

ANA British Gold Exhibit Opens to Glittering Applause

British Consul General John Maguire joined the opening ceremonies Friday, February 8, 2002, for the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) newest exhibit - "Una and the Lion: British Gold Coins through the Ages."

Maguire said he was honored to represent the British Royal Mint and the Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He was joined at the ceremonies by award-winning exhibitor Thos. H. Law, whose 2001 Howland Wood Memorial Award for Best-in-Show Exhibit - "Rare English Gold Coins, 1344-1839" - is the focal point of the ANA's exhibit. Law is a five-time winner of the ANA's top competitive exhibit award.

ANA Governor Arthur Fitts III, a specialist in English coinage and a past curator of the ANA museum, represented the Association's Board of Governors at the opening ceremonies. He and ANA Executive Director Edward C. Rochette, who served as master of ceremonies, presented Law with his 2001 Howland Wood Award plaque. The 14kt-gold medal that accompanies the award is displayed with Law's other exhibit award medals.

More than 100 people attended the event and enjoyed a "high tea" service following the ceremony. ANA Curator Lawrence J. Lee and his staff were praised for their work in creating this newest exhibit, which will be on display at the Money Museum in Colorado Springs, Colorado, until April 26.

The half millennium of British gold coinage in this spectacular exhibit fills the lower gallery of the ANA Money Museum. In addition to Law's coins, the exhibit showcases selected material never before allowed outside the Royal Mint; nearly 700 years of English coronation medals from the collection of token and medal specialist and author David E. Schenkman; and artifacts from the early days of Colorado Springs, once known as "Little London."

One of the many features of this brilliant exhibit is a £5 piece known as "Una and the Lion" - considered one of the most beautiful English coins ever made. Issued at the beginning of Queen Victoria's long reign, the 1839 gold piece depicts the 20-year-old monarch on the reverse as "Una" (Truth) - one of the principal characters in Edmund Spenser's 16th-century allegorical poem *The Faerie Queene* - accompanied by a lion that guards her virtue.

For the exhibit, Lee obtained a 10-foot-long mounted lion, on loan from an ANA member, and for the opening a live model wearing a replica of the gown worn by Queen Victoria on the Una piece. Also included in the exhibit is an 1895 edition of Spenser's epic poem, on loan from nearby Colorado College, and the first 2001 £100 "Britannia" gold bullion proof set, the loan of which arranged by the Royal Mint.

Lee also acquired material from the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum that reflects England's influence on the city in 1870s and '80s. Founded in 1871, the city attracted a great many British visitors and investors from the thousands of English gentry seeking their fortunes in the American West. A Colorado Springs advertising campaign in British newspapers promoted the community as "Little London." The moniker remains today.

For more information about this or other Money Museum attractions, contact ANA Museum Services at 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279; telephone 719/632 2646; fax 719/634-4085; E-mail museum@money.org; or visit the ANA web site at www.money.org.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 28,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.