Melbourne Mint to raise money for numismatic purchases, their annual budgets did not allow for this activity.

Thus, in 1890 when George Murdoch of London approached the Mint for proofs, they were supplied — although the Mint refused to strike off-metal pieces for him. This marked the beginning of a phase at the Melbourne Mint of dealing in coins with private collectors and dealers.

In 1892 Melbourne ordered sets of Maundy Money from Spink's, London and later sought USA gold tokens of California from the same source. In 1893 they were offered the Heuzenroeder Australasian Token Collection for one hundred pounds (Heuzenroeder's coins had earlier been purchased by Mr Horn and donated to the South Australian Public Library and Museum) but could not afford them. Perhaps inspired by this the Mint ran an advertisement in four Melbourne newspapers on August 9th offering duplicate Colonial specimen coins for sale at face value. By the 17th all were sold! The Mint Collected by type, not date.

Later that year the Melbourne Library again re-appeared on the scene acquiring proof strikings of the 1893 Melbourne sovereign and half and asking to receive specimen Colonial coins from London. This latter request sadly was not followed through for some time.

Now the Mint had the taste of real collecting. In 1893 proof gold coins were struck with gay abandon. Not in numbers, but in dates. Sovereigns of 1889 and 1893 with both plain and milled edges were struck and half sovereigns of 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892 and 1893. In every case ten examples of each issue were produced. They were all sold to collectors. When that did not satisfy the need for money the old newspapers were sold off and the income from that put into coin collecting. Proof strikings of the gold were produced every year from 1893 until 1902, inclusive, sometimes on more than one occasion in a year. Purchases from overseas continued and both the Mint's and local collector's collections flourished.

Donations to the Mint collection were few. The only notable one being 16 tokens from George McArthur of Maldon in 1894.

The era from 1888 until 1902 was the great one for the Mint Collection. Contact with private collectors continued on a smaller scale during the reign of Edward VII and even revived in 1912-13, but it was never again to challenge this period.

The new century soon saw both the Mint and Institution's collections in operation together for the first time. In the spring of 1903 the Professor of Geology and Mineralogy of Melbourne University visited Maldon with a group of students. There he met George McArthur (Plate 6), the man who had donated some tokens to the Mint Collection in 1894.

Mr McArthur was so impressed by Prof. Gregory, that he decided to leave his extensive collection of books to the University. It would appear that he also decided at that time to leave his numismatic collection to the National Museum, Melbourne. The Will was changed on 3rd October. In the early hours of 18th October George McArthur left a note for his brother-in-law and then drowned himself. The note is now lost, and its contents were not released.



Plate 6. George McArthur, 1903.

The Bequest marks the second beginning of the Museum collection. By European standards it was not large, 1357 coins, 575 tokens 894 medals and 303 badges, but unlike the earlier collection, it had an Australian flavour. McArthur built his collection in the period that the Australian Colonies were seeking Federation. To an extent his collecting interests reflect the mood of that era. The collection contained 370 Australasian tokens and 283 Australasian medals.

George McArthur, came to Victoria with his family in 1853. The arrival of the family is recorded in the *Argus* of March 8th, 1853, and his father's profession is given as baker. They came from Linlithgow Bridge in Scotland. The family travelled first to Bendigo by bullock dray and by 1854 had settled at the Tarrangower diggings (later Maldon). There a bakery was established to service the diggers' needs. The original oven was still in use in 1985. The family prospered during the gold rushes and in 1865 George began to travel. Between then and 1889 he visited New Zealand, Europe and North America. During this period he also ran the bakery. In 1888 he came to

Melbourne for the International Exhibition and visited the National Museum. In 1889 he sold the bakery to his brother and took up travelling seriously. He toured the Pacific spending months on the different islands, Western Asia, China, Japan, South America including a trip up the Amazon and to South Africa where he became sympathetic to the situation of the Boers. At the end of 1893 he purchased a six month all-lines rail ticket and used it travelling some 4,600 miles around Victoria and southern New South Wales.

His collection reflects his method of collecting, field trips not visits to dealers. Almost every corner of the present collection contains a piece gathered by this extraordinary man. Further, being such an early collection, his Australian material gives a wonderful anchor point against which later restrikes can be judged.

