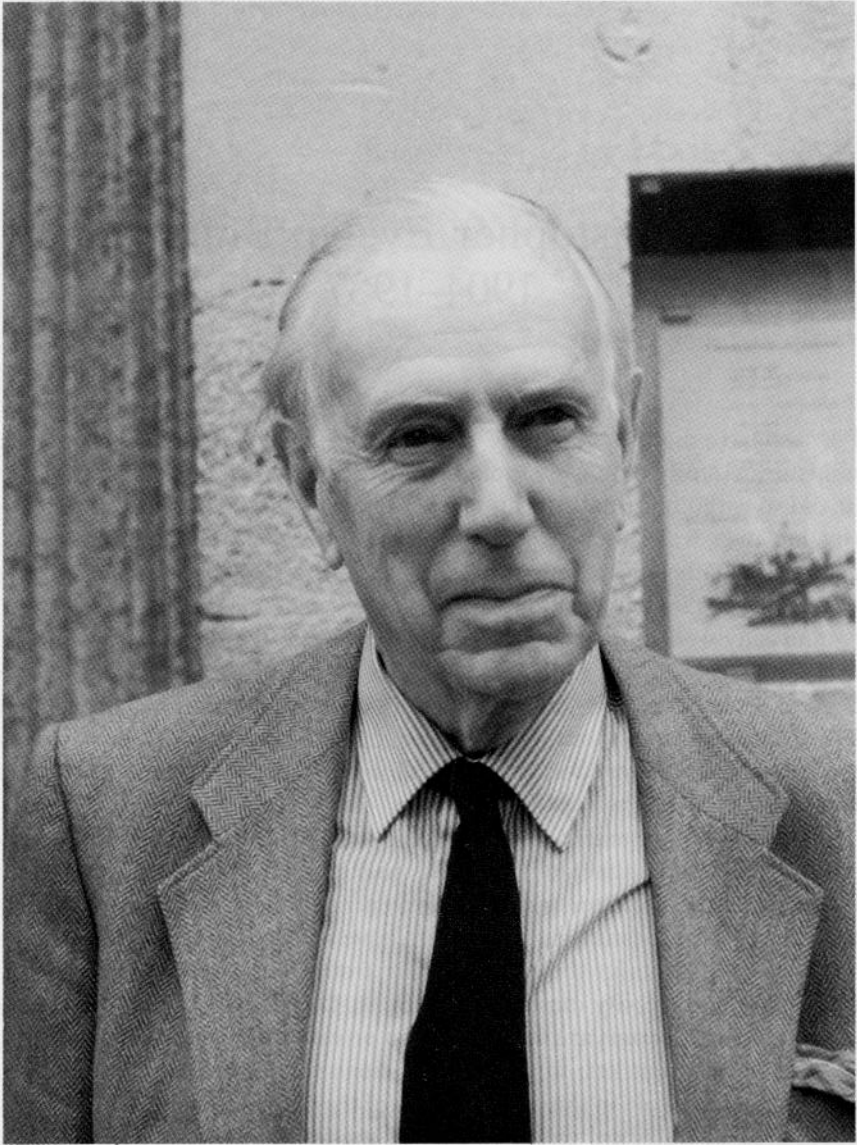


## Christopher Evelyn Blunt 1904–1987

FEW can have made a more wide-ranging contribution to their chosen field of historical study than Christopher Blunt did to British numismatics. That he did so without formal education after leaving school, and in such time as was left over from a long and distinguished career in the City, makes his achievement the more remarkable. That it was possible at all was due essentially to the nature of numismatics as an academic discipline, in that it is unusually well suited to amateur scholarship; to the decline in the scale and quality of English numismatic studies in the years leading up to the Second World War; but above all to the personal qualities that Christopher Blunt so opportunely brought to their regeneration. On the last two of these I shall have more to say in the following pages but a word about the first is necessary by way of introduction.

Although numismatics is a discipline ancillary to history and archaeology, the numismatist does not rely to nearly the same extent as the historian or the archaeologist on a limited number of libraries, museums and archives for his material, and there have never been more than a very few academic posts in the subject apart from the curators of the major national and university museum collections. On the other hand, there are large numbers of coins at any one time in private collections or in stock on the commercial market, and for generations collectors and dealers have played a greater role in the development of the subject than perhaps in any other area of historical enquiry. One of the consequences of all this has been that the scholarship of numismatic publications has tended to be of very uneven quality. The particular distinction of Christopher Blunt was not only to have produced a great body of original work of his own: as an editor he raised the level of the contributions of others to something approaching his own high standards, as an administrator he restored the status and fortunes of the British Numismatic Society and was architect of the Academy's major project, the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*,



C. E. BLUNT

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which has published many volumes of essential material, and as mentor, friend and colleague of numismatists young and old, he provided for more than 40 years the continuity and the focus that for other disciplines come from a stream of professional scholars in university posts and their pupils. That his own great collection of English coins, put together with discrimination and insight over 60 years, is in accordance with his wishes to be preserved for the use of later students is a characteristic conclusion to his life's work.

## 1904–45

Christopher Evelyn Blunt was born on 16 July 1904 at the Vicarage, Ham Common, Surrey. His father, the Revd (Arthur) Stanley (Vaughan) Blunt, was vicar of Ham, 'then a pretty little village',<sup>1</sup> between Richmond and Kingston. Their branch of the Blunt family had been settled since about 1600 in Sussex, from 1750 at Springfield Place, Horsham; later at Crabbett Park. There Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, poet and revolutionary, who was nevertheless as head of the family 'pleased to be called HF', and his wife Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Lovelace and granddaughter of Lord Byron, built the finest stud of arab horses then in England. Stanley Blunt, who belonged to a cadet branch of this family, went after Ham to the vicarage of Holy Trinity in Bournemouth, then in 1912 to Paris as chaplain to the British Embassy Church, and finally in November 1921 to be vicar of St John's Church, Paddington, where he died in 1929 at the age of 59. He had, in 1900, married Hilda Violet Master, who after 29 years of marriage was to live 40 years a widow until she died in 1969.

Hilda Blunt was the youngest of five daughters of John Henry Master of Montrose House, Petersham, who was always proud to have been one of the last recruits to the East India Company before it became the Indian Civil Service. The wide and distinguished family circle to which Christopher belonged (and which was greatly extended by his marriage) was not only a source of pleasure and satisfaction to him throughout his life<sup>2</sup> but provided quite a number of numismatic connections which he was delighted to discover. The most important of these was the result of marriage between another of the Master sisters and Sir Ralph Assheton of Downham Hall,

<sup>1</sup> This and other unattributed quotations about Blunt's life up to 1939 are drawn from autobiographical notes dictated shortly before his death (see p. 379).

<sup>2</sup> Mr Simon Blunt recalls how in the thirties his father would often set off on a powerful motorbicycle to seek out scattered relations.

near Clitheroe, the estate on which the largest hoard of English and Viking coins of the time of Alfred had been discovered at Cuerdale in 1840. The Blunt family itself had already entered the numismatic reference books, through Samuel, brother of a direct forebear, John Blunt of Lindfield, Sussex, who had issued a token to provide local small change, as was widely done in the 1660s to remedy the lack of an official copper coinage—the Blunt token is a great rarity, as Christopher would explain with some pride when speaking of the specimen he obtained in 1969. He was also pleased to claim descent from a mid-18th-century Deputy Master of the Mint, one Henry Vander Esch, whose father is said to have come over with William and Mary.

Christopher was the second of three brothers who were all to achieve distinction as scholars in different fields. Wilfrid, three years older, was to gain a substantial reputation through his books on art, history, travel and much else. At one stage trained as an opera singer, he spent most of his working life as art master, first at Haileybury, where he wrote a book about the buildings formerly belonging to the East India Company in which his Master grandfather had started his career, and then at Eton, where generations of boys took up the fashion of Italic handwriting that he did much to promote. His later years were spent as curator of the Watts Museum at Compton, Surrey, where he continued to write prolifically, and completed two volumes of autobiography before his death in January 1987.<sup>3</sup> Anthony, the distinguished art historian, three years younger than Christopher, was elected a Fellow of the Academy in 1950, although towards the end of his life his academic reputation was eclipsed by the notoriety that followed revelations of his earlier activities as a Soviet agent. If Wilfrid was the most versatile of the three, and Anthony the most polished scholar, it may well be that Christopher's work, though less well-known, will prove to have been the most original and fundamental.

Christopher's education had its ups and downs, as he has himself described. 'I was seven when we went to live in Paris and was put to school in the nearby school, the Ecole Villiers, to which I duly paraded dressed in my black tablier. After a short time there, to the American school in Paris—a rough establishment'. After the outbreak of World War I, Wilfrid and Christopher still crossed the Channel regularly for holidays—'the only occasion I can remember missing was when the Sussex, one of the cross-Channel ships, was sunk by a submarine—but even that did not put off coming for the following holidays. Newhaven–Dieppe or Southampton–Le

<sup>3</sup> *Married to a Single Life* (1983) and *Slow on the Feather* (1986). In the former (which contains much about Christopher and the family) he wrote of his father 'He had intellectual interests and in particular a strong feeling for history, but he was not really a scholar'.

Havre, of course no Boulogne or Calais'. In due course the boys went to a school at Springfield Place, run by cousin Gerald Blunt. 'This was not a success (my fault I am sure) and I then went to St. Peters, Seaford, a lively and happy place'. Finally, in January 1918 he went with a foundation scholarship to Marlborough where 'I spent the four unhappiest years of my life'. One of the main reasons for this became clear when, near the end of his life, Christopher and I had lunch with one of his most distinguished Marlborough contemporaries, Sir George Abell (who had been captain of almost everything at school and went on to get several blues at Oxford), and Christopher sadly observed that the school must have been fun for those who were good at games, but it certainly had not been for him.

