

Numismatic Society of Ireland (Northern Branch) Meeting 10th January 2020

Alan Dunlop
Member NSI-NB

The first Society meeting of 2020 was held at Shaw's Bridge. After seasonal greetings and apologies, the chairman introduced the speaker for the evening - our member Paul Hayward. Paul is well known for his specialist knowledge of the coinage of Edward VII and his recently dispersed collection.

The subject of his presentation for the evening was rise in the production of commemorative medals and medallions, beginning during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign to its peak in the reign of Edward VII and its gradual decline in the reign of George V.



Christening medal for Albert Edward 1842

Paul explained that the increase in their production was the result of a combination of reasons. The expansion of industrialised production methods and the development of various metal alloys made them more available and affordable to the public. This along with an aggressive marketing and sales approach by the producers and a more confident and patriotic fervour within the country further boosted the demand.

The medals/medallions were produced in a wide range of metals and finishes from gold to white metal which provided a wide price range to suit all pockets. The market was not only supplied by British manufacturers, but also by a large number of European makers, especially German.



Opening of 'Prince of Wales Dock' Bombay 1880



Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra 25th
Anniversary 1888

Paul combined a PowerPoint presentation and a large number of medals and medallions from his collection during his talk. Firstly, we were shown some very small medals in gold and brass celebrating the birth of Albert Edward in 1841 and his christening in 1842. Then Paul moved on to show a series of medals produced during Edward's early years commemorating various visits he had made, including two medals from

Canada. It became popular for towns and cities to issue medals to celebrate Royal visits and other events. They often used standard portraits on the medals but changing the reverses depending on the town/city or event. There were also official medals of certain events, such as



Boer War Medal by Spink for raising funds for the wounded

Edward and Alexandra's wedding anniversary in 1888, and special note was made of Victoria's 60th Anniversary in 1897 which portrayed the four generations of the Royal family - Victoria, Edward, George and David (Edward VII).

Medals were also issued for sale to support various causes, such as hospitals for the wounded from the Boer War an example was

Princess Alexandra's Private Military Hospital in Surbiton in 1900. School attendance medals were also very popular and were issued and presented by many schools, although for some reason none are known for Ireland.



Boer War 'British Empire Medal' 1901 by Spink

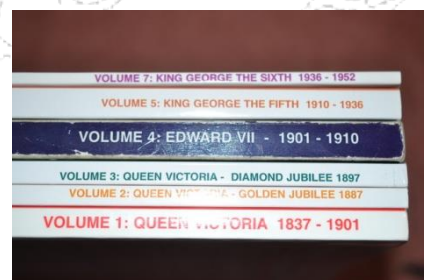
The coronation of Edward VII in 1902 was an event for which many medals were struck by cities and towns. We also saw 'The Death Medal' for Edward VII struck by Spink in 1910 which Paul had brought along.



Boer War 'Princess Alexandra Nursing Home' Surbiton

With the advent of the Great War the issue of commemorative medals virtually ceased, and in the years following their production gradually slowed down. To illustrate the rise and fall of the production of medals and medallions during the 1800s and 1900s Paul showed a photograph of the standard catalogues stacked in a pile where the volume of their output can be seen by the thickness of the catalogues for each period.

There followed a fairly long question and answer session when most members were able to relate some of their own experiences with medals and medallions.



Books about the series

John Rainey expressed a vote of thanks to Paul for his most interesting and wide-ranging presentation about such a vast range of pieces and also for bringing along so many examples from his own collection. It was great to learn about a subject new to many of the members.



Arrival of Princess Alexandra to London 1863



1902 Coronation Medal for Sedgley



Canadian Coronation Medal

National Series Medal 1902 by Brookes & Adams