



Museum Development North West

Worth the Investment – Making the Most of Numismatic Collections



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Foreword

Esme Ward, Director, Manchester Museum

I'm delighted to be invited to write the foreword for this publication. A significant concern has rightly been expressed across the museums sector about the loss of collections expertise in recent years. To celebrate the success of the collaboration between Museum Development North West (MDNW) and the Money & Medals Network (MMN) and the impact it has had on museums with numismatic collections in the region has never been more important. Curators now have increased confidence and understanding to ensure the widest possible access to use of their numismatic collections and to facilitate work with a wide range of experts and researchers.

One of the great strengths of this project lies in the inspiring partnerships and relationships that have developed. The MMN, led by curator Henry Flynn, has given its time, enthusiasm and expertise, and provided speakers for workshops with the aim of making numismatic collections here in the North West more accessible. Critically, it's been a two-way process, and the partnership has also benefited from innovative and exciting work being done in the region; for example, the Harris Museum & Art Gallery's 'Money Matters' project which helped teach financial capability.

Part of MMN's remit was to map numismatic collections across the UK. I think we should be very proud of the fact that the North West was the first region to have its money and medals listed on the MMN website. This has opened up collections to public enquiry and made them much more accessible to the communities that we serve. North West museums and the regional network were also showcased in the British Museum's recent exhibition about the work of MMN, and featured in numismatic conferences in 2014 and 2018. There is clearly an appetite in the region to making more of under-used collections. More than 50 individual members from 28 museums make up the North West numismatic network, seizing the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise.

Actions speak louder than words. The wonderful example of the benefits of working collaboratively can be seen at the Grosvenor Museum in Chester. For the first time in its 130-year history, the coin collection was shown in a temporary exhibition and members of the public were involved in its co-creation. The exhibition was so popular that parts of it have since been incorporated into the permanent galleries.

Politicians may have declared the age of austerity to be over but museums and galleries still operate in a tough financial environment. This programme has had limited financial investment, yet has punched well above its weight, with significant impact, organisational and public benefit. It is hard to put a value on the expertise and willingness to share that it has elicited.

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Introduction

Matthew Ball, Numismatic Consultant

A few years ago, numismatics in the North West was characterised by a wealth of local, civic, and university collections on the one hand, and an almost total lack of specialist curatorial knowledge on the other. The fragility of this situation was brought into stark focus when, in 2013, Keith Sugden of Manchester Museum, the region's only specialist numismatic curator, announced plans to retire. For years, Keith had provided vital advice, support, and expert interpretation to other museums on their numismatic collections.

At the same time, two things happened - Museum Development North West (MDNW) was approached by the Harris Museum & Art Gallery with ideas to develop its underused numismatic collection by working with young people to curate collections, and by the Money & Medals Network (MMN) Project Curator to work together to raise the profile of numismatic collections. So began the Harris' 'Money Matters' project and a five year partnership between MDNW and MMN which have bolstered curators' awareness of the enormous potential of their (largely dormant) numismatic collections. A lack of capacity for further groundwork and collections projects like 'Money Matters' was addressed by MDNW, which funded collections reviews at museums eager to learn more about their numismatic holdings. This work has shown that numismatics should not be seen as an isolated collection area, difficult to incorporate into the work of the museum, but as a diverse and adaptable resource with near-universal applications.

This publication is a testament to the number and variety of numismatic projects to have taken place in recent years. In the coming pages, you will find information on each of the projects named here (and more), a breakdown of MDNW's training programme, and details of where to find equipment, support, and resources that will enable you to make the best of your own numismatic collection.

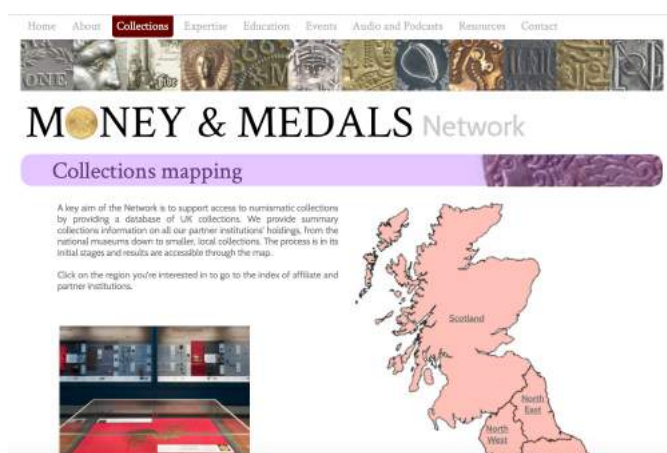
Each project featured here was only made possible by the joint collaboration and support of MDNW and MMN. That earlier imbalance between collections and expertise has gone some way to being restored; five years of projects and training days have created a numismatic network of museums alive to the sources of external expertise and assistance they can draw upon. Numismatics in the North West's museums has surely never been in better health.

Money & Medals Network

Henry Flynn, Project Curator, Money & Medals Network

The Money & Medals Network is a Subject Specialist Network (SSN) co-funded by Arts Council England (ACE) and the British Museum's Partnership UK programme. It is one of a number of ACE-supported SSNs currently actively providing support to people working and volunteering in museums in the UK. SSNs exist to provide advice and assistance in a range of subject areas in a climate of declining specialist expertise.

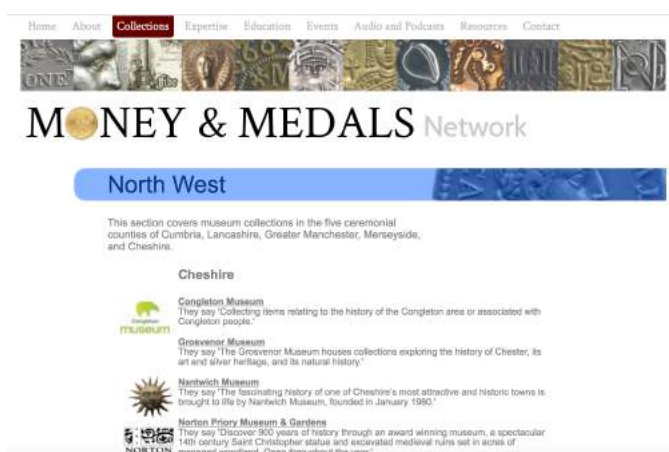
The reason for MMN's existence is twofold: specialist curators for coins, medals, banknotes, tokens, badges and associated objects are becoming increasingly rare; and the subject of numismatics is often regarded as being niche and not of interest to museum visitors. As a result, museum numismatic collections tend to stay in storage as they are seen as a challenge to display, mainly because the objects are 'small and boring.' The MMN seeks to change this perception.



It aims to achieve this through a collections mapping project and the provision of training. My role as MMN Project Curator is to visit as many UK museums with numismatic collections as possible to provide advice and gather information – each participating public institution gets their own page on the Money & Medals website (www.moneyandmedals.org.uk). The training focuses on curatorial, collections management and public engagement subjects in an effort to encourage attendees to go back to their own collections, view them with a new perspective and make more of their potential through display and outreach projects. These events are regularly held all over the UK.

The relationship between MMN and MDNW has been a particularly productive one. Through collaboration, we have successfully held a number of numismatic training events focusing on a range of topics and a numismatic subnetwork for the North West has been established. The model for this subnetwork, with its regular programme of follow-up training events, has proven to be so effective that it is regularly cited as an example to be emulated in other areas at MMN training events and promotional talks.

The UK has a wealth of numismatic holdings and North West museums are particularly well represented on the collections section of the Money & Medals website. The diversity of the network is in evidence on the North West page, as the long list of county, city, town, maritime, university and archaeological museums, plus one country house, will attest. So far, 25 North West institutions have a page of their own and 20 of them have been visited by the MMN Project Curator. This collections mapping work has since acted as a springboard for more in-depth numismatic projects run by MDNW, which is marvellous to see.



Participation in the network is free and open to any museum or public institution with a numismatic collection of any size and type. Participation involves completing a questionnaire about the collection in advance of an informal visit from the MMN Project Curator. Advice, suggestions and practical assistance on storage improvements can be made during this visit which is an opportunity to discuss how involvement in the network can directly benefit each institution. At the time of writing, around 148 museums have been visited and 139 of them are represented on the website. Five subnetworks have been set up and more are in the early stages of development. New participants are always welcome and anyone who would like to find out more is invited to contact the Project Curator at the British Museum mmn@britishmuseum.org.

Regional training

MDNW and MMN have staged a successful series of training days on almost all aspects of museum-based numismatics. These were open to anyone interested in the study, care, and display of numismatic collections in museums.

