

THE PLANCHET

EDMONTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

December 2013

Volume 60 Issue 5

The 4th Crusade The Forming of Achaëa



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THE PLANCHET

December 2013

Volume 60 Issue 5

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The Planchet Team:

Editor-In-Chief: Roger Grove

Content Editor: Chris Hale

Co-Editors: Pierre Driessen & Marc Bink

On-Line Distribution: Pierre Driessen

Printing and Mailing: Howard Gilbey

ON THE COVER:

A fortified Mystras on Mt. Taygetos, Achaea. Built by William II of Villehardouin, was the site of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

<https://www.gtp.gr/Locpage.asp?id=63651>

- Reverse of Denier of Isabelle de Villehardouin, 1297-1301.

- Obverse of 1804 US 1/2 cent.

Disclaimer: The opinions herein are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Edmonton Numismatic Society.

The editors, at their sole discretion, reserve the right to accept or refuse any material submitted for publication.

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Message from the President

David Peter 2010-14



Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year.

It's been a very exciting year for the ENS and numismatics in Canada. We celebrated our diamond jubilee and had two successful shows. I was pleased to host this year's BBQ, and we had a great turnout with excellent weather.

Canada currency saw the first train banknote since 1912. The birth of the royal baby brought some new collectors into the hobby with the introduction of commemorative silver coins. Superman coins bridged the gap between numismatics and comic book collectors. And the biggest of them all was the official end of paper banknotes combined with the end of the Canadian penny for circulation.

With the new year comes change. Hopefully, 2014 should be another exciting year, and I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

David

ENS President

@ The Next Meeting Wednesday, December 11, 2013



Royal Alberta Museum, 12845 - 102 Avenue
Meeting Start Time 7:15pm

- ENS society matters
- 2014 director and executive nomination and election update
- show and tell
- awarding of the Volunteer Awards for 2013
- draw and awarding of the GO FOR THE GOLD full gold sovereigns
- ENS Annual Charity Auction for 2013
 - this year's charity to be voted upon by members present
 - draw for the tax receipt open to all members who submit item(s) to the auction
- coffee, pop and cookies
- door prize draws
- Christmas and New Year's wish from your society's president

For more information regarding these events, or to add an item to the agenda please send an email to editor_ens@yahoo.ca

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About Your Society

Minutes from ENS Monthly Meeting on Oct 9, 2013

1) David Peter the ENS President opened the meeting at 1917 hrs.

David welcomed everyone and briefly spoke about the upcoming November coin show. He mentioned that the sign-up sheet was being passed for volunteers.

2) The issue of striking a commemorative token or trade dollar for the ENS 60th Anniversary was discussed as it will be very expensive to do. It was suggested that the club purchase windbreakers for all members instead.

- Jim Kindrake made a motion that the Executive Committee decide on the quantity of sizes to be ordered. Bob Eriksson seconded and the motion passed.

- Marc Bink made a motion to have a vote on whether or not we should purchase them quickly or wait until the March 2014 show.

- Jim Kindrake then made a motion to amend his previous motion to get size samples to try before placing the order. Marc Bink seconded and the motion passed.

Pierre stated that he would look into getting samples to try at the November ENS Monthly Meeting.

3) On a sad note the recent death of Jim Charlton at the age of 102 was noted.

Dan Gosling then gave a short talk on the importance of Jim Charlton to Canadian numismatics and his many accomplishments.

4) Jim Kindrake gave a very informative presentation on 20th Century Nepalese Coinage or "The Revenge of the Rana's" as he likes to call it. Not only is the numbering system very complex but Nepal also changed the dating system around 1925 and then they adopted a decimal monetary system in 1932.

5) Show & Tell
- 1309-1310 Edward II English Penny from the London Mint. The 5th Strike of the Series.
- 2 French Crusade Deniers struck in Greece
- 3 & 5 Cent US Banknotes from 1864
- 1759 ¼ Guilder from the Province of Holland
- Porcelain Coin Notgeld from 1920's Germany
- An early Alberta Prosperity Certificate with Serial # 1102. The lowest serial # is 1001.

Conclusion

Door prizes were drawn and the meeting was adjourned at 2110 hrs.

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Ikea? No, Achaea

By Marc Bink



The other day, I was at my favorite local coin shop where I acquired a couple of old medieval looking pennies that I thought could be French. They looked like they were made sometime between the 13th and 14th centuries, so that piqued my interest up. They had all the right highlights; they had a cross and a crown on it, and the legends were the usual cryptic looking medieval gothic font that is illegible to most except for maybe a monk-scribe bombed on mead in some obscure abbey somewhere. The archeology was going to be fun, considering I don't own any French coins from the early 13th century.

As it went, I wasn't permitted to do the archeology; the coins weren't for sale until it had been determined exactly what it was they were. Even though I was prepared to make an offer on the spot and take my chances with them, the answer still ended up being "no". I wasn't too

happy about it at first, but then again, I kind of knew time and the laws of supply and demand would be on my side, simply because there aren't that many people who are prepared to shell out money for a pair of un-researched medieval coins.



Map of the Byzantine Empire in 1265.



Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204.

A week or so later, the coins are identified, and it comes time to make a deal. So far the dealer has the initial purchase price plus the cost of paying someone to identify them into these coins. So they could end up costing far more than they are worth. Especially, considering they come from an obscure place and from a not necessarily important time period, I made a deal primarily because they had me intrigued, not because they were pretty. They are actually kind of crude and not that visually appealing. I guess I was the only guy making an offer to buy these things, because I wound up getting a pretty good deal on them, after I got an English penny thrown in on the deal. I knew that it was misattributed and figured it was going to be worth the risk. It turns out I was right, so everyone was happy in the end.

So imagine this: two sentries meet up about eight hundred years ago in the rain at the corner of an old abandoned marketplace in what used to be a city called Sparta. It was from this point the "the 300" embarked to their destiny. A multitude of campaigns against Athens were hatched here. Young men were harshly driven to stealthily pinch goods in the marketplace to survive. All of this is part of their training. Here, the greatest warriors Ancient Greece had ever created were trained. And now, there is just silence, as the two sentries approach in amongst all the ghosts of the past. Nothing is unusual until you hear them speak – and realize that they are speaking French! What were Frenchmen doing here?

