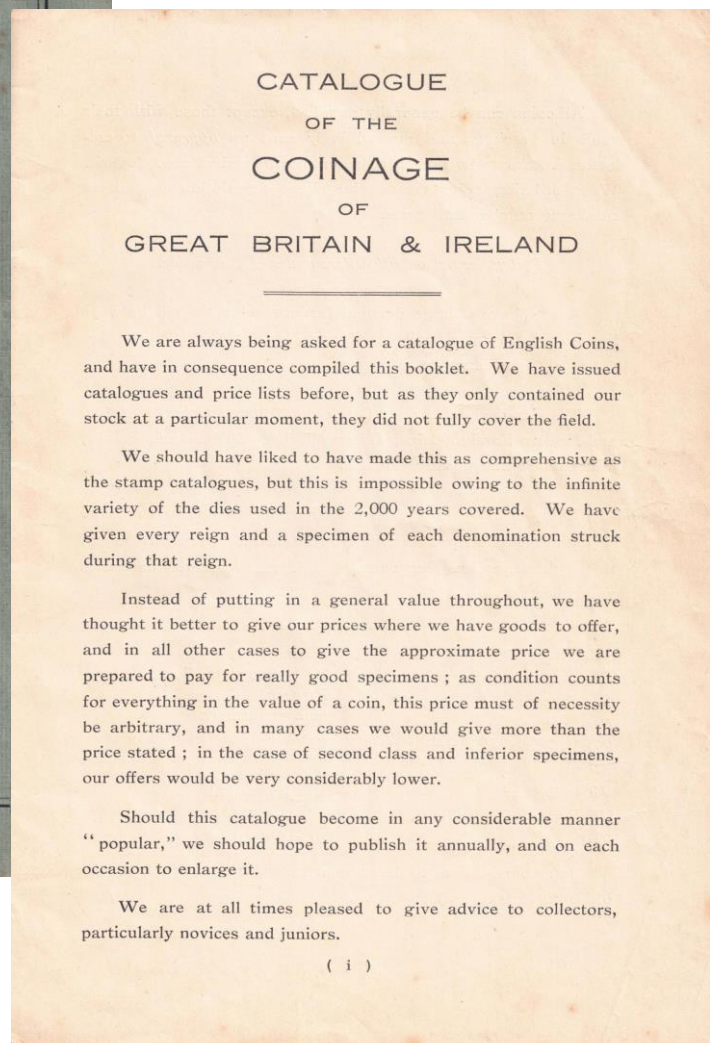
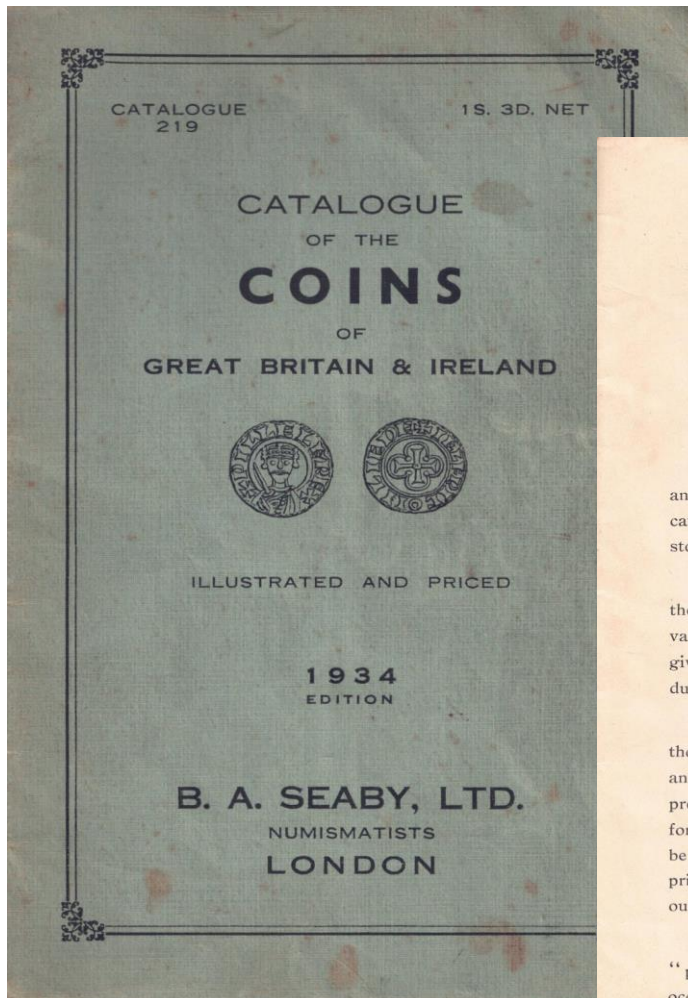


# The Rise of The Standard Catalogue

Gary Oddie

A recent sorting and tidying of my bookcases revealed a range of different editions of the Seaby/Spink standard catalogues, acquired over some decades. An accidental accumulation totalling over a yard of shelf space. Two different versions of the 1934 edition; pale blue cover with a single staple and grey cover with two staples drew me in to look more closely.

