

“The Bulletin” March, 2003

President’s Message

We had an Executive Meeting on March 11 with many agenda items. Besides planning meeting features for the next few months we also reviewed this Club’s participation in the upcoming ONA Convention.

I will be announcing our Club delegate to the convention at the next meeting. In the meantime, please keep selling those Dream Vacation Draw tickets on behalf of both the ONA and this Club. If you are not going to the Convention yourself, bring your ticket stubs to the March meeting.

Your 2003 membership renewal of \$10.00 is now overdue. Please bring your renewal to Len Kuenzig at the next meeting or send it in by mail (use the address on the letterhead). Those who have paid are receiving new membership cards with this mailing.

If you are now on the Internet, please send an e-mail to the editor at **“p.petch@rogers.com”**. This will allow us to send you any last-minute emergency announcements. You may contact the President, Bob Wilson, at **905-677-3765** or the Editor, Paul Petch at **416-303-4417**.

The Stuff Dreams are Made Of!

The next meeting of the North York Coin Club, will be held on **Tuesday, March 25, 2003**, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive. We start gathering about 7:30 p.m. with meeting start scheduled for 8:00.

For this meeting we are going to give all members a chance to tell everyone what their special collecting specialty or specialties might be. We are especially interested in finding out what key item you are currently looking out for to add to your collection and what “dream” addition you would love to get, but doubt you ever will. This may be because it is just too expensive or too scarce.

We have a listed auction this month (see page 2) and you are encouraged to bring additional auction material for this meeting. Hope to see you at the meeting!

Coming Events

Eastern Ontario Numismatic Show, March 28-30, Fri. 4pm-7pm; Sat. 9:30am-5pm; Sun. 10am-4 pm at the Days Inn Convention Centre, 33 Benson St. Kingston. 65 tables. Admission \$3. Contact Ted at 1-866-747-2646.

Kent Coin Club Annual Coin Show, April 6, 10am-4pm at the Wheels Inn, 615 Richmond St., Chatham 25 dealer tables, display competition. Hourly draws, free admission and parking. Contact: Lou Wagenaer 519-352-4150

ONA Convention, Holiday INN, 601 Scottsdale Dr., Guelph, April 12-13 Highlights include: bourse, exhibits, banquet, free parking, specialty collector meetings, fun and fellowship. Annual ONA general meeting and club delegates meeting. For more information, contact onainfo@look.ca.

Peterborough Coin Club Coin Show, May 3 at Portage Place 9am-5pm Draw for Uncirculated set. Contact (705) 742-0114.

Windsor Coin Club Annual Spring Show, May 4 at Caboto Hall, 2175 Parent Ave. 10am-4pm Admission \$1 includes draws for hourly door prizes and a grand prize. Juniors admitted free. Free parking. Contact Margaret Clarke (519) 735-0727, e-mail mclarke@wincom.net.

Burlington Show, May 10, 10am-4pm at 2300 Duncaster, off Brant St. N. Free parking, admission, coffee and donuts (while they last). Contact Nancy Meredith, (705) 788-3159.

Courtesy of Canadian Coin News
(<http://www.canadiancoinnews.ca>).

***Next Meeting:
March 25***

Meeting News from the February 25 Meeting

The 482nd meeting of the North York Coin Club was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2003 at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive, Willowdale, Ontario.

The President, Bob Wilson, opened the meeting at 8:04 p.m. and welcomed 24 members and 2 guests. On Time Attendance Draw: Franco Farronato was present to receive the \$2.00 pot.

The Chair announced that since this is our anniversary meeting it is our custom to recognize members of 15 continuous years with a commemorative certificate and to grant members with 25 continuous years a lifetime membership in the Club. This year Mirko Kosic is recognized with a lifetime membership, but unfortunately he could not be with us this evening. If he is still unable to attend after the next few months, his Certificate for 25 Years of Continuous Membership and a gold plated Membership Card will be forwarded to Mirko Kosic with our thanks for his long support.

Minutes of the January 28, 2003 meeting were read by the Secretary and, after correcting (under Recent Events) "ONA" to read "CNA", they were accepted by the Chair.