Sadly, the incorporation of the McArthur Bequest is not documented. The Institution's collection (at the time the Library, Gallery and Museums were not independent bodies and responsibility for individual collections, including numismatics sometimes changed hands) seems to have been only a little more active for some years. Only one important donation is recorded before the outbreak of the First World War, a small collection of Indian coins from His Highness the Rajah Kuman Nawah Shyama Tagore. This forms the beginning of what is today a reasonably important holding of coins of the Indian sub-continent.

The Melbourne Mint continued its activity at this time. In 1906 the various Consuls active in Victoria were approached and many arranged for collections of their national coinages to be supplied. The Mint paid for all pieces acquired in this manner, but often acquired proof rather than circulated issues. The policy of selling duplicates and old newspapers was therefore continued.



In 1908, the Ottawa Branch of the Royal Mint began operations and the Melbourne Branch began to purchase and exchange specimens. A number of staff members from the Australian Branches actually transferred to Canada to the new mint, so initially, close relations existed. The Mint acquired the 1908 specimen set though not the sovereign (it was seen as a duplicate of the sovereign of Edward VII already held). In 1912 Melbourne wrote to the Ottawa Mint for examples of "The new coinage". Ottawa responded by sending the 1911-12 specimen set, again without the sovereign. These sets are quite rare — five being issued with the sovereign and three without, but they were not what Melbourne was after. They wanted the "new coinage" of 1912, not 1911 so Ottawa manufactured additional specimens although the quality of striking of these pieces was not as good as the 1911 specimens. The 1912 specimens were supplied to Melbourne but there had been a problem. There were no ten cent dies of 1912 left by the time Melbourne's correction arrived in Canada, so a 1913 specimen ten cent piece was struck to fill the gap.

Close contact with Ottawa continued into the thirties, with specimens of most new types being acquired, though sadly not the 1921 set. These were later to be complemented by another impressive collection of Canadian specimens and the missing specimen sovereigns of 1908 and 1911 when the Mint and Gallery collections were combined.

In 1917 Alfred Chitty returned to Melbourne after assisting the South Australian Art Gallery and Museum organise their important collection. Alfred Chitty is a very well known name in Victorian numismatic circles, but surprisingly little is known of him. He died on 4th June, 1929 at the age of eighty, so he was almost seventy when he took on the task of producing a catalogue of the Victorian collection in late 1918. He was a contemporary of George McArthur, being only six years his junior.

His life is not well documented, but there were many bright spots during his ten years with the Victorian numismatic collection. In 1918 he arranged for the purchase of the electrotypes of Pistrucchi's Waterloo Medal, in doing so becoming the first curator to tap a source that was later to be of the utmost importance, the Felton Bequest.

In 1919 he initiated a series of exchanges with the Melbourne Mint, obtaining some specimen strikings of Australian silver and a proof set of British Honduras which the Mint considered a duplicate. For these he exchanged a set of electrotypes of Napoleonic medals. That year he also arranged with the City of London for a donation of fifteen of the City's medals.

In 1920 he arranged for the permanent loan, and later bequest of the Isaacson collection of British war medals and Napoleonic medals. Alexander Isaacson indeed added to his collection at the Gallery until his death, and is considered one of our major benefactors.

Between 1922 and 1924 he purchased and arranged for the donation of important groups of Chinese currency, mostly being brought out of China by returning missionaries. This period of acquisition combined with that of von Guerard from Chinese arriving on the goldfields in the 1850's are still the main source of our Chinese holdings. In 1922 he accepted the kind donation from the family of Mr J. G. Gotch of 520 coins, mostly ancients.

No area of the collection was ignored by Chitty. In 1923 he approached the Banks, and between that year and 1925 specimen notes were supplied by the National Bank of Australasia, the Bank of Australasia, the Union Bank of Australia and the Commonwealth Government's Note Printing Authority. This last source has remained a supporter of the collections of this and other Australian State collections ever since. From 1925 he began to bring a part of his personal collection with him to add to the State collection on each visit.

It was particularly important for its tokens (Plate 7), but like that of George McArthur covered much of the world.



Plate 7. Australia, New South Wales. "Aboriginal 4d", 1860. Andrews 694 (Ex Heuzenroeder, donated by Alfred Chitty 1923).