A more agreeable feature of Christopher's time at Marlborough was his introduction to numismatics, at about the age of 15, through John Shirley Fox who lived on Kingsbury Hill in the town. He was very fond of Shirley Fox and his wife, and no doubt they of him, since when JSF died in 1939 he bequeathed his collection to Blunt. Christopher had 'always been a collector—stamps, birds' eggs (ashamed!), butterflies. Anthony and I started a small "museum"—to contain anything we could pick up from friends and relations—consisting initially of War memorabilia, fragments of shells—fuses—buttons—badges'. Shirley Fox and his brother Harry Earle Fox were among the foremost coin collectors of their day, concentrating latterly on English coins of the later Middle Ages which were the centre of attention and study in the British series at that time. Blunt's energies as a collector thus found a decisive sense of direction at an impressionable age. The Fox brothers had recently produced a classic monograph on the Edwardian penny coinage from 1279 to 1344, and encouraged Blunt to look into the peculiar but related series of coins struck at Berwick-upon-Tweed during the intervals when the town was held by the English. This was to be the subject of Blunt's first paper, read to the Royal Numismatic Society (which he had joined in 1923 at the age of 18) in 1929 and published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1931. The first entry in the small notebook, in which he recorded accessions to his collection throughout the rest of his life, was for Edwardian halfpennies of the Berwick mint, for which he paid £3 2s. in 1925.

After returning from Paris in 1921, the Blunt family had made their home at the vicarage in Paddington. In 1930, the year after his father died, Christopher married Elisabeth Rachel Bazley, daughter of Gardner Bazley of Hatherop Castle, Gloucestershire (an estate on which an important Anglo-Saxon gold coin had been found and presented to the British

<sup>4</sup> For Blunt's comments on Shirley Fox see the obituary in *British Numismatic Journal* (*BNJ*), 33 (1938–41), 365–6, and 'Reminiscences'. *BNJ*, 46 (1976), 64–6.

Museum by Sir Thomas Bazley in 1869), and Ruth Evelyn Howard of the family of Howard of Greystoke. They set up house at 15 Gerald Road, SW1, where with the addition of Anne (1931), Simon (1933) and Judith (1937) they lived until the Second World War.

Before he left Marlborough Christopher already had ambitions to go into the City, 'not the most sought after place in those days', partly with an eye to rebuilding the family finances, partly because, despite his scholarly tastes, another side of him was attracted to the practical world of business. Wilfrid and Anthony, both destined for bachelor academic lives, went to university, but Christopher on leaving school prepared himself for his working career by spending a year abroad in Germany and Spain, and the next two first at a business training school and then 'very unprofitably' with the accountants Deloitte. In 1924 he was 'slipped in the bottom of a small Anglo-American merchant bank, Higginson & Co. The first years were all right but with the 1929 crash came the Kreuger tragedy.<sup>5</sup> We had sponsored Kreuger and with his suicide (and the disclosure of his fraudulent transactions), the Higginson little empire fell apart. The American partners withdrew, leaving a small rump, which the English partners agreed to try and carry on, which, almost miraculously, they managed to do through the War.'

During the pre-war years Blunt steadily moved into a central position in English numismatics, both as a scholar and as an organizer. Through the Foxes he had met as a schoolboy and as a young man most of the leading numismatists of the day, notably L. A. Lawrence, the aural surgeon who had produced the first thorough study of the pennies of Henry II to Henry III; F. A. Walters, the architect who had published a run of papers on the coinages of the Lancastrians and Yorkists; and G. C. Brooke, the only professional numismatist among them, an assistant keeper at the British Museum and author of an outstanding work on the coinage of the Norman kings. That Blunt had already in his early twenties gained the respect of leading students other than Shirley Fox is shown by the willingness of Lawrence to lend him his large series of coins of Berwick for work on the paper, and by references to his assistance in dealing with recent hoards made by both Lawrence and Brooke in 1928. Walters died in 1931 and Brooke prematurely in 1934, not long after completing his handbook, *English Coins*. Lawrence had recently produced a major work on the coinage of Edward III, but he was by then in his 70s and wrote little thereafter. By the mid-1930s the founding generation of the British Numismatic Society (BNS), established in 1903 out of schism with the

<sup>5</sup> Ivar Kreuger (1880–1932), founder of the Swedish Match Co. which gained a near world monopoly, committed suicide when the truth about his finances was exposed.

Royal Numismatic Society (RNS) in order to give greater prominence to the study of the coinages of the British Isles, had faded or gone. Blunt, cautious of the personal animosities associated with the early years of the Society, had not joined the BNS until 1933, but after Brooke's early death there were few in a position to provide for its future. The *British Numismatic Journal* was in arrears and many of its more recent contributors were distinguished more for their enthusiasm than for their scholarship. Blunt, already on the Society's Council, was chosen in 1935 to succeed Brooke as Director, the post with responsibility for arranging the Society's programme of meetings and papers, and this he combined with the much more demanding role of editor of the *Journal*, a task he was to perform, with successive colleagues, for the next 35 years. From this time onwards Blunt devoted himself single-mindedly, so far as his job (and the war) allowed, to reinstating the BNS as a going concern among learned societies and the credibility of its *Journal* as a serious organ of scholarship. Derek Allen, later Secretary of the Academy, who had joined the British Museum to fill Brooke's place in 1935, was quickly enlisted by Blunt as Secretary of the Society, and later recalled that he 'could, even then, observe the workings of his remarkable mind and personality'.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of Blunt's career to this time was the way in which, without going to university, he used the relative leisure of early adult years to equip himself with the knowledge and intellectual discipline that were to lead to such scholarly eminence. By wide reading he gave himself a good groundwork in archaeology and history, aided by fluent French and a working knowledge of German, Italian and Spanish. But he also taught himself how to weigh evidence, to put it in context and to set out his argument with clarity. All this can already be seen in his paper on the English coins of Berwick, which remains the standard reference work more than 50 years later. It borrowed to good effect the techniques of both Lawrence and the Foxes, incorporating a comprehensive list of inscriptions as Lawrence had done for Edward III, and combining, as the Foxes had done, a thorough knowledge of the historical background and documentary sources with acute observation of letter forms and other details to arrange the material and date the successive classes of the coins.

After Berwick, Blunt turned his attention to the reigns of Henry IV and Edward IV, neither of which had received much thought since Walters had written on them before the First World War. He read a paper on the heavy silver coinage of Henry IV to the International Numismatic Congress held in London in 1936, in which he put forward a novel but convincing

<sup>6</sup> *BNJ*, 42 (1974), 4.

argument that some rare half-groats, combining old obverse dies of the 1370s in the name of Edward III with reverse dies of the 1390s, should be attributed to the period following Richard II's deposition in 1399. The *Journals* for 1936–8 show how his work was beginning to advance our knowledge of the complex issues of Edward IV.<sup>7</sup> One of these was to demonstrate from the use of documents that the mint-mark sun-and-rose had been introduced in the last months of the reign of Edward IV, and not for Edward V as had generally been supposed. Allen described his handling of the controversy caused by this reattribution, which had the unwelcome consequence for collectors of making true coins of Edward V virtually unobtainable, as an excellent example of his diplomatic touch. It also constituted a step forward in numismatic technique, since it involved comparing the scale of the surviving material and the number of dies used with mint output figures for the relevant period—the understandable failure to do this before the English medieval mint accounts had been published had led such distinguished students as Brooke, for example, to propose an impossible boundary between the issues of Henry IV and Henry V, and the Foxes an equally unworkable chronology for the period after the recoinage of 1300.

During Shirley Fox's lifetime Blunt had the use of his collection of the silver coins of Edward IV as a basis for study, and was thus able to add direct familiarity with the coins to his knowledge of the documents. In this project he collaborated profitably with C. A. Whitton, a schoolmaster who had been forced into premature retirement through ill-health and who was to complete standard works on the coinages of Henry VI and Henry VIII before his early death in 1950. 'Blunt and Whitton' on Edward IV (the publication of which was delayed by the War until vol. 25 of the *Journal*, 1946–8) has a good claim to be ranked as the best of all the basic studies of the English coinage in the period of the groat (Edward III to Henry VIII), and the introductory text, for which Blunt was principally responsible, is a model of clarity, balance and common sense. This achievement was the greater since the coins of Edward IV from ecclesiastical and provincial mints, of which more were operating than at any other time in the late middle ages, at many points do not closely correspond with the main London series, and so present awkward problems of classification and arrangement. Blunt's partnership with Whitton was itself also something of an innovation, and one which set a pattern for much valuable collaborative work on English numismatics in the following generation. Hitherto joint

<sup>7</sup> Blunt's interest in this reign lay behind the choice of a heavy gold noble of Edward IV as a presentation from leading numismatists of the time to the British Museum in memory of G. C. Brooke.



papers had been very much the exception, at least in part because of the highly individualistic and competitive approach of most English numismatists at that time. One recalls one or two joint papers on hoards and the work of the Fox brothers themselves, but otherwise little of consequence had been published by co-authors before Blunt and Whitton.

Meanwhile Blunt had become an active collector concentrating, though not exclusively, on English coins of the later middle ages. He records that when the family returned to London in 1921 money was tight and there was no scope for collecting coins—‘the thought that one could study without collecting had not at that stage occurred to me’. Once he was settled in banking, however, things improved, and it is probably no coincidence that his coin register runs from 1925, the year after he began with Higginsons. In the late 1920s he spent between £5 and £10 a year on English coins from Edward I to Charles I, with the emphasis on the 14th and 15th centuries. He bought rare coins of Berwick from the Wheeler (1930) and Walters (1932) sales, and the new focus of his interest on Edward IV is evident from his other purchases from Walters and from the coins he obtained from the Morrieson sale (1933). He continued to acquire coins of the 15th century throughout the 1930s, the major item being Shirley Fox’s coins of Edward IV which he bought (for £35 10s.) in 1938, followed by the bequest of the remainder of the collection the next year.

