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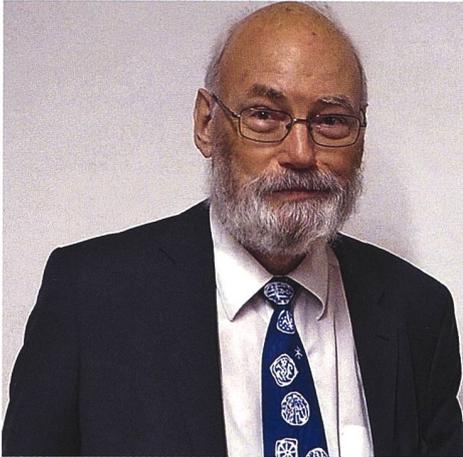
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In memoriam Joachim Stollhoff
(18th July 1948–2nd November 2024)



Joachim Stollhoff in 2021 (Photo: U. Kampmann)

Joachim Stollhoff's life revolved around coins. As the owner of Münzen & Medaillen GmbH (earlier Münzen & Medaillen GmbH Deutschland), he was well-known as a serious coin dealer and an authority on many facets of medieval and early modern coins. His interest in the subject started at an early age. Growing up in post-war Charlottenburg, West Berlin, Joachim would get his father, a professional genealogist, to accompany him to auctions before he was old enough to place bids in his own name. As a young man he was a keen sportsman, practising judo, cycling and engaging in several other sports, and his first qualification was in *Leibeserziehung* (physical education) at the university in West Berlin. Later he studied English, gaining a qualification as an English teacher and spending extended periods living and working in England. He worked in a school in Dorking, Surrey, but also spent a period as a night porter in a hotel in Mayfair, London. In the 1970s he undertook long cycle tours through the British Isles, staying in youth hostels or in a very small tent. During his time in England he got to know the Hennessey family in Cheam. Shenagh Hennessey visited the family several times in Berlin, forming a lifelong friendship: her daughter, the author of this text Claire Franklin (later Franklin-Werz), became Joachim's assistant in 2008 following the death of his business partner Bernhard Schulte. Later, Joachim was best man at her wedding with Ulrich Werz (1964–2023).

Upon his return to Germany, Joachim Stollhoff took a further qualification in *Historische Hilfswissenschaften*, forming the basis for his future career as a professional numismatist (which he started in 1982). It was perhaps an odd career choice for someone who as a student had been a socialist and participant in the 1968 counter-culture movement, but he remained both a committed numismatist and a faithful subscriber of the far-left newspaper TAZ for the rest of his life. He began to work for Dieter Gorny in Munich at the *Gießener Münzhandlung*, living in a shared house with other students, some of whom became life-long friends. Later he worked for H.-W. Müller in his business *Kölner Münz Zentrum*, where he learnt much about the coin trade, specialising in medieval and early modern coins.

In the 1990s, Joachim had the opportunity to work for Münzen & Medaillen AG in Basel, working under the direction of Bernhard Schulte; his colleagues included Ursula Kampmann. The esteemed old company, which was founded in 1942 but had its roots in the 19th century, needed a branch in the European Union. The daughter company, Münzen & Medaillen Deutschland GmbH, was founded by Arne Kirsch but after he decided to move back to his family in northern Germany in 1998, joining the company Fritz Rudolf Künker in Osnabrück, Joachim Stollhoff took over control. He continued to be assisted by Bernhard Schulte and Dr. Hans Voegtli, who wrote the sections on ancient coins. Although Münzen & Medaillen GmbH (which later dropped the addition Deutschland) at first relied heavily on its connections with Switzerland, it soon acquired its own customer base, many of whom remained loyal to the present day.

Under Joachim Stollhoff, Münzen & Medaillen GmbH went on to hold many more auctions, which included a wide range of special collections. The most commercially successful was the extensive Napoleon collection of Dieter Schwering which formed Auction 24 in 2007, but many other catalogues were well received, with some becoming reference works in their own right. Notable collections included the BCD collection of coins of Acarnania and Aetolia (Auction 23, 2007), the Vatican collection of Klaus Bronny (2008), the collection of medieval coins of Bernhard

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Schulte, his former boss and business partner (2008), and many more. Some of the auctions consisted of his own collections: these included the auction of British trade tokens (2008), which Joachim had mostly collected during his trips to Britain and which was very well received, a collection of medals and coins relating to the social unrest and revolutionary activities in Europe in 1849 (2009), and a collection of coins minted by the Grafschaft Montfort on Lake Constance (Bodensee) in 2012.

