

# HISTOIRE DES COLLECTIONS NUMISMATIQUES ET DES INSTITUTIONS VOUÉES À LA NUMISMATIQUE

## Numismatic Collections in Scotland

Scotland is fortunate in possessing two major cabinets of international significance. In addition over 120 other institutions, from large civic museums to smaller provincial ones, hold collections of coins and medals of varying size and importance.<sup>1</sup>

The two main collections, the Hunterian held at the University of Glasgow, and the national collection, housed at the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh, nicely complement each other. The former, based on the renowned late 18th century cabinet of Dr. William Hunter, contains an outstanding collection of Greek and Roman coins as well as important groups of Anglo-Saxon, medieval and later English, and Scottish issues along with a superb holding of medals. The National Museums of Scotland house the largest and most comprehensive group of Scottish coins and medals extant. Each collection now numbers approximately 70,000 specimens.

The public numismatic collections from the rest of Scotland, though perhaps not so well known, are now recorded to some extent due to a National Audit of the country's cultural heritage held by museums and galleries carried out by the Scottish Museums Council in 2001 on behalf of the Scottish Government.<sup>2</sup> Coins and Medals was one of 20 collections types included in the questionnaire, asking for location, size and breakdown into badges, banknotes, coins, medals, tokens, and other.

Over 12 million objects made up what was termed the Distributed National Collection, of which 3.3% consisted of approximately 68,000 coins and medals in the National Museums concentrated in Edinburgh and 345,000 in the non-nationals throughout the rest of the country. This total of 414,000 numismatic objects was the fifth largest of the 20 collections types identified and will have increased since then.

The data was based on 170 replies of which 124 included coins and medals. After the Hunterian and the National Museums of Scotland the next largest cabinet is that of the University of Aberdeen while significant collections are owned by the major civic museums at Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, and Perth. A third university cabinet

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1. This survey covers only existing public collections and omits military museums and military medals.

2. See Scottish Museums Council, *A Collective Insight Scotland's National Audit Full Findings Report* (Edinburgh, 2002). The Scottish Museums Council is now known as Museums Galleries Scotland.

is to be found at St. Andrews and noteworthy are the two small but early and intact cabinets of Robert Gordon at Aberdeen and Adam Arbuthnot at Peterhead.

The following survey covers the larger and/or interesting numismatic collections in Scotland and is ordered by alphabetical location.

## **Aberdeen**

### *Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums*

This large civic collection contains over 20,000 items including coins, historical and prize medals, trade tokens, communion tokens, and banknotes. The coins range from some Greek and Roman and many medieval to modern British and world-wide issues. The majority of the medieval coins are English pennies from the three large 14th century hoards found in the City at Upperkirkgate in 1886 and in St. Nicholas Street in 1983 and 1984. There is also a small collection of Scottish coins with examples of the issues of the Aberdeen mint. The banknotes, tokens, medals and coin finds have a bias towards the North-East of Scotland and form the best collection of numismatic material from that area outside of Edinburgh. It is an active collection though most is normally in storage. However, it is used for periodic displays and a large group is accessible through scran.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Robert Gordon University*

Robert Gordon (1668-1731) was an Aberdeen merchant who spent a large part of his working life in Danzig. He retired home in 1720 and on his death left his fortune to found a school for boys. After many developments Robert Gordon's Hospital became The Robert Gordon University in 1992. The *Dictionary of National Biography* describes Robert Gordon as a "keen collector of coins, medals and drawings" and his collection remains intact at the Robert Gordon University.<sup>4</sup>

A detailed and well produced catalogue was published in 1893. This indicates two groups of coins. Where there is a run of coins from a specific country there is always a clear gap from the 1720s until at least the end of the 18th century. This indicates later additions to Gordon's collection, which he appears to have added to almost to his death in 1731. Thus the English coins run up to three halfpennies of 1729 and then nothing further until a halfpenny of 1828. The contents of Robert Gordon's cabinet therefore seem to be quite discernible.