Numismatic seminar

Manchester Art Gallery, March 2013

The first of these workshops was organised ahead of the imminent retirement of Keith Sugden, the long-serving curator of numismatics at Manchester Museum. As the only museum-based numismatist in the North West, Keith was indispensable to non-specialist curators in the region, who often called upon his wealth of knowledge and experience for guidance. His departure represented a significant loss of expertise and support. This seminar therefore offered curators the valuable opportunity to hear from Keith and other specialists. Topics included an introduction to numismatics as a source for social and political history (Keith), the use and display of paper money (Jenni Adam, Bank of England Museum), a case study on how numismatic collections can be used to explore financial crises past and present (Tom Hockenhull, British Museum), a lesson in financial management, designed and led by secondary school pupils (Debt Advice Foundation / Southlands High School, Chorley), and a talk on Art Fund grants for the conservation and display of coin hoards.

A concluding discussion between delegates touched on a wide-ranging set of issues on the future of museum-based numismatics in the North West. Above all, it was clear that a great enthusiasm for numismatics existed in the region's museums, and that its survival and resilience depended upon MDNW and MMN providing further opportunities to meet and exchange ideas, training days, and access to subject-specialist advice.

Out of this emerged the North West numismatic network: a group of North West museums in possession of numismatic collections, committed to mutual support, knowledge sharing, and regular meetings. Network members were consulted on the kind of training they would like to receive over the coming years; this formed the basic framework of the training detailed below.

Numismatic training day

Manchester Museum, June 2013

'It's really good to have someone ensuring numismatic collections don't languish in museum stores in the North West.'

This well-attended day was the first training event after the seminar held at Manchester Art Gallery in March. In all, 34 delegates travelled from as far away as Chester and north Cumbria. Sessions included a Roman coin identification talk (Ian Leins, Curator of Iron Age and Early Roman Coinage, British Museum), guidance on collections care and storage (Henry Flynn, MMN), and display techniques (Ben Alsop, Project Curator, British Museum Citi Money Gallery). To complement these practical sessions, MDNW provided delegates with numismatic 'starter kits' containing all the basic essentials needed to begin to work with their numismatic collections, along with a useful list of suppliers (see page 38).

Delegates were also offered an insight into the Art Fund's *Treasure Plus* funding which ran from 2013 to 2015 (Penny Bull, Art Fund), followed by a case study on a *Treasure Plus*-funded project at York Museums Trust (Andrew Woods, Head Curator, York Museums Trust). A plenary discussion and review, chaired by Bryan Sitch (Deputy Head of Collections, Manchester Museum), reaffirmed the importance of the North West numismatic network, fielded potential topics for future training sessions, and responded to audience questions on the day's talks.



Overall satisfaction with the organisation of the day, and the relevance of the material covered, was very positive. Returned feedback forms also produced a long list of potential training events for the future - from photography and storage sessions, to more practical identification workshops.

Identifying Roman coins

Nantwich Museum, October 2013

'Very useful, as I'm a complete beginner. [I] feel confident I can attempt this now. I loved the handling session.'

Roman coins are amongst the commonest and most abundant categories of object in any numismatic collection. This day of lectures and practical handling sessions, led by Phillippa Walton (Assistant National Finds Advisor, Portable Antiquities Scheme) and assisted by Keith Sugden, offered training on the fundamental aspects of identifying Roman coins. Overall feedback and comments were extremely positive, with requests for further training on topics such as medieval numismatics in the near future.

Paranumismatica

Manchester Museum, June 2014

'Paranumismatics' includes a wealth of money and coin-related objects that are common to the vast majority of museum collections, including tokens, jetons, gaming counters, toy money, tallies, and banking ephemera. Keith Sugden gave a thorough introduction to the enormous variety of paranumismatic objects in existence, as well as possible avenues for their use and study.

The paranumismatic session was followed by a much-anticipated Q&A session with Keith. This was billed as the final opportunity to put anything to Keith before his imminent retirement - prompting a very productive back-and-forth on a variety of topics, including the interpretation of coin finds, coin identification, how to deal with enquiries from the public, cataloguing, the preparation of coins and medals for display, and conservation.

This was followed by Claire Costin (British Museum, Portable Antiquities Scheme) on the PAST Explorers project - an initiative focused on finds recording in the local community, and finished with the Harris Museum & Art Gallery's announcement of the 'Money Matters' project (see page 35).

'Definitely inspiring and really interesting. Information really useful.'

'I've found a drawer full of old coins. What do I do about them?'

Knowsley Hall, November 2014

This seminar came about thanks to the discovery of hundreds of Roman coins amongst the family papers at Knowsley Hall. Dr Stephen Lloyd (Curator of the Derby Collection), who made the find, gave an account of the events relating to the discovery.



This was followed by a talk from members of the Ormskirk and West Lancashire Numismatic Society, the two numismatists who were brought in by Dr Lloyd to identify the coins and compile a catalogue. Henry Flynn (Project Curator, MMN) then stepped in to offer his expert advice on cataloguing and researching a smaller collection, as well as pointers on the 'dos and don'ts' of coin storage.



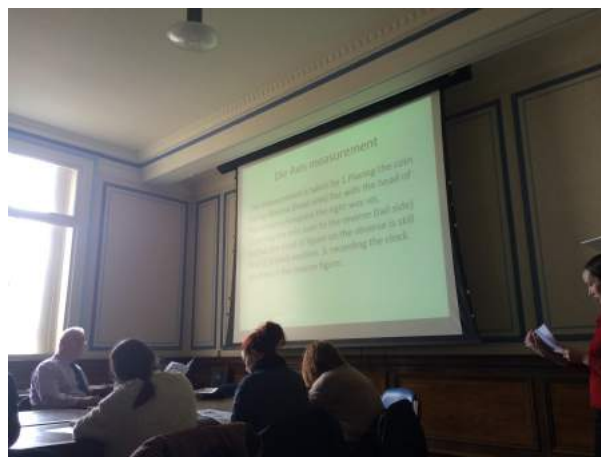
Making the most of orphaned collections

Preston Town Hall, April 2015

'Very enjoyable and informative. Feel inspired to tackle the documentation issues we have.'

This workshop was designed and delivered with the Harris Museum & Art Gallery's 'Money Matters' project. The aim of the day was to demonstrate how to get the most out of an 'orphaned' collection (i.e. one lacking in-house expertise).

Matthew Ball gave a summary of 'Money Matters' and its progress up to 2015. Before his arrival at the Museum, the Harris' collection - despite its impressive size and variety - had remained largely untouched, mainly owing to a lack of curatorial interest and expertise. Matthew gave an account of his steps to rectify the collection's considerable documentation and storage issues, as well as an overview of how the collection's potential was finally being realised in the form of research projects, displays, and outreach initiatives. Delegates also heard from three students on placement from Lancaster University's Regional Heritage Centre, who spent time working with the Harris' German, French, and Russian collections of coins, medals, and banknotes culminating in a display they designed on the effects of the First World War on the currencies of the time. Vanessa Oakden (Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer) then gave a session on how to identify Roman coins. Henry Flynn talked about the work of the MMN, along with advice on the proper storage and cataloguing of collections, followed by Tom Hockenhull (British Museum) on British tokens from 1600 to the present.



Conference: Penny Lane - Using and caring for numismatic collections

Museum of Liverpool, September 2015

'Thoroughly enjoyed the really detailed focus (Roman & medieval on day 2) and stepping back for a more general view - children's management of money and interpretation (day 1).'

MDNW and the MMN, in partnership with National Museums Liverpool and the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, held this two-day conference on how to make the most of underused numismatic collections. It was the culmination of nearly two years of work between MDNW and the Money & Medal Network to support numismatic collections in the North West.

Day one looked at how we might go about using numismatic collections in outreach, learning, and engagement. Stand-out sessions were delivered by Lancashire County Museums Service - on the events and activities around the Silverdale hoard of Viking silver (which included the sudden, surprise appearance of a Viking!) - and the Debt Advice Foundation, who, in partnership with the Harris Museum, brilliantly showcased their work on training young students to deliver peer-to-peer financial responsibility lessons in schools. Sessions were also delivered by Museum of Liverpool staff on the *House of Memories*, a training programme supporting carers of people with dementia, and by Ben Alsop and Meika Harris, who introduced the work of the Citi Money Gallery education programme at the British Museum.



