

# MONEY & MEDALS



The Newsletter for Numismatics in Britain

79 | April 2020

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Money & Medals is the newsletter associated with the Money and Medals Network based at the British Museum and in association with the RNS, BNS and a number of key partners. The Network aims to act as an information exchange for museum professionals within

the UK whose collections include coins, medals and other objects relating to monetary and economic history and numismatics.

To contribute information or articles to the Newsletter or to subscribe by email please send your name and email address to the editor at [MMN@britishmuseum.org](mailto:MMN@britishmuseum.org) or by post to Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Auction and fair details for inclusion in the next edition should be sent to Peter Preston-Morley at [ppm@dnw.co.uk](mailto:ppm@dnw.co.uk)

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## NEWS

### Change at the British Museum

Philip Attwood is leaving the British Museum on 1st May after forty-one years in the Department of Coins and Medals and ten years as Keeper.



He will be replaced for an interim period by Jane Portal, the Museum's Keeper of Asia. The address for all enquiries remains [coins@britishmuseum.org](mailto:coins@britishmuseum.org).

Gareth Williams, the Museum's Curator of Early Medieval Coins, will take over from Philip as Chair of the Money & Medals Network Steering Group. Gareth has been a leading figure in the Network since its formation and is a founder member of the Steering Group. The medal collection now comes under Tom Hockenhull, Curator of Medals and Modern Coins. For an in-depth discussion of Philip's career see the International Numismatic Council webpage at <https://incnews.org/2020/02/27/philip-attwood-retires/>.

### What's that in old money: Remembering Decimalisation - National Lottery Heritage Fund project - Expression of interest

*Sarah Tyley*

The 50th anniversary of decimalisation falls in February 2021. As part of an educational outreach project to celebrate the anniversary, the Royal Mint Museum is looking to collaborate with museums across the United Kingdom.

Changing to decimal currency was a momentous event for the whole country and is almost certainly the most significant shift in Britain's currency in its 2000-year history. The Museum holds objects and documents, drawings and machinery, photographs and memorabilia about decimalisation, all of which can be used to bring the subject to life.

The Museum is offering educational interactive boxes

and lesson plans that could be used to facilitate workshops with visiting schools or as part of activities with the general public on the subject of decimalisation. This will form part of a wider project which will also involve facilitating reminiscence sessions with people who lived through the changeover, including those with dementia. The objective will be to connect generations by involving young and old alike and we are approaching the National Lottery Heritage Fund for support.

The project will be an important opportunity to highlight currency collections in museums. Providing specialist knowledge, we will act as an information hub to help shine a light on these objects around the country.

By developing partnerships nationally, we hope to raise the profile of coinage heritage in Britain. We are interested in hearing from museums that wish to know more about this project and we are keen to hear about objects they hold relating to decimalisation. If you would like more information, please contact Sarah Tyley ([sarah.tyley@royalmintmuseum.org.uk](mailto:sarah.tyley@royalmintmuseum.org.uk)).

## MMN 2019 Training Roundup

*Henry Flynn*

2019 was an exceptionally busy year for the Money and Medals training programme. Nine training events took place all over England and a range of new training subjects were covered. There was more of an emphasis on medals and tokens than in previous years, and two new courses were introduced - a practical workshop-based course on documentation and photography, and a series of Train the Trainer events.



*Train the Trainer event at the British Museum*

The need for practical training on how best to photograph numismatic objects as well as how to create good quality catalogue entries for them has been clear for some time. This period of ACE-funded

activity has made it possible to address this. The first session, which was also the first event to be held in 2019, was based at the British Museum. The emphasis was on sharing advice and techniques for best practice in numismatic documentation.



*Photography workshop at the Yorkshire Museum*

A very similar event was run later in the year, this time by York Museums Trust for the benefit of people based in museums in the Yorkshire area and beyond. Both events were very productive, and hopefully this type of training can be run again in other areas in the future.

The other major innovation this year was our Train the Trainer series. With a view to the sustainability of MMN, these events are intended to furnish individuals with knowledge and skills and then encourage them to share these skills with museum colleagues in their own areas. It is the intention that these events will go beyond just the identification of objects and include pinning workshops, advice on how to make use of objects through display and, in the case of the first event which was on medals in museum collections, how online family history resources can be used to enhance knowledge of the objects. This event covered commemorative, military and art medals as well as how to store and catalogue them. The second event focused on medieval coinage and featured talks on how to make use of ID resources plus putting medieval coins in their context.