Finally, in 1926, Dr William Howat, at one time President of the Numismatic Society of Victoria, brought his two cabinets of coins to the Museum and told Alfred Chitty to keep what he needed for the collection but return the cases and the remaining coins. This donation was of an extraordinary nature. William Howat had managed to gather 113 patterns, proofs and mint specimens, some from the Melbourne Mint, but most apparently from the special striking undertaken by the Royal Mint for the International Exhibition in Sydney in 1879. This

donation included an Imperial proof set from farthing to half crown of 1879, a wonderful complement to the 1880 proof set supplied to the Melbourne Mint. It also contained proof Canadian material not held by the Melbourne Mint, as well as re-strikings of proofs which were struck on a different occasion to those already held by the mint, thus giving a unique opportunity for comparison. Further, unlike earlier donations, the Howat donation included proof gold coins, such as an example of the Una and the Lion Five Pound piece of 1839 (Plate 8).

The importance of Alfred Chitty to the development of the collection cannot be over stated. Had he not been here these donations would not have occurred. The donors are to be thanked for their generosity and the forethought which has preserved their collections and work, but without the confidence that their material would be properly looked after and used, they would probably have sought other means of disposing of them. Alfred Chitty was the source of that confidence.

When Chitty completed his catalogue of the collection on 26 May, 1925, it contained 13,454 specimens.



Plate 8. Great Britain, Pattern Five Pound, 1839 (Dr. Howat donation, 1926).

The year 1926 also marked the end of an era at the Melbourne Mint. In that year A. M. Le Souef retired from his position as Deputy Master and went to Sydney to supervise the closure of the Sydney Branch of the Royal Mint. Le Souef was the principle figure in the experiments around 1920 which have left us with the series of square nickel patterns. He was a small scale collector of coins and medals, though his position gave him access to pieces which have made his collection very important to modern numismatic studies. Most of his collection was purchased in 1928 and is held, together with his original catalogue by the Museum.

During his period in charge of the Melbourne Branch, its collection developed rapidly. He did not change the collecting policy, the Mint continued to collect by type only, but he did tend to retain more Australian material than his predecessors. In particular, the nickel patterns were well represented — though his own collection was more complete and was the source of the two “raised tail” varieties. In the same way, the Museum’s 1919 shilling came from his collection, not the Mint’s own holding.

In 1921, Le Souef undertook a striking of the Adelaide Assay Office Five Pound Piece (Plate 9). The records of the actual number of pieces struck at that time are not yet recovered. However, it seems that

there were twelve or thirteen pieces struck in gold and two or three in silver. In 1927, Melbourne partly funded their purchase of the Sydney Mint Five and Two pound pieces by the sale of one of these Adelaide strikes to William Dixon. He paid ten pounds for his example. In 1929 the dies were returned to Adelaide together with a gold striking. In that year, the authorities at Melbourne offered some State Galleries gold strikings at gold price, but none were wanted, and so the five remaining in stock were melted.

There is still talk of the last days of the Sydney Mint in Australian numismatic circles. Almost sixty years after the event there are those who believe that Le Souef and Dixon spent the day with a bucket of blanks, a coining press and a goodly supply of old dies. There was some re-striking undertaken, but it was strictly controlled. The main areas of re-striking were medals, particularly the Sydney Mint pieces. Of greater interest perhaps were the Sydney Mint five pound and two pound pieces (Plate 10). These were re-struck only for Dixon, the Melbourne Mint, and Le Souef. The mintage figure was recorded and was:

	Gold	Silver
Five Pound	4	2
Two Pound	5	—

The two silver strikes of the Five Pound piece probably reflect Le Souef’s striking



Plate 9. Australia, South Australia. Adelaide Assay Office Five Pound, 1852. Struck at Melbourne Mint 1921. (A. M. Le Souef Collection, purchased 1928).



Plate 10. Australia, Two Pounds, 1902 S. Struck at Sydney Mint 1926. (Melbourne Mint Collection).

in silver of the Adelaide piece. They were for his own collection, one was the 1887 piece and the other the 1902. This striking was not permitted, and Le Souef was asked to return the pieces to Melbourne where they were destroyed. Melbourne always strictly adhered to a policy of not striking off-metal pieces of the Imperial coinage.

