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The Coin Courier

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BCC Notes:

BCC Editor noticed the unique technology discussion by the Canadian Royal Mint as an intriguing topic to include in our newsletter.

BCC themes are: SBA & Sacagawea Dollars on 6 September

Gold Type Sets on 20 September

Commemoratives

Authorized by Congress, commemorative coins celebrate and honor American people, places, events, and institutions. Each coin is crafted to be rich in symbolic history. They represent not only an investment in maintaining our American Past, but also in ensuring our Future.

Unique among U.S. Mint products, these coins help raise money for important causes as well as commemorating important aspects of American history. These products not only provide beautiful additions to any coin collection, and they capture the American culture.



President's Message

Hope all enjoying this summer weather, seems like we are being fried or getting soaked with rain. We have passed 2 successful Whitman shows, The summer show was poorly attended and smaller than the other two shows. Thanks to all who made our registration a success. A special thanks to Bill Stratmeyer for organizing the shows for us. The last show of this year is set for October 25-28, 2018. Bill has started to organize for this one also. Our annual holiday get together is set for 6 December 2018. Mike has stepped up and is doing the organization this affair, Bill has gotten us a new speaker for the Holiday dinner.

Thanks to all for their attention to my recent brush with the grim reaper. I received several calls and visits to the hospital by club members.

As always we need to get more new members....bring a friend or relative to our meetings...

Ken

COPPER NICKEL THREE CENT PIECES 1865-1889

by Sandon L. Cohen

Collectors sometimes refer to these coins as “three cent nickels”. They were the first U.S. coins struck in the 75% copper 25% nickel alloy that is still used for five cent coins and the outer layers of clad dimes through half dollars. Like two cent pieces they resulted from the Civil War coinage shortage, though in this case indirectly. According to Walter Breen's *Encyclopedia* their primary purpose was to replace unpopular three cent fractional currency notes rather than vanished silver three cent pieces or other coins that the fractional currency notes were meant to replace. The Act of March 3, 1865, which authorized these coins, provided that they were to be paid out in exchange for these notes. Breen claimed that most of the pieces minted from 1865-76 were used to redeem over 17 million fractional currency notes, while others were mainly used to purchase postage stamps as had their silver predecessors. These coins had a total mintage of about 31.4 million over the 24 years of their mintage, which is less than either the two cent pieces or the silver three cent pieces, which had fewer years of production. The Act of September 25, 1890, abolished the denomination.

Like the silver three cent pieces and the two cent pieces, these coins were designed by Chief Engraver James B. Longacre. The main motif for the obverse design is a liberty head wearing a coronet that is unlike any other such design but whose face is similar to that of other liberty heads designed by Longacre, including that of the Indian cent. According to Breen, Longacre based all of his liberty heads on a Greco-Roman statue called the *Venus Accroupie* (“Crouching Venus”) he had seen in a Philadelphia museum. I find this head pleasing, especially on higher grade coins. The obverse design is completed by the legend “United States of America” and the date. The reverse design is the roman numeral “III” with internal vertical lines surrounded by a laurel wreath similar to that used on 1859 Indian cents. At 17.9 mm they are the same diameter as dimes but perhaps due to their plain edge and different design were apparently not often confused with dimes in the days when they circulated

The copper nickel three cent pieces, like the two cent pieces, started out with initially high circulation mintages that dwindled as the years went by. The rarity of these coins generally follows their original mintages, although low mintage years and proofs tend to have a higher survival rate. The initial mintage of nearly 11.4 million pieces in 1865 was followed by a still respectable 4.8 million in 1866 and mintages over 3 million for each of 1867 and 1868. Mintages remained over 1 million annually through 1870 and in 1873, and in other years through 1874 were between 600,000 and 900,000. The 1875 and 1876 have mintages of 228,000 and 162,000 respectively. Thereafter, only the 1881 has a sufficient

mintage—about 1.1 million—to be considered common. Of the remaining dates the 1877, 1878 and 1886 are proof only, with the 1877, with a reported mintage of 900 (but probably more), being the key date to the set, while the other dates have circulation strike mintages ranging from a low of 1,000 (1885) to a high of 38,000 (1879). For the 1883, 84, and 85, proofs have higher mintages and are more available than circulation strikes; the circulation strikes of these dates as well as the 1887 have become relatively expensive in recent years. Because many proofs of these years look like circulation strikes and may be confused with them even by the grading services, I regard the proofs as a better value.

