

THE ANTI - DECIMAL BULLETIN

NUMBER 1.

NOVEMBER, 1967 .

Published by the Anti-Decimal Association,
66 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1.

We oppose both decimalisation of our currency and general adoption of the decimal metric system of weights and measures. We believe that these proposed changes would not only be very expensive and troublesome but also that they would not bring any great benefits such as their supporters suppose. They are unnecessary but fashionable. They were not properly investigated before the Government announcements were made

The Committee of Inquiry on Decimal Currency was not even asked to investigate the advisability of decimalisation; it was asked "how", not "whether". No such committee of inquiry was set up on the metric system, and there are no official estimates published of the cost to the country of metricisation (or metrication). The measurable cost of currency decimalisation alone was, however, officially estimated as over £100,000,000.

Surely before investing (or wasting) such large sums, a small fraction should be spent on an expert and impartial appraisal of the value to the country of this expenditure. No competent businessman would make a major investment without a careful evaluation of its costs and benefits, difficult though these may be to estimate.

It is often assumed that the decimal system offers nothing but advantages. This facile assumption is incorrect. British weights and measures are not perfect by any means but they do present solid, practical advantages in many respects.

Another misconception concerns the belief that British units are very much in the minority since, it is said, "80 per cent of the world uses the metric system." This figure is superficial and misleading, partly because actual and nominal usage differ in many cases. Use of British units is far more widespread in the world than metric propagandists realise. Some of the evidence is presented in the following pages.

15 February 2021 was the 50th anniversary of the decimalisation of Britain's coinage. This publication marks the occasion by bringing together rare materials produced by the resistance: the Anti-Decimal Association, and the Anti-Decimal Group. The article *Fight Against Decimal Money Launched* is from the *Daily Telegraph*, 29 April 1968, and the photograph of Antony Insoll collecting signatures is from *The Times*, 21 June 1968. The cartoon on the back page is from *The Observer*, 26 October 1969, the month the 10 shilling note was replaced by the 50 pence piece.

"DECIMAL COINAGE AND THE METRIC SYSTEM: SHOULD BRITAIN CHANGE?" is the title of a joint report of Committees appointed by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, published by Butterworths Scientific Publications, London, in 1960. Quotations from this report follow:

"Therefore, since engineering equipment based upon standards using the inch/lb. system is at present more widely spread throughout the world than equipment based upon metric standards, and since there is no reason to regard metric standards as being inherently better than inch/lb. standards, there is little disposition upon the part of the engineering industry in the U.K., and perhaps still less in the U.S., to allow a preference for the metric system, as a system of measurement, to outweigh the very substantial advantage of retaining inch/lb. standards and of seeking their adoption as international standards."

"The relative usage of the metric and inch/lb. systems in the world today cannot be gauged by measuring land areas or counting populations in the various countries which are in widely different stages of industrialisation."

"There is a significant group of European countries - Denmark, Germany, Greece, Holland, Sweden and others - which, although officially metric, use the inch/lb. system to an appreciable extent in their engineering manufacture."

"Through one of the Trade Commissioners the Committee has been supplied with evidence from one of the largest ship repairers in the world at Amsterdam. They are familiar with repairing ships of all nations and stated that 'present practice in shipbuilding is that the British standard of weights and measures is used almost universally, the outstanding exception being France'."

"A figure mentioned at a 1954 conference was that out of 4,000 civil airline aircraft less than 100 had instruments reading in metric units. It is generally agreed by air transport organisations throughout the world that it is more convenient and safer to measure altitudes in feet than in metric units."

"All that can be said in summing up on the cost question is that transitional costs would undoubtedly be very heavy in some spheres, particularly in engineering. As regards the financial benefits to be gained, these appear to be small and, indeed, of such a different order of quantity as to provide an inadequate return on a purely financial basis in relation to the associated transitional costs."

"Little use is made today of the metric system in the U.K. except for scientific and laboratory purposes and in a few specialist fields, in particular the pharmaceutical and optical industries and scientific instruments."