The answer to that begins about a hundred years earlier with the 4th Crusade. This was a crusade that Christendom has had cause to regret since it happened. In a nutshell, a group of French and Holy Roman knights were enroute to liberate the "Promised Land" from the Infidel (again), and instead, they were diverted, sacked Constantinople and essentially ruined the Byzantine Empire. It all started when the Third Crusade ended badly. Frederick of Barbarossa had died, his army had fallen apart, Richard of England was also dead, and Philip of France had decided enough was enough and went home. Saladin was winning, even though he actually was losing too.

So another army was hastily called up by the inappropriately named Pope Innocent III to go and get the job done. This army consisted mainly of French mercenaries who weren't currently engaged with the British. These crusaders were usually the second and third sons of knights who weren't direct heirs. Their unfortunate lot in life was to either marry into a good family, take over an inheritance, or take to the colours and go off and either liberate the Holy Land and steal as much as they could or die trying. As can be imagined, the carnage was pretty heavy. Those that made it were generally pretty desperate men with nothing to lose and a writ to kill issued from Christ's own disciple on earth. It didn't get much better than that.

This new army was supposed to head right onto Cairo, instead it made it as far as Venice for



Alexios III Angelos

the winter of 1201. There was a problem; the Venetians had been promised 85,000 silver marks to convey this rag-tag army to Cairo, but only 14,000 guys showed up, not the 20-30,000 that were expected. This smaller group was obligated to honour the deal, but all they could come up with was 35,000 silver marks, and that left them in abject poverty - in other words, destitute with nothing to lose. This was not a pleasant situation to have within city walls; something clearly had to be done. Negotiations went on throughout the summer of 1202, and even the Pope got involved again. But still no one would pay the bill. Finally, the Venetians hit on an equitable solution; they'd use this army to knock some sense into the Byzantine Empire. The pope eventually acquiesced but had his reservations. He was, after all, condoning war against other Christians, and that just smacked of being wrong, considering the recent events in the Holy Land with the Ayyubids in Cairo. He should have listened to his gut.

The Byzantine Empire by that point in time was the height of civilization. It was over 800 years old and still had a lot of Roman buildings and institutions in place. Having taken diplomacy to a high art form, the Byzantines understood things in ways that their European cousins couldn't or didn't have time for. And, as was typical of the era, that which was not understood was consigned to destruction in the name of Christ. So before they realized it,

the Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos was on borrowed time. All that was needed was the spark which would set the whole thing off.

It wasn't long in coming. It occurred when the Emperor's cousin contacted the Christian army with an offer that couldn't be refused in the hopes that he might depose the Emperor. He offered the impoverished Crusaders 200,000 silver marks, the services of the Byzantine navy and a number of siege engines, if only the army would divert to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium. Surprise of surprises, the Crusaders agreed, and even though the Doge of Venice should have known better (he was once an ambassador to Constantinople and knew of their duplicity), he was an enthusiastic supporter and permitted the army to set off. It arrived at the gates of Constantinople in October of 1202.

Constantinople was one of the largest cities in the world at the time. It had never been successfully taken either. It had withstood Muslim onslaughts a number of times, as every Sultan or despot from anywhere in the Arab world who had attempted to move north into Europe had to go through Byzantium first. Initially this Christian army wasn't taken seriously. But by this point in time, the Byzantine Empire was in decay, having relied on economics and diplomacy and not a standing army. The defenses weren't adequately prepared, and the Europeans were just a little better at the art of war than the Byzantines gave them credit for. In July of 1203, a siege was begun. Later that year, Alexios III Angelos had fled, leaving nothing but a bare treasury, and his cousin, now crowned as Alexios IV Angelos, discovered that there was no way to honour his side of the bargain and began to melt down priceless Roman artifacts in an attempt to raise enough silver to pay the Crusaders. And then the unthinkable; Alexios IV was overthrown and strangled, and this just set the Venetians off. The murderous rampage had begun. For three days, Constantinople was sacked, and nothing was left unturned. Libraries were destroyed, ancient Roman works were demolished and lost, and what wasn't destroyed was stolen. This was the high-water mark of the Fourth Crusade. After this, about a tenth of those who had set out from Flanders a few years earlier had actually arrived in the Holy Land. And then, when they were there, they were largely ineffective. A great many of these Flanders crusaders elected to remain in Byzantium as occupiers. They set up what was referred to as a "Latin Empire" throughout the Balkan Peninsula in what is now Macedonia and Greece as well as in what is now modern Turkey.

This new Latin Empire was at first reviled by Rome,

but eventually, the Pope came around and acquiesced to it. He soon saw the riches of Byzantium pour into his coffers. All of a sudden, he was on board with the idea and ennobled it. The problem was, this new Latin Empire was constantly at war, if not with the Seljuk Sultanate, then the Greeks themselves or the remnants of the Byzantine Empire. A rising new group in the area, also based in Cairo at the time, decided to bide its time and let the locals take on the French and Italian occupiers and slaughter each other in fine medieval tradition. They'd come in later and pick up the spoils, once everyone else had exhausted themselves. They didn't know that they would have to wait close to 200 years, but it was worth it. This new group was the Ottomans, and they would become the true benefactors of the Fourth Crusade, having the

French to thank for doing what was previously thought to be impossible - take out Byzantium. In the meantime, the French thought that they had it made; they'd finally be able to set up a sphere of operations in this area of the Mediterranean. One of these new French states was that of Achaia, which is where my two coins came from.

One of the end results of this was the final "schism" between the two major forms of Christianity during that time. The Orthodox Church, based in Constantinople, had never forgiven the Roman Catholics of Rome for what they'd done. The Catholics, through the French, had succeeded in destabilizing the whole of the Balkans, allowing the Ottoman Turks into the heart of Europe. The Orthodox Christians were the first bastion of defense against the marauding armies of Islam. By taking them out, the French had more or less set the stage of European history for the next 400 or so years - constant conflict and war, until the Ottomans were finally stopped at the gates of Vienna and slowly driven through the Balkans back to Turkey. The Catholic Popes only realized what had happened after it was much too late. By that time they were complicit in the thieving and motivated by greed. Some things never change, it seems; the larger the institution the greedier and shadier it becomes. As is also the case with most large institutions, apologies or taking credit for mistakes also moves at a glacial pace. It took 800 years, but Pope John Paul II finally apologized to the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, in 2004. By then

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of course, the damage had been done; millions of lives had been needlessly squandered, and our history today might have been very different had the Doge of Venice forgiven the debt, and if Pope Innocent III had stuck to his guns and not permitted the raid on Constantinople to go forth.