In addition to his main work on Edward IV and V he was during these years giving thought to more general aspects of medieval coinage, reading papers in 1934–5 on the working of the mint in the middle ages and on the trials of the pyx. He was also much more familiar with the continent of Europe, its languages, its history and its coinages, than most English numismatists—the minutes of the BNS record the favourable reception of a paper he later gave (February 1942) on the age of silver and the revival of gold coinage in western Europe in the later middle ages. He had more than a passing interest, too, in pre-medieval coinage. Though his bibliography includes only one published item on coins of the ancient world, on some Roman coins found in Norfolk (1931), he lectured in 1936 on the coins of ancient Sicily,<sup>8</sup> and his coin purchases in 1936–8 included a Syracusan tetradrachm and other Greek silver and copper coins. From the beginning he had been interested in the activities of early numismatists, back to the origins of the subject in the Renaissance period, an interest which was to find expression in a short but perceptive paper entitled ‘Early Coin Collecting in Europe’ that he gave to the Annual Convention of the American Numismatic Association in Buffalo in August 1947. This was to be an important strand in his later work on Anglo-Saxon coinage, and his

<sup>8</sup> An interest inspired at least in part by Sir Arthur Evans (*BNJ*, 46, 71).

knowledge of the great collections of the past, from the 17th to the 19th centuries, enabled him to use the systematic investigation of the pedigrees of individual specimens in reconstructing the contents of hoards discovered long ago and dispersed without proper record.

With war looming Blunt joined the Territorial Army Officers' Emergency Reserve in 1938. He was in camp when war broke out in 1939, and spent the first six months of the War as a 2nd Lieutenant, Royal Artillery, in gun-stations near London. Soon he was invited by Rudolph de Trafford, for whom he had worked at Higginsons, to join Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, being duly posted to the British GHQ at Arras as a 1st Lieutenant in March 1940 to work in the chief censor's office. In recommending Blunt for recognition (he was to be mentioned in despatches in January 1941), Walter Monckton, then Deputy Director General of the Press and Censorship Bureau, wrote 'He worked indefatigably under most trying circumstances, at a time when it was essential to give every assistance to the French Military Censorship, and it was greatly due to his energy and tact that it was possible to keep up an efficient service to the end when the Unit was finally evacuated from Bordeaux' (June 1940). From then onwards Blunt was mostly based at the Ministry of Information in London, making frequent tours around the country to military bases with parties of reporters, and sometimes venturing further afield (he was in Iceland in September 1941). He had been made Head of Department of Field Press Censors in February 1941 and continued with similar work until the end of 1943, even sometimes finding occasion to deliver a numismatic lecture. During the first half of 1944 he worked at Eisenhower's SHAEF headquarters at Bushey Park on plans for the Normandy invasion, and in the weeks after D-Day he travelled frequently, mostly to France, but also to Brussels and via Morocco and Algeria to Rome. In September he moved with SHAEF to Versailles (not too far from the coin collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale), travelling more widely in Western Europe as the allies advanced but spending VE night to his great delight in Paris. Blunt was not the archetype of a senior soldier; but that he ended in the rank of Colonel,<sup>9</sup> was awarded the OBE in the Military List and was created an Officer of the US Legion of Merit, is perhaps no more than one would have expected from someone who throughout his life was so capable and conscientious at anything to which he turned his hand.

In 1940 Elisabeth moved with the children to Hatherop, but the castle was requisitioned in May 1941 by the Army for training purposes. After a brief stay with Blunt's mother-in-law at Fairford nearby, they rented the

<sup>9</sup> To his amusement, he was still so addressed by villagers forty years later.

Manor House at Ducklington, Oxfordshire, for most of the war years and shared it with some Howard cousins. Blunt meanwhile had taken a small flat in Dorset House, Gloucester Place, but was able to visit the family from time to time as duty permitted. To the extent that he had any numismatic leisure at home during the war years, he mainly engaged himself in ticketing the 2,000 odd coins from the Shirley Fox collection, since Fox himself had relied on his encyclopaedic memory for detail and only wrote out coin tickets in exceptional cases. The one paper that Blunt brought to conclusion during the war years was on the heavy gold coinage of Henry IV, published in the *Journal* for 1941–2, which complemented his work on the corresponding silver coinage a few years earlier. But a brief note in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1943 (which he had read the previous December) on a Bohemian coin of the Carolingian temple type with the name Ethelred is of note in being his first published contribution relating to Anglo-Saxon numismatics. The beginning of this change of focus from the 15th century to the 9th is illustrated by the two coins which he bought at the Gantz sale in 1941, the one a gold coin of Edward IV, the other a London penny of Alfred, the first pre-conquest coin to figure in his register of acquisitions. But it was the dispersal of Lord Grantley's enormous coin collection at auction in 1943–5 that was to mark the major turning-point.

Not surprisingly, the inheritance of such a comprehensive collection as that of Shirley Fox, though a marvellous thing to have, diminished Blunt's appetite for buying Plantagenet coins, and in the 1940s he turned his main attention as a collector first to the Continental series and then to Anglo-Saxon. The fifth Lord Grantley (1855–1943), a landowner with antiquarian tastes, had collected coins of all regions and ages for more than half a century, with emphasis on those of medieval Europe and in particular of the period up to the 10th century in which he took a special interest.<sup>10</sup> The Grantley sales enabled Blunt to acquire a substantial number of European coins, and for a few years he devoted considerable effort to rounding out his collection in this field. It was a good time to do so, since there were then very few collectors of Continental coins in England, and the London dealers had larger holdings than usual, partly as a result of buying Grantley coins for stock but also because of the absence of foreign dealers and collectors from the London market during the war years. He continued to buy European and Levantine medieval coins in London actively until 1951, including a substantial parcel of Grantley duplicates from W. Owston Smith in 1949, but his subsequent additions in these series, which continued intermittently into the 1960s, seem generally to have been

<sup>10</sup> Professor Grierson's collection also drew heavily on Grantley—see P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I (1986), pp. 395–7.

acquired on business trips or holidays abroad. Both his notes on Anglo-Saxon coins published in 1948, like that of 1943, had a Continental dimension—one on the unique gold penny of Edward the Elder in Lausanne, the other on Anglo-Saxon coin types imitated in Italy. Although completion of the monograph on the coinage of Edward IV was his most immediate post-war task, his acquisition of English coins of the late middle ages was now increasingly selective. He bought a few 15th-century coins from the Grantley collection, and rather more from those of Whitton (1950) and Lawrence (1951). But these were to be almost the last significant additions to his now extensive Plantagenet collection.

### 1945–64

After the War Blunt resumed his banking career and assumed greater responsibilities.<sup>10a</sup> Notwithstanding this, the period of nearly 20 years until his retirement from the City in 1964 was to see the restoration under his leadership and guidance of English numismatics as a scholarly discipline. In retrospect the War can be seen as having created a gulf between the older generation and the new. Although some of the most prominent collectors and students of the pre-war period survived it by a few years—Ryan and Lawrence to 1949, Lockett and Whitton to 1950, Parsons to 1953—Blunt was almost the only one of stature remaining active in the field whose experience went back to the twenties. It was therefore no surprise that, though only 41 but already director and editor for 10 years, Blunt should have been elected in November 1945 to the presidency of the British Numismatic Society for the next five years. We owe to Whitton the suggestion that a presidential address should be given at the anniversary meeting, and the first five of these, covering the years 1946–50, gave Blunt an opportunity to set out his thinking on the future of the society and its subject. He remarked elsewhere that when he invited Harold Mattingly, president of the Royal Numismatic Society, to dine with him, it was the first occasion that the presidents of the two Societies had done so in over 40 years. The old bitterness now belonged to the past, and in his first address Blunt was able to say that it was Council's policy to work in 'closest harmony' with the RNS and that members of each Society would be welcome to attend the other's meetings. In 1949 Blunt himself became foreign secretary of the RNS.

The BNS in those days used to meet on the first floor of no. 21 Bedford Square, but with a rapid increase in membership as life returned to normal

<sup>10a</sup> See p. 368 below.

after the War, and the Society's books still deposited in a private house, new premises were needed. Blunt's suggestion that the library should be housed jointly with that of the RNS at the Warburg Institute, then in South Kensington, has not only proved to be of lasting practical benefit to the members of both Societies but was also to lead to a solution to the problem of accommodation, since the Warburg itself not long afterwards moved to Woburn Square, so providing a suitable location close to the British Museum for the Society's meetings. Blunt, like the Society's founding fathers, saw its role as much more than a club for coin collectors; rather it was 'to promote the study of numismatics and to be a medium for the discussion and publication of the results of fresh research'. During the inter-war years much of what was written on English coinage had been speculative, insular and detached from historical discipline. The need to redress the position was a central theme of Blunt's addresses. Noting 'the importance of having some knowledge of the continental series before one can form any considered opinion of the coinage of this country' and that it was 'all too rare for good numismatists to be good historians', he pointed to 'the perils that beset the path of numismatists who attempt to handle, unaided by the historian, the raw materials of which history is made' and suggested that the 'solution lies in co-operation between the historian, archaeologist and numismatist'. Blunt was conscious that the development of the Journal was constrained by printing costs, and a timely rise in the annual subscription from one guinea to two in 1950 was to prove an important step in preparing the way for publication of the flood of new work that was to appear in the following years. In the last of his five annual addresses he could fairly say that the Society was now in a 'healthy, thriving condition'.

The presidential addresses also give an insight into the practical directions in which Blunt felt British numismatics ought to develop. An early need was a new edition of Brooke's *English Coins*, which Blunt persuaded Methuen to undertake and Whitton to edit (with Blunt's assistance for the pre-Conquest period), and for which he was already soliciting material in 1946. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of the proper recording of coin hoards and single finds—his comment in 1947 that 'we are collecting material for a bibliography of coin hoards' was a reference to preparatory work that was to form the basis of J. D. A. Thompson's *Inventory of British Coin Hoards* (1956). He was also concerned that important collections should not be dispersed without what, with reference to the great Lockett collection (1950), he described as a 'worthy record', and a fund was accordingly established by the Society for this purpose. The germ of a similar idea, which was also to find fulfilment in the *Sylloge*, can be seen in his comments in connection with the bequest

of a collection of Nottingham coins to the Nottingham Museum in 1948: that bequests of this kind raised serious problems of consultation for numismatists, that local museums should therefore be encouraged to publish illustrated catalogues, and that the Society might be able to assist. More specifically foreshadowing a line of approach that he was later to exploit for early Anglo-Saxon coinage, he drew attention to the importance of establishing pedigrees of individual specimens, hitherto regarded more as an exercise in antiquarianism to satisfy the tastes of collectors than as an instrument of serious scholarship. 'To future numismatists in the light of further knowledge provenances of seeming unimportance may prove significant. They should never be lost . . . In trying to track down all known specimens of a certain type one is constantly faced with a doubt as to whether a piece appearing in a modern sale catalogue is in fact the specimen mentioned in, say, the Devonshire catalogue of 1844 or whether one has a further specimen to look for.' When Blunt said this (1950) he was already in the process of compiling the card index of Anglo-Saxon coins which was to form the foundation of so much of his own later work and that of others.

