

Belted Boudica has coloured public perceptions of the Iceni.

CHRIS RUDD

Accountant figures out why ICENI MINTED COINS



THE Iceni have often been portrayed as a warlike tribe of impoverished peasants, best known for their red-haired queen and her revolt against rapacious Romans. This popular view of the Iceni as rustic troublemakers, too thick to grasp the subtleties of finance, commerce or international trade, is about to be blown out of the North Sea by an explosive new book, *Made for Trade: A New View of Icenian Coinage*.

The culmination of an intensive 13-year investigation, *Made for Trade* dramatically demonstrates that the Iceni of East Anglia were a cultured, collectively responsible group of peace-loving people, mostly farmers, who enjoyed an enriching market economy and whose elites minted a highly sophisticated, meticulously regulated coinage for the primary purpose of facilitating commerce—locally, regionally and internationally. *Made for Trade* also suggests that the Iceni had a sensitive appreciation of their tribal traditions, cosmology, religion and the art that expressed their beliefs.

The author of *Made for Trade*, 68-year-old Dr John Talbot of Cambridge, is as remarkable as his book. Originally trained as a chartered accountant, John Talbot became a world-renowned expert in investigating corporate fraud and failure, and in rescuing companies that had got into trouble. He used the same analytical skills when he examined the coins of the Iceni, ignoring all former theories, working solely with demonstrable facts and finding simple answers to complex questions. John's capacity for multi-tasking is colossal. Whilst deeply engaged in his numismatic research he was also European chairman of Kroll Talbot Hughes, chairman of English National Ballet and executive chairman of Johnson Service Group. That's not all. John is also a keen collector and promoter of contemporary art and, as if that is not enough, he is actively involved in the management of two very posh hotels—one in Wales, the other in North Africa. His next numismatic project is a thorough investigation of the coinage of



Dr John Talbot, author of Made for Trade, used to investigate corporate fraud.

The first major die-study to use composite images of coins. Others are likely to follow Talbot's example.

the Durotriges of Dorset, a mammoth task first initiated by Dr Melinda Mays in the 1980s, but never fully published.

Like its unconventional and innovative author, *Made for Trade* is a pioneering game-changer. Celtic numismatics will never be the same again, neither will our view of the Iceni and their coins. *Made for Trade* is:

- the largest die-study of its kind ever conducted, including every known example of Icenian coinage—over 10,000 coins;
- the first die-study of this scale ever completed for a British iron age regional coinage;
- the first major investigation of ancient coins to use composite images of coins;
- the first book published about the coins of the Iceni;
- the first to identify 13 denominational issues;
- the first to provide a convincing chronology;
- and the first to propose that most Icenian coins were minted mainly for commerce.

Chris Gosden, Professor of European Archaeology at the University of Oxford and Director of the Institute of Archaeology says:

"John Talbot's work has set the study of Celtic coins in Britain on a new footing. Starting from detailed analyses of die links John has thrown new light on patterns of production, use and deposition which in turn tie coins into the main cultural questions confronting anyone studying the late Iron Age. John's work breaks new ground and will act as an inspiration for a new generation of researchers".

I agree. I confidently predict that *Made for Trade* will quickly become an indispensable reference book for collectors and dealers, will profoundly improve our understanding of the Iceni and their coins, and will hugely influence all future studies of regional iron age coinage.



Some say Anted and Ecen were kings. Talbot says they were traders.

For more information contact Chris Rudd, tel: (44) 1263 735 007, fax: (44) 1263 731 777, email: liz@celticcoins.com