



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!

FIFTY YEARS ON - AND STILL GOING STRONG!

IT ALL STARTED back in June 1970 when, in the run-up to decimalization, three members of Wigan Numismatic Society decided there was enough local interest in the subject of coins, medals and tokens to support a similar society in the Ormskirk area.



Some members and their spouses at the 10th anniversary dinner, held in Southport, 1980



The FIRST meeting in June 1970 at the Buck 'I' th Vine pub in Ormskirk. With three of the founder members



Colin cuts a 20th anniversary cake at a dinner held at the Old Dray, in Ormskirk, 1990

LOOKING BACK...

The *Ormskirk Advertiser* gave a report of the first meeting held on 1st. June 1970. Initially, the name chosen was *The Ormskirk & District Numismatic Society*. However, after decimalization interest in coins, especially modern issues, began to wane nationally and many newly formed coin clubs and societies started to fail and close. By the early 1980s, the Ormskirk Society had gained members from many of the defunct coin and medal groups in the North West, thereby becoming recognised as the premier society in the West Lancashire region. In 1982 it was decided to change the name to *The Ormskirk & West Lancashire Numismatic Society*; more accurately reflecting the area covered by its membership.

Over the last fifty years members of the Society have written a considerable number of papers for such journals as the Royal Numismatic Society's *Numismatic Chronicle*, The British Numismatic Society's *British Numismatic Journal*, Seaby's *Coin & Medal Bulletin* and Spink's *Numismatic Circular*. A number of these academic papers have since received recognition as standard reference works on their specific subject. In addition to these, members have published countless articles on a variety of numismatic subjects for various coin collecting and antique collecting magazines and periodicals, in both this country and abroad. Talks on aspects of coins, tokens and medals by our own members always makes up part of the annual programme of meetings, supplemented by guest speakers from other societies or institutions. Such guest lectures have then been reciprocated by our members, at such events as the BANS lecture weekends, numismatic symposia and other societies' meetings throughout the country.

A number of local charities have also benefited from generous contributions made by members of the Society, auction commissions and raffles. The main aim of the Ormskirk Society, as set out in the Constitutional Rules, has always been the unwavering commitment to the furtherance of numismatic knowledge. It has been this ideal, coupled with a balanced programme of meetings that has been the Society's strength, earning it an acclaimed standing within the numismatic community. Here's looking forward to the next fifty years!

SOME MEMORABLE OCCASIONS

There has been any number of memorable occasions to recall, from hosting key speakers of international renown to marking events and celebrations, such as the millennium. These are a few to remember.



David Regan and Alan Dawson hold the Inter-Counties Numismatic Quiz winners' cup.

WINNING THE QUIZ CUP - FOR THE THIRD TIME!

The annual Inter-Counties Numismatic Quiz, hosted by the Crewe & District Society takes place every June. In the past our two-man team has won the silver cup on no less than three occasions!

The first time was in 2004 again in 2005 and finally in 2007. On each occasion we were triumphant over teams from South Manchester, Derbyshire, Crewe & District, Preston and Chester societies. However, Ormskirk has not fielded a team at this event since 2010.

CELEBRATING THE PRICE OF A PINT

To mark the fortieth anniversary of the Society a special framed presentation was given to the then landlord of the *Eagle & Child*, in recognition of their ongoing accommodation of our monthly meetings. Early 20th century coins and archive photographs of the pub featured the 'price of a pint' a hundred years earlier.



Dr. John Dawson presents the then manager of the Eagle & Child with the framed presentation.

HOSTING THE 2011 BANS CONGRESS

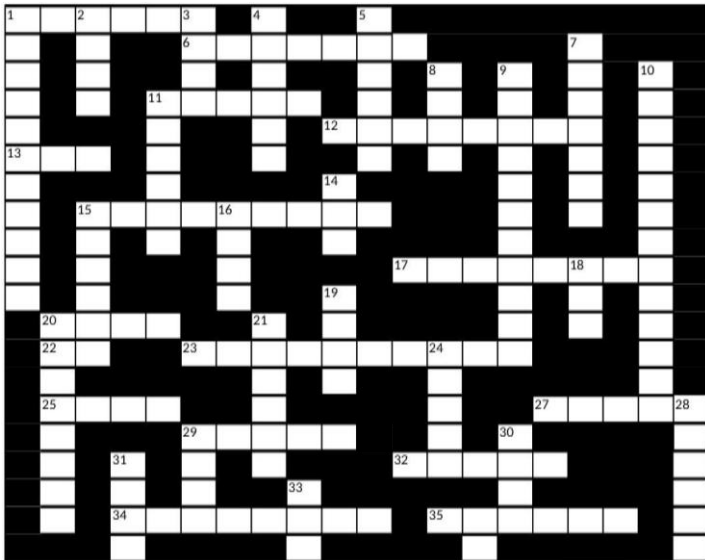
The Ormskirk Society was invited to host the 2011 BANS Congress, which was held at the Ramada Hotel in Southport. The three-day event featured speakers from throughout the country, as well as two members of our own society. The event was well supported, with attendees from throughout the UK, Europe and even the USA.