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3. I am grateful to Stewart Thain, Assistant Keeper of Archaeology, for arranging access to the numismatic collection. Scran (Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network) can be accessed on [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)

4. I am grateful to Neil Curtis, Senior Curator, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen, for bringing this collection to my attention and providing a copy of the catalogue.

There are 36 later coins and medals, and leaving aside the 33 worn and defaced coins, there remain 482 specimens apparently constituting the Gordon collection. It is not clear when he started collecting but seven of the ten Irish coins listed are pieces of Gunmoney issued by James II. These became valueless and common after William III's victory at the Boyne in 1690 and it is possible that Gordon acquired them at the time. If so, this places the origin of the collection in the late 17th century.

The Robert Gordon Collection mainly consists of 168 Scottish coins, 132 English, 83 European, 52 Roman, 25 British medals and 15 European medals. The Scottish collection is thus the main element, accounting for 35% of the whole. It is reasonably representative of the Scottish issues in gold, silver and base metal running from the long cross issue to the last pre-Union coins of Anne.

The number and scope of the medals suggests they were put together with some thought. The 25 British medals consist of coronation medals from Charles II to George II, a small group of early Jacobite medals, and a few specimens of the commemorative series of Queen Anne.

#### *University of Aberdeen, The Marischal Museum*

The Marischal Museum with some 40,000 coins and medals possesses the third largest cabinet in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> The University of Aberdeen was created in 1860 from an amalgamation of King's College founded in 1495 and Marischal College founded in 1593 though the Marischal Museum was not set up until 1907 under the name of the Anthropological Museum. A catalogue of the coins in the King's College Archaeological Museum was being compiled in 1887 while a 1912 printed catalogue of the Museum's contents includes most of the present coin cabinet. There have been few significant acquisitions since then.

The cabinet includes over 16,000 classical coins: 7,000 Greek, 1200 Roman Republican 8,000 Roman Imperial and 500 Byzantine. Among the Greek coins is the Norman Davies collection of 500 items purchased in 1880 and published as one of the early *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* volumes in 1936. The main element of the medieval coins is the parcel of several thousand English pennies from the 14th century Aberdeen Upperkirkgate hoard found in 1886. There are a further 1,000 English hammered coins and approximately the same number of milled pieces up to the reign of Queen Victoria. There is a good collection of 600 Scottish coins and a further 300 of Ireland.

The 4,500 European coins are mainly modern of France and Germany. Four thousand coins of India, China and other Asiatic countries make up the eastern collection while the rest of the world is represented by 500 items.

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5. See Bateson, D. and Curtis, N., "The Marischal Museum Collection, University of Aberdeen", *CCNB Newsletter* 20 (January, 1999), 1-2.

The 800 medals are mostly 19th century and later commemorative and prize medals, many from the north-east of Scotland and especially the University. Among them is a Nobel Prize for Medicine awarded to J.J.R. Macleod for his contribution to the discovery of insulin. There is also a large and important collection of 8,500 communion tokens, as well as groups of trade tokens and jettons.

## **Dundee**

### *Dundee City Museums, McManus Galleries*

Dundee City Council's coins and medals represent a substantial but typical modern civic collection although containing some interesting groups.<sup>6</sup> It contains over 10,000 coins, tokens and medals.

This includes over 1,000 classical coins of which 100 are Greek, with little of note, and the remainder mostly Roman Imperial. The majority of the latter consists of around 750 coins from the Paton Gloag cabinet constituting a comprehensive range of these issues in fine condition.

There are only a small number of medieval coins, the core being 85 Scottish pieces, including examples of the Dundee and Perth mints. There are few specimens of English, and even fewer European, issues. British milled coins from the 17th century number almost 1,000 and there are approximately 3,000 modern world issues. The Cairncross collection of over 500 Chinese coins donated in 1913 is of note and quality, and includes good examples of money swords.