An Application for Membership has been received from Shawn Hamilton of Scarborough. If accepted his number will be 519.

Recent Shows: John Regitko announced Torex had a fantastic attendance on Saturday but the snow storm really effected Sunday. Paul Petch attended the Classical and Medieval meeting and enjoyed an interesting paper given by Bruce Brace based on the C.N.A. slide set on The 12 Caesars. Roger Fox stated Mr. Wayne Sales, President and CEO of Canadian Tire gave a fantastic talk at the Canadian Tire Paper Money meeting.

ONA Convention: Paul Petch encouraged members to support the sale of Dream Vacation Raffle tickets and John Regitko advised he had convention Programmes

of Events and hotel registration forms on hand.

Dick Dunn cautioned members about an extensive paper money scam being used on the E-Bay auction. John Regitko also noted two dealers in Hamilton had been robbed last week and the perpetrators were caught shortly afterwards while trying to sell some of the goods to Colonial Acres Coins in Kitchener.

John Regitko kindly provided 4 videos for the evening programme. Two were produced by the Royal Canadian Mint and, although very promotional, they were interesting and beautifully presented. The other two were about Ingrid Smith and her operation of the Torex show. Following the Torex video on a copyright dispute with The Toronto Stock Exchange, Rick Craig, a member of the Exchange, recalled some personal background and some modest participation in resolving the situation. To augment the anniversary programme, Norman G. Gordon very kindly brought along his complete sets of North York Coin Club bulletins, medallions and wooden money for members to examine.

This being the club's 43rd Anniversary a special cake was served by Lucille Colson while Roger Fox presented his usual great choice of refreshments.

Lucky Draw winners were: Lucille Colson(2), Bob Velensky, Paul Johnson, Vince Chiappino, Franco Farronato(5), Bill O'Brien, Shawn Hamilton and Mark Argentino. The draw run by Roger Fox with Albert Kasman selling the tickets brought proceeds amounting to \$32.00

A special auction was ably run by Bob Porter with the assistance of Mark Argentino and Vince Chiappino and earned \$28.00 in commission and donations. Many thanks to Roger Fox and Frank Zahra for their donations.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:00 p.m.

Listed Auctions

Bring any material you would like to be considered for the listed auction in April, 2003 to the March meeting and give it to Rick Craig. The items should be presented in person in an ordinary envelope showing your **name, phone number** and your **estimated value** (i.e., reserve bid). Rick is assisting us by assuring consistent descriptions of quality and by pegging fair starting amounts for the listing of premium items in the bulletin.

Those members not requiring this service are still invited to bring along any material they wish to enter into the auction to any meeting.

The listed auction is a way of publicizing your more premium material in advance of a meeting, to give notice to all Club members and to generally raise the calibre of material offered.

March Meeting Auction List

- | | Starts at |
|--|------------------|
| 1) <i>Canadian Bouquet Sous</i> , by E. G. Courteau, 1908. Hard covers, 24 pp. with blanks for notes etc. Nice condition .. | \$20.00 |
| 2) Nine catalogues by Neil Carmichael on Canadian coins and medals, issued 1957 and 1961 | 20.00 |
| 3) <i>A Medallic History of Britain from Tudor Times to the Present Day</i> , by J.R.S. Whiting. Hard cover , new condition, 236 pp..... | 20.00 |
| 4) <i>1954 Palace Collection of Egypt</i> (King Farouk) Auction catalogue 306 pp, 72 plates, soft covers, with prices realized. Est. \$100 | 60.00 |
| 5) <i>Heads and Tails</i> , a 1968 Royal Canadian Mint hard cover book commemorating 60 years of Mint operations. Includes a 1968 mint set in sleeve at back. Donation to the Club | 9.00 |

The Royal Mint Launches DNA £2 Coin

The Royal Mint is launching a new £2 coin, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of the Double Helix structure of DNA by Francis Crick and James Watson.

The reverse design on the coin features the distinctive double helix structure of the DNA molecule, comprising two strands twisted around each other. On the edge of the coin are inscribed the words *deoxyribonucleic acid*. The design, by sculptor John Mills, was selected by the Royal Mint Advisory Committee from several others submitted in competition.