As Allen has remarked, the award of the British Numismatic Society's gold medal to Blunt in 1950 marked the consummation of his Plantagenet period. In addition to his academic interest in early English coinage, one of his reasons for turning to Anglo-Saxon coins was, I believe, that it now offered greater potential for the collector in him. There had not been much opportunity for collecting Anglo-Saxon coins before the War, since most of the good material had been concentrated in three great collections, those of Grantley, Lockett and Ryan, and there was relatively little of interest available on the market. Blunt's curiosity about the Anglo-Saxon period had first been aroused when on a visit to his Assheton aunt as a young man he had located under the dressing-table in a spare bedroom at Downham the cabinet in which the family's portion of the great Cuerdale hoard was housed. Through his friendship with Brooke, who had had to undertake much preparatory work for the early chapters of *English Coins* and had been planning to do more thereafter, Blunt was aware of the many unresolved problems in this field, and he had been beginning to think about them while concluding his main work on the later middle ages. If his Alfred penny from Gantz was an appetizer, it was the first English part of the Grantley sale (1944) that opened up real possibilities for collecting and was a reminder that the other great pre-war cabinets would probably also be dispersed before too long. Among his acquisitions from Grantley was a broken but unique coin inscribed HEABERHT REX which Grantley had attributed to an obscure Kentish king of this name who was a contemporary of Offa of Mercia, but which had been catalogued as doubtfully

attributable to Eadberht (796–8).<sup>11</sup> Blunt's first post-war paper to the BNS was on the early coinage of the kingdom of Kent and he was to publish a note vindicating Grantley's Heaberht attribution in 1952; but the coin had a more profound effect on Blunt's interests in concentrating his attention on the coins of the later 8th century generally. Then in 1946 he acquired 15 coins of the 10th century from the hoard found at Tetney in Lincolnshire the previous year, and from 1947 onwards his records show the acquisition of several Anglo-Saxon coins every year, including a number from the collections of Lawrence and W. C. Wells in 1951, from the Ryan sale and the Duke of Argyll (through Spink) in 1952, from the first Lockett sale in 1955, from the Hon. Robert Erskine in 1956, and from many other sources, so that within a little over 10 years he had already formed the nucleus of a significant Saxon collection. In addition to the earlier period, Blunt's special interest in Alfred and the 10th century is also evident in his acquisitions from Tetney onwards, recalling remarks in his 1946 address that the coinage of Alfred was 'a most fascinating series' and that Brooke had been too pessimistic in saying that 'an attempt to form a chronological sequence of Edward (the Elder)'s types is doomed to failure'.

In many respects the Whitton edition of Brooke came too early, in 1950, to incorporate the changes which Blunt realized would be needed as a result of further research on the Anglo-Saxon period. Yet it is a useful reminder of the state of knowledge on the threshold of the most rapid period of advance that the study of the early English coinage has ever enjoyed; and those changes, as they came, were to prove so fundamental that they could not in fact have been made without a complete reorganization of the early chapters of the book. The process of major revision began almost immediately. In the same year two major hoards of the tenth century were found, at Chester and on the island of Iona, and early in 1951 Michael Dolley, a young man who was to devote great energy and enthusiasm to his new role, was appointed Assistant Keeper in the Department of Coins at the British Museum with responsibility for British medieval coins. The Iona hoard went to Edinburgh, where it was admirably recorded by R. B. K. Stevenson of the National Museum. The Chester hoard, more varied in content and consisting of over 500 coins from the beginning of the 10th century to the 960s, was of exceptional interest and it was most fortunate that Blunt should have been available to collaborate with Dolley in publishing it. The close co-operation thus established between the two quickly became the central feature of the resurgence of activity in Anglo-Saxon numismatics and had a decisive influence on the

<sup>11</sup> *BNJ*, 46, p. 74. The coin had been bought at the sale for 10 guineas by the dealer Seaby, from whom Blunt bought it for £17 10s. shortly afterwards.

work of many others for the next 15 years. Dolley regarded Blunt as a sort of honorary patron and mentor,<sup>12</sup> and for some years they worked together in a productive partnership. There could hardly have been two more contrasting characters, the urbane banker, calm, wise and cautious, and the young and spirited curator. But their qualities were complementary. Of the main ingredients of successful scholarship, flair, judgement and mastery of detail, Blunt was the stronger on the last two, while Dolley relied more on the first. Although access to the British Museum cabinets, with fewer serious students and less anxiety about security, was more readily available in those days, Blunt was rarely free to get to the Coin Room in the working week, and much of their collaborative work was done at weekends at his house in Wiltshire.

In December 1944, towards the end of the War, the Blunt family had moved to Wilton House in Hungerford, on the Berkshire/Wiltshire border (where Blunt was again able to indulge in the pleasures of fishing that he had learned from Shirley Fox). It had always been in his mind to settle in one of the quiet villages in the Wiltshire countryside that he had so much enjoyed visiting by bicycle as a schoolboy, and in 1952 the opportunity arose for him to move to a charming Queen Anne house at Ramsbury (once the see of Saxon bishops), half-way between Hungerford and Marlborough. Ramsbury Hill was to be his home for the rest of his life. During the first war it had been prepared as an emergency hospital and when the Blunts moved in it still had an operating theatre off the front hall. But it quickly became not only a home where, after the wanderings of the war years, the Blunt family could at last take root but also a meeting place for scholars and collectors of all generations from far and wide, who were privileged to enjoy discussion of their common interests in the peaceful hospitality of an English country house. The visitors' book which contains the details of house-guests over the years records the names of dozens of leading figures in Anglo-Saxon studies and English and medieval coinage generally, historians, archaeologists, philologists, as well as numismatists, who remember with pleasure the many kindnesses of Elisabeth and Christopher as hosts and the agreeable hours of fruitful conversation and study that played such an important part in what amounted to the renaissance of Anglo-Saxon numismatics. Indeed, Ramsbury Hill became a kind of informal research institute, equipped with a first class coin collection and a specialist library, and led by one who was held in universal esteem both as a scholar and as an administrator. By 1962 Christopher's books and coins had outgrown his study, with its broad bow window looking across the garden to the ridge of hills that rises to the south of the

<sup>12</sup> An early Dolley off-print is inscribed 'magistro meo'.



village; and so with the greater leisure of retirement ahead he had a library designed on classical lines (commended by Pevsner) in the larger room on the southern side of the house, which not only housed his rapidly increasing number of books and catalogues but also served as his sitting room and study and in effect as editorial office for the *British Numismatic Journal* and the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*. When the market price of coins rose dramatically in the sixties and seventies, some of the cabinets disappeared as Blunt put the more valuable parts of his collection into safe-keeping, but the loss of direct access to his coins was offset by increasingly effective means of rapid photography which enabled him to record and consult not only his own specimens but also those in many other private and public collections through his card index and other records.

Dolley was one of the most frequent visitors to Ramsbury in the 1950s, and until he left the British Museum for The Queen's University, Belfast in 1963, the working relationship between Blunt and Dolley was a comprehensive one. After the Chester hoard they did not in fact do very much basic research together, since Blunt concentrated almost exclusively on the coinages of Offa and his successors while Dolley, following an invitation for a British contribution to the international team working on the material from the Viking-age hoards in Stockholm, devoted the greater part of his energies to the reigns of Ethelred II and Cnut. Their principal later works of collaboration were two papers in 1959–60 on the coins of Alfred, and a study of a unique gold coin of the time of Offa which Blunt had bought at auction (and which, with characteristic generosity he presented to the British Museum in 1962 when they had completed their work on it).<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, although they discussed each other's work extensively, they tended to pursue separate paths of study. Their main collaboration (at least in print) was in editing the *Journal*, in publishing notable parcels of coins which they came across in such diverse places as Nostell Priory in Yorkshire and the Vatican Library in Rome, and in editing and compiling various volumes of the *Sylloge*.

The *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*, a series of catalogues of public and major private collections fully illustrated with concise descriptions accompanying each plate, was a project originally conceived by Blunt in the early post-war years, after the model of the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* which had proved its worth in ancient numismatics since its inception in the early 1930s. The proposal was endorsed by the two Numismatic Societies in 1952 and in the following year, at the instigation of Dr E. S. G. Robinson, one of the founders of the Greek *Sylloge*, it

<sup>13</sup> Blunt's second bookplate (his first was armorial), designed by his daughter Judith, was based on an engraving of this piece in Speed's *Historie* (1611).

received the general blessing of the British Academy. The first task chosen was to arrange for the publication of the English part of the exceptionally rich collection of the late R. C. Lockett (1873–1950), but this had soon to be abandoned because of its dispersal following the death of his widow, and in place of a *Sylloge* volume photographic plates were prepared and sold by the British Numismatic Society. The *Sylloge* project gathered greater momentum in 1955 when under the chairmanship of Sir Frank Stenton an informal committee was formed comprising Dorothy Whitelock, Philip Grierson, Philip Whitting, E. J. Winstanley, Robinson, Dolley and Blunt. In January 1956 it was elevated to an official Academy committee, but although this gave the project useful status it did not bring financial security. Until 1980 the committee itself was responsible for raising the finance for each volume, a burden which inevitably fell largely upon Blunt and Whitting. After receipts from the sale of previous volumes, the Academy has been the largest contributor to the costs of administration and printing of each new volume, but Blunt was always at pains to find additional grants from elsewhere.