For variety collectors, 1873 coins come with both closed and open "3"s. Many proofs of 1887 are fairly clear 1887 over 6 overdates. There are also a number of repunched dates and other minor but interesting die varieties, especially for the earlier high production years.

For type collectors, common dates retail according to *Coin World Values* for as little as \$20 in Fine, \$43 in EF, \$150 in MS63 and \$500 in MS65. While dates from 1865-68 are the most common, most have one or more irregularities such as die breaks, die erosion, clash marks, planchet laminations, and weak or uneven strikes. (The mint initially had a difficult time using nickel alloys for coinage due to the hardness of the metal.) Later common or better dates tend to be better made for some premium but nicer earlier ones can be cherrypicked. Date collectors on a budget may wish to build a "short set" consisting of the coins dated 1865 to 1876 and the 1881. Scarcer dates such as the 1879, 80, 82, 88 and 89 can also be had in mid circulated grades for a few hundred dollars each. They are rarer than many key dates of other series but, as fewer collectors build complete sets of three cent pieces, far less expensive. Attractive proofs of most years list about \$350 in PR63, \$500 in PR65. Even the key proof only 1877 at \$2,250 in PR63 or \$3,750 in PR65 and a total of 1,082 certified and graded by PCGS and NGC combined is a bargain compared with an analogous proof only 1895 Morgan dollar listing \$53,000 in PR63 and \$70,000 in PR65 and combined certified population of 934 or 86.3% of the three cent piece.

I have found collecting these attractive coins challenging and enjoyable. I hope that you will too.

Words from the Past - #34

By: Don Curtis

The Year was 1945

Excerpts from minutes of past Baltimore Coin Club meetings as written by
the club Secretary-Treasurer R.C. Hall

May 20, 1946 - *The meeting was called to order by President Sheckells at 8:10 PM, with 29 members present. The club nominated and unanimous approved seven individuals for the American Numismatic Association (ANA) to include: President, First and Second Vic-President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, and one member to serve on the Board of Directors.*

Two questions were found in the Question Box, both producing some discussion. Mr. Cook made a presentation to Past President Strauss, the gift being a specially designed plaque. Mr. Strauss in acceptance made a short speech of appreciation. Following a short auction Mr. Strauss spoke on the subject, "Documents" and the relationship between collecting coins and collecting historic papers. A display of papers signed by Queen Ann and other rulers as well as American notables proved very interesting.

Mr. Arthur Stewart commented on the need for a projector, so that all might see the items being discussed. President Sheckells, stated that this will be looked into. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

June 6, 1946 - *The meeting was called to order by President Sheckells at 8:20 PM, with 32 members present. The President stated that Secretary Hall would be absent and that Mr. Howell would be acting Secretary for this meeting.*

Mr. Hass brought up for discussion the "Club's Commission on Auction Sales". It was his opinion that that there should be limits placed on the amount the Club collects on Auction commission. He feels that the commission is too high and therefor keeps choice coins from being offered in the auction. After considerable discussion, it was decided to table the subject for consideration by the Board of Directors.

The auction was held netting the Club \$1.24.

June 20, 1946 - *The meeting was called to order by President Sheckells at 8 PM, with 22 members and 1 guest present.*

With the date of the next regular meeting was scheduled for Thursday July 4th, a motion was made, seconded and passed, without a dissenting vote to hold the next meeting on July 11th.

Mr. Strauss spoke of the collection of Mr. Eliasberg, one of our members and commented particularly on the recent acquisition of some rarities.