Not unexpectedly there is a large collection of over 3,000 communion tokens with local issues well represented. There is also a comprehensive collection of some 700 trade tokens from Scotland and beyond. The medals consist of a good collection of 600 British commemorative medals as well as 150 prize medals, mainly of local origin. A set of 100 electrotypes of Renaissance medals is unusual. The collection also contains good groups of banknotes and beggars' badges.

## **Edinburgh**

### *Edinburgh City Museums and Art Galleries.*

The City Museums possess a small collection of coins and medals which includes 193 Scottish coins from Alexander III to the post-Union issues of the Edinburgh mint of 1707-09, some found during excavations in various parts of the city. The collection also holds the entire 1980 Leith hoard of 358 coins, mainly composed of

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6. I am grateful to Ruth Neave, Collections Management Officer at the McManus Galleries, for providing a copy of a survey and report on the numismatic collections carried out by Ian Carradice, University of St. Andrews, in 2005.

billon pennies of James II and James III, and a group of 81 late 18th century Scottish trade tokens.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBOS), Museum On The Mound*

This small museum located in HBOS headquarters tells the story of money in a permanent exhibition opened in 2006. It begins with the history of Scotland's oldest bank (BOS) founded in 1695, traces the development of money from barter objects through coins to banknotes, and then examines the role of building societies and life assurance.

The archives of the Bank of Scotland and the Halifax Building Society are held by HBOS Group Archives.

#### *National Galleries of Scotland*

The collections include nearly 700 medals, with a good group of Renaissance and later medals, many on display, in the National Gallery of Scotland, The Mound, and others bearing images of Scots in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Queen Street.

#### *National Museums of Scotland*

The National Museums of Scotland were formed from the amalgamation of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland and the Royal Scottish Museum in 1985. The former has already been the subject of an article in *Compte Rendu* while the combined collection was discussed more recently in *CCNB Newsletter*.<sup>8</sup> The numismatic collections of the National Museums of Scotland now approach 70,000 items.

The National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland had its origin in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland founded in 1780. Among its first donors of coins was William Hunter who gifted 88 Scottish coins in 1781. With the acquisition of the Advocates Collection in 1782 it obtained the older and important cabinet of James Sutherland dating back to the late 17th century. The Society's main interest was in Scottish material and, particularly with the aid of hoards and finds declared Treasure Trove, it soon built up an outstanding collection of Scottish coins accompanied by Roman, Anglo-Saxon, English and European coins which had been found in Scotland. It also acquired large collections of medals, trade tokens, and banknotes

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7. See Holmes, N.M.McQ., *Weill Wrocht & Cunyeit: The Edinburgh Mint and its Coinage* (Edinburgh, 1982).

8. See Caldwell, D.H., "The Numismatic Collections of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland", *Compte Rendu* 32 (1985), 47-50 and Holmes, N., "The National Museums of Scotland", *CCNB Newsletter* 12 (April, 1996), 2.

relating to Scotland as well as communion tokens. It was also given an important group of dies for the period 1675-82 from the old Edinburgh mint. In the early 20th century the major private collection of Scottish coins was gifted by the Coats family and later some of the best items from R.W. Cochran-Patrick's medal collection were purchased.

The Royal Scottish Museum possessed only a very modest collection of Scottish coins and medals but did have a large holding of communion tokens. Otherwise it collected in most other areas and included Greek and Roman coins, though not in large numbers, as well as substantial collections of English, European, eastern and modern world coins along with trade tokens and related material.

The National Museums of Scotland numismatic collection thus now boasts the largest and best group of Scottish material in the world, especially of the coinage of Scotland, in addition to having representative collections of most other areas within the subject. The collection is held in a modern dedicated coin room with good access and student facilities. A substantial number of coins are on display. In addition publication of the Scottish coin collection has commenced with the appearance of a substantial volume on the 16th century issues and one in preparation on the 17th century coinages.<sup>9</sup>

## **Glasgow**

### *Glasgow Art Galleries and Museums*

Glasgow City's numismatic collection consists of approximately 10,000 items and is typical of a late 19th-20th century civic collection covering in a general way a wide range of types and periods.