LAUNCH OF THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE

In 2006 Chris Leather brought his considerable computer skills into play by designing and hosting an excellent and much needed website for the Society. Since the site's launch it has attracted worldwide interest and in 2019 alone received 21,859 visits. The site's blog page has been an obvious success, with acclaim from many of its users. Interestingly, most of the numismatic queries concerned the identification of tokens, jettons and other paranumismata. To keep public interest in the website buzzing we do need to add new articles and short papers from our members. So, if you have anything you think suitable this is an ideal way to reach thousands of fellow coin collectors and interested individuals throughout the world.

5 MINUTE CROSSWORD – no books needed!

Lee Brown



ACROSS

1. Terminology for a two shillings piece (6)
6. Segment at the bottom of a coin, usually segregated by a line (7)
11. Gold coin of Edward III (5)
12. James II emergency money, used to pay troops (8)
13. Metal piece engraved with intent to stamp a coin (3)
15. George III 1797 coins, standardized weights (9)
17. Profile bust style imitating Roman emperors (8)
20. Mintmark used by Henry III and Charles I (4)
22. Abbreviation used for Roman bronze/base coins (2)
23. Roman emperor who completely reformed the coinage (10)
25. Denotes the orientation of the obverse/reverse of a coin (4)
27. Silver dollar typically used for foreign exchange (5)
29. Designer of Jubilee 'penguin head' Victoria sixpence (5)
32. Background area of a coin not used for the main design (5)
34. Small bronze coin with a Wren on reverse (8)
35. Nickname given to a sixpence (6)

DOWN

1. Top level condition of a coin (11)
2. Small Ancient Greek silver denomination (4)
3. One of the 12 Caesars most known for his artistic designs on coinage (4)
4. Spanish 'pirate' silver coins (6)

5. Initial denomination of Roman gold in ancient times (6)
7. 7th century Anglo-Saxon gold coin (7)
8. Captured silver coins of George II (4)
9. Metal company contracted to make coins in 1918 and 1919 (11)
10. Coin from 1343 which sold at auction for £460,000 (13)
11. Kite-shaped siege money from the English Civil War (6)
14. Initials of engraver under bust on an 1887 sixpence (3)
15. 11th century Danish/English king who tried to hold back the tide (6)
16. Terminology used to denote a light silver/gold plating over base metal (4)
18. Abbreviation used for a double denarius (3)
19. Coin struck from dies never intended to be used together (4)
20. Middle Iranian civilization famous for its large flan silver coins (8)
21. Henry VIII silver coin debasement giving rise to his nickname of 'Old.....nose'(6)
24. Celtic tribe known for its use of crescent moons on its coins (5)
28. The portrait likeness used on the monarch's bust (6)
29. Animal used as mintmark on Richard III coins (4)
30. Blank piece of metal used to make a coin (4)
31. Mercian king with only three gold coins known to exist (4)
33. Unusual metal used in the production of base coinage of 1690 (3)

GEORGE ORWELL'S '1984' FRIGHTENINGLY REVISITED

Graham Jones

Just one per cent of Sweden's GDP circulates as cash. As debates over the need for cash rage along lines of age, wealth and location, the country is looking to create a digital currency.

In February, Sweden's Riksbank – the country's Bank of England equivalent – announced a year-long pilot experiment with its own digital currency, the e-krona. This could take the country a step closer to the creation of the world's first central bank digital currency (CBDC), although China is already working on its own digital currency system. "I hate cash. It's dirty," says Jowan Österlund, a 39-year-old Swedish entrepreneur. "It creates friction and risk. It kills time." Österlund does use Swish but he believes smartphones aren't the best way to pay. Instead, his company Biohax has repurposed old technology to enable its customers to purchase products using a microchip that can be inserted into their hands, under the skin. Since the company's launch in 2014, around 5,000 Swedes have bought Biohax chips, enabling them to pay for travel, buy snacks at their gym's vending machine or gain access to their office with a wave. Maybe, in the not-so-distant future our Society will have to be re-named *The Ormskirk & West Lancashire Obsolete Payment-chip Society*. A very disturbing thought !