An active publication programme was soon arranged, and the first volume, by Grierson, of the pre-1066 coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge came out in 1958. Since that time further volumes have appeared at an average rate of more than one a year, making it one of the most fruitful of all the Academy's projects. Such an amazing degree of productivity could not have been achieved without the unremitting editorial labours of Blunt and Dolley (and since 1980 of Mark Blackburn), which went far beyond the mechanical preparation of texts for the printers. The high standard of accuracy achieved is due in no small measure to their careful checking of attributions, readings, and pedigrees, and their generosity of advice and help to authors, many of whom were museum curators without a specialized knowledge of the coin series concerned. They sought out collections to be covered and authors to cover them with such persistence that, by the time of Blunt's death nearly 30 years later, almost 40 volumes had been published and another dozen were in preparation, recording tens of thousands of coins in university collections (Cambridge, Glasgow, Oxford and Reading) and other museums in the United Kingdom (Chester, Edinburgh, Belfast, Midlands, Bristol & Gloucester, Yorkshire, West Country, East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Merseyside) and abroad (Copenhagen, Helsinki, America, Berlin and Poland) and in some of the major private collections of the time (E. M. Norweb, R. P. Mack, J. G. Brooker and J. J. North). The series also includes the first volumes of the huge holdings of the British Museum and of the Royal Coin Cabinet in Stockholm and a cumulative index of the first 20 volumes. Within a few years the *Sylloge* had become an indispensable

tool of research, and many of the advances in English numismatics of the past generation, particularly those based on die-study, would have been impossible without it. Although the emphasis has been on the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, for which the critical material is unusually widely scattered, volumes on Celtic coins of the Coritani, the early Anglo-Irish coins in Belfast, the Scottish coins in Glasgow and Oxford, the North collection of Edwardian sterlings, the Oxford collection of Henry VII, the Brooker collection of Charles I, and the 17th-century tokens of Mrs. Norweb have demonstrated the value of syllogizing major collections of other periods.

Sir Frank Stenton, who had long recognized the importance of coin evidence to the historian, had been an ideal choice as first chairman of the *Sylloge* committee, a position involving a close working relationship with Blunt over many years.<sup>14</sup> The warm friendship that developed between Blunt and Stenton as a result created a vital channel of communication (both ways) between historians and numismatists, and this pattern was happily maintained with Dorothy Whitelock and Henry Loyn, Stenton's successors in the chair of the committee. In a similar way, through friendship with archaeologists such as David Wilson and Martin Biddle and philologists such as Olaf von Feilitzen and Veronica Smart, Blunt not only helped to harness their knowledge for the benefit of numismatists but ensured that rapidly changing perceptions of early English coinage were appreciated by other specialists. I think it is beyond doubt that Blunt's influence as a scholar was greatly enhanced by the exceptional regard, indeed affection, in which he was held personally by so wide a range of people.

In the fifties and early sixties Blunt did not produce any single monograph quite on the scale of Edward IV or his subsequent major works, but during his senior years in the City he still found time to publish a succession of significant shorter studies and notes, in addition to a phenomenal amount of editing and the demands of the presidency of the Royal Numismatic Society from 1956 to 1961. The RNS was in a much healthier condition in 1956 than the BNS had been in 1946, and this time his commitments as President were accordingly more straightforward. Blunt was the only person in this century to have been elected to the office whose reputation was founded entirely on English numismatics, partly no

<sup>14</sup> Blunt was much gratified that the *Sylloge* was one of the three beneficiaries (the others were the Pipe Roll and Selden Societies) of the fund established by Stenton's will.

doubt because so few English numismatists have had the wide general knowledge of coinage that is called for in those who take the chair at the Society's meetings. But he was anxious that the RNS and the *Numismatic Chronicle* should continue to include some coverage of British topics, particularly on those of more general interest, even though the BNS and its *Journal* now provided for most of the specialist needs in this field. Blunt himself set an example, devoting two of his annual addresses (1958–9) to a magisterial survey of progress in Anglo-Saxon numismatics, and two more (1960–1) to an account of ecclesiastical coinage in England. He also thereby introduced the practice of using the presidential address for discussion of a general theme, and this innovation has been followed to good effect by his successors.

Among Blunt's publications at this period was his 1957 paper on the coinage of Egberht of Wessex (802–39), the first systematic modern study of the coinage of any of the 'heptarchic' kings. This was also the first occasion on which the contents of his card index of all known specimens had been embodied in the text for most of the types, and the Egberht paper was also notable for its careful reconstruction of the hoard evidence, for the revival of a 19th century attribution of some very rare coins to a mint at Rochester, and for a table of prophetic significance showing how many of the names of Egberht's moneyers also officiated for Mercian or Kentish kings. Blunt's two joint papers with Dolley on Alfred provided a starting point for further study (although it is only recently that this has been taken much further forward), but a much more important work was his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Sir Frank Stenton, which Dolley edited in 1961, of the coinage of Offa. This was also based on the card index (although every coin was not separately listed) and provided a comprehensive presentation of the diverse and attractive material from this crucial reign in which the English penny, following the Carolingian model, took on the basic format that it was to have for centuries. This paper immediately stimulated a lively debate on the process whereby the new penny coinage became established in the south of England in the second half of the 8th century, a debate which still continues and has modified some of his conclusions, but which could not otherwise have taken place.

The acquisition in 1959 of a coin of previously unrecorded type of Offa's son Coenwulf (796–821) contributed to Blunt's growing interest in the coinage of the generation after Offa, and this was greatly enhanced by his discovery about the same time in the forgery trays of the dealers Baldwins of a coin in the name of the Mercian king Ludica (825–7) which he believed to be genuine and to be derived from the Wigan collection in

the 19th century.<sup>15</sup> At the same time Stewart Lyon and I were looking at the coins of the Mercian and Kentish kings of the early 9th century and it was a natural development for us to pool resources in a joint work on the coinage of southern England from the death of Offa in 796 to the time when the House of Wessex overhauled the Mercians in the struggle for power in the 820s and 830s. The resultant paper was notable in two respects. First, entirely due to Blunt's card index, it included (after the model of Ecgberht but on a much larger scale) a list of all known specimens of a substantial span of Anglo-Saxon coinage, and so enabled tentative conclusions to be drawn about a whole range of questions such as the composition of hoards or the relative volume of coinage of different moneyers and their relationships. Second, and again developing an idea opened up by Ecgberht, it broke away from the traditional classification of the coinage according to the kingdoms of the rulers named on it, and replaced this with a new concept of mint-series defined by the continuity of the same moneyers' names, by die-cutting styles, and to a lesser extent by the choice of reverse designs, and in which kings of different kingdoms alternated in the use of individual mints. Blunt was initially cautious about accepting the full implications of this approach, less perhaps because of any ambiguity in the evidence than because of the enormity of the upheaval of arrangement and thinking that it involved. This included the recognition of Rochester's position as a substantial mint from the early 9th century and acceptance of the fact that Mercian kings coined intermittently with local kings at the mint in East Anglia and with Kentish kings at Canterbury and Rochester. Although Blunt had less of an eye for artistic detail than his two brothers, and tended to look to his collaborators on questions of classification by style, once we began to collate the illustrations for the plates his doubts disappeared and he embraced the new framework with enthusiasm. While the implications of mint-series have not yet been entirely followed through for the middle decades of the 9th century, it is probably fair to say that this paper, with its emphasis on moneyers and die-cutting styles, provided a new perspective for the study of the whole period up to the unification of the kingdom of England in the 10th century. In this sense it was to lead on to the fundamental work of Blunt's later years on the coinage from 900 to Edgar's reform in the early 970s.

<sup>15</sup> Following its rehabilitation by Blunt, Baldwins handsomely sold the coin to him for half what they reckoned to be its value. It was of this piece that Sir Robert Clark spoke at his memorial service: 'I believe the only display of any emotion, in all my time with him, of this very calm and distinguished man, was when he came to the bank one morning in the early 1960s and displayed some early coin, the authenticity of which he had been claiming with the British Museum for a long time. The museum had ultimately agreed and for once we saw the emotion of pleasure on Christopher's face'.

1964–87

When Blunt retired from banking in 1964 at the age of 60 he did not give up his business interests entirely. One of the clients of the firm had been a paper making business in Portugal, Eucalyptus Pulp Mills, and after his retirement from the bank, Blunt took on the chairmanship of this company of which he had been a director for some years previously, and saw it through the difficult period of political revolution. He had to visit Portugal periodically for board meetings and other business and the number of numismatic monographs in new leather bindings on his shelves was due to the fact that for a time there was a block on the remission of funds out of the country and this was one means of using his director's fees locally. Christopher did not disguise the pleasure he gained from spending more time at home in his library on retirement and release from the pressures of a business career spanning almost 40 years. At his memorial service in St James's Church, Piccadilly, in January 1988, Sir Robert Clark, his former colleague and successor at Philip Hill, told us of Christopher's impact in the City. After the war he joined the Industrial Division of Higginsons, his activities expanding as Higginsons and Erlangers joined with Philip Hill. In due course he became head of the Corporate Finance Department, which was the most prominent part of the enlarged group, greatly respected by Lord Keith and Sir Harry Moore, under whose forceful management Philip Hill Higginson Erlangers was achieving a leading position in its field. Sir Robert spoke of the period after the war 'when industry sought from its merchant bank good advice, good judgement and technical financial expertise. In all these Christopher created a splendid personal reputation, acknowledged and admired throughout the City by competitors and colleagues alike. Quietly and without fuss he had the fullest confidence and loyalty of both his senior colleagues like Sir Derek Palmar and Sir John Colville and also, equally importantly, his more junior staff and particularly his secretary who continued to be his friend and helper throughout his retirement ... Christopher had very high standards and his quiet insistence on these—both for himself and all who worked for him—brought considerable acclaim and success for his merchant bank. He always bore a somewhat academic and intellectual air but he was practical and could detect a "rogue" very quickly. With great courtesy but with equal firmness, such people were turned quickly away.'