The rest of 2019's training formed part of MMN's continued support for existing numismatic sub-networks as well as efforts to create new ones. There was tokens training in the West Midlands, and Anglo Saxon and Viking coinage ID training in the East Midlands. These were both new courses with many new speakers. There was also more general training covering storage, display and documentation of numismatic material in the South West, South East and North East.



*Stage 1 Event at Canterbury Museums & Galleries*

As usual I extend my thanks to everyone who hosted, spoke at and attended these events. Money and Medals training depends on the generosity of speakers sharing their expertise and the willingness of people in museums and other heritage organisations to take a day out of their busy schedules to come and listen.

A programme of six training events had been planned for Spring 2020. These included a Train the Trainer event on Iron Age and Roman coinage, medals events in the East Midlands and South West and a brand new themed event, another first for MMN, on numismatic collections in transport museums. Due to the COVID-19 crisis these have all been cancelled, but we are hopeful that they will be rescheduled later in the year.

### **BAMS Awards, March 2020**

The 2020 BAMS President's Medal is to be awarded to The American Numismatic Society for its longstanding promotion of the history of the medal and contemporary medallic art.

The Society has been the foremost supporter of the study of medals in America since its formation in 1858. Its activities embrace many aspects of numismatics, but one of its outstanding promotions has been the presentation of the J Sanford Saltus Award for distinguished achievement in the field of the art of the medal, created in 1913. This was initially awarded to American based artists but, in 1983, was extended to include artists from other countries. Since then it has honoured some of the most outstanding practitioners of the art of the medal in many countries, thus increasing the attention to and prestige of this art form. The Society makes regular purchases of BAMS medals to enhance its collections and recently purchased the significant archives of the Medallic Art Company to preserve them for posterity.

The 2020 Marsh Award for the Encouragement of Medallic Art is to be awarded to Lisa McGovern of City of Glasgow College, an enthusiastic supporter of the BAMS Student Medal Project.

Lisa McGovern is Curriculum Head for Craft Design at City of Glasgow College. She teaches students who are involved with different aspects of making, such as sculpture and jewellery. In recent years Lisa has been very involved with the Student Medal Project, using it as part of the teaching curriculum at Glasgow College. In 2019 she set the theme of 'plastics in the environment' and the resulting student medals were very imaginative, with one awarded a prize. Lisa organised and ran a medal symposium in 2019 which brought in students and others from outside the College, and speakers such as Kate Ive, Mark Jones, Roddy Mathieson, Ulrika Kjeldsen and Marcy Leavitt Bourne. BAMS and The Marsh Christian Trust are delighted to acknowledge the work Lisa does to encourage medallic art and bring it to new audiences.

In other news, the BAMS conference in Chester which was planned for 17th-19th April has been postponed until 4th - 6th Sept. and further details will be sent to members in due course.

### **BNS News**

Sadly, we have to announce that the Society's meetings are likely to be suspended until September at least. The health and safety of our speakers, members and guests remain the Society's top priority at the present time. It is hoped that our scheduled speakers will be able to present their lectures on our 2021 programme. While the present emergency persists, E-NEWS will continue to circulate to members at monthly intervals, so please watch future issues for news of when the Society's programme of meetings will recommence.

### **RNS News**

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the RNS have had to cancel or postpone its meetings from February to June in 2020. However, we aim to reschedule the lost talks for the 2020-21 session.

### **Numismatic chat on Twitter**

If you are in lockdown and lacking in numismatic chat – join likeminded numismatists every Tuesday between 5-6pm on Twitter by following @NumisChat and #NumisChat.

## FOCUS DEALERS

This month three dealers give us their different perspectives and experiences of the trade, talking about what got them hooked on the subject, and how this has developed over their career.

### Paul Withers

Do you believe in predestination? I loved coins. I badgered relatives, and my parent's friends. Cupboards were searched and plundered. I liked my coins shiny, so all were polished and were stored in a tin with jubilee portraits of George V and Queen Mary on the lid. I was, I hasten to add, only four years old, and I don't think I ruined anything of quality.