So what about this new "Latin Empire" that was created by a bunch of dispossessed third-rate knights of Flanders' lesser nobility?

Achaia was formed or "founded" in 1205 by two Frenchmen, William of Champlitte and Geoffrey I of Villehardouin. The conquest took about five years before the two Frenchmen and their small troop were in firm control. William left for France in 1209, leaving Geoffrey of Villehardouin in charge. The Villehardouins would rule for the next 100 years, and then, the principality became property of some lesser Italian nobility who fought over it until it was eventually reabsorbed into the Byzantine Empire in 1432, which would in turn be absorbed by the Ottomans in 1453.

Achaia is located in what is now referred to as the Peloponnesian Peninsula. The capital was located at Andravida, and eventually, it was moved to Mystras in 1250. Ethnically, the people there are Greek and part of the Greek Orthodox Church. The French tried to popularize their own culture with the locals but eventually, failed and were always viewed as an occupying army. Economically, the lands were rich with dates, raisins, wine, honey and oils. Silk and wax were also made there. To the north, lay the Despotate of Epirus, and to the



1 Denier of William of Villehardouin of Achaea, dated between 1245-1278

east lay Attica and Athens. Surrounded almost entirely by water, this area of Greece was an important link in the trade routes to the east and the south. Apparently the wine was really good too - but there's no word whether the French set up any resorts there. Considering the day and age, probably not.

The Villehardouins were from an area in northern France about 30 km northeast of Troyes in the Champagne-Ardenne area. There was a castle there, and the surrounding area used to actually be called Villehardouin until this past century, when it was absorbed into Val d'Auzon in 1972. Considering that the First World War was essentially fought on those lands, there probably isn't too much left of the Villehardouin home property. Evidently, back in the 13th century, there wasn't much to go back to, because the Villehardouin family more or less stayed in the Latin Empire of Greece until they died out.

Geoffrey I was the first of them and a pretty nasty piece of work in his own right. As stated above, he and William of Champitte had managed to wrestle control of the area with 100 knights and 500 foot-soldiers. He clobbered the Greeks at the Battle of the Olive Grove of Koundouros. A few remaining forts held out until 1213, but afterward, he was firmly in control. William of Champitte went back to France in 1209 to claim his inheritance, but he never made it; he conveniently expired en route leaving the whole thing to Geoffrey. Geoffrey died in 1219 and was succeeded by his son Geoffrey II, who was in turn succeeded by yet another of the first Geoffrey's sons, William II in 1245.

During the reign of William II of Villehardouin,

the principality had hit its peak and soon was starting to slide. It was inevitable. William II was a bit of a troubadour and a poet, and he flourished in the culture at the time and set the standard for his principality. He had his own mint, and the principality had a unique spoken form of French which was reflected in the literature that emanated from there. He moved the capital of Achaea to a newly built fortress called Mistra which happened to be located near where ancient Sparta was located. One wonders if this was coincidental; and given William's love of literature and the arts, there's a good chance it was. As stated previously, it unfortunately couldn't last. William couldn't keep himself out of trouble. He first decided to get involved in the War of the Euboeote Succession and allied himself with the Despot of Epirus who soon deserted him to his fate. He was captured, and even though he was eventually released in 1262, it had cost him a great deal in money, prestige and real-estate. The Byzantine Empire was making a return in this area and was now the major force to contend with and "enemy number one". He tried to take it all back through a series of alliances and wars against the Byzantines, the end result of which cost him his daughter and his principality to the House of Piedmont. William had then decided enough was enough and went back home to Achaea to live out the rest of his life in relative peace. He died in 1278 and set off yet another uniquely medieval war of succession. This time it was his daughter Isabelle who was in the thick of it.

Isabelle had married Philip of Sicily as part of a deal cooked up by her father in another war of succession. This time he had helped Charles of Anjou take over Sicily and in turn resist the



Phillip of Piedmont of Achaea, circa. 1301-06.

Byzantines. William was allowed to retain his principality, but he now transferred his suzerainty from Emperor Baldwin of the Latin Empire to Charles of Anjou/Sicily. The problems started when Isabelle's husband Philip unexpectedly expired in 1277, and the Treaty of Viterbo with its Salic code kicked in, denying Isabelle of her father's dominions. Charles of Anjou took over Achaea and ran it for a number of years, even though he never once set foot in it.

Now here's where it gets a bit murky and tends to read like a section out of "Lord of the Rings" or a "Game of Thrones" episode. Isabelle then decided to marry Florent of Hainaut, who was the Stadholder of Zeeland and the Constable of the Kingdom of Naples. Funny how a Dutchman wound up in Greece fighting with a bunch of Italians over a Frenchman's daughter. Florent and Isabelle had a daughter, which didn't solve anything, and then Florent went off and died in nearby Acadia in 1297. This opened the door for another suitor, a man who was much younger than Isabella. Philip of Piedmont came on the scene in 1307. What's not clear is whether or not he married Isabelle. But he did satisfy Charles II of Naples' claim to the principality under that treaty, so he was allowed to stay. Now he died in 1313, and the rights were turned over to the unfortunate Isabelle again, who by this time was in Hainaut. Her rights were taken up by her sister and then contested by her daughter. And this went on until the last of the Italians and Frenchmen had killed each other,

and there was nobody left. So the land reverted back to Byzantine control in 1432 but was then forgotten to history, once it was swallowed up into the Ottoman Empire in 1460.