Strangely, it seems to be with the departure from the scene of Le Souef and Chitty that exchanges between the Gallery and Mint collection became more formal. From 1927 the Melbourne Mint deposited specimen record pieces of all its Commonwealth coin production with the Gallery. At the same time arrangements were made through Melbourne for proof-record pieces of each new type prepared by the Royal Mint, London to come to the Gallery. There were indeed years when the Melbourne Branch must have handled almost half of the entire production of these rare coins. After all, Melbourne took a double set for itself, the Victorian State Collection and the South Australian State Collection.

Alfred Chitty's last major step during his important period as Curator was when he convinced the Gallery to make funds

from the Felton bequest available for regular numismatic purchases. He was not to be the one to make full use of this source of funds, spending only £32 from the bequest in 1926. His successor on the other hand was so successful that by 1933 he attracted attention and after much argument about the nature of the numismatic collection as a collection of "works of art", was denied further access to the fund. Still, in those few years he was able to take areas of the collection to world prominence.

Chitty's successor as honorary curator of numismatics was Alfred Kenyon. Kenyon was born in Homebush, Victoria in December 1867. He came to Melbourne in 1881 and joined the Public Works Department as a pupil engineer in 1887. From 1901 he was Engineer in charge of Town Supplies and New Proposals with particular responsibilities for the Mine Department. From 1906 to 1911 he was the Engineer for Agriculture and then he became the Senior Engineer of the newly formed State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. From 1932 he was Commissioner of Water Supply which post he held until his retirement in 1935.



ALFRED STEPHEN KENYON

He was honorary curator of numismatics from 1927 until his death in 1942. During this period the collection achieved independence. It became the National Coin and Medal Collection and had its own Annual Report to the State Parliament.

Kenyon's fame rests as much with the individual pieces he purchased as the collections he developed. Some highlights are worth noting. In 1929 he purchased the Mason and Cully Australian penny token, then considered the most controversial and rare piece of the token

series (Andrews could only obtain a rubbing); the 1855 type II Sydney Mint pattern half-sovereign and Canadian specimen sovereigns of 1908 and 1911.

In 1930 it was hammered British like the Scottish James V "bonnet piece" and in the Australian series the Proof Australian penny of that year. Also in 1930 he arranged for the purchase of the collection formed by Dr. Yelland.

In 1931 he bought the 23,266 electrotypes from the Ready family of London (Plate 11), and amongst many coins a VF (for issue) Hog Money sixpence.

1932 was his best year. He managed to obtain the Irish halfpenny of John as Lord, profile bust; a second issue silver farthing of Henry VIII; Norman pennies including examples of the flag type of Stephan, Eustace Fitzjohn and Henry of Northumberland (Plate 12); an EF oak tree twopence and a beautiful example of the two-shilling Scarsborough siege piece (Plate 13). These are only a few highlights of a very broad collecting policy.

After 1932 Kenyon was not able to use the funds of the Felton Bequest. He spent the next ten years cataloguing and displaying the collection. Many years were spent on the Ready collection, which he mounted on cards and annotated for display. This collection still sees extensive use in teaching and reference, although with the advent of modern visual aids, its original role in display is no longer important.



Plate 11. Electrotpe copy of Gold Penny of Henry III. (Ready Electrotpe Collection, Felton Bequest 1931).



Plate 12. England, Scottish Border Issues.  
Henry, Earl of Northumberland, Penny  
(Felton Bequest, 1932).

At the Melbourne Mint the years after the departure of Le Souef saw only minimal attention paid to the collection. The Mint had become the most important in Australia, and after the Great Depression was kept very busy with work for the Commonwealth.

The thirties saw two important donations of material added to the collection at the Gallery. Both were in 1933. The first was the magnificent collection of medals, principally British War Medals in the Wannemacher bequest. The second was from the firm Stokes and Son, who donated a selection of token and medal dies from the 1850's and 1860's. These included the dies for the Kangaroo Office two, one, half and quarter ounce pieces. A missed opportunity at this time was the original Kangaroo Office press. Stokes offered this to the Gallery, but it did not fit their collecting policy and so it was rejected. Subsequent to this refusal the press was destroyed.

