

Magazine listing led to Toronto club

BY EDWARD BANNING

In 1936, a Toronto numismatist named G. N. (Bob) Robillard saw another Toronto name listed among the new members of the American Numismatic Association in its monthly publication, *The Numismatist*. Mr. Robillard contacted this new member — Norman B. Mason was his name — and the two set about instituting Canada's first coin club.

Fifty years ago there weren't many coin collectors in Toronto, and the Toronto Coin Club's meetings and programs were very informal. No one recorded minutes, and there were no elected officers. Instead, a small group of numismatic enthusiasts used the telephone or the mail to arrange to get together, generally in the Robillard home on Church Street, whenever they wanted to talk about coins or show one another the new additions to their cabinets.

But Mr. Mason made efforts to expand this circle of numismatic friends and to transform it into a more formal club. Remembering how the pages of the ANA's *Numismatist* had introduced him to Mr. Robillard, Mr. Mason published a notice in that journal that, he hoped, would bring new members into the group. In it he asked coin dealers to send him the names and addresses of Toronto customers on their mailing lists, so that he could invite them to join the club. The notice failed to attract attention.

But Mr. Mason nonetheless reported the successful formation of a Toronto club in 1939. In the July, 1939, issue of *The Numismatist* he gave an account of the club's first formal meeting and first official election on May 26. The club's newly elected officers were Bob Robillard, president; William Williams, vice-president; and J. Bruce Parker, secretary-treasurer. Mr. Mason served as secretary pro tem, and Ted Parsons and John Sunden were listed as executive members. Of the club's nine members, Mr. Mason recounts, five were also ANA members.

Another item of business settled at this meeting was to give the club a name. York Coin Club of Toronto and Toronto and York Club were considered, but the simpler Toronto Coin Club found favour.

Mr. Robillard had arranged some months previously to have a presidential chain of office made with a silver tetradrachm of Alexander the Great as its centrepiece. This tetradrachm continues to be the Toronto club's logo.

With business concluded, the first meeting finished with a small donation auction, the proceeds of which furnished the club's first funds, and the sharing of refreshments.

The 12 charter members included H. E. Roseborough, W. E. Marley, Paul Barsos and three gentlemen who are still TCC members today. These are Sam Snider, J. A. (Bert) Peddie, and J. E. (Jim) Charlton. By 1958 the number of members topped 100, but after the mid-60s levelled off around 60.

In February, 1940 *The Numismatist* showed the Toronto Coin Club in its directory of coin club meetings. The club met the second and third Fridays of each month in Mr. Robillard's apartment. Later, after the death of Bob Robillard's mother, meetings took place in several other members' homes.

Out-of-town members and visitors to these gatherings included Peter and Pat Seaby, of the famous numismatic firm in London; John J. Pittman of Rochester, N.Y.; the late J. Douglas Ferguson, the "dean" of Canadian numismatics, from Rock Island, Que.; Guy Potter of Ottawa;

and the first curator of the Bank of Canada's National Currency Collection, Major Sheldon Carroll, also of Ottawa.

In July the Toronto Coin Club held a banquet to celebrate its 50th anniversary. It preceded the Canadian Numismatic Association's convention at the Westbury Hotel in Toronto, and so many of the club's out-of-town members attended.

Charter members Sam Snider, Bert Peddie and Jim Charlton also shared in the festivities

A 50th-anniversary medal designed by Dora de Pedery-Hunt was unveiled at the banquet, and TCC president George Gale presented Mrs. Hunt with three of the medals in bronze, silver and gold.

The club encourages guests to attend its meetings, or to become new members. It usually meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in Room 210, Lawrence Park Collegiate, 125 Chatsworth Dr. in the Lawrence-Yonge area. There are no meetings in July and August. In September and December, meetings are held on the second Monday. At the next meeting on Nov. 17, Dr. George Gale will talk about the coinage of Napoleonic Europe.

The club also has supplementary Sunday meetings in conjunction with the Metro Toronto Coin Exhibition (TOREX) at the Bond Place Hotel, 65 Dundas St. E. Coming MTCE-TOREX meetings will be at 11 a.m. on Jan. 25, Feb. 22, May 24 and June 20, 1987.