Negotiating with people, exercising judgement with firmness but discretion, overseeing the production of company prospectuses containing a mass of technical detail and putting every available moment of the working

day to its most productive use<sup>16</sup>—these were the attributes of the disciplined banker that made Christopher such an effective performer in the role of academic administrator and editor. In 1965 he was elected to the Academy (a most exceptional distinction for an amateur scholar without a degree) and this gave him extra authority within the *Sylloge* committee and in his dealings with the Academy's officers in furtherance of the ambitious programme of publication which was being planned. In this he continued to work in partnership with Michael Dolley but when Dolley, after increasing strains with his colleagues in the British Museum, went to Belfast in 1963 the relationship between the two became more distant in personal terms as well. The sad process by which Dolley became progressively estranged from his early numismatic friends and colleagues has been described elsewhere,<sup>17</sup> but it was particularly painful to Blunt that someone to whom he had given so much friendship and encouragement in the fifties should have made no exceptions in the antagonism he showed to those who, however tactfully, ventured to question any of the central features of his concept of the late Anglo-Saxon coinage. The seeds of tension were sown in 1959, when Blunt in his presidential address to the RNS expressed scepticism about some aspects of Dolley's developing theory, but things deteriorated in the years after Dolley left London and became emotionally involved in Irish politics and convinced (quite erroneously) that his achievements were not given the credit they were due. Few outside the family can have known the distress that Blunt, for all his self-control a deeply sensitive man, suffered as a result of the rift. Eventually he came so much to dread receipt of Dolley's letters that Elisabeth would open them and read them first, so as to prepare him. Shortly before he died he told me I would find among his papers one which on her advice he never read. I relate this unhappy story because I do not think it would be possible otherwise to convey the enormous personal cost to Blunt of sustaining a working relationship with Dolley throughout the sixties and seventies, nor the scale of the debt we owe him for what it meant for the progress of the *Sylloge* and the wider interests of the subject.

The only material piece of research work that Blunt and Dolley conducted together in later years was on the differentiation of the coins of Northampton and Southampton during the 10th century (1971). In the fifties Dolley had published some valuable work on the coinages of the 10th century before Edgar's reform, notably on those of the Vikings, and

<sup>16</sup> Miss Cecilia Preuss, his admirable secretary at Philip Hill, has remarked on his amazing ability to organize his work to fit his time exactly.

<sup>17</sup> Mr Stewart Lyon's obituary of Dolley in *BNJ*, 52 (1982), 265–71, by no means overstates the difficulty of treating with him in his later years.

collaboration on this period, where their interests overlapped, would have been an obvious development from their joint work on Alfred, and a resumption of the partnership founded on the Chester hoard of 1950. The Northampton/Southampton paper, disciplined, balanced and systematic, also incidentally demonstrates again the beneficial effect on Dolley of Blunt's influence, something which had undoubtedly contributed to the high standard of much of Dolley's early work. Since his original partnership with Whitton, Blunt had always found stimulus in collaboration with others, taking advantage of the opportunity to test ideas with a co-author and enjoying the personal communication that it involved. Before his retirement he had done joint papers with J. D. A. Thompson on forgeries of Anglo-Saxon coins (1955), with F. Elmore Jones (a passionate collector whose instinctive flair would not have been fully exploited if it had not been for his collaboration with Blunt, Dolley and others) on the unlocated 10th-century mint of Weardburh (1957), and with David Wilson on the 9th-century hoard of jewellery and coins from Trewiddle in Cornwall (1961). He was also glad to venture outside the field of his immediate interests in company with others, as with Michael Metcalf on leather money (1959), with Elmore Jones on Norman coins (1967–9), and with J. D. Brand on the mint accounts of Henry III (1970). But after his retirement, and on completion of the 'heptarchic' phase of his work, he began to focus his attention increasingly on the 10th century.

As remarks in his BNS presidential addresses from the 1940s show, his special interest in the hundred years of coinage from Alfred to Edgar dated from before the discovery of the Chester hoard, and the great Cuerdale find of 1840 was never long out of his mind. Although he worked at the subject intermittently and accumulated relevant material for many years, he never wrote the comprehensive reappraisal of the hoard that at one time he had contemplated; indeed, it became apparent that a great deal more work needed to be done on the individual series beforehand. He had lectured on the Cuerdale hoard in 1950, but the only general paper on it that he put into print did not appear until 1983, by which time he had come to the conclusion that a definitive list of its contents was impossible because of the way in which various parcels had, not always honestly, been abstracted from it, before it was reported to the authorities as treasure trove. Apart from his two papers on Alfred with Dolley, the main use that Blunt made of the Cuerdale material in his published work was for his survey (1969) of the Viking coinage of Anglia in the name of St Edmund. Two months before his death Blunt was planning as his next project to write a general account of its numismatic contents for a British Museum publication of the hoard (which consisted chiefly of silver bullion and ornaments) by Dr James Graham-Campbell. His notes and file have been



passed to Miss Marion Archibald of the Department of Coins and Medals, so his preparatory work should not be lost.

The Cuerdale hoard was buried early in the reign of Edward the Elder, at the very beginning of the 10th century (*c.*905), a few years before the start of the gradual reconquest of the Danelaw, which led to the unification of the English kingdom for the first time under Athelstan in 927. After Athelstan's death in 939, the Vikings again achieved ascendancy for a period in the north-east and the last of the Norse kings was not finally driven out until 954. The coinage of the first three-quarters of the 10th century thus began from a state of fragmentation which was gradually brought into order by Athelstan; and then continued with a further period of disruption which was again put into reverse over the next two decades, until Edgar's monetary reform of the early 970s eventually brought a lasting uniformity to the coinage-of the whole country. Although English coins of this period carry the names of their moneyers, only in the reign of Athelstan and to a lesser extent in that of Edgar were their mints also named with any regularity. Since many of the moneyers of Edward continued into the mint-signed issues of Athelstan, and many of the moneyers of Athelstan survived, though without their mints being identified, until the reign of Edmund and beyond, the coinage of Athelstan was clearly crucial to any attempt at working out the regional structure of minting. Blunt therefore decided that this must be his starting point, and from the mid-1960s he gathered together illustrations of every variety of type and moneyer of this king that he could find. No previous scholar had been in a position to view the coinage as a whole in this way, but by careful analysis of the material, and using hoard evidence, the identification of local or regional die-cutting styles, the evidence of hybrid (or 'mule') coins combining obverse and reverse dies of different types or series, as well as the names of the mints and moneyers, Blunt was able to present for the first time a coherent record of the three chronological phases of Athelstan's coinage and of the geographical variations within them. The resultant monograph, which was published in 1974 as a special volume to mark its author's 70th birthday, was the longest and most thorough treatment of the coinage of any of the Saxon kings that had ever appeared, and must be regarded as among the most important single items in English numismatic literature.

It was now possible, as it had never been before, to approach the coinages before 924 and, more particularly, those after 939 from a soundly established base. Blunt had already (in a joint paper in 1971 with the Swedish philologist von Feilitzen) published a detailed list of the names of moneyers known for the various types (and, where indicated, mints) of Edgar. He realized that it should be possible in some cases to reconstruct

the succession of issues in the 940s and 950s from individual mints by the continuity of moneymen's names forwards from mint-signed coins of Athelstan and backwards from mint-signed coins of Edgar, and was able to demonstrate this for Hertford, Maldon and Stafford. He had also already, in 1971, published a study of the rare coins of Edmund with a crowned bust, and as soon as Athelstan was completed he began to collate from his card index and other sources details of the extant examples of all the types of Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig and Edgar up to his reform. It was a huge undertaking. The coins of the middle decades of the 10th century are for the most part plain and unexciting in appearance, with few of the attractive or exceptional designs that are of interest to collectors, and were thus little illustrated in auction sale catalogues or dealers' lists. Most collections contained no more than a few representative specimens of them, and the material, which in detail is immensely complex and varied, was unusually widely scattered.

At first Blunt thought of writing a series of articles, and before long (1974) suggested to Mr Lyon and myself, who had each been doing some work on parts of the series, that we might put together enough of such studies to justify their publication in a volume of collected papers. When we came to weigh up what was involved, it became evident that there was so much interrelation between the different types and reigns that anything short of comprehensive treatment would be unsatisfactory. Thus it came about that he invited the two of us to renew the collaboration we had developed some years before for the coinages of 796–840, and in 1976 the scope of the project was expanded to cover the whole of the English coinages from the death of Alfred in 899 to the reform of Edgar, except for the reign of Athelstan, for which only a summary was needed. We decided also to treat the Anglo-Viking coinages between 939 and 954 in a similar way and to include at least an outline account of the Viking issues of the first quarter of the century. When we began I do not think any of us had fully appreciated the extent of the task on which we had embarked, nor the difficulties of trying to establish an orderly system of description and arrangement for a mass of material that had previously received so little attention. Blunt's co-authors, either singly or jointly with him, certainly contributed substantial sections of the book (Mr Lyon's long chapter on the coinage of Edward the Elder is especially notable), but the project would not have been feasible at all if Blunt had not master-minded it throughout and acted as co-ordinating editor.

*Coinage in Tenth-Century England (CTCE)* took more than 10 years to write and during this period Blunt, like its other authors, produced a number of lesser publications on relevant topics that would have been out of scale if included in the book. Among these were papers on hoards

containing St Peter and other Viking coins of the first quarter of the 10th century (1979 and 1983), on three mid-10th-century hoards (with Hugh Pagan, 1975), on the unique coin of the Welsh king Hywel Dda (1982), and (stimulated by the acquisition of one from the Norweb collection) a reconsideration of the extremely rare Northumbrian coins from the Cuerdale hoard in the name of Alvaldus (1985). But much the most important parallel piece of work on the 10th century at this time was a volume of the *Sylloge*, written jointly with Marion Archibald, on the British Museum's vast collection of coins from Athelstan to Edgar's reform (1986). Publication of the *Sylloge* ahead of *CTCE* not only enabled its coins to be referred to in *CTCE* by the appropriate numbers, but provided such comprehensive illustration of the series that the plates of *CTCE* could be reserved, apart from a representative specimen of each type or variety, mainly for combinations of type and moneyer not already illustrated, so that the two would be complementary. It was a great advantage that Blunt should have been part author of both volumes, and taking these together with his earlier monograph on Athelstan we can see that the last 20 years of his life saw the appearance of by far his most important work. Neither Blunt nor his collaborators would claim that these publications do more than set the scene for more detailed work on the series they cover. But it is a measure of his achievement that without them coherent appraisal of the development of the coinage at a crucial period of the emergence of the English kingdom remained virtually impossible.