Day two concerned itself with providing practical advice on caring for, curating and identifying numismatic collections. The day began with an introduction to the work of the MMN, succeeded by an engaging practical session on the display of collections (Karen O'Rourke, Curator of Urban & Military History, National Museums Liverpool, and Henry Flynn), during which delegates were given the chance to pin their own coins and banknotes using equipment provided by the MMN. Talks then followed on the proper documentation of collections (Eimear Reilly, Documentation Assistant, Fitzwilliam Museum) and the care and conservation of numismatic objects (Julia Tubman, formerly British Museum). The practical identification sessions in the afternoon were very popular - medieval coins, delivered by Carl Savage (independent numismatist), and Roman coinage by the Portable Antiquities Scheme's Vanessa Oakden.

Attendance figures were high on both days, and feedback was good. All those surveyed said the conference was relevant, engaging, and pitched at the right level. Suggestions for further training days included renewed calls for more identification training, and workshops exploring the intricacies of documentation, conservation, and the imaginative use of modern money in collections.



'Great curatorial sessions on identifying coinage.'

Medieval coins

Harris Museum & Art Gallery, February 2016

Medieval coin identification is one of the most frequently requested forms of training. This workshop, designed and led by Carl Savage, was divided into four sessions, each introducing the basic history and chronology of English medieval coinage from 1158-1544. At the end of each session, the delegates were given a chance to test their identification skills using coins from the Harris' collection. This was an invaluable opportunity to learn from the region's most knowledgeable medieval numismatist. Feedback was uniformly positive, with all of those in attendance feeling the event was well conceived, relevant to their work, and worth their time.

Making the most of your medal collection

Victoria Gallery & Museum, University of Liverpool, October 2018

For the first time we held a workshop looking at medals, with a fly through a brief history of medals and the medallic tradition with Philip Attwood, Keeper of Coins & Medals at the British Museum, and an overview of British military medals by Alan Jeffreys, Senior Curator at Imperial War Museum. An intriguing insight into the creative process behind the production of modern art medals was given by Irene Gunston, Medallist and Sculptor/Metal Caster from the British Art Medal Society. Tanya Szrajber, Head of Documentation at the British Museum gave an introduction to cataloguing procedures and Henry Flynn discussed ideas for displaying medals in engaging ways.



Collection reviews

Matthew Ball, Numismatic Consultant

In late 2015, I was appointed Numismatic Consultant for MDNW, who planned to launch a programme of numismatic collection reviews for North West museums. Applications were sought from museums that lacked the necessary time and expertise to make the most of their numismatic holdings. Applicant institutions were requested to provide an idea of the current level of in-house knowledge regarding their collections and what they hoped to gain from participation in the reviews. The purpose of the reviews was to provide each museum, even for a short time, with access to the expertise necessary to assess the importance of their collections, the potential locked within them, and to make specific recommendations based on storage and conservation requirements. The four successful institutions, each of which will be visited in detail below, were:



Grosvenor Museum, Chester



Warrington Museum & Art Gallery



Congleton Museum



Salford Museum & Art Gallery

1. Grosvenor Museum, Chester

The Grosvenor Museum opened in 1886, with a wide-ranging remit toward fine arts, natural and social history, geology, and archaeology. The Museum's close involvement with ongoing excavations and related archaeological investigations in and around Chester has led to the creation of an impressive archive of archaeologically-recovered material – much of it in the form of coin finds. These include single finds, site assemblages, and some wonderful hoards, including the Heronbridge hoard of Roman *denarii*, the Dutton hoard of late Roman *siliquae*, the Esplanade hoard of Viking silver, and the Winsford hoard of Tudor and Stuart silver coins. These sit alongside a textbook collection of Anglo-Saxon pennies of the Chester mint (already published), and a more 'generic' collection of non-archaeologically-recovered coins, medals, tokens, and banknotes originating from Cheshire, Britain, and beyond. At just over 8,500 objects at the last count, this ever-expanding collection was also the largest in the review.

The numismatic collection had been entirely digitised and accessioned prior to my arrival, making it very easy for me to locate things in the store. Likewise, the overall storage situation at Chester was the best of any museum in this programme of reviews – the collection was stored as a single entity in the Museum's main on-site storage facility, housed in custom-built coin cabinets of the type usually seen in major numismatic departments. Despite this, the Grosvenor admitted that it lacked the expertise necessary to understand the significance of its collection, or its display potential.

The purpose of this review, therefore, was twofold. First, to conduct a general survey of the collection (paying particular attention to the Roman section), correcting mis-identifications and providing further context on important objects; second, to identify important objects, themes, and stories from within the Grosvenor's collection that would form the basis of a numismatic exhibition scheduled for the summer of 2016. These new interpretations would, in turn, be used to inform improvements to the Museum's permanent numismatic displays, the ways in which it used coins in its public programming, and the quality of in-house knowledge.



Roman coins, in common with their ancient and medieval counterparts, carry a remarkable variety of images and designs. This makes them amongst the most versatile classes of object in any museum, easily adapted to fit the theme of almost any display or project. The Museum explicitly stated the upcoming exhibition should interpret and use coins in ways that demonstrated their richness as historical sources, countering the perception that coins are small, boring, and difficult-to-display objects. The Grosvenor's collection was a rich source of material and ideas – as were the general public. Before settling upon exhibition themes, curator Elizabeth Montgomery and I spent a day in Chester city centre. Armed with a handling collection, we talked with shoppers to understand their interest in numismatics and to hear what they would like to see in an exhibition. We even gave people the chance to strike their own coin on an authentic reproduction pair of ancient coin dies - a draw that not many could resist!

The finished exhibition, 'Minted: Making Money and Meaning', hoped to encourage people to look at coins as more than simple monetary objects. No single period was focused on more than others. Instead, themes centred on topics like portraiture, how coins were made, their use as propaganda tools – and even the way they chart changing historical fashions. All manner of coins and hoards from Roman through to modern periods were on show, many for the first time.

One of the most eye-catching innovations of the exhibition was the use of photography. Members of the public were given the chance to have their hair styled by professional hair stylists in imitation of those on the coins. Their portraits were then taken by Kat Hannon, a local studio photographer, who produced a striking set of portrait roundels that were prominently displayed next to the coins themselves.



A number of interactive features, suitable for all ages, were provided alongside. These ranged from coin rubbing to a 'design your own coin' station, where visitors could dress up and pose for a portrait photo in front of a coin backdrop. A good number of these were submitted online and posted on social media, thereby broadening the reach of the exhibition. Positive reviews were received in a number of places, including *Coins Weekly* (see page 40 for the link).

The provision of low cases and plenty of magnifiers made it very easy for everyone to appreciate the details of these objects at close range. Much of this was made possible by a generous MDNW grant, around £1,200 of which went toward the costs of display, photography, and interactives. 'Minted: Making Money and Meaning' closed in late 2016, but its success was such that elements of it are now on permanent display.



'Minted' was on at the same time as 'In Good Humour: Disease, Doctors and Dying in the Roman World', a prestigious exhibition that drew in loans from the British Museum, National Museums Liverpool, and the Wellcome Trust. I was keen to prove that coins, as much as any other kind of object, could play a key part in transmitting Roman ideas of health and medicine. The addition of a numismatic element to an exhibition on this (seemingly unrelated) topic was an important one; it demonstrated to curators from other departments that coins and medals could, and should, be considered when planning future displays, regardless of theme. 'In Good Humour' therefore featured a number of coins from the Grosvenor's collection – large Roman bronzes, bearing depictions of the goddesses Salus

(health and wellbeing) and Minerva (associated with doctors and medicine), as well as representations of abundance and various foodstuffs – in the Roman mind, hallmarks of healthy, civilised society contrasted against chaos, disease, and barbarity.

Coins were also made to fit in with simpler, no less effective, things like Valentine's Day (which occurred around the time of my visit). In almost no time, a display case in the Museum's entrance foyer was put together, featuring delicate Valentine's cards of the 19th century together with coins on a related theme - Roman bronzes, struck by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius in memory of his beloved wife, Faustina I, and a silver shilling of 1555 bearing portraits of the (less happily married!) Philip of Spain and Mary of England. Displays like this are small, but they contribute toward the sustained inclusion of numismatics in everything the museum does.

Apart from advising on display and exhibition themes, my review looked at how the Museum's main permanent numismatic display, situated in the gallery on Roman Chester, could be improved and rejuvenated. A display of coinage is one of the first things that greets you as you walk into this gallery. It was something of a 'missed opportunity': coins were pinned to a sloping backboard with unimaginative and non-eye-catching blocks of text. I suggested that the coins could be used to explain what the different Roman denominations were, or illustrate the rate of legionary pay - this seemed pertinent given the gallery in question charts the history of the Roman fortress and its garrison.