The obverse design is the portrait of Her Majesty the Queen by Ian Rank-Broadley FRBS, which has appeared on all UK coinage since 1998.

Gerald Sheehan, Chief Executive of the Royal Mint, comments: "The discovery of the double helix structure of DNA is one of the most important scientific discoveries of the past century. With this in mind, the Royal Mint feels it is a fitting tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of this achievement to feature it on this year's £2 coin."

The Brilliant Uncirculated DNA £2 coin is available in an informative presentation folder priced £6.95. Furthermore, the coin is featured in a presentation pack along with all the other circulating coins in the UK for 2003, priced £13.95. Collector versions in silver and gold and a circulating version will be available later in the year.

Francis Crick and James Watson described the double helix structure of

DNA. Watson and Crick raced to find the structure before anyone else. They were competing with Linus Pauling, who had earlier discovered the alpha-helical structure of some protein molecules. While Watson and Crick were still working on their model, Pauling published a paper suggesting a triple-helical structure for DNA. Others quickly realized that the model was chemically flawed. Watson and Crick used paper cut-outs of the bases and metal scraps from a machine shop to come up with their own model.

Their model revealed the following important properties:

- DNA is a double helix, with the sugar and phosphate parts of nucleotides forming the two strands of the helix, and the nucleotide bases pointing into the helix and stacking on top of each other.
- The nucleotide bases use hydrogen bonds to pair specifically, with an A always opposing a T, and a C always opposing a G.
- The two strands of the double helix run in opposite directions.

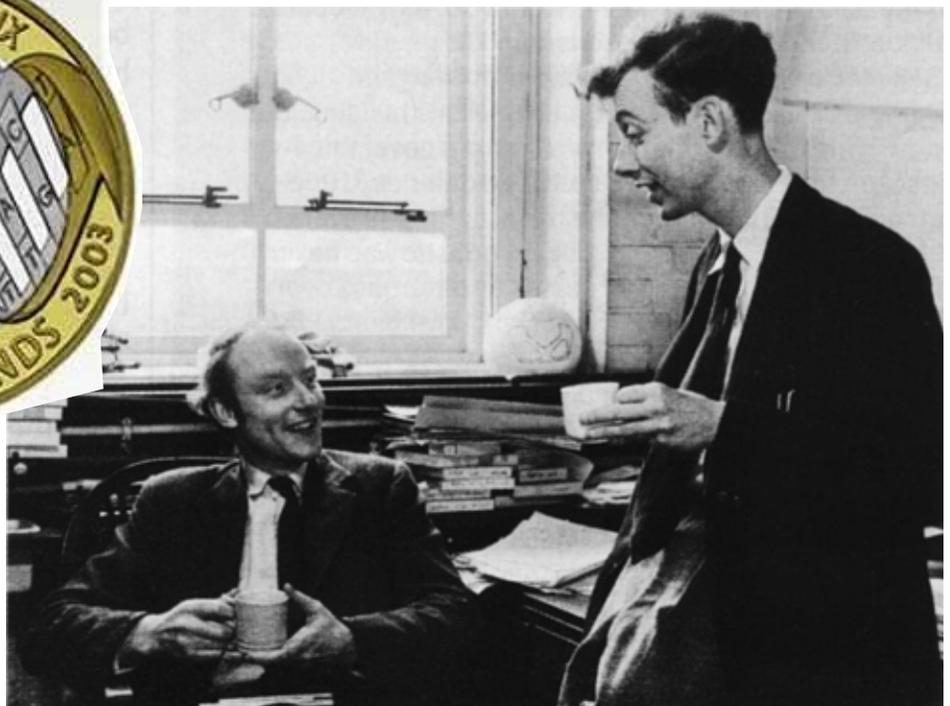
Question of the Month

The February Question of the Month asked you to identify the commemorative coin being struck in 2003 celebrating the 50th anniversary of a Nobel Prize winning discovery. Nobody had a ghost of an idea that the answer was Watson and Crick formulating the structure of DNA! Too bad Marvin Kay had to leave early. We are sure he would have got this one! The Royal Mint is commemorating the event with a special coin. Read full story to the left.