During Christopher's retirement numismatics came increasingly to fill his life. With his son Simon, a skilled photographer, he visited Rome and photographed 800 English coins of the 10th century from the hoard found in the Forum in 1883, and thereafter he made several trips abroad to record early English coins in continental museums, including those in Leningrad and Warsaw. He enjoyed travel and with Professor Karl Morrison, historian and student of Carolingian coins, who had married his daughter Anne in 1964, he visited Turkey and Greece (where they stayed at Mount Athos) in 1972. Elisabeth had often joined him for a holiday on his visits to Portugal, but in the 1970s her health was not good and she was rarely able to accompany him on his journeys overseas. She had been left lame by one of the earlier hip operations and in later years she suffered increasingly from periods of melancholy. Like Christopher, she took great pleasure in the garden (the family built a raised flower bed from railway sleepers when she could no longer bend), and in gatherings of the children and grandchildren each summer and of cousins from far and wide on Boxing Day. There was no television in the house (except when families like mine came to stay and rather ashamedly included a portable one in the luggage), but the wireless was a mainstay and Christopher, like so many of his

generation, would make a point of listening to the news. He maintained a lively interest in the financial world and in current affairs, but in later years he naturally devoted more of his time to things closer to him, as treasurer of the parochial church council, in the Wiltshire Archaeological Society and Devizes Museum, supporting many village functions such as the flower show<sup>18</sup> and canvassing on the doorstep for the Conservative candidate as late as the General Election of June 1987.

In 1979 the revelation of Anthony's activities as a Soviet agent in the 1940s came as a fearful shock to his family. Christopher told me that what hurt him so deeply, beyond the public shame, was to accept that so much had (necessarily) been excluded from what he had believed to be a close relationship of trust with his younger brother. Anthony's resignation from the Academy, which put an end to an increasingly bitter dispute that developed over his continued fellowship, was a further, even if ultimately an inevitable blow. During the following winter Elisabeth's health deteriorated and in May 1980 she died. Christopher had had a profoundly happy marriage, but the sadness of his bereavement was tempered by his steady faith and by the belief that for her it was a timely relief. At the age of 75, and beset by such sorrow, many men would have been dispirited. Within a few months, however, Christopher had picked up the threads of his life, and come to terms with a more solitary but less confined existence. He visited London regularly, attended meetings of the Societies, and deposited his collection of Anglo-Saxon coins at the British Museum, partly for security but also for the convenience of the joint work with Miss Archibald. Without the flat in Albany that had been his home in London for many years, he now went to the Travellers' Club when he wanted to stay overnight, and would use it to entertain friends to dinner from time to time. He also travelled abroad rather more, regularly to see Anne's family in Chicago and Kansas, and in 1982 he spent time in Paris where his son Simon was working—making a day trip to Poitiers to see the only surviving Carolingian coin die, on which he published a note in connection with the discovery of two 10th-century dies then recently excavated at York. As late as 1986 he was driven up to Scotland by a grandson, visiting relations on the journeys, including Jock Yorke who commissioned him to buy a coin of Edward VI, with the Y(orke)

<sup>18</sup> The garden of Ramsbury Hill was opened one day each year under the National Gardens scheme, and its produce won many prizes of which the fading certificates adorned the walls of the kitchen.

mint-mark of his ancestor.<sup>19</sup> He continued to entertain at Ramsbury, maintaining, though not always without difficulty, the domestic processes of the household with the aid of a succession of housekeepers (of variable quality), and although he was often apologetic to his house-guests, he almost always managed to conjure extra helpers from village or family to provide the hospitality that he felt was needed. He took particular pleasure in continuing the annual gatherings of the family at Ramsbury in the summer. Although a naturally private man he always enjoyed company. One special occasion was the party given for him in 1984 by his numismatic friends to mark his 80th birthday, with the presentation of a portrait medal to which they had subscribed,<sup>20</sup> another was the International Congress, held again in London in 1986, at which he was the senior (and only medievalist) of the three survivors<sup>21</sup> of its precursor 50 years before. Medallist of the Royal (1969) and American (1974) Numismatic Societies as well as of the British (and the first person to be so), the respect in which he was held was now world-wide.

Although he found growing difficulty in getting about, Blunt enjoyed good eyesight and hearing until the end of his life and remained mentally alert until the last days of his brief final illness. He kept up a wide correspondence, especially with numismatists. It had long been his habit to answer his letters each morning and then walk through the churchyard with his dog to catch the 10.30 post; but in the last two years this was too much and he became increasingly immobile. When I stayed with him during the first week in August in 1987 (as I had done for several years immediately after Parliament rose for the summer recess) we had the proofs of the 10th-century book before us, and went through them in detail. Before he left for America in September he had marked up a fair copy for the printers. He first admitted to feeling unwell in October but had found the strength to give his last lecture on coins to students at the University of Kansas. Soon after his return he entered hospital, but when it was known that he had cancer and would not live long he was allowed home, to his great relief, for the last weeks.

Ten days before his death, he dressed for the last time and came downstairs to sit again in the armchair by the fire in his library. We began by dealing with outstanding points, administrative and numismatic, on the book and he handed me the corrected proofs. Then we spoke about the

<sup>19</sup> Sir John Yorke was under-treasurer with responsibility for mints at Southwark and in the Tower of London in the 1540s and 1550s. The coin is illustrated in *Yorke Country* (Hexton, 1988), by Anne Ashley Cooper (née Yorke).

<sup>20</sup> For the medal see *BNJ*, 53 (1983), frontispiece and pp. 189–90.

<sup>21</sup> The others were Prof. Anne Robertson and Mr Herbert Cahn.

future of his coins, his books, his index and his papers (which he had carefully put in order), and he suggested that it might be of benefit both to students and to his estate if his collection was offered to the nation in lieu of tax. In his will he bequeathed three of his most important coins—his pennies of the Kentish kings Heaberht and Ecgberht and the unique penny of Edward V—to the British Museum ‘in recognition of much help, encouragement and kindness from the staff of the Coin Room over sixty years’. But he felt that there would be too much duplication or near duplication with the enormous holdings of the British Museum if the collection as a whole went there.

In 1982 a project of which he greatly approved had been launched by his friend Philip Grierson for the publication of a major survey of *Medieval European Coinage* under the auspices of the *Sylloge* Committee and with financial support from the Academy. In this undertaking Grierson had the collaboration of a younger colleague in Mark Blackburn, whom Blunt regarded highly and saw as someone who could carry forward a project that would take many years to complete. Their first volume, on the early middle ages, which appeared in 1986, included a long general survey followed by a detailed catalogue of the relevant coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, a format designed to be followed in subsequent volumes covering the whole of western medieval coinage. The Fitzwilliam’s holdings incorporate Grierson’s unrivalled collection of continental coins, and these rather overshadowed the English medieval series at Cambridge, most of which had come from the bequest of general collections that contained many fine and rare items but had not been put together systematically. The Blunt collection, on the other hand, included the specialist series that had been gathered for his own work on Saxon coinage, the Berwick mint, and Edward IV and by the Foxes for Edward I–III, as well as good runs of student material of other periods. He therefore asked me to arrange for the bulk of his collection to be offered to the Fitzwilliam Museum and this transaction was successfully completed two years later—the first time indeed that a coin collection had been accepted by the nation in lieu of tax. In addition to some 800 foreign medieval coins, the Fitzwilliam has thus acquired nearly 3,000 British coins which almost double the size of its holdings in that field. Their publication in future volumes, which Blunt saw as an ideal way of making his coins generally available for study, will help to make *Medieval European Coinage* one of the most widely used works of reference for generations to come.

## The Achievement

Christopher Blunt was beyond question the greatest figure of the 20th century in the study of British coinage. Hugh Pagan has suggested that he ranked second only to Sir John Evans in the history of the subject.<sup>22</sup> The comparison is a proper one, for each of them in addition to publishing major works of scholarship played a prominent role in the affairs of the learned societies; and each of them had the independent means (generated by their own efforts) to put together a collection on the grand scale, to travel and to entertain in ways that made so much else possible. But for Evans the British series was only a part of his field of interest, and numismatics itself only part of a wider concern with the development of archaeology as a whole, and although in that context he was undoubtedly the larger figure and the greater scholar I do not think he can measure up to Blunt in the full range of his contribution to British numismatics. At least in the field of English coins, he did not exercise that constructive influence which Blunt devoted to guiding and encouraging two subsequent generations of scholars, and so achieving continuity and momentum for his subject. Nor do I think that any society under Blunt's leadership would have drifted like the RNS into the explosive schism of 1903. His diplomatic touch defused innumerable pressures and tensions, so that the powerful progress of British numismatics from the fifties to the eighties seems to have been achieved almost with inevitability. It was the enlargement of his role in such pervasive ways that made Blunt's achievement unique not only in his own time but also when measured against his predecessors—and, in all likelihood, his successors.