Aged 6, staying with my widowed great aunt Clara, she found an 1897 medalet depicting four monarchs, a real treasure. I couldn't be parted from it. I even took it with me to the outdoor privy. Trying to admire it in the dark and pee at the same time, it fell. Splash! Devastated, sobbing, I fished it out and scrubbed my arm almost raw, and the medal got a special clean with harpic!

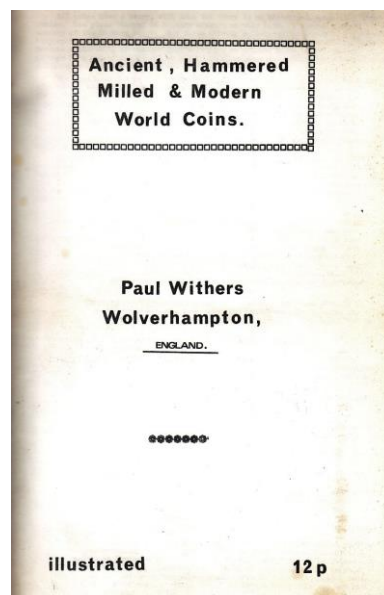


*The 1897 'privy' medalet*

Aged 15, I was good at science, but wanted to earn money so didn't stay in school, going to work in the metallurgical laboratory of a steel works. Three years later, earning little, I had only really enjoyed the brief time when I was seconded to the research department, so decided that education was the way forward after all, so 'O' and 'A' levels at night school whilst I tried out life as a student teacher. Five years later I was an impecunious teacher, and collecting coins at a time

when people were checking their change and collecting date runs. I attended a meeting of the newly-formed coin club. People looked at my album and were impressed. I explained that these were duplicates. People thrust money at me. I had become a part time dealer.

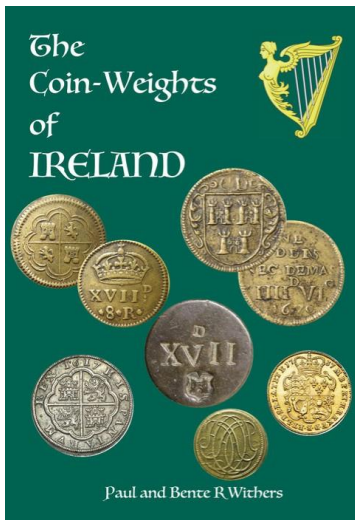
Fast forward a few years and I was married, and although I loved teaching I was earning so little that had our infant son been of school age, he would have been eligible for free school meals! I had a Sunday morning pitch in Cutler Street market, London. This produced as much income as a week of teaching. One Christmas we went to Denmark, my wife's home, accounts in hand, to discover that my hobby was subsidizing my job. I left teaching. Fifty years ago dealers sent out printed lists. I had a 1930s typewriter bought from auction for 30 shillings. £3 bought an ex-army electric duplicator. I wrote short articles and sent out sales lists by post.



*An early printed coin list*

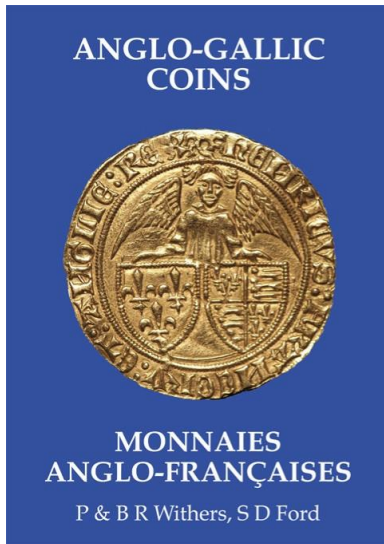
What makes a professional numismatist these days? Firstly, you have to keep up to date with modern technology and move with the times, learning new skills when necessary. My wife and I have had a good deal of experience over the past half century, becoming, out of necessity, Jacks and Jills of all trades, from coin photography to specialist, multilingual typesetting, and printing. When the duplicator wore out £25 bought us a small, second-hand offset printing machine. A few years on we had the same electronic type-setting equipment as our local newspaper. There were only four such IBM machines in the entire county of Staffordshire. Then computers arrived. We were the

first coin dealer in the UK to use one.