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WHILE LOOKING AT THE PAST

Alan Dawson

At one time the year was measured by only ten months and consequently earth time was periodically out of synchronisation with sun time. Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, is generally credited with adding two months to the year and naming the first month after the Roman god Janus. The well known profile effigy of Janus is two-faced, not for any derogatory reason, but because Janus was the deity of beginnings and endings, of looking to both the future and the past. He was the guardian of doorways and gates, of coming and going, and as such was regarded as Keeper of the Universe. The first hour of the day, the first day of the month and the first month of the year were all sacred to Janus.

As coin collectors, we all constantly look to the past for the information we need to correctly identify and build our collections. The past is a place of fascination to many people, as it holds memories and often ideals, which we sometimes find lacking in today's hectic and increasingly computerised world. Most collectors find interest in previous coinages and civilizations – and even collectors of modern issues, must realise that today's latest commemorative coin design often has elements harking back to the past for inspiration. Anyway, tomorrow's issues are always destined to become yesterday's historic specimen. So, the two-faced Janus head is really quite an appropriate symbol for any ongoing area of numismatic research or a coin collection looking to future expansion. The patron saint of coin collectors is said to be the seventh century French goldsmith St. Eligius. I feel the Roman deity Janus has a much better claim to the title.



Head of Janus on a Roman AE grave of the first century BC

USELESS COIN FACTS No.2

Graham Jones

Although a shilling wasn't known as a coin until the reign of Henry VII, it was used as a unit of account for reckoning back in Saxon times.

During the 13th century a shilling would buy 600 bricks (or 1/6d for 1,000). Based on this price, Eton College would have cost no more than £75 in materials to build.

By the mid 1700s, at a Liverpool inn 'The Lion', a couple could pay a shilling and enjoy a good meal of veal cutlets, pigeons, asparagus, roast lamb and salad, apple pie and tarts.

– What could you buy for 5p now?

Source: 'The Splendid Shilling' by James Mays

'Lockdown has achieved what no woman has been able to do.... cancel all sports, shut down pubs and keep men at home!'

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. 'Tenor' = a 'tenner' = £10 | 7. 'Sick squid' = £6 |
| 2. Three far things' = 3/4d | 8. 'Halfcrown' = 2/6d |
| 3. 'Joey' = 4d | 9. 'Fiver' = £5 |
| 4. 'Two Bob(s)' = 2/- | 10. 'Monkey' = £500 |
| 5. 'Pound' = £1 | 11. 'Pony' = £25 |
| 6. 'Shilling' = 1/- | 12. 'Penny' = 1d |

COIN PERSONALITIES OF THE 1970s

Alan Dawson

The coming of war in 1914 led to a rapid re-think as to the nature of money and needs of the country. The vast amount of gold in circulation reflected national wealth, yes, but it was in the hands of hundreds of thousands of individual owners, and was not immediately available to the government for strategic purposes. So, within a few days of war being declared, a temporary issue of ten shilling and one pound Treasury notes was prepared, printed on the paper normally used for stamps, and declared to be legal tender. In a traditionally British fashion, there was never any legal measure set in place to withdraw gold from circulation - the government simply let it be known that it would be considered 'unpatriotic' to insist on receiving gold, and by the early part of 1915 nearly all had disappeared from circulation. Obviously some would remain in private hands, hoarded by the cautious, but most began to pour into the national coffers, from where it was dispensed only where absolutely necessary. Production of sovereigns continued until 1917, but only for strategic use, and not for circulation.

And so matters remained, with currency notes in general circulation and not being redeemed in gold, until the passage of the Gold Standard Act of 1925. This 'return to gold' was proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Winston Churchill, on the advice of his financial experts. He later described it as the worst mistake he ever made, as the inflexibility forced on to the financial system made the coming depression much worse than it might have been otherwise. The 'return to gold' did not mean, however, that Mr Average could take his 'orrible one pound note to the bank and demand a nice new shiny gold sovereign. Oh no, not even nearly! Gold was indeed available on demand, but only as 400-ounce bars, at the official price of £3.17s.10½d per ounce, or about £1,557 per bar. We will come to what happened next in just a moment. As part of the tidying up processes accompanying the 'return to gold' the government decided to withdraw from its reserve all the damaged and worn out sovereigns, and to replace them with new. The new ones were struck at the Royal Mint, and dated 1925 - some three and half million of them. But very few of these got out. Some probably 'leaked' into the market via government payments of one kind or another, but they were very few.