Other less immediately obvious outcomes included a contribution toward scholarly awareness of the collection. My review led me to realise there existed a number of things deserving a wider scholarly audience. Together with Carl Savage (independent medieval numismatist), I went on to write several articles on coins and hoards in the collection for academic journals. These include a long article on hitherto-undocumented coin hoards of Cheshire in the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, as well as articles on an extremely rare late Roman silver medallion that had been acquired by the Museum after its discovery in 2016.

There is an ongoing commitment to numismatics at the Grosvenor. On top of the exhibitions and consistent inclusion of numismatics in displays and other programmes, there will soon be a collections page for the coin collection on the Cheshire West and Cheshire museums website, <http://westcheshiremuseums.co.uk/collections/our-collections/>. Current plans to refresh the permanent displays continue apace, and it is extremely pleasing to see that aspects of the 'Minted' exhibition remain on public view for all to enjoy.

2. Warrington Museum & Art Gallery

Warrington Museum & Art Gallery first opened its doors in 1857, making it one of the oldest surviving municipally-funded civic museums in the country. As with many 19th century foundations, its collections aimed to showcase all the world under one roof, with objects representing a quite amazing mixture of subjects, from geology, botany, ornithology, ichthyology, and ethnology, to Egyptology, the pre-historic and Roman periods, British history, local archaeology, regional crafts, the fine arts – and, of course, numismatics. The main archaeology and ethnographic galleries, as well as its recently opened Cabinet of Curiosities gallery (2014), successfully retain an impression of this Victorian eclecticism combined with modern, considered curation and display.

Despite being a part of the Museum since its founding, the numismatic collections have historically lagged behind the others, both in terms of their prominence in the galleries and in the way they have been perceived and understood by staff. In its application, the Museum noted how the recent numismatic work of MDNW and the MMN in the North West provided the encouragement it needed to finally go about examining the potential for increased public use and access of its numismatic collections.



The chronological and geographic scope of Warrington's numismatic collection is wide, covering almost all periods from the prehistoric and Roman to the modern day, as well as extensive holdings from local excavations. It is also, by the standards of a museum without a specialist numismatic department or curator, very large – over 6,500 objects. To make the best of my visit, it was decided that

my review should be divided into two parts. First, an overall inspection of the health of the collection as a whole, including an assessment of its storage needs, conservation requirements, and general organisation. This was no small task, as years of relative neglect had resulted in a very unsatisfactory storage and documentation situation.

Second, in-depth examinations of two collection areas the Museum was especially keen to develop - its fine collection of Roman coins (my own speciality), and 17th century traders' tokens. Warrington is situated in a part of Cheshire that saw intense and sustained Roman occupation, making it important for the Museum to understand the significance of its Roman numismatic collections, especially those from local excavations. As for the traders' tokens, it had long been claimed that Warrington possessed amongst the finest and most extensive collections in the region, with an especially good selection from 17th century Lancashire. This was a



claim the Museum was especially keen to verify.

As just mentioned, Warrington possesses an extensive Roman coin collection. In the main, I found it to be composed of standard base metal issues, though there are representatives of almost every denomination to be found in Britain (barring gold). These coins cover a wide chronological span - from asses and *dupondii* to common radiates and *nummi* typical of the later empire in Britain. The important archive of excavated coins from the famous Wilderspool site (a trading and manufacturing centre on the Mersey) even contains extraordinary issues from the sixth century onwards. Silver coins are rarer in the collection than bronze and copper-alloy, although the few silver *denarii* and *siliquae* are very fine.

It soon became apparent that much of the core founding Roman collection was made up of high quality examples of large bronze *sestertii* from the first and second centuries A.D. - evidently chosen for their extremely fine, medallic portraits.

Most of these, inevitably, are not local (their provenance will never be known), but their high quality makes them extremely displayable and suited to handling. In many ways, this is typical of how many, if not most, 18th and 19th century collectors viewed ancient coins - as examples of ancient art akin to sculpture or engraved gemstones. As with collections of imperial busts in marble, coin collecting was seen as a way in which wealthier collectors might assemble a 'line-up' of portraits for each of the emperors familiar to them from classics of Roman literature like Suetonius and Tacitus. Warrington's possession of such a fine collection, sourced from various donors pre-dating the Museum's foundation in the 1840s-50s, places it squarely within this tradition.

Locally found coins added a touch of diversity. These are understandably of more weathered appearance but - having originated from nationally significant sites such as Wilderspool - tell a much richer archaeological story than the more aesthetically pleasing examples. Much of the Wilderspool material is already on display in the Museum's archaeology gallery. The coins, of which there are many examples, demonstrate the vibrancy of Wilderspool's commercial life, which, unlike many sites in this part of Roman Britain, endured well into the later period. Some of the more unusual coins show that the site maintained some kind of indirect overseas contact with distant parts of the Empire. Unfortunately, the display of these coins failed to convey their importance to the region's archaeology. I recommended that their presentation be made more eye-catching (the coins were, at that time, displayed on the flat, and lacking light), and that new information regarding some of the more 'unusual' eastern Mediterranean specimens be added to the interpretation panels.

One of the great benefits of a coin collection - especially a Roman one - is its adaptability. Themes as diverse as architecture, fashions in clothes and hairstyles, ancient religion, commerce, and political symbolism are all expressed on Roman coins. With this in mind, and in addition to the more focused work outlined above, I passed on a list of general, easy-to-implement ideas on how the Museum might incorporate coins in its other displays, exhibitions, and public programming. More generally, the collection could be even be used to describe the significance of money in societies both past and present. All of these themes could provide a useful hook on which to hang a small exhibition or display.

As already mentioned, another aim of the collections review was to determine the status of the trade tokens. Thankfully, there was substance to the Museum's claim that its collection of 17th century Lancashire tokens (around 130 pieces strong) is amongst the best in the country, and one of the largest in the region. The need for tokens arose in the later 17th century because of the Royal Mint's failure to meet the demand for 'small change'. Across the country, local merchants stepped in

and started to issue their own tokens - mainly for low values like the halfpenny and penny. The Museum's collection contains a good number of examples from the growing 17th century market and manufacturing towns of the region - Warrington, Preston, Bolton, Chorley, Liverpool, Manchester, Lancaster, Macclesfield, and more. Tokens of this period carry not only the name of the local merchant who sponsored their production, but also his trade, and even his address. I was keen to stress this point to the Museum. Like few other objects in their collection, tokens offer a tangible connection to the interests, beliefs, and trades of 17th century Warringtonians - an important factor to consider, given the importance of local stories and experiences to the work of modern local museums. As with the Roman coins, the future use of the tokens depends upon the museum's ability to slot them into wider projects and programmes. Potential projects include using the tokens to create comparative 'maps' of the geography and trades of 17th and 21st century Warrington, addressing questions relating to how the town has changed and adapted in the intervening centuries. Multiple avenues of investigation could be explored depending upon the group you work with - the changing townscape, the emergence of new trades, and the arrival of new communities, to name but three.

The Museum was quick to act on my recommendations. Craig Sherwood, Collections Access and Documentation Officer responsible for my visit, ensured that my report was circulated amongst all staff (some of whom were unaware that Warrington even had a numismatic collection!). Consequently, the Museum education officers included coins in their Roman Britain sessions for the first time, with the presence of rarer international issues amongst the Wilderspool collections important in demonstrating the significance and reach of Wilderspool as a settlement. Inspired by the success of 'Minted: Making Money and Meaning' at the Grosvenor Museum, Warrington has also committed to staging an exhibition centred on its coin collection, with a chosen emphasis on the significance of money (in all its forms) to societies past and present.

On a more fundamental level, the review enabled the Museum to rectify deficiencies in the way its collection was stored and documented. The storage situation was far from ideal. Coins were stored in hanging files, old packets, makeshift envelopes, and an array of re-used boxes and tubs, many without sufficient documentation. Much of my time at the Museum was therefore spent trying to associate coins with their original provenance, as well as a coin-by-coin review of the Roman section to double-check and rectify many incorrect identifications. Pleasingly, the Museum used this information to add a considerable number of coins to its collections management database. This was accompanied by a grant from MDNW, £450 of which was used to purchase sufficient acid free coin envelopes to appropriately re-house the collection.