*The Coin-Weights of Ireland by Paul and Bente Withers*

We bought a bigger and better machine and began printing sales lists for other dealers, as well as the ONS Newsletter, The Medal, and then, our own books. This involved learning skills such as editing and specialist typesetting. We even contemplated bookbinding!



*The recent Withers publication on Anglo-Gallic coins provided a much-needed update to this series*

Being a numismatic publisher is like being a detective who applies the ABC principle. What's that? Assume Nothing. Believe Nothing. Challenge and check everything. Do that well and the book stands a reasonable chance of being good, providing you read and understand the previous literature on the subject. That of course, implies that you have a good library - and we have one of the best in Wales, all thanks to Howard Linecar, and Peter Seaby who encouraged me 45 years ago.

## Frances Simmons

Reader, I married him... Howard Simmons was an avid coin collector turned dealer so that was how I became interested in the medal, accompanying him to fairs and auctions; two keen collectors out hunting every weekend. The hobby became a business in 1982. We travelled the world, buying and selling at major fairs and local numismatic society meetings, from the US to France and the Low Countries, and even to Hong Kong and Singapore in those early years. We had to negotiate our way through foreign and UK customs with endless paperwork all pre internet. A four hour wait for a customs stamp on a form at Dover after a rough ferry crossing, squished between juggernauts, was pretty normal. Somehow I ended up doing all the admin and was grateful when the global scheme for VAT accounting came in. I was also organising the London Coin Fair at the Cumberland Hotel, subsequently at the Holiday Inn Bloomsbury. I continued to do this with Howard's help until 2010 when the show was sold to Mike & Lu Veissid.



*Musicians' Company Livery badge, by Gilbert Bayes, silver 40mm. 1929*

Our first premises were in Grays Antique Market off Oxford Street. It was a tiny space, barely 3m. x 2m. chock-full of boxes and display cabinets, with a door on to the street, sunshine, dust and the cold drifting in along with dealers and collectors from all over the world, some of whom are still with us after nearly 40 years. We never knew what we were going to be offered or what would sell or when. At one time masonic jewels became hot fashion items so we'd purchase as many as we could in London, and sell them to visiting Italian dealers. One beautifully intricate piece, wasn't of interest to them. It was from the Coach and Coach Harness Makers Company, City of London, a silver gilt and enamel master's badge. Unsold, we took it off the shelf, put it in a box and when the opportunity arose, added more and more livery company jewels until we had a collection. Years later when we'd moved to the Lamb's Conduit Street gallery, we sold the collection to the Worshipful Company of Cutlers to complement their own holding. This type of collecting while dealing became part of our method over the years. We'd find something good, rare and well-designed but not have an immediate customer for it. The collecting instinct kicks in. Time passes, markets like China, India and Asia open up and suddenly there are new customers, pleased to have found you.

Through BAMS, I'd become very interested in the contemporary medal and our Holborn gallery space gave us the opportunity to hold specialist exhibitions by practising medallists and jewellers, such as Nicola Moss, Danuta Solowiej, Marian Fountain, Ron Dutton, Jane McAdam Freud, and Ian Rank-Broadley. We also hosted the BAMS Student Medal Project exhibition and held special Christmas shows of sculptural jewellery and medals.

There's always a tension between being a collector and a dealer; you have to sell for commercial reasons. Which is why, sadly, we don't have any Japanese obans, Gupta lion slayers, colonial US coins or Korean won in our stock now. It's also fun and a privilege to help others build their collections, whether institutions like the British Museum or the Bank of Jamaica, or private individuals. We disperse collections through our mailbid auctions or by direct purchase. Most notable were the private sale of a series of medals by Ludwig Gies and other early 20th century German medallists, the auctions of the Bagwell-Purefoy and Shepherd complete BAMS collections, the Chambers collection of tokens and the Macmillan Scottish tokens. We're still receiving and making collections for sale and I expect Howard and I will be dealing for many more

years, albeit at a gentler pace.

## **A lifetime passion in the Coin Trade**

### *John Philpotts of Silbury Coins Ltd*

My introduction to coins began at the very young age of five. I remember going to a beach in North Wales (we then lived in Lancashire) with my father and his metal detector. The first 'signal' and subsequent hole were exciting but then as any five year old with the attention span of, well, a five year old would I began searching for crabs and soon wanted to go home. My father persisted though and at the age of eight bought me my first metal detector. Many years of exciting searching followed and we've been fortunate enough to have been involved in unearthing some wonderful treasures and hoards over the years, we both still go metal detecting today although Dad, now retired is out most days and I, with a 4-month old son cannot remember the last time I switched my machine on.