Unlikely as it may seem, there was a very large demand for the 400-ounce gold bars, and in order to meet this demand, the government was forced to melt more than ninety million sovereigns from the reserve during the period 1929-1931. No doubt huge numbers of interesting and historic coins met their ends, including all but a handful of the 1917 issue, and most of the 1916 issue. We can assume, too, that nearly all of



The 1925 'Churchill' gold sovereign

the 1925 coins were sent to the furnaces. And that would have been that. 1925 would have joined the others as desirable rarities for collectors. This is not the end of the story, however. In 1931, in response to the world economic situation, and the continuing drain on the gold reserves, the government abandoned the gold standard entirely, and declined to provide gold in exchange for paper on any official basis. The remaining sovereigns in the government stock pile - and no one now knows how many these were - were now a commodity and not a circulating coin in any meaningful sense, though they retained legal tender status as £1 coins.

After the second world war, when gold was strictly controlled, and in much demand for untraceable transactions, Italian and Lebanese forgers began work, and challenged the doctrine of legal tender as the coins could not be spent in the UK. After much legal shenanigans, the Bank of England won the point, but in order to put the forgers out of business arranged for a new issue of sovereigns. Coins dated 1925 were struck again, in 1949, 1951 and 1952. Virtually all of the 1925 pieces seen today are from the 889,000 struck at this time, including the one shown above from my collection. Supposedly, you can tell which are the later ones from the greater depth of the rim on the obverse, but I've never seen even a photograph of an original low-rim 1925 'Churchill' sovereign!

In the run-up to decimalisation and just after, the whole coin trade seemed obsessed with nineteenth and twentieth century currency coins. People were still checking their change for rarities and the trend was definitely collecting by date. Of course, this date collecting mania was still being fuelled by the popular press, with countless articles about the value of the coins in your pocket. The trend was also sustained with an abundance of features evoking twinges of nostalgia. Collectors of late milled coins were also catered for by some dealers, but hammered and ancient coins had certainly taken a back seat. Most of the well-known dealers of the 1970s are now long retired or have gone to the great coin cabinet in the sky (taking with them their jars of Goddard's Silver Dip, no doubt in the hope of improving the grade of the Pearly Gates). As personalities, their names still linger on after nearly 50 years, as a new breed of dealers, collectors and investors take centre stage.

Prior to the 1960s there were few coin dealers outside London. The scene was then dominated by the 'big three' Spink, Seaby and Baldwin, with Glendinings being the principal coin auctioneer of choice. One name in particular will always be associated with the collection of modern currency issues; Geoffrey Young of Harrogate. His adverts seemed to dominate everything from the popular coin press to Exchange & Mart. He was possibly the first dealer to literally 'wholesale' modern coins to the rest of the trade.



'Coins' magazine, May 1970

PRICES PAID FOR ENGLISH COINS			
Edward VI Sovereign, 2nd period	Fine	£50	
Halfcrown	VF	£50	
Mary "Fine" Sovereign	Fine	£325	
Philip & Mary Angel	Fine	£225	
Shilling	VF	£40	
Sixpence	VF	£30	
Elizabeth I Crown	VF	£140	
Halfcrown	VF	£65	
James I 3rd George Halfcrown	VF	£50	
Charles I Tower Mint Angel	Fine	£100	
Halfcrown (minimum)	VF	£20	
Commonwealth Lime	Fine	£45	
Crown	VF	£70	
Halfcrown	VF	£40	
Shilling	VF	£15	
Charles II Lime	VF	£90	
Guinea, each	Fine	£75	
Hammered Halfcrown 1st or 2nd issue, each	VF	£50	
James II Crown	VF	£125	
Sixpences	VF	£35	
William & Mary Guinea, each	VF	£60	
Shilling	VF	£80	
Sixpences	Fine	£7	
William III Guinea	VF	£50	
Anne Crown	VF	£115	
Halfcrown	VF	£42	
Shillings	VF	£37	
Sixpences	VF	£18	
George I Guinea	Fine	£30	
1715 PROOF Halfcrown	FDC	£375	
Halfcrown, each	Fine	£14	
Shillings	VF	£80	
Sixpences	VF	£12	
George II 2-Guinea pieces	VF	£70	
Crown	VF	£32	
George III 1-Guinea	VF	£45	
2-Guinea	VF	£12	