The coins themselves are not very pretty. In fact, they're hardly recognizable to most numismatists who collect modern coins. The older of the two, the denier from William II of Villehardouin, is struck pretty clearly and is for the most part legible. The later coin, the denier from Philip of Piedmont, is blundered. This is typical of a state that is in the midst of a war. One of the first indicators that things are in trouble is the fact that the coinage is blundered or cruder than a "peace-time" issue. Both coins are thin and made out of "billon", which is a very debased silver alloy with copper. Billon coins tend to contain only about 25% silver or mercury, the rest of the alloy being usually copper, and in some cases tin. These coins look like the alloy is more on the tin side, because they haven't turned brown or black yet. I would hazard a guess that they have been cleaned at some point in the last century or so, because they aren't re-toning.

The coins are about the same size as modern dimes but approximately half the thickness and weight. One has to remember that silver was pretty hard to get in those days. This was before the huge silver strikes in the Johannisthal area of Bohemia rendered silver "cheap". The coins look crude and are crudely struck on thin, hand-cut flans. At this point in time, the art of minting



Charles of Anjou, 1275-85.



Phillip of Taranto 1307-1312.

was being re-learned, after it was more or less "forgotten" after Rome fell 800 years earlier. The Church had very strong ideas about money in the early Middle Ages; the whole concept of "money" as a commercial entity was deemed "evil" and actively discouraged. There were very few coins made during the Middle Ages in Europe between 400 and about 1200 AD. Those that were struck tended to be of only one denomination and of a fairly uniform weight, implying that they would have been used more for foreign trade as opposed to making a down-payment on a local cow or something. The most prolific coin makers of the day were the English with their penny, and the French with a coin of a similar denomination called a denier. Both coins were loosely descended from the Roman "denarius" which is where "denier" gets its name from, and the English used "d" to signify the penny denomination up until 1967.

The English coins were held to a strict purity standard of sterling silver, the French were not. In fact, most mints on the Continent made debased silver coins that tended to suck all of the good silver pennies out of England. And in order to assure acceptance of these debased things in

place of good English silver, the Continental coins were styled like the English coins they were substituted for. So when these things came around, I thought they'd be decent examples of those somewhat debased Continental coins, which is why the English penny had to be part of the deal. The other reason I wanted the English penny was that I do have quite a type collection of Edward I pennies, and this one looked like a type I didn't have. Initially, I thought this article would have been a comparison between the English penny and the French ones, but there is no comparison; they aren't even in the same era.

So are these coins collectible or valuable? Yes and no. If a person comes from Greece and is interested in this area, then yes. However, here in Canada, I think there aren't that many people who would collect these things. Monetarily, no, these coins will never be considered "blue-chip". Not to mention, it's probably not a period of time that too many people know about or care about. I had no idea this sort of state even existed prior to coming across these coins. I had no interest in Medieval Greek history. I really didn't even care about Crusader history,

considering it was an essentially useless struggle that ended badly for anyone involved. I've now got a different read on this, and it may start a new facet of collecting for me, as I delve further into this period of time.

And that's the beauty of this hobby and what a coin can do. Look into those fields and legends and see a window back into time. One can almost see those two French sentries meeting each other in the rain on a corner in Sparta so long ago.



Peter McDonald Coins

Box 171 Kirkland, QC Canada H9H 0A3

Tel (514) 231-4106

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The Genius of the Roman People

By Terence Cheesman

On the 14th of May 330 A.D., the Emperor Constantine I consecrated the new imperial capital of Constantinople. Before this, the city was known as Byzantium. Constantine, rather than starting something new, had simply expanded upon what has been done by other emperors, though on a reduced scale. Increasingly during the third century A.D., the role of the emperor had become primarily military. His function was to lead the army in campaigns against the various kingdoms and peoples ranged on the frontiers of the empire. The city of Rome was too far away from the frontier, and thus the emperors spent less and less time within the city limits.



Increasingly, they began to place their headquarters in some of the cities along the frontier. These structures were at the beginning temporary but became more and more permanent. The emperor was, after all, the head of state. Where he went, his administration had to follow. As he spent more and more time away from Rome, the need for the creation of infrastructure necessary for the smooth running of government, as well as those things that Romans would see as essential for living their lives as Romans, had to be built.

Constantine had a further reason to build a new capital city. His support of the Christian faith required a break from the old pagan past. The new official religion would not have much competition

from the old. The old city of Byzantium was chosen, and extensively modified to become the brand new city of Constantinopolis or the City of Constantine. Unlike the previous imperial capitals, the founding of this new capital was marked by an extremely extensive issue of commemorative coins. Some of them were in fact minted throughout the Empire by the different mints in operation at that time. However, some were only minted at Constantinople, obviously to serve some special need. One such coin is the one we are now looking at.

It is a small coin, possibly a half nummis, minted likely for the special events associated with the consecration of the city. The obverse reads POP ROMANVS and depicts the bust of the Genius of

the Roman people facing left. On his left shoulder sits a cornucopia which is a horn of plenty. The reference here is that because of the abilities of the Roman people, the empire enjoys abundance and prosperity. The Genius is depicted wearing a laurel wreath on his head and is further draped very much like the images of Roman emperors. In fact, the Genius looks very much like a member of the family of Constantine. This Genius does break with tradition. Normally, the figure is depicted as a young man nude, or all but nude. Invariably, he is pictured holding a patera which is a shallow bowl from which he is pouring out liquor. In his other hand, he holds a cornucopia which is featured on our coin. The Genius seems to be fully clothed, for reasons that are obscure. Perhaps the most likely answer is that, though Genius of the Roman People is basically a pagan personification, he is being co-opted as a Christian one and needs to be seen to be different.

The reverse features an eight-pointed star surrounded by a laurel wreath. Below, is the mintmark CONSI. This indicates that the coin was minted at Constantinople at the tenth workshop. The laurel wreath has been an imperial symbol for centuries, but the star is an old symbol of the city when it was known as Byzantium. In 340 B.C., the city was under siege by the armies of Philip II of Macedon. One night, he tried to launch a surprise attack on the city but was thwarted by the appearance of an unusually large and bright star. Since then, coins minted in Byzantium often feature an image of this star, usually coupled with a crescent moon. This is most likely why this star is placed on this small coin which would have seen little circulation outside of the city. It looks like, despite all the rapid massive changes going on at that time, someone is still interested in maintaining something of the spirit of that venerable old city.