Developing a love for coin collecting through metal detecting it wasn't until my late teens that I first sold a coin, and was intrigued by the world which that coin then entered. Before long I found myself selling coins for friends and other members at our local Historical & Metal Detecting club. After a few years and having always had an entrepreneurial flair I decided to shelve my career as an electrician and have a go at being a coin dealer, something which I had quickly started to thoroughly enjoy. That was some 18 years ago and I still enjoy getting to the office on a Monday morning (ok well not always but generally!) I've now run Silbury Coins for 10 years, we deal in coins and artefacts from the Bronze Age to Victorian era, a wide span which certainly keeps us busy. Personally I specialise in the British Iron Age, Anglo Saxon and Medieval periods. I love the simplistic nature of the Iron Age coins and the art which goes with it (Figure 1), paralleled in the early Anglo Saxon coinage (Figure 2) before the introduction of the standardised penny.



*Figure 1. Gold Iron Age 'Remic' stater (19mm)*

I feel proud to have been with Silbury Coins since its creation in 2010 and do my best to ensure that new and old customers receive the same high level of service that I would want to receive myself. I often see people receiving lower quality service, both in the numismatic trade and outside of, which I think there is no excuse for, everyone deserves to be treated fairly.



Figure 2. Anglo-Saxon Series Q sceatta (13mm)

Since my introduction to the coin world I have only seen an increase in values, albeit at varied rates, something which I think fairly reflects the remarkable objects which we are lucky enough to handle each day. A Roman coin, nearly 1700 years old in exceptional condition for £50 (Figure 3) or British Anglo Saxon art at its best for £390, surely that must be good value for money?



Figure 3. Roman follis (19mm)

Alongside Silbury Coins I also run the Bloomsbury & Harrogate Coin fairs, the first being a regular event held in London and the latter an annual event spread over 3 days. I've done this for 8 years now and get much enjoyment out of providing a safe, friendly environment for new and experienced collectors to

come together and immerse themselves in their hobby, passion or profession for the day. More details can be found on <http://www.bloomsburycoinfair.com> or <http://www.harrogatecoinfair.com>.

The current market is rather different to anything any of us have ever know before. With the worldwide spread of Covid-19 and ensuing lockdown measures taken around the globe there is no chance to travel or meet face to face at the moment. Dealers and auction houses are having to adapt to doing business solely online and, now that the dust has settled and we are getting used to this new way of business, those companies who have adapted are continuing to trade. Items are sent by post or securely stored and due to the fact that things cannot be sold elsewhere more is available online than ever before. I appreciate that there's nothing quite like viewing a coin in hand but Silbury Coins and others have always offered a 14-day returns policy which means you can buy a coin, receive it via insured post, closely inspect it and then send it back for a full refund if you are not happy. Selling happens in the same way, insured post, offer, decision, coin back or funds transferred. The way in which we do business has changed but the fundamentals which we value have not.

So while we all have more time at home I'd recommend getting those collections out and spending time on your pastime, be it identifying gaps then searching the website for those items or choosing coins to move on, there has been no better time to focus on coins and we, the dealers are still open for business! You can view Silbury Coins extensive stock and easy to navigate website here [www.silburycoins.com](http://www.silburycoins.com) or if you'd prefer call them for a chat on 01242 898107 or email [info@silburycoins.com](mailto:info@silburycoins.com)

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Museums are currently closed to staff and the public. This list includes exhibitions that were scheduled to be open during the period of the Newsletter (April to August). When the lockdown has been lifted museums will begin to open galleries again but please check with the venue before attempting to visit.

### **Lasers, Hoarding and Roman Gold Coinage** Ashmolean Museum | Gallery 7 | until 23 August 2020

Explore the results of recent research from the University of Oxford which used laser technology to determine the chemical 'fingerprint' of over 600 coins. As part of the Oxford Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project, this display shows changes in the gold

sources exploited by the Ancient Romans and in hoarding behaviours, allowing fascinating insights into fundamental developments in the Roman economy.