It includes some 2,000 classical coins, many of which are copies, comprising varied groups of Greek and Roman Republican, Imperial, and Provincial issues. The remaining coins are mostly modern with around a further 2,000 British and British Empire issues and an equal number of European, American, African and eastern coins.

There is a small number of medals, again mainly modern and of local interest. The communion token collection comprises over 2,000 pieces. In addition there are trade tokens, and smaller numbers of banknotes, beggars' badges and archaeological finds from the West of Scotland.

The collection is stored at the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre at Nitshill and few items have been included in the displays of the recently re-opened main museum at Kelvingrove.

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9. See Holmes, N.M.McQ., *Scottish Coins in the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh*, Part I: 1526-1603 (Sylloge Coins of the British Isles 58, London, 2006).

The Burrell Collection possesses a small group of 34 Greek coins, purchased in one lot from Spink in 1951, and no medals.

*University of Glasgow, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery*

The Hunterian numismatic collections consist of William Hunter's magnificent 18th century cabinet along with the coins, medals, and tokens added over the past 200 years since its arrival in Glasgow from London. The collection has already been described in *Compte Rendu* and received further attention in the *CCNB Newsletter*.<sup>10</sup> In addition William Hunter is the subject of the *Compte Rendu* series on famous collectors in this present edition. Only brief details and an update will therefore be provided here but the cabinet speaks for itself of its treasures and significance.

William Hunter (1718-1783), born in Scotland, became a pioneering medical doctor in London. He also found time to build up a splendid library and museum of medical preparations, natural history and ethnographic items and coins and medals. His coin cabinet was then the best in Britain and the second in Europe. It consisted of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Anglo-Saxon, English, Scottish, and Irish coins as well as medals, jettons, and trade tokens. All were bequeathed to Glasgow University and arrived in 1807.

However, it was not until the 20th century that major additions were made, notably the Coats collection of Classical and British medieval and modern coins in 1924, the Lockie collection of communion tokens, trade tokens and modern coins in the 1970s, the Maclean collection of communion tokens in 1990, and the Cuthbert collection of Scottish coins in 1999. There is an active acquisitions policy through donation and purchase, aided by the Walter Allen Endowment Fund established in 1990 and matched by grants from the National Fund for Acquisitions. This has allowed a new collection of post-1800 Scottish medals to be assembled and now numbers 800 specimens. Donations have ranged from a Victoria Cross to the first euros. Thus Hunter's original collection has doubled in size to some 70,000 items.

The Hunter Coin Cabinet continues to welcome scholars from around the world and the coin library is now accessible and listed on the website. Images are provided by digitisation. Teaching continues, mainly in the University's Archaeology Department, with a full honours module being delivered on the Development of Greek and Roman Coinage in alternate years (next starting January 2010).

The Hunterian Museum underwent a major refurbishment for its bicentenary in 2007.

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10. See Bateson, J.D., "The Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow", *Compte Rendu* 27 (1980), 43-48 and Bateson, D. "The Hunter Coin Cabinet", *CCNB Newsletter* 20 (January, 1999), 2-3.

This resulted in the dedicated coin gallery space being used as part of a major, and first, exhibition on William Hunter. However, a number of coins and medals are displayed throughout the new exhibitions. Publication of the collection progresses with a further *SCBI* volume on English Coins 1066-1279 and two *SNG* volumes covering the entire Roman Provincial collection.<sup>11</sup> Work on two further *SNG* volumes on the Greek coins is underway and more are planned with a view to update the entire Greek series. Meanwhile the Hunterian Collections, including the coin cabinet, have been recognised as being of National Significance under a scheme set up by the Scottish Government and a Recognition grant has enabled the Roman Imperial coins to be added to the Hunterian database which is accessible through the web.