"We conclude that the units officially adopted by a country for internal trade have little effect in dictating the flow of international trade. Other factors such as duties, quotas, standards of performance, quality, finish, price and availability of currency, have far greater weight."

"A large tube firm stated that more than half the world's production is based on the inch/lb. system and that many European countries have adopted these sizes although they may have designated them by metric system values."

Evidence from the Admiralty was quoted: "In overall world production, there is probably little difference between the total amount of production in "metric" and "inch" sizes, and if British Industry were to saddle itself with conversion it might deal itself a blow, financially, and perhaps, commercially, from which it might take a long time to recover."

"The Air Ministry stated that the dislocation and cost of transition appear certain to outweigh any long-term advantages that might result from the adoption of the metric and decimal systems."

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government's final comment was: "It seems doubtful whether any benefit in either money or labour would eventually accrue."

British European Airways. "They wished to retain the Blue Table for operating (this uses nautical miles, feet, feet per minute and lb.) and observed that many countries which agreed to the full I.C.A.O. (mainly metric) units had in fact reverted to the Blue Table. Many metric countries also used feet for vertical distances as metres were not convenient for quadrantal separation flight levels."

THE PROPAGANDA OF THE METRIC SYSTEM

"The propaganda of the metric system is effected, from abroad by diplomacy, and from within by —

Calling it 'antiquated', a term which might be applied to Law, to Religion, to Marriage, to Property, and other ancient institutions.

Calling it 'irrational', when it has that great reason which comes from custom, convenience, improvement in recent times.

Calling it 'unscientific', when it joins to popular convenience the option of decimalisation, whenever that is found convenient, ...

Ignoring all that is convenient in our system and all that is inconvenient in the metric system.

- Edward Nicholson, F.I.C., F.C.S.
in "Men and Measures" (1912).

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS CONDEMNS DECIMALISATION

Speaking in the House of Lords on 27 June, 1967, Lord Kahn, a Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge, said that, "the decimalisation of our currency is just one more of those monstrous irrelevancies ..."

"Decimalisation will result in a great deal of effort wasted and resources wasted, and in a great deal of confusion and exasperation. My Lords, to what purpose is this going to happen? The adoption of decimal currency will not facilitate our international and national operations."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER'S 1000-YEAR REIGN

Speaking in the House of Commons in May, 1966 the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied to a question:

"I recognise that the half-cent is at least a transitional deformity in a pure currency system, but on the other hand we are devising a system which I believe will last us for the next 1,000 years, as the £ has for the last 1,000 years." (The Times, 18.5.66).

CENTIGRADE DOWNGRADED BY PROFESSOR FRED HOYLE

Writing from the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics of the University of Cambridge, Professor Fred Hoyle, F.R.S. commented in a letter to the New Scientist (4.1.62):

"I note with slight sadness the approbation with which you apparently greet the proposed demise in meteorology of the Fahrenheit scale; for surely a change to Centigrade is a distinct change for the worse? There is no moral or logical superiority in the Centigrade system. All temperature scales contain an arbitrary element. Even the 'absolute' scale contains an arbitrary constant of proportionality.

.... Since no special virtue can be attributed to any particular system, I would think the best scale would be the one with the greatest practical convenience. In meteorology, I would take this to be a scale in which operative meteorological conditions are spread fairly smoothly over the useful numerical range from 0 to 100. This condition is very well satisfied in the Fahrenheit system. Scarcely ever in this country do we come outside this range. ...

The Centigrade scale, in contrast, suffers from the absurdity that the upper half of the useful range, 50 to 100, is virtually unused in meteorology. And because the Fahrenheit scale has roughly twice the expansion of the Centigrade scale it is necessary to specify temperatures to the nearest half-degree C - often demanding a three-digit number - in order to achieve the same accuracy of statement as does the nearest degree F.

The suggested switch of scales loses convenience and gains nothing at all from a scientific point of view."