We did so poorly on the February questions that we are repeating the 50 year theme again this month. Name all the significant features collectors look for on any or all of the denominations of Canadian 1953 decimal coinage.

Their 900-word paper, published in *Nature*, concluded, famously, "It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material."

Watson, Crick, and Wilkins received the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1962.



For the Fun Of It

by Jane Van Der Voort (Special to The Sun, February 23, 2003)

Whether it's coins or cards, passion feeds collector frenzy

One is never enough. Whether you're holding a rare coin or one of *The Sun's* Toronto Maple Leafs sports medallions, chances are you're hooked and looking for more for your collection.

"No one goes through this for any other reason than having a passion for it," says Bret Evans, managing editor of *Canadian Coin News*. "Some people will collect for a link to their past, and sports is classic. People who collect sports cards or medallions or discs are often going back to their past, when maybe they were big fans of a particular team or player. Or maybe they watched the games with their dad. "Medals and medallions are one of the fun areas of collecting. For a lot of people, this is a very affordable collectible," Evans adds.

Mid-1800s

Coin collecting in Canada dates back to the mid-1800s, says Robert Porter, president of the Mississauga and Etobicoke Coin, Stamp and Collectibles Club. He says Canada's most valuable coins, the 700-piece catalogue of the Sid and Alicia Belzberg Collection of Canadian Coinage, was sold last month at a New York auction for \$4,699,347. Included was the 1911 Canadian silver dollar, dubbed the "Emperor of Canadian Coins," that fetched just over \$1 million.

Porter's interest in collecting began at the end of World War II when, as a navy minesweeper in England, he traded cigarettes for Allied military currency. He turned to coins in

1955 — "I just liked Canadian currency" — and has since put together a set of 100, 50c pieces.

"Coin collecting is just fun, there's not a lot of money in it," says Porter, 81, founder of R.J. Porter Office Supplies. "It's the thrill of the actual possession of a particular coin."

Or, in the case of commemorative collectibles, it's the thrill of hunting down and completing a set.

"Most areas of the collectible market are really strong right now," says Evans at *Canadian Coin News*. "There is a sense they have intrinsic value, which is a sense of worth, of permanence and stability. It only takes a few cents to make these coins but we believe in them. They have value to us." He points to Canada's Centennial year, 1967, as a "high-water mark" for collectible sets, such as the medallions featuring Canada's prime ministers that were distributed through Shell gas stations. One of the earliest collectible promotions came out of Sheriff pudding packages with a mail in hockey disc promotion.

The Royal Canadian Mint marked the new millennium by releasing new quarter designs.

"The Team Canada promotion put together by *The Toronto Sun* last



Austin Hanson, 7, is up every day at 6:30 a.m. to pick up his daily Sun Hockey Medallion

winter created a frenzy in the market place," says Brian Ehrenworth, president of Frameworth, Canada's leader in collectible framing and design. "Of course, with Canada winning gold, that became huge and collectible," he says of the pin sets.

"The current frenzy with the Toronto Maple Leaf medallions is based on getting the collection, and people loving their team. If the team gets to the Stanley Cup and wins, that set is going to be worth a lot of money," Ehrenworth adds.

Available at stores until March 5, each of the 24 medallions cost \$2.59 plus tax. Yet eBay is already listing Leaf captain Mats Sundin's medal for \$14.99 and completed, framed sets at \$300.

"Everyone does that old 'I had five sets and if I'd only kept them I'd be rich,'" he says. "Depending on how the Leafs do, this could turn out to be one of those sets."

An Improbable Numismatic History

Here we are once again, only a week or so away from April 1. It's that most hallowed of days to those of us who do not like to see things taken too seriously. In that spirit, here is this year's offering from the editor, dedicated to the actors' creed that "dying is easy, comedy is hard", but numismatic comedy is next to impossible!

Informal investigations into coin collecting practices of today reveal that most collectors prefer not only perfectly round coins, but ones made of metal too. While this may appear to be self-evident, it was not always the case. Read on!