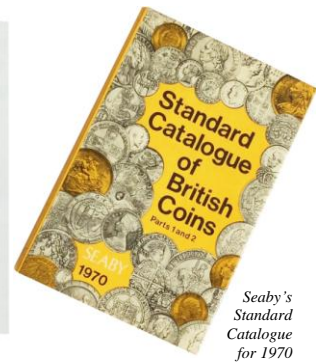
A section of John Duggan's advert in Coins magazine, May 1970

SELECTION OF 5 GUINEA AND 2 GUINEA PIECES.

NO LICENCE REQUIRED.

1672 Charles II 5 Guinea piece. EF/GVF	£525
1716 George I 5 Guinea piece VF/GVF	£820
1729 George I 5 Guinea piece EF	£550
1741 George II 5 Guinea piece A/EF	£395
1746 George II Lima 5 Guinea piece GVF/EF	£575
1753 George II 5 Guinea. G/VF	£425
1711 Anne 2 Guinea. EF	£375
1738 George II 2 Guinea. EF/UNC	£155
1739 George II 2 Guinea. EF/UNC	£155

A selection of choice gold coins offered by Leonard Kaitcer Coins of Belfast in the May 1970 issue of Coins magazine - How prices have changed!



Seaby's Standard Catalogue for 1970

Another name that readily springs to mind is John Duggan of Blackburn. Duggan did not get caught up in the craze for modern coins but always dealt in the highest grade and rarity, to which he attached his own idea of worth - regardless of catalogue prices. The fixation with pre-decimal coins was not restricted to England as one of the foremost dealers of the day was Leonard Kaitcer of Belfast. Sadly, Kaitcer's career was tragically cut short when he was kidnapped and murdered by the IRA. Seaby's produced the coin collector's 'bible' every year and their *Standard Catalogue of the Coins of England* was, and still is, (now published by Spink) the most popular reference work of choice.

The dealers and collectors of yesteryear could never have imagined how much the scene would change fifty years on. Change checking is still a popular pursuit, thanks to the splurge of commemorative issues being churned out by the Royal Mint. Like them or loathe them, it keeps interest in our coinage alive and well. The internet has spawned hundreds of collector/dealers and the new auction houses now cater for a worldwide clientele with money to spend. British coins are as popular as ever and television history programmes have generated renewed interest in classical and medieval issues. The future certainly looks bright in certain areas of numismatics, but coins from the past are finite, whereas the ever growing number of collectors and investors is not. Supply and demand is certainly set to dictate the future path for all collectors - but hasn't this always been the case?

The next issue of Lockdown Newsletter is scheduled for July/August. If you have a contribution to make - please get in touch!

THE TOWER MINT - FOR KING OR PARLIAMENT?

Chris Leather

The period of the English Civil War has left a confused but interesting pattern of coinages, from the Tower Mint, and from a number of Provincial mints. The Standard Catalogue, published by Spink, lists the Tower coinages in one section with a double title: Tower under the King 1625-1642 and under Parliament 1642-49. Within this listing, individual coin types are described, and are assigned either to King or Parliament based on style and issue mark. With no dates on the coins, we can place individual coins in sequence by means of issue marks, and these are dated according to when the relevant Trial of the Pyx was held. All the coins with issue marks up to and including Triangle In Circle are given to the King, and all the subsequent coins starting with issue mark (P) are given to Parliament. This suggests a neat changeover, where change in management resulted in a change of issue mark. This is not the case, however, and I believe that there should be a revision of categories as follows:

1. Tower Mint under the King
1625 – 1641 all the coins with issue marks up to and including Star.



2. Transitional Issue 1641-1643
all the coins with issue mark Triangle in Circle.



3. Tower Mint under Parliament
1643-1649 all subsequent coins starting with issue mark (P)



The Trial for coins with issue mark Star was held on 15th July 1641 and the Trial for coins with issue mark Triangle in Circle was held on 29th May 1643. All the Triangle in Circle coins were produced within this period.