In 2009 Glasgow hosts the XIVth International Numismatic Congress, something which William Hunter would surely have approved and welcomed.

#### *University of Strathclyde, Collins Gallery, Andersonian Coin Collection*

The Andersonian Coin Collection derives its name from John Anderson (1726-1796), an eminent but eccentric scholar and pioneer who was Professor of Natural Philosophy at Glasgow University from 1757.<sup>12</sup> He was interested in a more practical form of education and in his will left most of his estate to set up such a place. Founded in 1796, Anderson's Institution went through many expansions and name changes until it became the University of Strathclyde in 1964.

An anonymous *Account of the Andersonian Museum Glasgow* printed in 1831 lists five cases of respectively Scottish, English and British, Roman, medals, and coins including Wood's Halfpenny and Jacobite medals, and current world coins. It notes that several of the Roman coins, found at Bar Hill fort, had been obtained by Anderson himself from the finders. Thus the origin of the cabinet goes back to the 18th century but had clearly been added to after Anderson's death as the medals and coins of the fourth case had been donated by James Smith of Jordanhill. A printed catalogue of 1865 notes only one case, of Scottish and English coins from another James Smith. This also lists over seventy donors of coins and medals.

A manuscript catalogue of the coins dated 1875 lists a total of 2,330 coins and medals: 48 gold, 591 silver and 1691 base medal. This included 288 Scottish coins, 382 specimens from William the Conqueror to Queen Victoria, various modern

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11. See Goddard, J., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*, Volume XII. *The Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow*, Part I: *Roman Provincial Coins: Spain - Kingdoms of Asia Minor* (London, 2004) and Part II: *Roman Provincial Coins: Cyprus - Egypt* (London, 2007); Dr. Goddard is Honorary Research Fellow in Classical Coins at the Hunterian Museum.

12. See Butt, J., *John Anderson's Legacy The University of Strathclyde and Its Antecedents 1796-1996* (Glasgow, 1996), 1-24.

world coins, 249 Classical coins almost all Roman Imperial, and 93 medals mostly 18th and 19th century British. A theft took place in October 1877 of 74 coins including a £20 gold piece of James VI of Scotland.

A need for more space led to the closure of the Museum in 1888 and the dispersal of its contents. The zoology and ethnographic material was donated to the Hunterian Museum but the coins and medals went to the Glasgow City Museum. The numismatic collection was, however, returned to Strathclyde University about the time of its bicentenary celebrations in 1996.

## **Perth**

### *Perth Museum & Art Gallery*

The Collections of the Perth Museum descend from those of the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth whose minutes books go back to 1784. The Society's collections had grown sufficiently for the need of a museum to be built in 1822. This museum was taken over by the City Council in 1914 with an extension being built in 1935. It is thus one of Scotland's oldest collections and museums.<sup>13</sup>

A catalogue of the coin collection appeared in the Society's *Transactions* published in 1827. This included 19 Greek coins, all in bronze and mainly of the cities. There were 275 Roman pieces of which 12 were Republican *denarii*. The rest ranged from Augustus to Theodosius. These were mainly of base metal though there was one aureus of Titus found at Valladolid. The English element of 156 coins included some Irish pieces and ran from William the Conqueror to George III. The Scottish coins numbered 82 starting with David I, though a probable penny of Alexander III heads the group ascribed to Alexander I. They end with an issue of William II/III. The foreign coins and modern medals, which were said to be numerous, were not included, though a set of Napoleonic medals was noted. A further catalogue of coins was included in the catalogue of the Society's library published in 1850 but this is shorter than the earlier list and may refer only to those coins on display.