The Real Olden Times

When we explore the beginning of coin history some thousands of years ago, we find that man's first preference in coins was for amorphous blobs, most closely resembling a gum wad which may be found on a cold sidewalk in December. This indifferent attitude towards the need for asymmetrical coinage may have reflected a generally relaxed attitude in those ancient societies. These blobs were created by striking crudely shaped soft metals of the day with engraved forms or punches. This was not so different than the process applied to hot wax officiating seals of the times. Those ancient civilizations may have got their Doric columns straight, but they left their coin flans uncollared to freely spread in any old direction they pleased. We offer as proof of this the overwhelming numbers of these blobs present today, both in and out of generic PVC flips and greasy olive oil laden volcanic soils.

While this less-than-round-casual-attitude is no more than conjecture, the writings of Alexander, one of the only men acknowledged to have lived before he was born, supports some of our thesis. Some of it, but really very little of it. Ironically, no one is quite sure if he even really existed, much less if he had a face worthy of coinage. In retrospect, what a pity that

the society that brought the world the calendar, togas, pasta, aerosol cheese, the Slinky, holy owls and words that start with a silent "p", didn't have the sophistication to make coins round.



On To Less Olden Times

Fast-forward to the last few centuries and we see, for many reasons, that the toga fell out of favour as a fashion statement and man developed pants with pockets. Those cute, ragged, heavy, 43-49 millimetre owl-bedecked blobs, once looked upon as hip, were now the scourge of tailors everywhere. The challenging task of saving pant pockets was thrust upon humanity. With much purpose and without delay the search was on for pocket-friendly coinage in a round, lean form.

One of the first offerings coming from the Research and Development people were carved wooden nickels, which



were all the rage until consumers realized that wood meant splinters and tweezers hadn't even been invented yet. Besides, with twenty of these little guys to a dollar, they were rough on the hands (not to mention body parts adjacent to the pockets) especially as they were prone to promoting trouser infestations of termites or boll weevils – all in all a bad thing.

So, along came semi-automated hand-operated machine-struck or pressed "minted" metal coinage with or without the denticle edging. There is some evidence to suggest that the denticles were hand carved on the coins to create a

"chopped bag marks" effect, which are cosmetic gouges on correspondingly stored adjacent coins. To our mind, however, this was a clear conspiracy to create hiding places for dreaded bacteria.

The Pre-Industrial Era and Numismatics

The now somewhat perfected round metal coin, willing to give its all simply for the economy of mankind, was about to take on a new mission and a new meaning. The collecting of these coins, which began as a mere hobby to most, would soon take a hellish spiral into numismatics, or the obsessive-compulsive study of coinage. This dark art was given birth because of men with piles of real (or perceived) money and too much time on their hands. Promoters and purveyors of this palaver would become known as "true" numismatists while the plebeian, simple minded "coin collector", as he was destined to be known, had an accumulation of just so much flotsam.

As could be expected, this festering assemblage of quasi-historic students brought forth no end of issues and variables to the new science of numismatics. Whose coin is bigger/better/shinier/deeper and therefore, worth more? How do we sort, classify and identify who has the top coin? And, if yours is the best, then I want one too (cause I'm as good as you are). No problem, let's clean up the filthy ones and make some more! This led to no end of cleaning discussions ad infinitum and more importantly, the act of counterfeiting, which despite accepted theories to the contrary, was only brought about to eventually clog Internet auctions.

Cleaning Those Nasty Things

Most would agree that the proper cleaning of any artefact, work of art, national treasure or other collectible object, is not only acceptable but expected, in order to preserve the piece for posterity. However, because of the potential for harm to a coin and given that there are so many idiots collecting coins, the act of cleaning a coin is adamantly discouraged and

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frowned upon. Therefore, collectors definitely prefer dirty, filthy, fingerprint laden, humanity encrusted coins, nestled quietly in their rosewood cases, or so they say. The reality is that this attitude has been known to bend slightly, depending upon the audience or stated intent, vested interest or profit motive.

