

THE EMPIRE STRIKES A COIN

By John Mulhall

A couple of weeks ago CAB received an email containing the following announcement: *The Ministry of Finance of the Empire of Atlantium is pleased to advise that minting of the Empire's inaugural 20th Anniversary commemorative non-circulating coinage has commenced, and is due for completion within the month. Mintage of the 10 Solidi coin will be limited to only 500 pieces + 12 trial strikes, and it is the first ever such issue to be produced by a global non-territorial state. Advance online orders are now being accepted at: <http://www.atlantium.org/buycoins.html>*

The Phantom Empire

While opening my browser to check the website I was reminded of a Saturday afternoon serial I watched as a child in the 1950s—"The Phantom Empire" (1935) starring Gene Autry. (Autry was a very popular singing cowboy star in the 1930s, 40s and 50s.)

In the 12-episode serial Autry is the owner of "Radio Ranch". Mortgage arrangements oblige him to make a radio broadcast from the ranch at precisely 2 p.m. each day. One failure to broadcast and the ranch is lost!

Some 20,000 ft. beneath "Radio Ranch" is the hidden "scientific city" of Murania, ruled by its Queen, *Tika*. The city is ultra hi-tech, possessing television, robots, ray-guns and many other marvels. Despite Murania's progress, compared with the world above, its inhabitants dress in clothing resembling a cross between that of the ancient Persians and Romans (robes, sandals, barbed helmets etc.).

Throughout the poorly-produced serial's 12 episodes Gene Autry is forever entering or being whisked off into the underground city. Unfailingly, though, he escapes in time to meet his 2 p.m. broadcasting deadline.

Arriving at the website I found that Murania and the Empire of Atlantium really have nothing at all in common.



The Empire of Atlantium's 10 Solidi coin. Its obverse bears the image of Emperor George II (a.k.a. George Cruickshank)

The Empire of Atlantium

What is the Empire of Atlantium? I think it's best if I let Emperor George tell you about it in his own words:

"Founded unilaterally on 27th November 1981 by three Sydney teenagers as a local political statement, the Empire of Atlantium has subsequently evolved over two decades into a unique global, primarily non-territorial sovereign entity that today embraces some 500 Citizens residing in over sixty countries. Atlantium is headquartered on a small territorial enclave located close to the Sydney CBD (Potts Point) and has Emperor George II as its Sovereign.

"Whilst effectively unrecognised by more established nations, Atlantium nonetheless maintains a growing

worldwide network of honorary diplomatic representatives, and is active in the promotion of a number of progressive causes, including non-territorial opt-in Citizenship, responsible world governance, the unrestricted global free movement of peoples, the right to medically-supervised suicide, drug policy review and decimal calendar reform. It additionally supports various cultural and humanitarian projects on an ad hoc basis, and has recently instituted a civic award known as the 'Great Georgian Order' to afford recognition to individuals and groups whose efforts are judged to have contributed in a positive manner to the sum of human knowledge and experience."

So there you have it.

About the Emperor

George Cruickshank was born in Darlinghurst, Sydney on 7 December, 1966. He attended Sydney suburban Catholic junior and secondary schools. As an adolescent he studied music under the tutelage of his grandfather, mastering the guitar and rising to the level of solo cornettist in his high-school band

An avid reader of history, political theory, comparative mythology, semantics, science and creative fiction from



An informal portrait of Emperor George II of Atlantium (George Cruickshank).

an early age, George felt compelled by an urgent desire to give concrete form to a new type of entity based on the ideas of liberal pluralism, secular humanism and sustainable globalization, which he viewed as providing the only viable pathways to stability in a world polarised by the Cold War. A project to synthesize and reconfigure many of the concepts he and his two cousins had explored into a coherent world view eventually crystallized into the idea of a global sovereignty project—The Empire of Atlantium—of which he was acclaimed Sovereign Head of State on 27 November 1981 at the age of 14.

He completed an Arts degree from Charles Sturt University in 1987 and worked as a designer for a number of years before successfully engineering a career transition to the field of sales and marketing. He has been engaged in various senior sales and marketing roles for such technology-based companies as Worldcom/UUNET and AAPT Tele-communications in recent years and is a member of the Australian Institute of Management.

In 1989 George began an association with public radio that continues to the present day, as producer, presenter and creative director of *Ultima Thule*—Australia's foremost programme of ambient and atmospheric music (broadcast weekly on 2MBS-FM).

George maintains an ongoing interest in the philately, numismatics, vexillology (study of flags,) and history of new country projects and secessionist states, on which he is a recognised authority. He personally owns and manages one of the world's most extensive collections of such material (known as the Imperial Collection) it is progressively being made available as a free online resource for collectors.

The Empire's Coin

Release dates for the Empire's coin are a little confusing. George said: *"the stated year of issue is 10500 (2001), which coincides with our 20th Anniversary - obviously the entire point of the release - however actual minting was delayed due to factors beyond our control until May 2002. The effective release date is expected to be in early July, when the printing of the packaging that accompanies the coins has been completed, although it is not yet possible to pin down a specific date. In addition*

to the mintage information published on our website an additional 3 pieces are being produced in solid sterling silver. Only two of these are available for purchase by the general public, and one has already been sold. Going forward we intend implementing a limited minting programme of 1 x commemorative non-circulating 10 Solidi coin annually, each with a total mintage limited to around 500 pieces."



Proposed design for the obverse of the Empire's next planned release.

Those interested can go to the website given at the beginning of this article. The terms of purchase are a little unusual. Prices quoted are in \$US. Anyone with a credit card can use the PayPal system but the *only* alternative is to mail US currency to the address given on the site.

Specifications:

Diameter: 38 mm

Thickness: 4 mm

Weight: 30.5 grams

Metal: copper, plated with 9 carat gold

Denomination: 10 Solidi

Year: 10520 (2001)

Mint: The Aquila Mint, Sydney, Australia.

Further details can be obtained from the website.

CAB thanks George Cruickshank for making available the images of the coins and for his friendly and good-natured cooperation with the preparation of this article.