Many other areas of the numismatic collection lay outside of my expertise and the time constraints of our project. In order that they received their due attention, I was able to establish contact between the Museum and other subject specialists. The Museum was visited by Helen Wang (British Museum Curator of East Asian Money), who reviewed its collection of East Asian coins and monetary objects. There then followed a review of the Museum's significant medieval collection. This review, the first of its kind in the Museum's history, was carried out by Carl Savage (independent medieval numismatist) and paid for with further MDNW grant money. Carl was able to identify several groups of interest within the collection, including the identification - previously unknown to the Museum - of a contingent of coins from the large Eccles hoard of 1864. Carl's findings, along with the first comprehensive listing of the Museum's medieval numismatic holdings, were subsequently published in the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*.

Much as with the Grosvenor in Chester, the impression at Warrington is of a museum with a reinvigorated interest in the potential of its large and diverse numismatic collection. Coins and medals now have their own collections page on the Museum's website, <https://wmag.culturewarrington.org/collections/coins-and-medals/>. Future plans for the collection - including mass digitisation, redisplay, innovative new exhibitions, and potential partnerships with local universities - hold plenty of promise, and we look forward to viewing Warrington's progress on each of these fronts in the coming years.

3. Congleton Museum

Congleton Museum was founded in 1985 as a charitable trust dedicated to the history and people of Congleton. My time at the Museum focused entirely on its two coin hoards - both of which, owing to their direct connection to turbulent periods in the town's history, have been described by the Museum as having 'significant resonance for local inhabitants'.

Together, these two hoards form the vast bulk of the Museum's numismatic holdings. The Moody Street hoard, 18 large gold coins of c.1623-41 were hidden in the wall cavity of an ancient half-timbered cottage and discovered during renovation work in the 1950s. The enormous Priestly Fields hoard - well over 3,000 Tudor and Stuart silver coins, buried in four large glazed earthenware jars - were uncovered in 1992. This is a significant collection for a museum of Congleton's size - made all the more important by the quantity of surviving information relating to the composition, burial, and discovery of both hoards. Quite apart from its immense size, the Priestly Fields find, for example, is notable because we can actually trace the probable identity of its original owner: John Walker, three-time mayor of Congleton, and owner of the land in which the trove was buried. One of the earthenware pots actually bears his initials! This level of accuracy is quite extraordinary - only in a very small number of cases have we ever been able to draw a link between a hoard and an actual person or group of people. Coins, by their nature, are 'anonymous' objects; to associate these coins with a known individual from Congleton's past presented numerous exciting routes for the future



re-interpretation of the Priestly Fields hoard redisplay.

The untapped potential of Congleton's collection was obvious. However, two successive reinterpretations of the hoard displays in 2002 and 2009 were, by the Museum's own admission, 'not particularly exciting'. In part, this was down to factors beyond the Museum's control: not only did they lack specific in-house numismatic knowledge, but, of the 3,409 coins in the Priestly Fields hoard, only 30 were in the possession of the Museum upon my arrival (the rest being stored at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester).

The delivery of the remaining portion of the Priestly Fields hoard on my second day at the Museum added a sense of urgency to the consultation (there was no room in the store to house them - we urgently needed to find some way of displaying all of these coins!). With an eye to their future display, I first considered how we were going to interpret the coins in insightful and interesting ways. This was done in conjunction with Ian Doughty, Chairman of Trustees, and Rebecca Checkley, the museum volunteer assigned to the review. I particularly enjoyed this part of the consultation, which involved in-depth numismatic conversations with volunteers and staff (in the hope of arming them with a body of knowledge that would outlast my visit), as well as discussions on how we might work more nuanced and interesting interpretative strands into the hoards redisplay.

First and foremost, my review aimed to challenge a long-held assumption that the Moody Street and Priestly Fields hoards are simply 'of the Civil War', buried in response to some ill-defined trouble in the area. This 'crisis-and-response' theory of hoard burial is often wheeled out to explain why hoards were deposited; in Congleton's case, this blanket explanation obscured far more interesting stories that could be told about the formation, burial, and context of their two hoards. Moody Street, in common with most hoards, is anonymous: no one will ever know why it was hidden in the wall of that cottage, adding a hint of mystery - the idea of lives and stories lost to time - that is more beguiling than any conventional theory, inviting us to draw our own conclusions on the reasons behind its concealment. In my opinion, the date range of Moody Street's coins, which were mostly minted within a very short time of one another, points to the possibility that whoever owned the hoard created it by changing some (or all) of their savings into a smaller number of gold coins before - for reasons we will never know - stashing them inside a wall and never returning.

For the redispays, we wanted to emphasise stories and interpretations like these, which are unique to the two hoards in question. Even so, we were eager not to lose sight of the fundamentals. The new labelling is careful to address the unavoidable 'where', 'why', and 'when' questions that people always ask when looking at a hoard (but which were not being addressed by the existing interpretation panels). As far as possible, we framed the answers to these questions in ways specific to the history of Congleton itself. For example, what were the

contemporary values of the hoards when they were assembled? Where did their owners sit on the social scale? Answer: the Moody Street (total £18) and Priesty Fields (£172. 8s.) hoards respectively amount to 720 and 7,000 times the daily rate of sixpence paid to Congleton's plague watchers in the 1660s! By a stroke of fortune, the Museum even possesses the will of John Walker, the likely owner of the Priesty Fields hoard, which includes item-by-item valuation of his possessions at the time of his death. It is hoped that the Museum will use this wonderful primary document to provide points of comparison between the price of goods c.1670 and the total value of the hoard itself.



Together, we thought about how the discovery of the hoards could be reflected in their presentation. The Moody Street display took the form of a 'recreation' of the wall in which they were found, with the coins suspended from the back wall of the case on projecting arms, as if spilling to the ground. An added benefit of this is that the arms bring the coins far closer to the eye of the visitor. The Priesty Fields hoard, in light of the thousands of extra coins available for display, was given a far larger multi-level case which, thanks to a £2,000 grant from MDNW, was equipped with custom-made mounts on which the hoard's four pots now rest, and new photographic backdrops reminiscent of the field in which the hoard was found. Display space in the Museum is extremely limited, so it was pleasing to see the Priesty Fields hoard being given prime position in a prominent case near the centre of the room. The coins – all 3,409 of them – are now displayed in 'heaps' around their respective pots (Priesty Fields is, after all, technically *four* separate hoards!), a popular and effective technique employed by many museums to maximise the

visual impact of large hoards such as this. All coins from both hoards are now wonderfully lit with in-case LED lights, increasing their visibility yet further.

The Museum was especially keen to develop materials and resources to complement the redisplayed hoards. These range from a set of informative electronic slides to sit next to the hoards cases, to free handbooks for the use of volunteers and visitors alike. Rebecca Checkley designed the handbook to accompany the Moody Street hoard, pairing each of its 18 coins with corresponding facts relating to 17th century coin production, the meaning of the words and images upon them, and the place of gold coins in 17th century society.

I found Congleton to be an example of how a largely volunteer-run museum, despite the constraints of space and budgetary limitations, can do things well - and with great enthusiasm. The recommendations and outputs of review are just one part of a wider effort on the part of the Museum to develop and promote itself across the county. Recently, it has made some notable new acquisitions such as the Sandbach Ring, and taken part in notable touring exhibitions (e.g. the Knutsford hoard, in league with the Museum of Liverpool and the Portable Antiquities Scheme). All of this feeds into the Museum's long-term determination to secure funding for the purchase and redevelopment of a new and more suitable building to do its collection justice. It is pleasing to consider that the work and outcomes of this collections review have gone some way to demonstrate the Museum's ability to properly use, display, and store its collection, as well as its willingness to work effectively with external partners.

4. Salford Museum & Art Gallery

Salford Museum & Art Gallery was founded in 1850. Like the nearby Warrington Museum & Art Gallery, Salford is amongst the earliest municipally-funded museums in the country. Numismatics, alongside the Museum's typically Victorian accumulation of antique casts, fine art, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Oriental antiquities, formed one of its core founding collections. However, curatorial knowledge and appreciation of the numismatic collection has traditionally lagged behind that of the others.

As at the Grosvenor and Warrington, the vast bulk of my time at Salford was spent with the collection - which, at c.3,200 objects, was of sufficient size for me to be able to survey it in its entirety over the course of my visit. This comprised a review of each aspect of the collection, period by period, mainly with a focus on teasing out noteworthy coins/groups of coins and objects deserving of curatorial attention. Taken together, this was the first global assessment of the entire collection to have taken place in the Museum's history. The importance of this was stressed upon me from the outset - curatorial confidence in the collection and its capabilities (hitherto in short supply) was vital to its inclusion in large upcoming projects such as a major gallery redevelopment. Parallel to this ran an effort to double-check and correct wrong identifications (plenty of which existed in the Roman section) for update on the Museum's collections management database, and a storage review. Recommendations on how the storage of the collection could be improved upon, with the use of MDNW grant money, were made at the end of the review (see below).