It is safe to say that if done properly, i.e., in a way that cannot be detected by anyone at anytime, a cleaned coin is not only a happy coin, but also a more valuable commodity. Curiously, olive oil, which itself dates back thousands of years, was and is the best and safest way to clean ancients or any coin. Of course, the same could be said for any other type of oil, honey, lemon Pledge and Jell-O Chocolate Pudding (the type that gets that thick skin on the top).

If, on the other hand, you are not yet retired from a profession and have a life beyond coins and coin stuff, there are alternate methods of cleaning available to the high volume pro. Boiling acetone, most acids and alkalines, magma taken from Pompeii at the point of eruption or even Swiffer floor wipes, will probably get the job done, with time left over to buff out that annoying last vestige of some old mintmark or fruity coloured tones! You must exercise caution. Perform cleaning on only numismatically approved circulating metals and coinage and always in a well ventilated area, or the moon will surely hit your eye like a big pizza pie.

A final caution: Products specifically made for cleaning coins are discouraged from use, because, well, "they" all say so. It has to do with unfair advantage or some such rule. The fact is, no one ever buys these cleaning products, but they continue to be produced and to sell. Strange, is it not?

Counterfeit Coinage

In ancient times, right on up to the pre-industrial era, humanity's desire to get something for nothing has never faltered. Whether the blobs of yesteryear or the round shiny coins that followed later on, counterfeit coins were to become a force that would not go away. In their most in-

nocent form, counterfeits took off as a method to meet the rent or other daily expenses, but shortly blossomed into the realm of numismatically valued commodities. If counterfeited during the time of normal circulation, they were referred to as "contemporary counterfeits" and were collectible as the economically driven vehicle they are. If they were duplicated at any other time or created out of malice towards numismatists, they became N.C.L.T. (numismatic counterfeits legitimately traded). It is a subtle difference, but one that must be appreciated to gain sufficient understanding to allow the buyer to beware of bogus collectibles.



Numismatic Standards

Next entered the grading concept and all the chatty unscientific debate that came with it. Problem was, no one could agree on the precise standards for such a task. There was always the "this is mine, that is yours and mine is better than yours" argument.

This situation simply could not continue. So, along comes a man named Sheldon, his corresponding quality scale and with it, all the subjectivity that you can imagine. Alas, quality alone was not enough to deal with. In no time at all, someone figures if the obverse of a coin shows some particular number of eyelashes then it's a VF30. That many folds to the ear, it's an XF or AU. Does that critter have 3 legs or 4? Was that fur accented or just matted? Filled die or lazy mint employee? Let me whip out my 40x loupe and see! Stuttering die in the collar or artificially

toned? Incuse? Outcuse? Excuse? Struck once, struck twice, do I hear thrice? One leaf? Two leaves? Three leaves, or four? Has all sanity gone right out the door? Some numismatists can't tell. To them, it's all just another day of splitting hairs.

As the reality of big bucks set in and the good Lord created both sellers and buyers, the need for a semi-professional third party to sort this out became all too obvious.

20th Century or Pre-Millennium

This third party made up of industry philanthropists wasted no time in solving the problem. They would entomb the coins in vacuum moulded sheets of machine sealed plastic and affix an irrefutable numerical grade designation to the specimen within. This entity would eventually become known as a "slab" and would become no more than a hard cold commodity, exchangeable sight unseen, based on the numerical grade.

Now the poor numismatist knew what he had, but he could no longer feel and fondle his coins and that made him sad.

The 21st Century and Beyond

Crack outs en masse! Raw, unslabbed coins will return to the hobby and better-informed collectors will embrace them as never before. If found, hair splitting differences in coins will be disregarded by all but the most Stoic of numismatic die-hards who will no longer be allowed to gather in public meetings but will be forced into small communes of moderated discussions, probably over beer and pub-style lunches.

Dealers will once again be looked up to rather than down upon. eBay, with its ability to defraud hard earned dollars through pitiful computer scans of specimens, will be no more. The revolution is at hand. Coin collectors of the world unite, throw off the shackles of... but I digress: The future lies before us; let's get on with it!

Credit is given to Mr. Jim Stone on recollecting.coins for providing the basis of this article that has been highly edited and somewhat expanded. It is based on collected observations of our hobby within that Internet news group.