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AGENT FOR THE ROYAL CANADIAN MINT



Go for the Gold

The fourth annual Go For the Gold awards were presented at the December ENS meeting. The award categories are:

- Volunteer
- *The Planchet*
- Executive

Volunteer

Club members* who volunteer at least three hours of time throughout the year qualify to receive a silver maple leaf. Each member will only qualify for one silver maple leaf regardless of how many times they volunteer. Every time a member volunteers, they will receive one entry into a draw for one gold coin.** There is no limit to the number of entries a member can receive; the more you volunteer the more chances you will have to win.

Volunteering can come in many forms:

- Helping with the *Edmonton's Coin Show and Sale* (set-up, tear down, displays, admission desk, hospitality suite, etc.).
- Designing club brochures and marketing materials.
- Displays at the Coin Show and Sales.
- Volunteering for duties within the club (librarian, FaceBook, etc.).
- Any activity that will benefit the club.

The Planchet

Any club member* who submits one article for submission to *The Planchet* will qualify for one silver maple leaf. Articles must be at least one page in length and must provide a contribution to numismatics. An article must be selected and printed in an edition of *The Planchet* in the calendar year in order to qualify. The acceptances of all *The Planchet* submissions are subject to the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Each member will only qualify for one silver maple leaf regardless of how many articles they submit.

Every accepted submission will earn the member one entry into a draw for a gold coin.** There is no limit to the number of entries a member can receive; the more articles submitted the more chances you will have to win. Members who also

volunteer for *The Planchet* related tasks will also qualify as if they were article submissions (i.e., mail distribution, content editing, etc.).

Executive

All elected Executive members will receive one silver maple leaf at the end of their immediate term, at the February meeting.

The ENS Executive would like to thank all members who volunteered their time and energy to help make the Edmonton Numismatic Society one of the most vibrant clubs in Canada. It is clear to see the commitment that everyone puts into their club and we thank you. The club will only be as good as what you put into it. By the showing of the commitment of our members, we have a great club!!!

The live draws for the gold coins were held at the December meeting.

Last year's winners of the gold coin draws:

**Volunteer Category
Zultan Miholy**

***The Planchet*
Wayne Hansen**

* Only club members in good standing can qualify for any Go For the Gold awards.

** The size of the gold coins will be determined by the Executive prior to the award meeting.

The breakdown of the number of club members who will receive a silver maple leaf are listed below in alphabetical order. Also listed are the number of entries each member received for the Volunteer gold coin draw and *The Planchet* gold coin draw.

NAME	PLANCHET	Mar Show	Nov Show	Presentations	Misc	Total
Randy Ash		1	1			2
Marv Berger		7	6			13
Marc Bink	10	17	17	1	5	40
Gillian Budd		1	1			2
John Callaghan		11	10		10	31
Lance Casagrande			2			2
Kimberly Casagrande			2			2
Terry Cheeseman	5	3	4	1		8
Ermin Chow	3	1	1		1	3
Bill Demontigny		2	3			5
Pierre Driessen	9	40	40	1	26	107
Mirko Dumanovic		3	3	1		7
Bob Eriksson		1	1			2
Pat Eriksson		1	1			2
Bob Fillman		3	1			4
John Gallupe		2	1			3
Howard Gilbey	5	10	11			21
Dan Gosling		1				1
Mitch Goudreau		5	5		13	23
Don Griffith		2	2			4
Roger Grove	5	3	2	1	17	23
Chris Hale	5	1	2			3
Wayne Hansen	5	2	2	1		5
Joe Kennedy		1	1			2
Del Keown		2	2			4
James Kindrake				1		1
Elmer Lupul		2	2			4
Jac MacDonald		2	2			4
Jeremy Martin		4	3			7
Zoltan Miholy		4	1			5
Markus Molenda	5			1		1
Seymour Neumann		2	2			4
David Peter		2	2		22	26
Kim Peter		1	1		20	22
Paul Purdie		3	3			6
Jules Rach		2	2			4
Arif Sheena			1			1
Pat Sullivan		1				1
Matt Sztym		1				1
Andy Vanderleest		4	2			6
Jim Vanderleest		2	1			3
Greg Wichman		13	11			24

Any errors or omissions are unintentional and should be brought to the attention of the ENS Executive prior to the draw.





A Story is Worth a Thousand Words

By Wayne Hansen



Acropolis, Athens

'Still only a young man, Ergedas could barely remember his little village in the Thracian hills, surrounded by dark forests and ragged fields. He had tended his father's goats and hunted the wild pigs until the foreign raiders had come. They had bound his hands and dragged him to the Big Water by the rising sun, where they whipped him, then forced him and many other captives into the belly of a great, wood-planked slave ship lined with oars.'...

- ∞ -

'His Greek owner lived in a large mansion in the center of the city, beside the high hill covered with temples. Ergedas (**ΕΡΓΕΔΑΣ** to the Greeks) was not pretty enough, nor young enough, to work in his owner's house. So, at the beginning, his owner loaned his services to the overseer on the hill who made him pull giant stones into position for a colossal new temple named for the city's main god, Athena.'...

- ∞ -

'Mint master Xeniadēs had been looking for another strong slave to increase coin production in the main shop behind the agora. He found Ergedas working at the temple site and bought him at a steep price, knowing heavy labor had already made Ergedas strong. Within a short time, the mint master found that the new slave also had a quick mind, so he chose him not only to pour silver precisely into the special little ingots, but also to strike the thick Athena coins with the die-basher's hammer (which he could do as well as anyone). Now, after a few years of such toil, Ergedas was tired, and he had recently become dejected. A large order had arrived demanding they prepare a year's worth of tetradrachms during the two hottest months of the summer. More dies were readied, and more slaves were brought in. However, the newest slaves were slow, and the mint master was growing even more anxious. Day after day, the mint furnaces melted the precious metal and the hammers pounded the bright coins.'...

- ∞ -

'On the longest, hottest day of the summer, Ergedas let his mind wander for a few moments. He wiped away the sweat, moved over to the shop door and gazed at the sun-drenched alley. He longed for the wooded glades of his childhood and yearned for his freedom. It was then that he first saw the mint master's daughter.'...

Excerpts from the author's forthcoming novel: 'The Mint Master's Daughter'.