Although the King left London on 10th January 1642, Parliament did not seize control of the Tower Mint until 10th August 1642, so it is likely that coins with the Triangle in Circle issue mark were issued both for the King and for Parliament, given that this issue mark is the commonest for all Charles I coins, and huge quantities of silver were being struck – an average of some £80,000 per month. Examining surviving examples show some struck reasonably well – perhaps these were the earlier pieces – and some struck very crudely, when presumably quantity was more important than quality – these may well have been the later pieces. Perhaps further research into coin hoards may help clarify this, but in the meantime I believe it is helpful to regard the Triangle in Circle pieces as a separate and stand-alone category of Transitional coins.

PRESSURE? - WHAT PRESSURE?

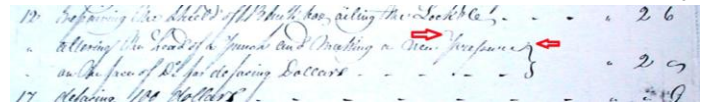
Eric Hodge

Six years ago, in 2014, I wrote an article for the British Numismatic Journal (BNJ) entitled 'Further Merchant Countermark Records of the Thistle Bank.' My article was to record contemporary records, appertaining to the Thistle Bank, discovered at two institutions in Scotland. Part of the research entailed deciphering invoices written 200 years ago.

One particular invoice (Fig. 1) had an important word relevant to the subject being researched. After much discussion and deliberation I decided to record the word as 'pressure?' Then the relevant sentence was 'altering the head of a punch and making a new pressure? on the face of ditto for defacing dollars'. (Fig. 2) That is how the sentence was printed in the article. Recently, with time on my hands! I revisited this article. I reached out to a blog site, E-Sylum eNewsletter (which issues a free weekly blog, with over 6000 members - mainly on American numismatics - but which over the years has proved to be

immensely valuable to me) and asked for ideas. Via the site I got a number of replies and one of them was 'pressure', but what really clinched it for me was that the contributor also commented that 'According to the full Oxford Dictionary, an obsolete meaning of 'pressure' is "impression", "image" or "stamp".' I immediately looked, online, at Webster's Complete Dictionary for 1886 and on page 1032 pressure is given six definitions, with number six stating 'Impression; stamp; character impressed.' (Fig. 3)

Fig.1



The problem was now solved to my satisfaction, but what relevance, you may ask, has this got to do with our Coin Club? Well in the early days of my research I asked the opinion of many colleagues, many from our club. One that took the request seriously and studied it at length was our old chairman Ben Fielding (he whose name is now given to our special lecture in November each year). He certainly was a gentleman in the true sense of the word and it is now, in our time of disorder and uncertainty, that one remembers people such as him who would always give a word of advice, a helping hand whenever it was needed. Ben did not just come up with a suggestion (pressure, including a dictionary definition) which I was to use, but he went further, finding interest in all the invoice content. It is good to remember our past members such as Ben.



Fig.2

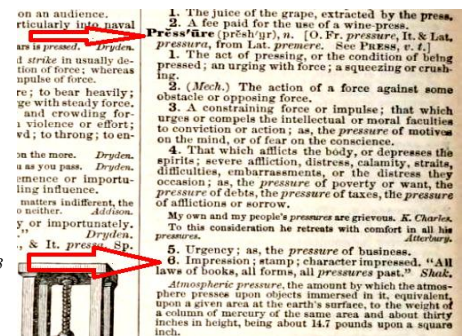


Fig.3

'Quarantine has turned us into dogs; we roam the house all day looking for food. We are told 'NO!' if we get too close to strangers, and we get excited about a car ride!'

'It's better to stay six feet apart – than be six feet under!'

THE CHURCHILL GOLD SOVEREIGN

Chris Leather

By the end of the Napoleonic War, the British currency was in a state of confusion. A mass of banknotes, of varying denominations and worth circulated with worn-out 18th century silver, and tokens issued by the Bank of England for five shillings, three shillings and 1/6d. By 1818, much had been achieved; new silver and new gold, based on a sovereign of 20/- rather than a guinea of 21/-, had been issued and banknotes of less than £5 denomination abolished.

The gold coins, of half and one sovereign, were therefore absolutely essential for many of the payments made throughout the country, and providing a ready supply of gold to meet demand became a major task for governments from then until the start of the first world war, nearly a hundred years later. The size of this task can be realised from the numbers of coins struck. In the four years 1911-1914, the Royal Mint in London struck more than ninety-six million sovereigns, and in the same period the branch mints in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth added a further thirty-six million - a total weight of one thousand and fifty tonnes of gold.

Cont....