### ***Rivalling Rome: Parthian coins and culture***

**British Museum | Room 69a | until 6 Sept 2020**

This exhibition looks at the often-ignored influence of Rome's most powerful rival in the East, the Parthians, who ruled from c. 248 BC to AD 224. Coins and objects of the Parthian world will shed light on Parthian art and culture and their impact on neighbouring regions.

## **LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES**

For listings in your local area go to:

<http://www.moneyandmedals.org.uk>

BNS and RNS meetings are held at either the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) or the Swedenborg. Please check the venue before travelling.

**Due to the COVID-19 outbreak lecture programmes have been suspended between April and July. We hope to be able to bring you more information in the August Newsletter, but more up-to-date information will appear in the BNS, RNS and BAMS bulletins, and on their websites.**

## **AUCTION DIARY**

Courtesy of Peter Preston-Morley. Please note: Dates may be subject to alteration. For latest updates on auctions, see the international auction calendar at [www.dnw.co.uk](http://www.dnw.co.uk)

Dealers contact details can be found on the British Numismatic Trade Association website at [www.bnta.net](http://www.bnta.net) or the dealers' own websites.

### **May**

**6 Dix Noonan Webb.** Coins. [www.dnw.co.uk](http://www.dnw.co.uk)

**6 Spink.** Paper Money. [www.spink.com](http://www.spink.com)

**19-20 Baldwin's of St James.** Coins. [www.bsjauctions.com](http://www.bsjauctions.com)

**20 Dix Noonan Webb.** Tokens and Historical Medals. [www.dnw.co.uk](http://www.dnw.co.uk)

### **June**

**3 Dix Noonan Webb.** Ancient and Islamic Coins. [www.dnw.co.uk](http://www.dnw.co.uk)

**6 Baldwin's of St James.** Coins. [www.bsjauctions.com](http://www.bsjauctions.com)

**17-18 Baldwin's of St James.** Coins. [www.bsjauctions.com](http://www.bsjauctions.com)

**24 Dix Noonan Webb.** Paper Money. [www.dnw.co.uk](http://www.dnw.co.uk)

## **CONTACTS**

### **British Art Medal Society (BAMS)**

Janet Larkin, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel: 020 7323 8568. Unless otherwise stated, all meetings held at 5.30pm, Cutlers Hall, Warwick Lane, London EC4. [www.bams.org.uk](http://www.bams.org.uk)

### **British Association of Numismatic Societies (BANS)**

Bill Pugsley [bill@pugsley.co](mailto:bill@pugsley.co)

### **British Numismatic Society (BNS)**

Peter Preston-Morley, Dix Noonan Webb, 16 Bolton St, Mayfair, London, W1J 8BQ, Telephone: 020 7016 1700. E-mail: [secretary@britnumsoc.org](mailto:secretary@britnumsoc.org). Unless otherwise stated (see lecture programme) all meetings are held at 6.00pm at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. [www.britnumsoc.org](http://www.britnumsoc.org)

### **British Numismatic Trade Association (BNTA)**

Christel Swan, General Secretary, 3 Unwin Mansions, Queen's Club Gardens, London W14 9TH, Tel: 07799 662181, e-mail: [secretary@bnta.net](mailto:secretary@bnta.net) website: [www.bnta.net](http://www.bnta.net)

### **International Bank Note Society (IBNS)**

Pam West, [pam@britishnotes.co.uk](mailto:pam@britishnotes.co.uk). Website at [www.theibns.org/joomla/index.php](http://www.theibns.org/joomla/index.php)

### **Oriental Numismatic Society (ONS)**

Ms Paramdip Khara.

Email: [paramdipk@hotmail.com](mailto:paramdipk@hotmail.com). ONS website at [www.orientalnumismaticssociety.org/](http://www.orientalnumismaticssociety.org/) and on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/OrientalNumismaticSociety?ref=hl](http://www.facebook.com/OrientalNumismaticSociety?ref=hl)

### **Royal Numismatic Society (RNS)**

Dr Megan Gooch.

Email: [megan.gooch@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:megan.gooch@humanities.ox.ac.uk). Unless otherwise stated (see lecture programme) all meetings are held at 6.00pm at the the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. E-mail: ; website: [www.numismatics.org.uk](http://www.numismatics.org.uk)