LETTERS

A correspondent in New Zealand writes: "You may be interested to know that in a recent letter to me, Hon. H.G.R. Mason, considered to be the 'father' of decimal currency here says: "There is really ever so much attributed to the decimal system that has nothing to do with it, and consequently a false sense of superiority is given to it." This is the basis on which your government and ours propose to act!" (In mid-1967 New Zealand decimalised its currency, thereby following Australia and South Africa. Theirs is the loss.)

A member writes: "Incidentally, I think you have missed a point about the clocks. Surely, the point is not whether to have a 24-hour clock but that nobody so far as I am aware has suggested decimalising time. After all, the same arguments which are applied to the currency and to weights and measures are equally applicable to clocks. Why not have a 10-hour day with 100 minutes to the hour and 100 seconds to the minute ?

You and I will, of course, know the answer - it has something to do with the Frenchmen all losing their way at sea in the 18th century when somebody tried to make them use a decimal compass."

Actually, an attempt was made to introduce a decimally divided day in France but was not generally put into practice except in official documents; it was suspended the following year! There was also a 400° circle; and a republican calendar used until the end of 1805 when Napoleon restored the Gregorian calendar and era.

Amazingly enough, the science journal Nature, in an editorial, "Power of ten" (19.3.66), advocated decimalising time.

An Austrian student has sent a long letter of encouragement, in which he refers to the antiquity of the £.s.d system and the novelty of the decimal metric system created in the French revolution "where it formed part of all the other humbug like the 10 day system and counting years from the outbreak of the revolution." In a second letter he mentions inconsistencies in the metric system.

For example, he writes that a "zentner" means 100 kilogrammes in Austria, and 50 kg in Germany. In Austria the "Dekagramme" (1/100 of a kilogramme) is frequently used, but not grammes, whereas in Germany dekagrammes are unknown. The kilogramme is used in Austria, but Germans use a "pound" /of 500 gramme, a little ~~smaller~~ than the British pound weight. "In all that I did not take account of all the (mostly local) systems and units used in Switzerland."

A member in Australia reports: "As change-over day approached here, and things began to go wrong, the majority began to take an interest. A knighthood was conferred on the chairman of the Decimal Currency Board, not after his job had been well and faithfully done, but six weeks before change-over day. This I interpreted as a move by a worried government to bolster the public's confidence in him and allay the general disquiet."

LETTERS (continued): An enquirer writes: "I lived in America for three years and went to school there, and I frequently visit France. In neither country have I found the decimal system useful, fast or unambiguous, and I have yet to see an American or French shopkeeper add up a bill mentally with the facility of an English barmaid!"

I feel very strongly that neither the decimal system nor the metric system would benefit Britain, and I would be glad to hear from you concerning your proposed methods of fighting this sad notion of the Government's."

So far as our currency system is concerned, these comments are confirmed by Lord Kahn's (see earlier remarks of his on a previous page):

"That system has one great virtue; and that virtue is revealed if one considers the accurate facility at mental arithmetic, in pounds, shillings and pence, displayed by numerous shop assistants and the like in this country and compares it with the often laborious inaccuracy with which, abroad, each item has to be written on a scrap of paper and all items have then to be added up. The British currency system presents an invigorating mental challenge to our schoolchildren. They meet that challenge and are all the better for it." (House of Lords, 27.6.67).

So much for the shortsightedness of the alleged "savings" in teaching arithmetic on the decimal basis alone!

THE ANTI-DECIMAL ASSOCIATION was formed early in 1967, under the Chairmanship of D.S. Blacklock, C.A. The official address is 66, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1. The subscription for membership is 5 shillings (minimum).