My review revealed that, overall, many aspects of the collection are 'generic' - what you would expect for a Victorian museum - including a Roman and medieval collection, with a good number of international coins and money objects (the latter mainly from East Asia, probably acquired as 'curiosities'), medals, and British tokens of the late 17th to 19th centuries. Regarding the latter, I was surprised to learn that the Museum possessed almost no locally-made Salford or Manchester tokens of the 18th century, which should have been common. This was offset by some rather more interesting (though, not local) tokens from various parts of Britain and the world, including an American set of trade tokens - some very early, like a 1783 example depicting General George Washington.

The international coins, many of which belong to the Gaskell Collection, were typical of what many museums seem to have acquired through the course of the 19th and 20th centuries - an ad-hoc (but nonetheless interesting) mixture of coins

from all over the world, their method of collection touching on the age of colonialism and the two world wars. In light of this variety, I made a recommendation that they refrain from viewing the collection as a 'finished' entity; in accepting such variety of coins, past curators evidently wanted the collection to represent money in all its forms, from all places and times, up to the modern day. I pointed out that simple steps, such as accessioning current/new issues of British and international coinage, are an easy way of keeping the collection alive and growing.

The key to making use of this collection in an effective and interesting way was to incorporate it along thematic lines into other things the Museum was doing - ensuring they achieved prominence in the galleries, temporary exhibitions, and public programmes. As at the other museums in this review, my visit was about demonstrating what the collection can do, and of its adaptability to different (not necessarily numismatic) themes. A gallery redisplay was scheduled for 2017; with this in mind, the Museum expressed an interest in displaying as many Salford-related medals as possible, but stated that its knowledge of its holdings, and of the techniques of medal display, was not sufficient to do this. My review was able to identify a selection of medals and other objects (e.g. locally-produced 17th century traders' tokens) that suited this purpose.

Regarding future exhibition and display, other ideas included an investigation of how people have interacted with money in alternative ways over the centuries - the nature of the collection was perfectly suited to look at how people responded in times of crisis or change (i.e. hoards, tokens), how they adapted money for other uses (i.e. for jewellery; many coins are holed for suspension), how they created their own money - legally and illegally, how they used money to put across their own ideas - be they political, social, etc. (again: tokens, or the Museum's wonderful Peterloo medal).

Another idea could be a display that asks 'what is money?', which would be a good way of making the point that not all money necessarily comes in the form of coins in the 'western' (i.e. round, metal) tradition. Salford possesses a good collection of objects perfectly suited to telling this story: tokens, banknotes, East Asian currencies, shells, and even ingots. A display drawing on these objects could even highlight the difference between modern money and that of past eras - ours is made of worthless metal; even until recently coins relied on their intrinsic metal value.

As well as the miscellaneous ancient, British, and international collections, there was the typical run of locally-found Roman through to Early Modern coins - both single finds and hoards with varying degrees of provenance.

The 'gems' of the collection, insofar as I was able to judge them, were the Roman hoards: Boothstown (540 copper-alloy radiates, AD 251-75), Booths Bank Farm (1,070 copper-alloy radiates, AD 260-96), and a contingent of the scattered Hackensall (or Preesall) hoard (325 copper-alloy radiates, c.AD 253-74). The Museum had long wanted to place these hoards on permanent public display, but lacked the relevant knowledge to do them justice. Knowing this, I was pleased to provide the Museum with updated interpretations, grounded in current scholarly thinking, on their contents, context, and why and when they would have been deposited. The Booths Bank Farm hoard, which still exists in its 'as-dug' form (the coins are fused into the shape of the bags in which they were buried, see picture below), was the most interesting of all. Thanks to the Museum's good connections with the University of Salford and its Centre for Applied Archaeology, this hoard was shortly due to go on display at Ordsall Hall (from September 2016). The current aim is to see it displayed on a more permanent basis within the Museum itself. To this end, part of the £2,500 MDNW grant awarded to Salford has been put toward



the purchase of suitable stands, mounts, and other equipment for the better presentation of coins in its galleries.

As with almost every museum that took part in these reviews, the storage of Salford's numismatic collection was in need of an overhaul. Inadequate plastic and non-archival packaging had taken their toll on the condition of the coins themselves, as had overcrowding as a result of insufficient storage space. With the help of a further £1,900 of MDNW money, the Museum was at last able to invest in a suitable cabinet and plenty of archival-safe Secol sleeves to house its prized medal collection, as well as a good number of acid free coin packets. In its report to MDNW, the Museum stated that these improvements in storage and documentation were a major reason why the numismatic collection ([which] 'has not been displayed for several years') is being included in current and future gallery redevelopments and temporary displays.

An easy way of inserting numismatics into a Museum's existing programme is through handling boxes. The Museum already has a good selection of boxes - these can be taken out, along with plans and guidelines as to how their contents should be used, at short notice. We talked about setting up a reminiscence box that incorporated a strong numismatic element. The distinctive shapes and tactility of old denominations like the threepence, farthing, and the larger penny are particularly suited to purposes such as this, as well as being very easy (and cheap) to implement.

Discussion with the Museum's Learning Officer also indicated that a Victorian handling box - to complement already successful sessions being carried out in the Museum by staff and volunteers - would be the best route to follow. A box (or boxes) along this theme could be designed at a very low cost. It was suggested that the coins could be handed out to groups of children as an activity based on buying. The Museum's collection of these coins isn't large enough to support this kind of handling; pennies like these can easily be obtained in quantity (and extremely cheaply) on online selling sites. The Roman and British collections (Tudor, Stuart etc.) are, likewise, ideally suited for handling purposes but at the time of the review the Museum did not deliver enough sessions on these topics to make handling boxes worthwhile.

Art Fund *Treasure Plus*



Treasure Plus, supported by the Headley Trust, was initiated in response to the growing number of archaeological finds being reported and acquired by museums. This is in no small part down to the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which, over the past 15 years, has done much to persuade the public of the importance of declaring their finds.

The programme aimed to deepen public appreciation of Treasure and related archaeological material through new and creative ways of engagement. *Treasure Plus* grants enabled museums to fund the specialist skills and further resources needed to properly conserve, display, and interpret their Treasure acquisitions so that they could be fully enjoyed and appreciated by the public.

Nationwide, grants amounting to £200,000 were awarded to 36 projects, including five sites across the North West (detailed on the next page).



A toolkit was developed by the Art Fund after the conclusion of *Treasure Plus* funding in 2015. It contains useful information on where to find funding and other forms of support for museums with archaeological collections. Find it in the Links and resources section on page 40.

Kendal Museum, 'Pennies and Pounds: Coinage throughout the years' (£6,987)

This project centred on seven Roman, medieval, Tudor and Stuart-era coin hoards acquired by the Museum since the year 2000 – none of which had ever been displayed. The *Treasure Plus* grant covered the costs of conservation, talks and identification events, an Arts Award project, and the development of augmented reality technology to complement displays.

Lancaster County Council Museums Service, 'The Silverdale hoard: the story so far' (£3,000)

The Silverdale Hoard is one of the largest Viking-era hoards to have been found in Britain to date. This project displayed the hoard in its pre-conserved state, giving visitors a chance to see the craftsmanship in just the same way it was discovered by a local metal detectorist in 2011. The display was accompanied by school projects and a programme of talks and family-friendly events.

Manchester Museum, 'Treasure Box' (£2,450)

This project was designed to test ways of increasing public engagement with the Alderley Edge Hoard (564 Roman copper-alloy coins of the third and fourth centuries AD, found in 1995) by working with people with dementia. A variety of resources were developed that would encourage reminiscence and discussion, and were then taken to community groups and local hospitals in the Manchester area.

Nantwich Museum, 'Nantwich Treasure' (£8,250)

The grant enabled the museum to purchase a new display case and storage equipment, to revise interpretations of its treasure collection, and to hold two public events. The objects at the centre of this initiative are all local discoveries that shed light on the lives of people who once lived in the town and the surrounding area. They include Roman coins and brooches, a Saxon pendant cross and pottery dating over a 600-year period.

Ribchester Museum, 'Ribchester Museum centenary project' (£5,000)

This project supported the loan of a key regional piece, the Ribchester Helmet, from the British Museum. The Museum acquired a new display case, updated security systems and delivered a public activity programme. This included a Roman festival featuring re-enactments, handling sessions, and talks from curators from both Ribchester Museum and the British Museum.