- ∞ -

Hope you enjoyed that. I'll confess, I might have read one too many historical novels. Though the prose of such novels is invented, a good historical novel is based on real events, and the author has usually gone to considerable lengths to research the pertinent details. But of course, a novel is also a license to add some sparkle by inventing new events and new details – something that is not tolerated within academic research, nor is it appropriate for serious coin writings. "The Mint Master's Daughter" may be fun to read, but it is not for serious consumption.

With that introduction, I merely want to emphasize that a good story, based on real facts, can add interest and appeal to an ancient coin; not a fallacious or salacious story of course, but a good story with lots of background to describe why the coin is special.

Initial and Next Steps

If you don't usually have a chance to fully investigate a coin before you purchase it, you can certainly do further research afterwards, when the coin's glitter and dazzle has faded from your mind (hopefully it doesn't fade too much, or you will want to return it). For a new purchase, the initial part of the story, the 'initial step', would be the basic research that normally covers coin type, coin variants, provenance, mint site, dating, weight and style comparisons, issuing authority, etc. Much of that rather dry information can be attached to the coin's flip for future reference.

With the basics under control, the collector can go to the 'next step' to create the deeper story - as I have tried to do with many articles for this column. The next step involves adding more context to the basic coin details, which might in turn help connect some of the disparate facts. So often, each ancient coin is seen as a single issue or a single strike with a price tag reflecting the current market value. A better appreciation for the coin's history can come from looking at a whole series of issues from a mint or a ruling authority, or looking at related issues from mints or authorities nearby. As an example, my article regarding the incuse nomoi of south Italy (The Planchet, December 2012) covers several cities that produced related coins, in a unique series, at different times, whose fabric changed as technology and fashion dictated. This type of context lets the collector appreciate where a coin fits into the regional scheme and further allows him or her to decide whether to invest in other related issues.

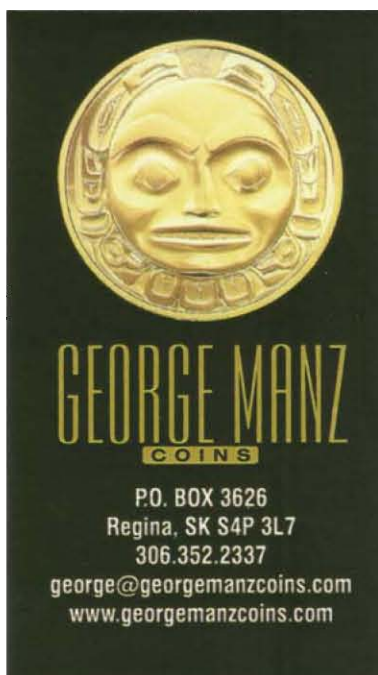
Some of these additional details can be added in sketch form to the coin's flip insert, if a computer printing system is used. The whole story will, however, need

to be recorded in a document, even if only as abbreviated notes, and then filed appropriately. The full story could also extend to describing the societal context of the region producing the coin. Where did the population come from? What resources were available? How wealthy was the society? Did a conflict or war affect the coinage? Which gods did they worship? Were coins needed for trade? How much did the citizens value style and design?

Conjecture

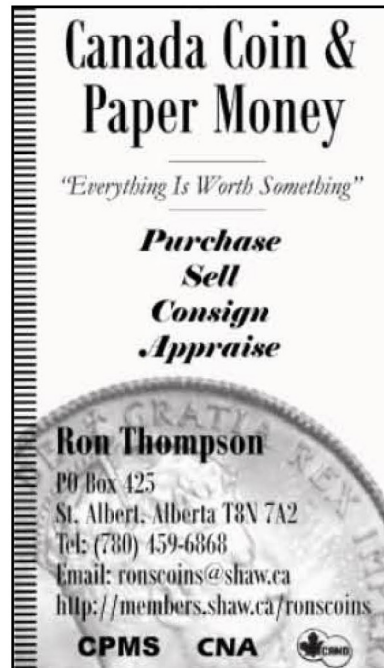
To capture and compile this information, it helps to write articles about the coins for publication. When I do an article, I at times insert various humorous or historical asides to add interest, but never to distort the facts, nor veer into the territory of the novel. That said, it is fair in a non-academic, recreational article (or your own collector story) to include some conjecture that ties together bits of research or provides 'educated' assumptions. Conjecture does not allow for the invention of new facts, rather it is more of a discussion of possibilities or an opinion. All such additional context regarding the circumstances of the coin's production and societal context, including limited amounts of informed conjecture, adds considerable meat to the bones of the basic coin story.

Speaking of facts and conjecture, it is important to mention the obvious - that most ancient history is not recorded and that ancient details are much scarcer than ancient coins. Regarding my attempt at a novel above, I would hazard to say that we do not know anything about the family particulars of any of the ancient mint masters - whether they had any particular daughters, or not, or whether any particular daughter was particularly sensuous and engaging, or not.



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Gratuitous Coin Photo:

Wouldn't you like to know if this coin helped win wars or sell trade goods, announced newly found wealth, spread propaganda, or was the last issue of a conquered people?



Carthage Tridrachm, Carthage mint. 230-220 BC (25.5 x 25.0 mm, 8.9 g, 12h). Collection of the author – ex: D Loates, Jan 2001.

In Closing...

Next time you find a really interesting coin, try to work out its background story and preferably write it down. Not only will it make your life more interesting (you won't necessarily become a babe-magnet or dude-magnet as a result), it could seal the deal with the coin's prospective new owner. If you do write the story down, consider sending it to various publications, including *The Planchet*, and let the royalties roll in, or not.

About Writing:

It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous. - Robert Benchley

Writing a novel is like driving a car at night. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way. - E. L. Doctorow

Writing is not necessarily something to be ashamed of, but do it in private and wash your hands afterwards. - Robert A. Heinlein

All the words I use in my stories can be found in the dictionary -- it's just a matter of arranging them into the right sentences. - Somerset Maugham

There is no mistaking the dismay on the face of a writer who has just heard that his brain child is a deformed idiot. - L. Sprague de Camp



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An Overview to Collecting Early American Copper Coinage

By Ermin Chow



Why do numismatists show great interest in their specialties? Although for some it may be due to economic speculation, for most it is the curiosity and the interest that is generated from their collection. Early American Copper (EAC) coinage collectors compose a fairly significant segment of the numismatic community and collect mostly US Large Cents and Half Cents. Numismatists choose to collect their specialization for a variety of reasons, but collecting EAC definitely has its perks.