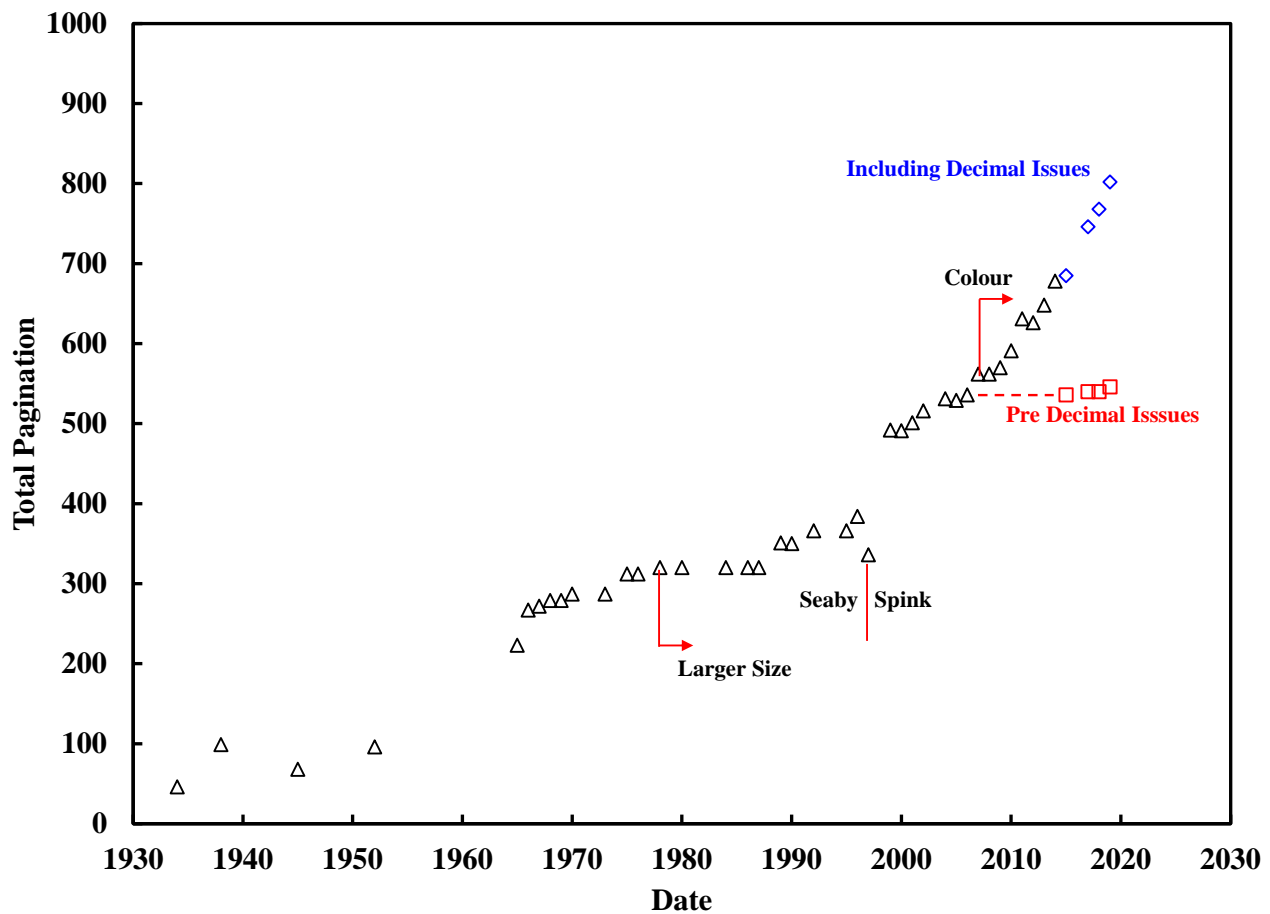


The penultimate sentence had not really registered before but caused pause for thought and a more systematic look at the evolution of the Standard Catalogue.

Should this catalogue become in any considerable manner “popular,” we should hope to publish it annually, and on each occasion to enlarge it.

The plot below shows the total page count for the Standard Catalogue from 1934 to 2019. I am aware of a 1929 edition, but don’t have a copy to hand. Many editions contain pages of adverts on unnumbered pages at the back and others have numbered empty pages for notes. Typically the last numbered page has been used.

The initial 46 pages in 1934 has now grown to two volumes; the pre-decimal issues at around 540 pages, hard cover, and the linearly increasing decimal issues soft cover first issued separately in 2014 now running at about 250 pages.



The transitions from line drawings, to black and white and now full colour photography has kept the catalogue fresh and draws in new eyes to the breadth and depth of this subject.

Rather than just using a catalogue, it is sometimes worth stepping back and appreciating the best part of a century of endeavour; specialist collectors, catalogues and publications, and the editorial skill required to distil the information, keeping the balance between including sufficient detail to be useable and still printable as a catalogue that is now the first port of call for most people with a coin to identify.

The catalogue has successfully catered for the needs of many groups of people over several generations; archaeologists, dealers, curators, collectors, detectorists, historians, the change checkers, the date/type/variety completists, the upgraders and now the collectors of modern issues.

I expect the whole coin and collecting world to be very different after the pandemic but hope that future editions of the Standard Catalogue will provide “popular” continuity through the transition and into the “new normal”.

### Crossword Clue

(1) The Standard Catalogue of Coins of England and the United Kingdom (5).

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I wonder how many readers still think/say Seaby? I can still remember buying my first copy in 1978, with a book token from a school exam prize. My teachers were expecting something more erudite than a priced catalogue, I remain happy with my choice.