We have since had the pleasant surprise of discovering the Anti-Decimal Group, which has much the same aims as this Association, and we have agreed to co-operate. The Group is sponsoring a petition against decimalisation, details of which can be obtained from their secretary, Mr A. Insoll, 13, Kings Road, Richmond, Surrey.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: By getting new members - as many as possible. By distributing our leaflet and this bulletin to anyone who you think might take an interest; please ask for more copies. By contributing an article or just writing a letter to a newspaper or magazine. By writing to your Member of Parliament (if he agrees with us, please let us know). By doing research into the actual usage of metric and non-metric units, especially of the latter in nominally metric countries. By contributing towards our funds. In any of these ways, according to your ability.

"Blind aversion for the past is full of falsehood and of ignorance." (Guizot).

The origins of the Anti-Decimal Association and Anti-Decimal Group are recorded in the *Duodecimal Newscast*, newsletter of the Dozenal Society of Great Britain, an organisation set up in 1959 to highlight the advantages of the dozen over ten-based systems for numeration and measurement.

The July 1967 Newscast reported the Dozenal Society's AGM of 29 October 1966, held at the Raglan Hotel, EC1:

Society against decimalisation. The meeting took note that no-one had volunteered to organise a body independent of the DSGB with the more limited aim of opposing decimalisation, despite evidence (in the Press, in correspondence with the Society and in personal discussions) of a large number of people in sympathy with that aim. (see notes after this report).

4. The Anti-Decimal Association (66 Shaftesbury Avenuw, London W.1) has now been formed as an independent organisation concerned solely with opposing decimalisation and Metricisation. The subscription is 5s.

From the October 1967 Newscast:

Correspondence has been received from the ANTIDECIMAL GROUP. The address of the group is 13 Kings Road, Richmond, Surrey.

In particular they have requested us to mention that they would like signatures to a petition against the spread of the metric system(decimal) and decimal coinage.

Members are requested to write direct to the Group if interested in the petition or the leaflets which the group has issued. Discussions are being held between this group and the Association already mentioned in the previous Newscast.

From the April 1968 Newscast, reporting the AGM of 24 October 1967, held at the Brown Bear, Holborn:

Methods of advertising were discussed; Mr. Johnston suggested more should be spent on attracting the average man, and this was agreed. The Advertising Panel will report progress later in the year. Mr. Bishop urged more opposition to the spread of decimalisation. Mr. Insoll, representing the Anti-Decimal Group, and Mr. Carnaghan, for the Anti-Decimal Association urged co-ordination of propaganda. It was stressed that the coming debate on decimal currency would spark off comment in the press and that all groups should avail themselves of this opportunity before interest died down again. It was with this in mind that a special effort was called for in *1180, that money was voted for the new Advertising Panel. We hope all members will join us in a concerted effort this year.

Cards for both the ADA and the DSGB were produced for those present to distribute.

The ADA has a subscription of 5s p.a. while the Anti-Decimal Group, more informal in structure, would welcome contributions for its work and signatures for its petition against Decimal Currency. The Group has already discussed its ideas with an MP.

FIGHT AGAINST DECIMAL MONEY LAUNCHED

'PEOPLE NOT CONSULTED'

By *PERCIVAL BANYARD*

A CAMPAIGN to repeal the Decimal Currency Act has begun with the distribution of thousands of leaflets to the public, M Ps, leaders of industry and housewives organisations throughout the country.

The campaign is being conducted by the Anti-Decimal Group. Among its supporters are Prof. Lord Kahn, the economist, of King's College, Cambridge, and Dr. S. Rundle, vice-president of the Liberal party.

The group is concerned about the danger of spiralling prices as a result of the changeover to decimals.

It says that legislation for decimal currency was never debated in Parliament and that the Halsbury Committee was appointed after a private decision, and that its terms of reference were not whether to make the changeover but how to bring it about.

Ten thousand leaflets have been distributed in the past three days, and a further 10,000 are being prepared to be sent to the provincial members of the group.

Freedom threat

A petition in the leaflet states: "Britain's way of life is threatened by constant breaches and reversals of freedom and we deplore the failure of the Government to consult public opinion."