Money Matters

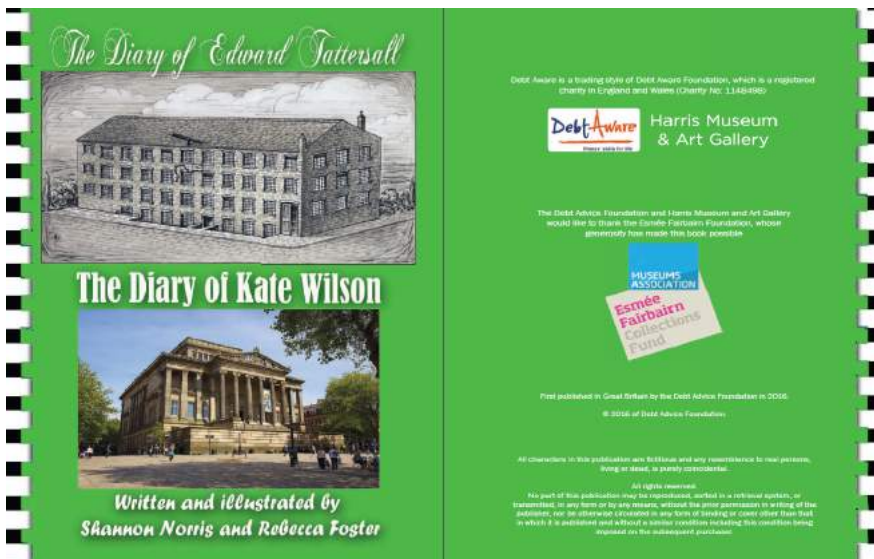
James Arnold, History Curator, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston

The 'Money Matters' project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund through the Museums Association, has transformed the way that the Harris uses its 12,500 item numismatic collection, which includes nationally important Roman and British coin hoards, individual coins from around the world, medals, tokens and paper money. The project has repeatedly demonstrated the relevance and versatility of numismatic collections, and challenged the presumption that 'coins are small and boring'.

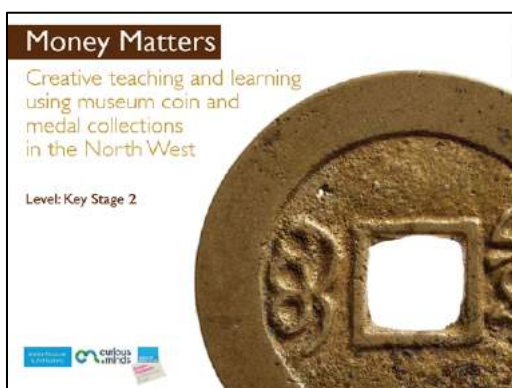
Improving the storage of the collection was the bedrock of the project. The Project Curator was assisted by Harris staff, volunteers and university placement students to label conservation grade envelopes, create digital catalogue records, and to identify any remedial conservation issues. The experience was mutually beneficial – to both the project and the participants – who received training in object handling, cataloguing, research, and exhibition curation. Public events included coin handling at Chinese New Year and striking Viking silver pennies for 'Museums at Night' using a coin die based on coins from the Cuerdale Hoard. A Viking Treasure Day at the Museum of Lancashire saw re-enactors, craft and family activities, and expert speakers bring collections to life, giving the day a real buzz.

One of two successful young people's projects was carried out with the Debt Advice Foundation, resulting in the development of a money diary and lesson resources as part of their Debt Aware initiative, aimed specially at schools. The diary, written by two university students, is in the form of a story book and contrasts the life and conditions of a family living in Preston in 1815 and in 2015 and aims to show the financial problems that are shared by each family, but that the solutions to those problems are vastly different. The lesson was successfully trialled in schools, with pupils gaining real value from the lesson and the handling coins that accompany it.

Another young people's project was carried out with local charity, Creativity Works, which assists people not in employment, education or training. Work by attendees included producing a film about money and what it means to them and a visit to the Royal Mint. The group got to see the design room where coin designs are initially sketched out, the engineering room where coin dies are engraved and the factory floor where machines were churning out money from metal blanks at enormous speed.



The project has put the Harris' numismatic collection on the map and has successfully demonstrated the diverse and rewarding outcomes that can be achieved through knowing a collection and making it accessible through cataloguing and research. As the project drew to a close there was a real desire to share the knowledge gained through the project. A new creative teaching and learning resource was commissioned by the Harris and Curious Minds, the Bridge Organisation for the North West, to give examples of how numismatic collections have been used. It includes curriculum and Arts Award links to collections, example activities and an index of museums in the North West with numismatic collections hosted by the MMN (find in the Links and resources section on page 40).



| Creative ideas and curriculum map | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| *For more details about Arts Award criteria please see pages 25-29 | | | |
| Theme 1 | The Journey of a Coin Through History - the use of money | | Online Resource Links |
| Main Curriculum Area | Related Curriculum Objectives | Challenge of Coverage | |
| History | <p>Maths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence in chronological order using time language Exchange rates <p>History:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancement of the ancient civilisations The legacy of Greek and Roman cultures <p>British Values/ Citizenship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Function and use of money Rule of law – all people are subject to and accountable to law <p>Literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in discussions, presentation, performance and role play Prepare pieces to read aloud and to perform | <p>The Journey of a Coin Through History – the use of money</p> <p>The initial introduction of coins as a way of charging for goods</p> <p>Learn about the earliest civilisations and how they 'paid' for goods and services</p> <p>Explore the earliest civilisations and their use of coins – differences between how the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans used coins</p> <p>Order coins and compare the differentiation of their use</p> <p>Place to one of coins generalisation – compare to the use of talens during the industrial revolution, linking to the role of law</p> <p>Learn about the Royal Mint and the use of money in today's society</p> | <p>General</p> <p>http://www.britishecollections.org.uk/collections/coins-and-medals.aspx</p> <p>http://www.britishecollections.org.uk/research/education_and_teaching.aspx</p> <p>http://education.scholix.co.uk/coins/504/</p> <p>Egyptian Trade</p> <p>http://www.ancient.eu/coinage/</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/45418107</p> <p>Ancient Greece</p> <p>http://www.teachinghistory100.org/objectives_jour_coins_from_athens</p> |

Accessing expert research

Caroline Wilkinson, Curator of History, Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery

In 2017, Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery hosted its first international academic residency. Eight students from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, spent a week at the Museum exploring the coin collections of Blackburn industrialist and philanthropist, Robert Edward Hart. A prolific collector of rare coins and books, Hart bequeathed his collection for the people of Blackburn in 1946. Hart's collection has become the subject of increased academic interest over the past four years.

So how did we get here? This unusual collaboration between a Canadian University and a local government museum is the latest venture to develop from four years working in partnership with the University of London. In 2012 a research visit from Dr. Cynthia Johnston from The Institute of English Studies at the School of Advanced Study led to an exhibition of ten of Hart's manuscripts at Senate House Library, University of London. 'From Cotton to Gold' exhibition at 2 Temple Place, London, focused on the collections of the wealthy Edwardian philanthropists of Pennine Lancashire. Both projects highlighted the extraordinary quality of the Hart collection and brought it to the attention of the academic community.

Since then, a rolling programme of visiting academics has paved a new way of working for us. For Blackburn, the input from specialists has uncovered areas of strength and uniqueness within the collections, revealing new narratives. Equally, academic partners have uncovered new research potential, as well as gained experience in working with museums. This has resulted in incredible improvements in our knowledge of the collections, as well as a commitment to develop new ways of communicating research to the wider community.

So far, the programme has focused on the rare book collections; however, the partnership has also enabled us to establish a relationship with Dr. Rebecca Darley, a lecturer in Medieval History at Birkbeck, University of London. Dr. Darley visited the museum in 2015 to explore the numismatic collections, identifying academic and engagement potential. It was through Dr. Darley that we were approached to host students from the University of Saskatchewan. The residency presented exciting opportunities for all involved. While there is an academic objective behind the visit, we are eager to see broader engagement ideas developed based on the research, so that new information and narratives can be shared as widely as possible. By working collaboratively in this way we hope to continue to make Blackburn Museum's collections accessible and relevant for our local community.

Working together - MDNW and the Money & Medals Network

Lynsey Jones, Museum Development Officer, MDNW

In 2013 our task was to find ways of filling the gap potentially being left by the retirement of a curator of exceptional knowledge of numismatics. Our partnership with the MMN for the last five years has definitely gone some way to filling that void. Through the MMN we have been able to bring experts from all over the UK to our North West workshops. In return we've been able to use our knowledge of museums in the region to make sure workshops have been directed to the most pressing issues and subjects. Each workshop has always borne in mind the limitations museums are working to, with lack of time, knowledge and resources so have always tended towards the practical, low-cost ideas and suggestions. Between us and MMN we've been able to provide the support for museums here to start understanding and using their numismatic collections.