It is clear from the above that many of Joachim Stollhoff's personal collections reflected his political and social interests. He firmly believed that coins should be seen within their historical context, and that it was part of the job of a coin dealer to inform and educate his customers about the coins they were buying. Unlike some other companies, he did not only auction the high-value, impressive coins in a collection, but also tried to include the smaller, less valuable coins to give a sense of the collection as a whole and to give the "impressive" coins a historical context. He managed this in his well-received collection of Crusader coins in Auction 47 in 2019 (Collection Erich Wäckerlin), for which he spent many evenings reading up about the historical background of the Crusader kingdoms and their activities. Another of his evening activities during the Covid period involved analysing and cataloguing the "bracteate find in the cigarette tin", an assembly of cut and broken medieval bracteates, some of them extremely rare, which had been placed in a cigarette tin and put to one side in Münzen & Medaillen AG Basel. Joachim was able to identify the bracteate fragments, augmenting the lost parts with illustrations of similar coins. He did not consider publishing his finds in a journal, instead including his text as part of his Auction catalogue 49 (2020).

Joachim was always willing to share his acquired knowledge on a subject. For a long period he was active (under the name *munde*) in internet forums, and he also gave several very informative lectures as a member of the *Circulus Numismaticus Basiliensis* in Basel. He encouraged and supported a number of younger collectors, some of whom have since become coin dealers in their own right. Although his company remained small, confined to a cramped and over-filled back-

street office in Weil am Rhein, he worked hard to make sure that Münzen & Medaillen GmbH kept its place in the increasingly competitive world of numismatics, and put a lot of effort into the marketing of his auctions, writing extensive reports and (along with the present author) pointing out the features of individual coins, many of which would otherwise have been overlooked. Initially wary of the transition to online auctions, Joachim eventually embraced the new technologies and was able to weather the difficult Covid period; he was however adamant that the many older collectors among his customers, many of whom had also been customers of the old Basel company and faithfully sent in their hand-written bidsheets for each auction year after year, should not be overlooked.

Joachim Stollhoff worked extremely hard to keep his company going. For a long time he lived in a flat directly above the office, and could be found sitting at his desk on weekends and public holidays. He had long accepted that he would probably never retire, but keep on working until the bitter end. Even so, he made sure he had numerous opportunities to leave the office. After the death of Bernhard Schulte in 2008, he took over the latter's Ford Focus, which was so infused with cigarillo smoke that it was considered unsellable. He drove it to the very end. Together with the present author, he made countless journeys to coin fairs and conferences as well as to private coin collectors; these trips were often an excuse to explore new areas and visit historical sites. One of his favourite expressions was, "Oh, there was a mint in this town in the middle ages. Let's go and see if there's anything still there". When the International Numismatic Congress in Taormina was announced in 2015, he hatched a plan to drive to Sicily from Weil am Rhein, and over the course of three weeks we drove from one historical site to the next, travelling down the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy and back up the Adriatic coast. We made a similar journey through Poland for the International Numismatic Congress in Warsaw in 2022. Joachim also encouraged me to assemble and edit a selection of my "Franklin's World" cartoons from the online news portal *MünzenWoche* (Coins Weekly), which was published by the company in 2021 and sent as a marketing gift to many of its customers.

Joachim Stollhoff remained active to the very end. He met up with his former classmates from his *Abitur* class in Berlin in August; then, a month before his death, he drove to the Swiss Numismatic Society meeting in Lugano, spending a week exploring Ticino, Lago Maggiore, Aosta and numerous Alpine passes in between the two events. Uncharacteristically, he felt so unwell that he did not

attend the second conference. Returning to his office, he continued work on his 51st auction before illness overtook him. Diagnosed in hospital with a lung infection, he died a week later on 2nd November. He is survived by his two nieces and their families as well as his assistant Claire Franklin-Werz.

Claire Franklin-Werz