The program committee presented a composite exhibition of English coinage, and each exhibitor offered comments on his part of the display. Those taking part and the subject of their remarks were as follows:

Mr. Brogden	Silver pound
Mr. Strauss	History of Copper Two pence
Mr. Lohrfink	Rose Guinea, and Gold Spade Guinea
Mr. Hall	Series of Queen Victoria
Mr. Sheckells	Silver Pennies
Mr. Wilis	Coronation Set of George VI
Mr. Plummer	Coins showing Anglo-Hanovarian Period

Following the auction the meeting adjourned at 945 P.M.

ROYAL CANADIAN MINT



A New Spin on Coin Innovation

When is a coin not just a coin? When it's also a working carousel — miniaturized, of course. Royal Canadian Mint Product Manager Uyen Vo explains the cutting-edge technology behind a new [\\$50 Fine Silver coin](#) that has to be seen to be believed.

In theme parks and on fairgrounds, in small towns and big cities, Canada has a rich legacy of beautiful, ornate antique carousels dating back to the turn of the 20th century. They're magical machines that continue to invoke a sense of wonder and nostalgia in Canadians today.

That gave the team at the Royal Canadian Mint an idea.

“We're always trying to create something new, something that will excite people,” says Product Manager Uyen Vo. “So we thought, if we're going to make a coin that commemorates Canada's antique carousels, why not make a coin that *is* a carousel?”

The result — the partially gold-plated \$50 Fine Silver *Antique Carousel* coin — is a world first in interactive minting technology. The reverse face features a functioning 3D carousel whose miniature horses rise up and down as it rotates, controlled by a magnet that ships with the coin.

“Most R&D coins take time,” says Vo, “but this may have been the most involved yet. Multiple technologies had to interrelate, multiple departments had to work together. Then again, nobody said innovation is easy!”

From inspiration to execution

Originally, the coin was to be modeled on an actual antique carousel built in 1928 that is currently located at Canada’s Wonderland north of Toronto. After some further thought, the Mint team opted to go for a more universal design.

“We always want our coins to be Canadian in the broadest way possible,” explains Vo. “We took inspiration from the carousel at Canada’s Wonderland but also worked in elements from others across the country. We feel like we’ve created something that will resonate with everyone.”

Once the art was finalized, the engineering challenge of creating a functional carousel on a coin began. The process took more than a year. Fortunately, the team didn’t have to start from scratch: in 2017, the Mint released a 90th anniversary [Peace Tower Clock coin](#) with a moveable clock gear made from copper from the actual Peace Tower on Parliament Hill.

While Vo says the [Peace Tower coin](#) was not nearly as complicated as making a working carousel, it provided some valuable lessons for realizing new design.

One of the biggest challenges, ironically, was the smallness of the parts.

“We had to find a balance between the delicacy required by the beautiful design and the durability needed for the interactive element,” Vo explains. “I think it took eight castings just to make sure everything was working right and that the whole piece together was strong enough. When we make a coin, it’s meant to last forever.”

The pocket in the coin where the carousel sits was created using Mint R&D department’s new mini-mill machine. The coin itself was cast using the same machine the Mint uses to make medals rather than standard coining machinery.

An instant classic

While *Antique Carousel* is decidedly a feat of engineering, it is also a stunning example of coin art created by Calder Moore, a graduate of the Centre for Arts and Technology’s animation program. Moore has provided several previous coin designs for the Royal Canadian Mint, notably the Loon and the Beaver.

The [\\$50 Fine Silver carousel coin](#) features rococo stylings and a scalloped rounding board lined by a row of gold bulbs that evoke a carousel’s lights.

Selective gold plating over 99.99% pure silver enhances the coin's engraved scrollwork. The mirror finish is framed by a gold-pated rim.

Limited to a mintage of just 1,000 coins, Vo expects *Antique Carousel's* unique design and world-first features will make it a prized collector's item.

"We've already received interest and attention from all over the world," she says. "We think we've got something very special here, and we can't wait to share it with our collectors."