Although age and interest are not at a set ratio, being able to handle and collect pieces that are around 200 years old is quite exciting. The quality of designs on EAC is phenomenal; in lower grades many details are visible and therefore generating interest for even the beginner of beginners. Its larger size also helps retain interest, since it allows for most details to be seen with the naked eye and finer details only require minimal magnification. The best part, however, is the fact that there are many ways to collect EAC and that raw circulated coins are equally collectable as uncirculated third-party graded coins.

Large Cents

These bulky, inconvenient pieces of currency were the most common denomination in everyday transactions from 1793 until they were gradually phased out in 1857 when its successor, the flying eagle cent was released. Due to the pre-modern minting technologies used at the mint, and changing specifications as dictated by Congress,

these crucial pieces of history ranged from 26 to 29 mm in diameter. Its weight in copper was to be equal in value to one cent, although it was only an approximation due to fluctuating copper prices. Since all dies for the early issues were hand-engraved, there were numerous minor variances in the designs, thereby creating many varieties for the Early Date (1793-1814) issues.

Large cents are generally categorized into 3 major groups: Early Dates (1793-1814), Middle Dates (1816-1839), and Late Dates (1840-1857). Collectors will very often specialize and collect varieties of certain dates. Large cents were actually minted every year from 1793 to 1857 with the exception of 1815. Often people will change the date on certain coins just to create an 1815 cent to complete their date set. Proof large cents were also made in small quantities since 1817, although not available to the public until the 1850s, and therefore very scarce.



Example of an early date large cent.



A stunning full red early date half-cent.

Half Cents

Similar to its counterpart, the half cent was minted from 1793 to 1857. However, this denomination was not as circulated as the large cent amongst the public, so mintages were significantly lower. Most dates are much harder to find than its large cent counterpart, and have sizable price differences. There was even a break in production from 1812 to 1824 and in the late 1830s.

Since all early American coinage was worth its weight in bullion, its low face value forced it to be much smaller, weighing exactly half of a large cent of the same year. For similar reasons to the large cent, half cents' diameters also range a fair amount; they measure from 21.2 to 24.6 mm. Their smaller size makes them much "cuter" pieces to collect.

EAC Grading Scale

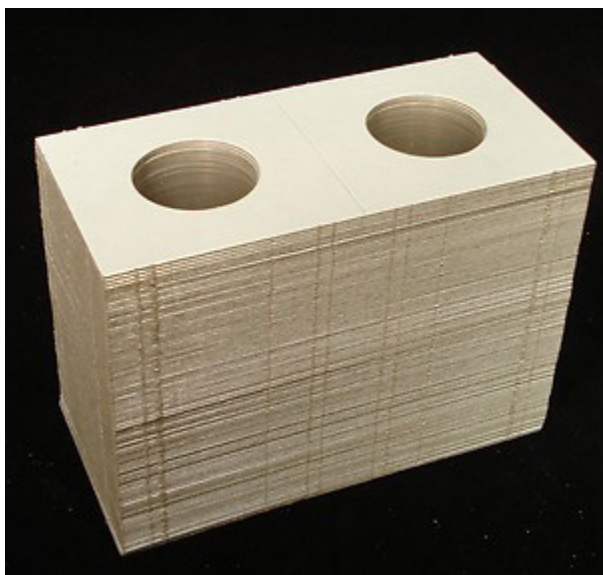
For all numismatic items, grading is considered to be an art; however, there are still guidelines to accurately assessing a coin's commonly accepted

grade. The EAC grading standard is based on the technical grades conventionally used for other series, but requires a net grade and condition. After attaining a technical grade, the net grade is assigned through decreasing an appropriate amount of grades for each problem with the coin. The net grade is used for the grade when pricing.

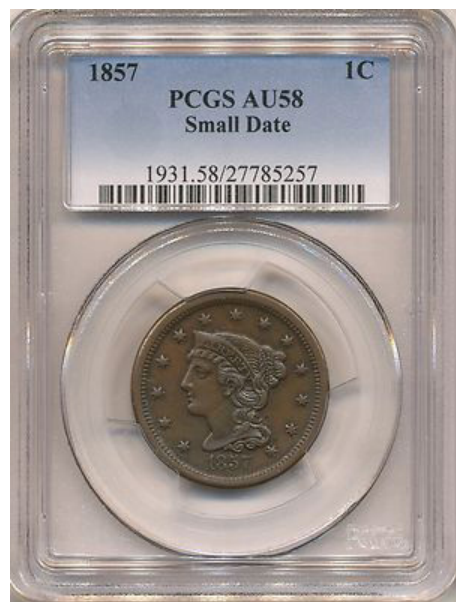
A coin is also assessed separately for surface condition, which ranges from scuzzy to choice. With a larger variance between the technical grade and the net grade, the condition is closer to scuzzy. The grades of average-, average, and average+ are assigned for conditions in between. The condition which is based on the amount of major and minor problems evident on the given coin plays a crucial role in the pricing of EAC coins.

Storage and Supplies

Every numismatist has their own preferences on storing their collections; however, there are widely accepted optimal storage methods. Commonly used methods of storage include cotton pouches



2X2 Holders



A slabbed EAC

in paper envelopes, 2 by 2 cardboard holders, and for graded coins its third party slab. Usually, the coins in its holders are then placed in coin pages or coin boxes for storage and organization. It is recommended that the coins are placed in a cool dry place, so that there will not be chemical reactions on the coin surface.

For removal of debris and crud in the EAC coins, several products are recommended. A commonly available, although toxic chemical called xylol is effective. The Blue Ribbon solution is not in production anymore, despite being a recommended solvent. A camel hair brush is great for gently applying solvents on the coin and removing extraneous material from the surfaces. It is to be stressed that coins that are toned do not need to be cleaned, only coins with excess material on its surfaces do. Also, a numismatist must be extremely careful and gentle with their coins, especially their prized possessions.