The Second World War, coupled with the death of Kenyon in 1942, saw the collections go into another lull. Indeed, the only interest generated in the forties occurred at the Mint with debasement in 1946. Prior to this the Mint undertook experiments in cupro-nickel strikes, and in various alloys of silver. Some of these experimental pieces have survived including the 1945 florins struck at 66% and 50% silver levels, the 1946 florins struck in cupro-nickel (Plate 14). Fortuitously, the Mint struck two special proof sets of its last striking at the



Plate 13. England. Scarsborough Siege,  
Two Shillings (Felton Bequest, 1932).

sterling silver level. The sets comprised only the florin and shilling denominations and were catalogued simply as "Florin George VI" and "Shilling George VI". Since the Shilling was in the end never struck for circulation, these two examples are of the greatest significance. Further, as they were stored to show the head of George VI, their true importance was not recognised until they were transferred to their present home.



Plate 14. Australia, Pattern Florin 1946,  
struck in copper-nickel.  
(Melbourne Mint Collection).

Alfred Kenyon was followed by one of his contemporaries, Fritz Schafer. Fritz was by that time no longer a young man, he had been on the Council of the Numismatic Society of Victoria in 1916. He was not able to lift the collection and get it going again, but worked with it for over ten years with almost no financial support to encourage development. Such

apparent stagnation does not inspire donations to a collection and so almost nothing came in. It must have been a sad time for Fritz, as around the country the hobby began to flourish after the end of the War. Fritz resigned in April 1955 and for eighteen months the collection was not curated.

The arrival of Eric Wodak in late 1956 seemed to mark the beginning of a new era. He was a man of international repute for his study of the coinage of the British Empire. At the time he was collaborating with Fred. Pridmore on the publication of the coinage of British India and the Malay Peninsular. Prior to beginning at Melbourne he had been Honorary Curator of Coins and Medals at the Raffles Museum, Singapore for a number of years. Further the Gallery, which had taken back responsibility for the collection after the death of Kenyon, was willing to support his activities, even if it could only employ him on a part time basis (Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings). Tragically, after a little under two years getting to know the collection he died. Any plans for the development of numismatics by the Gallery seemed to die with him.

Eric Wodak was not replaced, although an attendant, Archy. Price was offered the position of Honorary curator after his retirement in 1960. Although it is known that Mr Price answered public enquiries for a time his exact role is not clear. It is possible that he did not take up the offer after his retirement.

At about this time the curator from the anthropology section of the National Museum took an interest in the numismatic collection. He was a man whose credentials and position seemed impeccable and he was permitted to work with the collection. Given his position, he should have been above reproach. However he seemed to possess some of the worst aspects of the collector's mentality and clearly had no respect for the work of those who had built the collection.

Given that the collection had not been properly developed for almost thirty years, it is perhaps not surprising that he had little respect for it. Further, it is known that Eric Wodak had complained of difficulties in reconciling the catalogues with the collection. Sadly, the problems were seen by this man as an opportunity to improve his personal collection and it seems he even offered coins from the collection to dealers both in Melbourne and London. Thanks to the alertness of two Melbourne dealers, Reg Williams and Ray Jewell, he was soon stopped. Charges were brought, and he was found guilty of theft in 1964 and spent some time in prison.

Those coins which the Gallery could prove to be its property were recovered but some areas of the collection were destroyed at about that time. Particularly hit was the specimen series of Australian bronze. The silver holdings were not as popular although both the Chitty and Le Souef 1922/21 threepences were removed. The historical importance of these pieces far outweighed their collectors value. 1964 marked the nadir of the Gallery collection. The missing specimen coins were not available to the public and have not appeared on the market since their removal. Hopes are still held therefore that they may some day be returned — perhaps as an anonymous donation.

After this event, the Gallery closed the door. There was nobody available to take proper care of the collection, and when they moved to their new buildings in 1968, the collection was left behind. Prior to departure, in 1967, the Gallery did offer to hand the collection over to the Science Museum. This offer was rejected as the Museum did not have the staff to care for it. It would appear that between 1968 and 1976, the coin room was opened only once or twice a year. Even on those rare occasions however it was not for cleaning or dusting, but to place a donation in the collection area.