As a scholar Blunt stands firmly in the first rank in his field. Of his contemporaries only Lawrence, Brooke and Allen stand comparison for both range and quality. His published works span a period of almost 60 years and consistently attain the highest standards of accuracy, thoroughness and judgement. In some of his earlier work he was quite radical: overturning established opinion on Edward V (and Perkin Warbeck), reviving forgotten ideas about King Heaberht and about the Rochester mint in the 9th century, suggesting new interpretations like the attribution of half-groats from obverse dies of Edward III to the period after Richard II's deposition. In later years he tended to become more cautious, sometimes hesitating to abandon traditional ideas until there was proof to spare. Miss Archibald has remarked to me, in recalling their joint work on the British Museum *Sylloge*, on Blunt's continual concern not to push the

<sup>22</sup> *Numismatic Circular*, Feb. 1988, p. 4; for a numismatic assessment of Evans, see R. A. G. Carson & H. Pagan, *A History of the Royal Numismatic Society* (London, 1986), p. 20.

evidence beyond what it would confidently bear. This was not just due to a natural grain of diffidence. It was no doubt the result partly of a reaction to the speculative excesses of English numismatists before the war and partly of his own experience in trying to restrain Dolley's imagination thereafter, but it was I think also due to the sheer scale of the revolution in thinking that his own work had precipitated. It was as if, when so much had changed, he was reluctant to see the last features of the old landscape disappear. What he had done, for the two centuries from Offa to Edgar, was to gather all the material together and in effect to build up a new picture almost from scratch. He was always alive, even sensitive, to the views of others, and was ready to defer to anyone, of whatever experience or age, if he felt they had a case. He was never dogmatic, and always prepared to revise his own view, whether or not he had expressed it in print. The most remarkable example of this perhaps was his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Philip Grierson's 70th birthday (1980), in which he gently demolished the theory developed by Lawrence and Brooke, and absorbed into the work of Blunt himself, Whitton, Allen and others, that privy marks had been placed on the coins in the 14th and 15th centuries to distinguish the output of the mint for each quarterly period in connection with the trial of the pyx. The irony of this was that much of his argument was based on the observations of W. J. W. Potter, whose work on the English coinages of the 14th to the 16th centuries Blunt had for many years not regarded highly; indeed, he had as editor in the 1960s rejected Potter's paper on the silver coinage of Edward III,<sup>23</sup> which contained key passages on this subject, although not for that reason (he was always ready to publish views that conflicted with his own),<sup>24</sup> rather I think because he felt it was largely a rehash of Lawrence and not always accurate in detail.

If Blunt had limitations as a scholar, they were perhaps a relative lack of interest in some of the newer directions of research, such as statistical analysis and the identification of die-cutting styles, and a slight narrowing of focus in his later years, so that if a paper like Potter's contained inaccuracies they might weigh with him more than the merits of his theme. His own work was exceptionally meticulous and detailed and, again later, he tended to ask a collaborator to write the more general sections of a joint work. But we must remember he was continuing to work to the highest standards far beyond the time when many scholars have ceased to write at

<sup>23</sup> Subsequently published in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1960, pp. 137–81 and 1962, pp. 203–24.

<sup>24</sup> As editor he felt that this principle outweighed his anxiety to raise the academic standard of the *Journal* and accordingly accepted a very odd paper disagreeing with his views on Edward V (*BNJ*, 26 164–70).



all; and, as he showed not only in his work on Edward IV but also in a range of essays and lectures from the thirties to the sixties, he was not only capable of synthesis but he recognized the importance of thinking about some of the broader questions when others had not done so. Throughout, however, his method was more to generalize by the accumulation of examples than to distil the essence of a case and use the necessary evidence by way of illustration. By building up the structure of his ideas piece by piece, Blunt was much more likely to arrive at a sensible conclusion than those who worked the other way round. It had been a weakness of many of those in English numismatics during the first decades of the century that they developed their theories around the evidence, rather than from within it, and with uneven emphasis, concentrating on parts of it and overlooking whatever was inconvenient, quite apart from a sublime detachment from the constraints of related historical method. It is not only that there is a chasm of difference between, say, the disastrous approach by W. J. Andrew to the coinage of Henry I (1901) and the methodology of Blunt's *Athelstan* of 70 years later. The whole framework of the subject had been transformed, the *British Numismatic Journal* has become a reputable organ of serious scholarship and the numismatic evidence and argument it contains enjoy high standing with students of general, economic and administrative history, of archaeology, of philology and of other cognate disciplines. It is hardly conceivable that English numismatics could have attained such a respected position today without the foresight, the example, and above all the immense application of Christopher Blunt for so long.

One of the most important factors in Blunt's contribution had been the broad range of acquaintance and contact that he had developed over many years with students in related fields, who respected him not only as a scholar but also as a financial guide and mentor. He had become a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1936, and later was a member of one of its internal dining clubs as well as of its Finance and Kelmscott Committees. He was one of the founders (and one of only two financial supporters) of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1957, served on its council for 10 of its first 25 years, contributed a paper on 'The Anglo-Saxon Coinage and the Historian' to one of the early volumes of its journal and was a Vice-President from 1966 to 1971 and President from 1978 to 1980.<sup>25</sup> He was a natural choice as numismatic member when the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee was set up in 1977, and he also served wider interests through

<sup>25</sup> Dr Graham-Campbell recalls that the highlight of this period for him was when Blunt led (in French) the annual conference to Poitiers in the spring of 1979.

membership of the panel of expert advisers to the National Art-Collections Fund and the Publications Committee of the Academy.

But although these broader responsibilities and his own research increasingly occupied his later years, throughout his career Blunt had always found time to encourage those with an interest in coins at every level. He lectured frequently to local societies and clubs, was President of the Kent Numismatic Society before the war and of the Bath and Bristol Numismatic Society after it, and as President of the BNS played a prominent part (with Harold Mattingly, then President of the RNS) in establishing the annual Coin Day from 1948. This led to the foundation in 1953 of the British Association of Numismatic Societies, of which he later served as President. He never lost a chance of helping those whose knowledge and experience were far short of his own, and felt he was more than rewarded when from time to time a beginner who had heard him lecture or had benefited from his advice would graduate to more serious study. He was so widely known and well regarded that strangers would often consult him or report their new discoveries. Incredibly, since he had always half hoped for an Anglo-Saxon find at Ramsbury, a splendid coin of Offa, just locally discovered, was brought to the house by its finder on the last evening of his life.

Of Christopher's personality as such I hardly need to write, since it must have been evident from all that has been said already. He was of striking appearance, tall, patrician, distinguished, in a way that enhanced the natural authority of his unhurried manner. He had a lively sense of humour, especially among those he knew well, and his calmness and self-control did not suppress his love of life, or occasionally, his irritation. I only twice saw signs of anger, both on occasions when Dolley intervened in the editorial process with what he regarded as unacceptable objections to papers of which he was a joint author.<sup>26</sup> He had far more patience than one commonly finds in either businessmen or scholars. Unselfish, modest almost to a fault about his own achievements, he was always ready to encourage and praise the work of others. His younger friends would often come away with a coin or two, or a book, but his generosity was one of thought as well.<sup>27</sup> His quiet charm and natural courtesy were founded on a fundamental thoughtfulness for others. He was old-fashioned in the best sense, a characteristically English gentleman in a long tradition. One felt he was a kindred spirit with the antiquaries of the 18th and 19th centuries, who lived quiet lives in country houses like his, who wrote enthusiastically

<sup>26</sup> *BNJ*, 39, pp. 61–6 and *Num. Chron.* 1983, pp. 146–63; both co-authors (Brand and Stewart) had offended Dolley by questioning his views.

<sup>27</sup> I only discovered many years later that the back numbers of *BNJ* that I had asked for as a schoolboy on joining the Society had been made available to me at half price, Blunt paying the balance.

to each other about the coins they had just obtained for their cabinets, and the catalogues of whose collections adorned his shelves. The contentment he gained from his academic work was punctuated by the excitement of new discoveries and the fun of collecting, especially if he could establish who for the last 200 years had been the successive owners of his new acquisition. Through a long and mostly happy life his coins were an endless source of pleasure and a solace in times of trouble. They helped to sustain him through the difficulties of the last years, through bereavement (both his brothers, like Elisabeth, died before him), and the distress of Anthony's exposure and its relentless aftermath. But above all he had a straightforward faith (authorized version), underlying all he was and did. There are not many like him in this world. He was a lovely man.

IAN STEWART

*Note.* There is an important appreciation of Blunt's career by D. F. Allen in the volume for his 70th birthday, *British Numismatic Journal (BNJ)*, 42 (1974), 1–9. The fullest obituaries are those by H. E. Pagan in the *Numismatic Circular*, Feb. 1988, pp. 3–4 and by me in *BNJ*, 57 (1987), 157–60. Blunt's 'Personal Reminiscences of Some Distinguished Numismatists of a Previous Generation', *BNJ*, 46 (1976), 64–74, includes extensive information on Shirley Fox and others who influenced him in his formative years. There is an account of 'The Blunt Collection of Medieval Coins Acquired for the Fitzwilliam Museum' by M. A. S. Blackburn in the *Numismatic Circular*, May 1990, pp. 119–21; the residue of the Continental collection was sold at the Spink Coin Auction, 11 Oct. 1989, lots 370–560.

References to Blunt's published work and papers read may be found in the bibliography compiled by R. H. Thompson in *BNJ*, 42 (1974), pp. 13–33, 53, pp. 191–3, and 57, pp. 160–1. In the text I have only given footnote references where the item is not self-evident in the bibliography.

I am much indebted to Mr and Mrs Simon Blunt, Prof. and Mrs Karl Morrison and Mrs Judith Mustoe for information on family matters and other assistance in the preparation of this memoir. When Christopher Blunt learned that he was terminally ill, he dictated notes on his early life (of which I have made extensive use), prefacing them with the comment: 'It occurs to me that distinguished scholars must often waste much time digging for information readily available to the deceased. Hence these notes, any of which may be used, or equally well ignored!'. As his nephew, the Revd Robert Hughes, remarked at his funeral service, 'How typical of Christopher that, as his life ebbed away, he should perform one more act of courtesy, to save his colleagues an unnecessary chore'.

My thanks are due also to those who have read drafts of the text or otherwise contributed to it: Miss Marion Archibald, Mr Mark Blackburn, Prof. Christopher Brooke, Sir Robert Clark, Mr Patrick Finn, Dr James Graham-Campbell, Prof. Philip Grierson, Prof. Henry Loyn, Mr Stewart Lyon, Dr Michael Metcalf, Mr Peter Mitchell and Mr Hugh Pagan.