Along the way we've met over 50 North West museums with a numismatic collection of one form or another, given out 18 numismatic starter kits, contributed to the Money & Medals Network mapping, with the North West page being the first region to be comprehensively populated with information. MDNW is now also on the MMN steering group and we look forward to continue working with the MMN now that they have been awarded further SSN funding from ACE.

One of the greatest satisfactions has been to see what the four museums that received detailed reviews of their numismatic collections were then able to do with a small amount of funding from us, proving that lack of in-house knowledge doesn't have to be a barrier to managing, caring for and, ultimately, increasing public engagement with collections.

All the work of the last five years has culminated in this publication. This document is deliberately detailed, particularly in reporting the case studies, in the hope that staff and volunteers of other museums will read it and it will spark off ideas for how to use their own numismatic collections. In the training section we have also provided the names of speakers and their specialities; these and the information within MMN's *Fostering knowledge and expertise around the UK's numismatic collections* (find in the Links and resources section on page 40) should give you a starting point for making the most of your own numismatic collections, making it 'worth the investment'!

Useful equipment

The following is a list of equipment from the numismatic starter kits. Inclusion on this list is not an endorsement of any of the suppliers.

Archival pens (PEL)

Callipers (Prinz)

Coin capsules (Prinz)

Coin envelopes (PEL, CR, Spink)

Coin removed tickets (from MDNW)

Coin tickets, acid free (Prinz, Spink)

Currency envelopes (PEL)

Finger cots (CP, JG)

Humidity indicator cards (PEL, CR)

Magnifier (Prinz, PEL)

Medal boxes, acid free, handmade (GR)

Plastic 'Really Useful' boxes (PEL, YPO)

Railway track pins (DCC)

Zipper bags (PEL)

Key

CP - Cole-Parmer Instrument Company Ltd, sales@coleparmer.co.uk

CR - Conservation Resources
www.conservation-resources.co.uk

DCC - DCC Supplies
<http://www.dccsupplies.com/>

GR - G Ryder & Co
www.ryderbox.co.uk

JG - JustGloves www.justgloves.co.uk

PEL - Preservation Equipment Ltd
www.preservationequipment.com

Prinz - Prinz Publications UK Ltd
www.prinz.co.uk

Spink - Spink www.spinkbooks.com

YPO - Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation www.ypo.co.uk



Links and resources

Museum Development North West

<https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.wordpress.com>

Presentations from June 2013 training day -

www.youtube.com/user/MuseumDevelopmentNW

Money & Medals Network

www.moneyandmedals.org.uk/

The Money & Medals Network: Fostering knowledge and expertise around the UK's numismatic collections - www.moneyandmedals.org.uk/resources

Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)

Database of finds - <https://finds.org.uk/database>

PAS Explorers HLF-funded programme - <https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved> -

PAS education website - www.pastexplorers.org.uk

Art Fund *Treasure Plus* Toolkit

www.artfund.org/assets/supporting-museums/af-treasure-plus-toolkit.pdf

Roman, Medieval, and Post-Medieval coin identification guides

Online Coins of the Roman Empire - <http://numismatics.org/ocre/?lang=en>

Coinage of the Roman Republic Online - <http://numismatics.org/crro/?lang=en>

PAS introduction to Roman coins - <https://finds.org.uk/romancoins>

PAS introductory guide to identifying Roman coins -

<https://finds.org.uk/romancoins/articles/page/slug/identifyromancoins>

Introduction to medieval coins and identification guide for archaeologists -

www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/37.%20Coin%20Identification/37Coins_1.pdf

PAS medieval coin guide - <https://finds.org.uk/medievalcoins>

PAS post-medieval coin guide - <https://finds.org.uk/postmedievalcoins>

Medals identification guides

Medal Yearbook 2018

Various books available from

<https://spinkbooks.com/index.php?route=product/category&path=76>

Debt Aware (financial education work of the Debt Advice Foundation)

www.debtaware.org

'Money Matters' project

Money Matters: Creative teaching and learning using museum coin and medal collections in the North West -

<https://museumdevelopmentnorthwest.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/money-matters-lo-res-copy.pdf>

Review of the Grosvenor's 'Minted: Making Money and Meaning' in Coins Weekly

www.coinsweekly.com/en/News/Exhibition-review-Minted-Making-Money-and-Meaning/4?id=4641&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=CoinsWeekly+13.4.2017&newsletter=CoinsWeekly+13.4.2017

www.coinsweekly.com/en/News/Exhibition-review-Minted-Making-Money-and-Meaning/4?id=4641&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=CoinsWeekly+13.4.2017&newsletter=CoinsWeekly+13.4.2017

Acknowledgements and credits

Image credits

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Title page - Grosvenor Museum outreach activity

p3 Top - Knowsley Hall, bottom - Penny Lane conference

p5 Screenshot, Money & Medals Network website, <http://www.moneyandmedals.org.uk>

p6 Screenshot, Money & Medals Network website, <http://www.moneyandmedals.org.uk>

p8 'Anatomy of a coin tray', still from MDNW YouTube video from numismatic workshop

p10 Dr. Stephen Lloyd on the discovery of the Knowsley collection, Henry Flynn on coin cataloguing and methods of storage

p11 Roman coin identification with Vanessa Oakden, Preston Town Hall, left – Simon Critchley, right, image courtesy of Matthew Ball

p12 The Silverdale hoard's Viking re-enactor, Paul Gallagher of National Museums Liverpool on the House of Memories project, Penny Lane conference

p13 Practical activity in mounting banknotes for display, preparing coins for the Roman and medieval identification training sessions, Penny Lane conference, MDNW

p14 Irene Gunston, Medallist and Sculptor/Metal Caster, the British Art Medal Society, and Henry Flynn on displaying medals, MDNW

p15 The Grosvenor Museum, Chester,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grosvenor_Museum#/media/File:Grosvenor_Museum_-_](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grosvenor_Museum#/media/File:Grosvenor_Museum_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1335188.jpg)

[_geograph.org.uk_-_1335188.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grosvenor_Museum#/media/File:Grosvenor_Museum_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1335188.jpg); Warrington Museum courtesy of Warrington Museum & Art Gallery; Congleton Museum courtesy of Congleton Museum; Salford Museum & Art Gallery, courtesy of Salford Museum & Art Gallery

p16 Striking a replica coin, numismatic consultation at the Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Chester, 2016

p17 A member of the public styled as a young Queen Victoria, courtesy of Kat Hannon, some of the portraits displayed alongside the coins. Clockwise from top left: Faustina I, Marcus Aurelius, Aethelred II, Diocletian, and Caracalla, image courtesy of Henry Flynn

p18 View of the 'Minted: Making Money and Meaning' exhibition, image courtesy of Henry Flynn

p20 Warrington Museum's recently refurbished World Stories gallery, image courtesy of Matthew Ball

p21 Glass and ceramic finds from the Wilderspool site, on display in the archaeology gallery. The coins were not displayed with equal prominence, image courtesy of Matthew Ball

p25 The arrangement of the Moody Street hoard after a recent redisplay. The Museum acknowledged its lack of originality and sought alternative methods of interpretation, image courtesy of Matthew Ball

p27 Views of the re-displayed Priestly Fields hoard, showing coins spilling from the four pots in which they were found, and the Moody Street hoard of Stuart gold coins

p31 Part of the Booths Bank hoard - fused into the shape of the bag in which it was buried, image courtesy of Matthew Ball

p35 The Acton hoard of Roman denarii, found 2014 (PAS ref. LVPL-15E376). Acquired by Nantwich Museum, 2016, image courtesy of Portable Antiquities Scheme

p36 The Diary of Kate Wilson: a story book designed by students from the Debt Aware initiative; screenshots of the curriculum guide produced by the Harris Museum & Art Gallery and Curious Minds

p38 Coin removed ticket, MDNW

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About the author: Matthew Ball's career in museum numismatics began at the Roman Baths, Bath, first as a volunteer and then as one of the Beau Street Hoard project team. Since then, he has been the Project Curator for the 'Money Matters' project at the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, and the Numismatic Consultant for MDNW. He now works as the Research and Documentation Assistant in the Department of Coins and Medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. His primary interests lie in Roman coinage and archaeology, as well as wider numismatics and its application to museums more broadly. Find him on Twitter @matt0791.

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