

## **British Gold Coin Exhibit Continues by Popular Demand at ANA Money Museum**

A spectacular exhibit of a half millennium of British gold coinage will glitter for another month at the American Numismatic Association (ANA) Money Museum in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The exhibit - "Una and the Lion: British Gold Coins through the Ages," which showcases a vast array of British gold coins dating from 1344; selected material never before allowed outside the Royal Mint; nearly 700 years of English coronation medals; and artifacts from the early days of Colorado Springs, once known as "Little London" - will continue on display at the Money Museum, 818 North Cascade Avenue, through May 31.

"Since its opening in February, the exhibit has generated a lot of interest, with more than 360 visitors to the Museum in one week," says Curator Lawrence J. Lee. "We are seeing a daily increase in traffic at the Money Museum, especially with the promotion for our National Coin Week kickoff this Saturday."

Beginning with the short-lived gold florins issued under King Edward III (1327-77), British gold coinage has held an allure and influence that continues today, according to Lee. The exhibit brings this legacy to life with displays of gold coins and medals, vintage photographs and related material.

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 (or tails side) 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.

"On the obverse (or heads side) of the gold coin is the "Young Head" portrait of Queen Victoria, with her hair caught in a graceful bow in the back," Lee says. "The young Queen Victoria engraving appeared on coins of the British Empire for nearly 30 years."

(Last August, the Royal Mint unveiled its 2001 Britannia gold bullion coin bearing an updated version of the Victoria £5 design, with the current portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on the obverse.)

Lee adds that, as part of this exhibit, the original dies used to strike the 1839 £5 gold piece will be on display. This marks the first time the dies have been allowed outside the British Royal Mint.

The exhibit also features more than 100 historic English gold coins from the private collection of nationally recognized exhibitor Thos. H. Law. A partner with a Ft. Worth, Texas, legal firm, Law has been exhibiting his wide range of English gold coins for a decade, repeatedly

being named "World Champion Numismatic Exhibitor" and winner of the ANA's Howland Wood Memorial Award for Best-in-Show Exhibit.

Also included in the exhibit are British gold coronation medals from the 1300s to the present from the collection of token and medal specialist and author David E. Schenkman.

"From the time of the Stuart kings (1603) to the coronation of Queen Victoria (1837), gold and silver medals were scattered randomly to the onlooking crowd during the coronation ceremony as an expression of largess," Lee says. "However, the crowds became more aggressive, and the cost of this generosity grew. Not wishing to have the splendor and gravity of his coronation ruined in 1901, King Edward VII established the current tradition of presenting medals only to those who assisted in the coronation."

Material from the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum highlights the city's early days. Founded in 1871, the city attracted a great many British visitors and investors from the thousands of English tenant farmers and younger sons of large landowners who sought their fortunes in the American West. In the 1870s and '80s, 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](mailto:museum@money.org); or visit the ANA web site at [www.money.org](http://www.money.org).

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