Throughout the rest of the 19th and 20th century the Perth numismatic collection has grown considerably and is now a substantial representative holding of classical, Scottish, English medieval, and modern British and world coins. In common with the larger civic collections it possesses a large number of communion tokens and trade tokens. The medal collection has much of local interest and there are smaller groups of banknotes, jettons, coin weights and beggars' badges.

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13. I am grateful to Mark Hall, History Officer, for providing this information along with copies of the catalogues.

## **Peterhead**

*Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Heritage, Arbuthnot Museum*

Adam Arbuthnot (1773-1850) was a Peterhead merchant who built up a sizable collection covering ethnography, archaeology, natural history and numismatics. He bequeathed this to Peterhead where the Arbuthnot Museum was opened in 1893.

His collection of coins and medals survives intact and is the more interesting for its archival material contained in four manuscript notebooks giving details of his collecting, the contents and various notes on numismatics.<sup>14</sup>

Arbuthnot started collecting in 1787 – at the age of 14 – and by 1809 had 354 pieces, which by 1841 has increased to 1,714. There were probably further additions until his death in 1850. There is a breakdown of his coins and medals for 1841, showing he then possessed 69 Greek coins, 229 Roman mainly Imperial, 466 from the Anglo-Saxon period to Queen Victoria, 77 Scottish from William the Lion, 611 European plus a few from the United States, Turkey and India. In addition he owned 158 trade tokens and 103 medals.

## **St. Andrews**

*University of St. Andrews, University Museums Collections*

The University of St. Andrews, Scotland's oldest university founded in 1413, possesses a modest but interesting numismatic collection.<sup>15</sup> This has its origin in the museum set up jointly with the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews in 1838. Coin donations are recorded from 1840 and a manuscript catalogue compiled in 1870 survives. Unfortunately many of the coins, including the Scottish collection, were removed for safety during the Second World War and not recovered.

Currently the collection consists of approximately 700 coins, 300 medals and 12,000 communion tokens. Four hundred of the coins are medieval, mostly 14th century English pennies from the 1886 Aberdeen Upperkirkgate hoard. In addition there are some classical, eastern and modern western European issues, including a group of Polish coins given by General Sikorski. The medals are mainly prizes of the University from the 19th and 20th centuries as well as others awarded by national and international bodies to eminent scholars working at St. Andrews.

The communion tokens number over 12,000 and make up one of the largest and most important holdings of this type in existence. Several unique examples are

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14. I am grateful to Dr. David Bertie, Aberdeen Heritage, for bringing this collection to my attention and arranging access.

15. See Carradice, I., "University of St. Andrews Numismatic Collections", *CCNB Newsletter* 24 (April, 2004), 4-5; and personal communication.

included. The majority are of Scottish origin but there also many others from Ireland, England and the other countries around the world to which Scots emigrated. Around 8,000 of the tokens come from the collections of two St. Andrews graduates, the Rev. A.A. Milne and the Rev. A.R. Taylor. Milne's cabinet includes the examples he used in compiling the still standard catalogue of Irish communion tokens.

Noteworthy, too, is the group of 70 engraved archery medals dated from 1620 to 1750. Normally each year the student champion archer of the University had one produced to add to this unique relic of university history. A publication is in preparation and they may be seen, along with other numismatic items, in the new Museum of St. Andrews opened in 2008.

The fourteen museums listed here hold over 60% of the numismatic items owned by public institutions in Scotland. This includes the vast majority of importance. A further 110 museums have smaller collections of coins, medals and tokens. The coins are usually modern British and modern world issues though some have a small number of local coin finds and the occasional hoard. The groups of medals and tokens very often have local associations. Most possess some communion tokens. There are some exceptions. Dunblane Museum, in the small cathedral city of that name, is mainly devoted to local history but possesses a collection of some 7,000 communion tokens, including a large group of non-Scottish issues. Dumfries Museum has, among its Recognised archaeological collections, numerous coin finds from Dumfries and Galloway. As might be expected, few Scottish museums have no numismatic items at all.

J. Donal BATESTON