After the Gallery moved, the area where the collection was stored came under the control of the Science Museum. Gradually, this Museum came to be responsible for public enquiries. From as early as the mid 1950's the Science Museum had mounted displays of war medals, some of which had been collected as an adjunct to its extensive Arms collection while others were on loan from the numismatic collection itself. Gradually responsibility for public enquiries in numismatics came to F. J. Kendall, the Deputy Director of the Museum. With the passage of time the consistency of these enquiries led to a knowledge of the collection and the subject matter of numismatics. Then, in 1973, the Gallery precipitated events. Having failed to find another body to take over the collection they announced that they planned to sell the collection in ten years and use the funds raised to purchase works of art. Ten years was the statutory period controlling the disposal of works of art in the National Gallery Act.

Gallery to the Science Museum. By the time of the transfer F. J. Kendall had become Director of the Science Museum.

The Melbourne Mint closed in 1972. The Royal Mint handed the coin collection over to the State of Victoria and despite interest shown by the Royal Australian Mint, Canberra, the collection was promptly locked up in a bank vault. For some years the collection was not seen, although the Bank did make occasional use of it for displays. At one point the Bank even tried to acquire it and considered exchanging what it considered to be duplicates. Fortunately neither step was taken.

The first suggestion that the Mint collection should be combined with the old Gallery collection occurred in a proposal for the development of the Science Museum during the fifteen year period 1975-1990. This paper was tabled in September 1975. Formal steps to obtain this end were not taken until after the appointment of the curator in 1976.



Plate 15. Australia, New South Wales. Thornthwaite Token Penny, 1850. Uniface pattern. (Ex Heuzenroeder, Marcus Clark and Heyde Collections purchased Science Museum of Victoria, 1977).

By that time, the management of the Science Museum was more familiar with the numismatic collection. As soon as the plans of the Gallery were known, the Museum Council decided that they should take steps to preserve the collection. Hindle Fowler, the Director initiated proceedings in 1973. Given the situation, it took only two years for a position of Numismatist to be created and in 1976 the first full time appointment, John Sharples, was made. The keys to the coin room were then transferred from the

At first, little happened, then, in 1977, a second group took an interest in obtaining the collection for public display, the organisers of the proposed Gold Museum at Ballarat. These moves were countered by the Science Museum on the grounds that the Mint and Gallery collections were essentially different and complementary. Further, it became apparent that the Gold Museum had been misled in the actual amount of gold in the Mint's holding.



In the end, the Government decided to combine the collections to create the unique holding which is now controlled by the Museum of Victoria. However, the Gold Museum at Ballarat did benefit greatly as duplicate gold coins, most of the gold mineral specimens and a range of gold-fields tokens were made available to them.

Development of the State Collection has been consistent since 1976. Even before the Mint collection was added, the Science Museum had shown its enthusiasm for numismatics by dedicating one third of its total acquisition budget to that area.

These efforts have been rewarded by a gradual increase in donations. The most important of these being that part of the collection of Eric Wodak which had been retained by his family after his death. It included not only many hundreds of coins, but equally important an archive of his research correspondence.



Plate 16. India, Bengal Presidency, pattern "Calcutta Rupee" (1818). (Wodak Collection, donated 1981).

Since 1976 there have been dozens of donors active in supporting the collection. Emil Hafner, a Victorian die cutter has supplied many examples of commemorative medals he has worked on. Ian Armstrong has kept up a constant flow of new issues of his Shoe Mart tokens. Dr Percy Zerman has helped us greatly through donation of books, catalogues and coins. M. R. Roberts have supplied examples of their recent medal series. Les Carlisle, George Dean, Hall's of Toorak, Reg Williams, Ray Jewell,



Plate 17. Australia, Pattern Florin, 1937. (Uniface). (Purchased 1984).

John Barrow, and many others have added usefully to the current holdings.

In July 1983, the Science Museum and the National Museum of Victoria were combined to form the Museum of Victoria. Numismatics plays an important part in the planning of the new Museum, and has been supported by the management as one of the great collections of the nation. This was the aim of those men who gave a great part of their lives to the development of this collection. They would be thrilled, and we should thank them for their work by vowing to continue it so that future generations may have access to one of the world's great collections.



Plate 18. Australia, "Kangaroo Office" Pattern Two Pence, Circa 1860. (Purchased 1985).