Building a Collection

For many collectors, they will start with a set of dates to begin collecting. Often a date set within a date range is what people begin with. For myself, I am currently working on completing a date set of the Middle Date large cents. Others may choose to create a type set of all the large cents and half cents. Some may choose to collect the "Red Book Varieties," which are the varieties listed in Ken Bressett's "A Guide Book of United States Coins." More advanced collectors may gravitate towards collecting every variety of a certain date or dates.

Especially in Canada, EAC is somewhat scarce to locate. However, many of the minor varieties listed in the specialty books are unattributed and therefore it is possible for collectors to find pricey varieties for a reasonable price. It is quite a thrill to find non-varieties, then discovering a variety that I do not have in my collection.

Resources for EAC

Attributing and pricing are two important skills in addition to grading that will often require the use of written resources. Recommended books include William Noyes' "United States Large Cents Volume I & II," John Wright's "The Cent Book," "William Sheldon's "Penny Whimsy," several titles by Walter Breen, and "Attribution Guide For United States Large Cents 1840-1857" by JR Grellman amongst many others. These books are excellent for attributing varieties, and despite their higher cost are worth every penny.

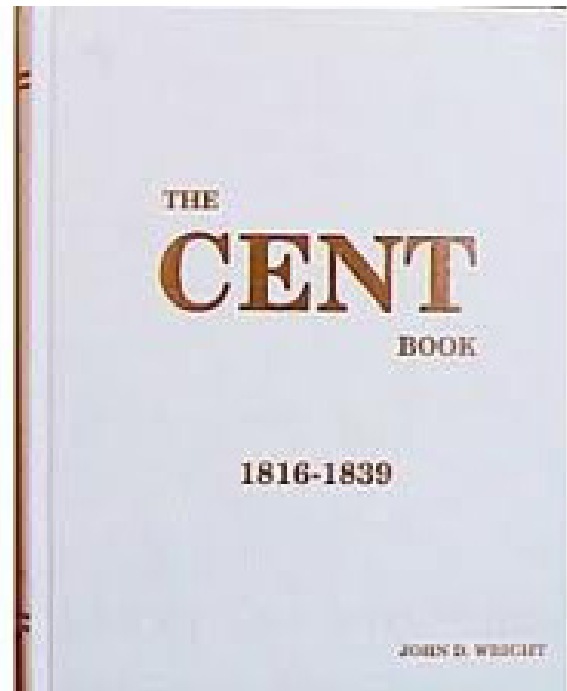
Pricing is somewhat trickier since the most authoritative resource, the CQR, is now out of print. The most current edition, the 20th edition,

printed in 2011 is available from its author Jack Robinson. Experts say that the prices from 2011 are still roughly 80% accurate. Like all other series, it takes much experience in dealing with EAC to be able to accurately determine the current market prices. Many EAC collectors and dealers believe that Red Book and Greysheet prices are inconsistent in reflecting current price levels.

It would be recommended that collectors join a numismatic organization. Many local, regional and national clubs have EAC collectors; it is a great way to build a network, as well as to buy and sell unwanted extras. However, there are specialty clubs which focus directly on EAC, such as "Early American Coppers, Inc" which is the premier club. Most clubs do publish a magazine or newsletter, which contains invaluable articles that may possibly include EAC research articles.

Conclusion

As previewed in the article, collecting large cents and half cents can be an exciting numismatic journey. The thrill of the hunt is what keeps many collectors going for decades. Early American Copper is great for both beginners and advanced collectors, since there are coins available to suit any budget, as opposed to other series like the gold Double Eagles. Although EAC may not be everyone's specialty, I encourage collectors of all calibres to give it a try. I discovered that the more I get involved with something, the more interest it generates for me.



"The Cent Book" by John Wright



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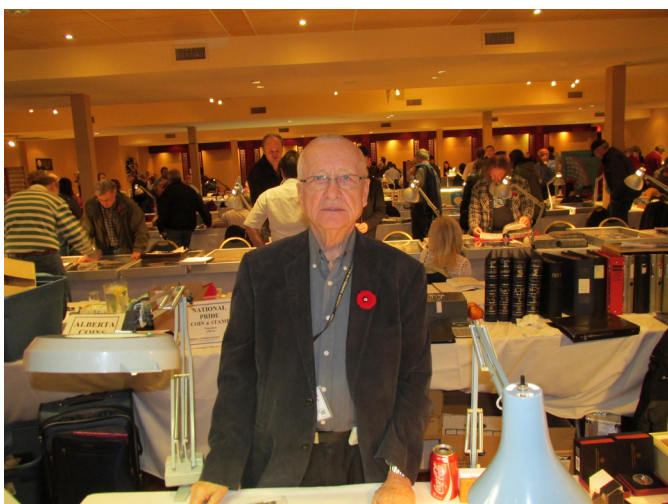
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New Membership Applications

**Charles Moore
David Marshall
Neil Heisler
John Poule
Sean Abbot
Jon Radels**

These individuals have applied for membership into the Edmonton Numismatic Society. Pending any objections from the membership at large, these individuals will be accepted as "Members in Good Standing", effective this publishing date. Any objections to the aforementioned applications must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Edmonton Numismatic Society, and will be evaluated by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Coming Events

December 11, 2013 - ENS December Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Go For The Gold awards and gold coin draws. Live auction with all proceeds to charity.

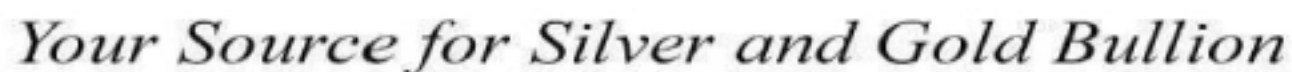
- members can bring items they wish to donate
- all proceeds will go to the charity to be voted upon by members
- draw for the tax receipt open to all members who submit item(s) to the auction

January 8, 2014 - ENS January Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

February 12, 2014 - ENS February Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Society annual elections.

March 1 & 2, 2014 - *Edmonton's Spring Coin Show and Sale, Edmonton Hotel & Conference Centre, 4520 - 76 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0A5, dealers wishing to attend call 780-270-6312.*

To list your coming events - send them to editor_ens@yahoo.ca.



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