Mr. Antony Insoll, 34, a London bookseller and secretary of the Group, whose home is in Richmond, Surrey, said: "Don't be misled by the pseudo 5p and 10p (1/- and 2/-) coins just issued. Nobody will have any trouble with those but the crunch will come on Feb. 15, 1971—Decimal Day, when they propose to inflict the rest of the coins on us.

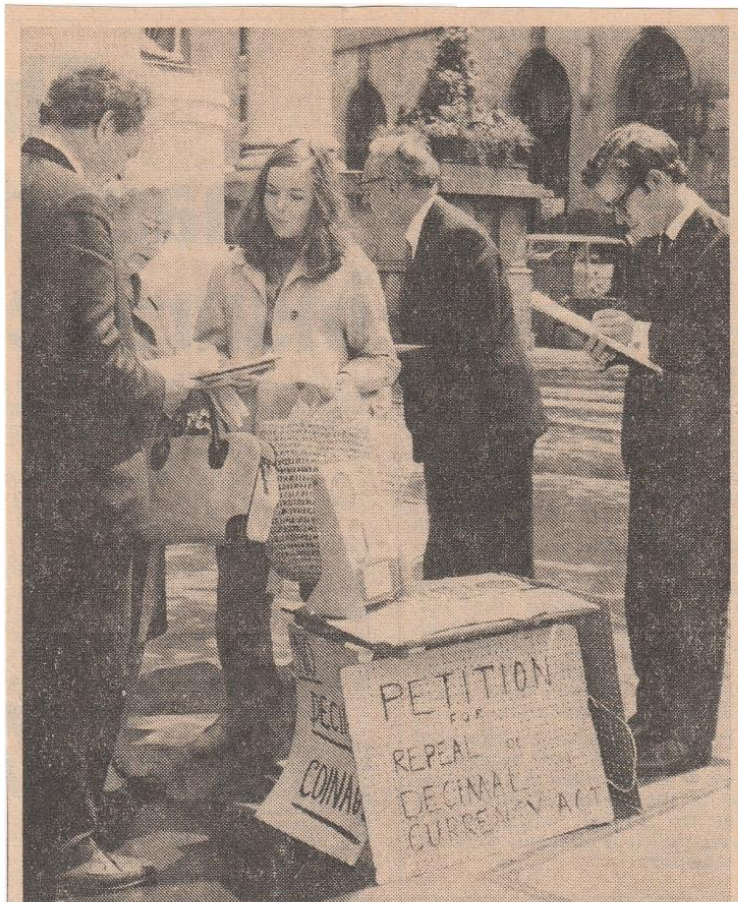
"We say that prices will go up simply to make for easier conversion.

Inquiry demand

Mr. Insoll said the group "has the support of nine out of ten housewives" and was demanding a Royal Commission to investigate the new currency, and they had three years to get the act repealed.

Mrs. Stephanie Harris, Secretary of Westminster Ratepayers' Association, said: "The Government have never asked the people but they've just foisted it on us. I have questioned hundreds of housewives about decimals and they say the change-over is not only a waste of money, but they are already suspicious that the cost of living will rise enormously."

Miss Elizabeth Abraham, the chairman, of Holland Park Road, London, who holds a degree in economics, said: "The movement is snowballing and later we shall present a petition to Mr. Wilson to do something about repealing the Act."



Mr. Antony Insoll (left), secretary of the Anti-Decimal Group, collecting signatures outside the

Royal Exchange, London, yesterday on a petition against the introduction of decimal coinage.

THE ANTI-DECIMAL ASSOCIATION

The Government has announced that decimalisation of the currency is to take place in February 1971, and that adoption of the metric system should take place mostly by 1975. The Anti-Decimal Association opposes these unnecessary changes in our traditional currency, weights and measures, both because of the considerable cost and trouble involved, and because of the disadvantages inherent in the decimal system and metric units.

The government Committee of Inquiry on Decimal Currency, which reported in 1963, was asked, "to advise on the most convenient and practical form which a decimal currency might take," to advise on the timing of the change-over, and to estimate the amount and incidence of the cost. But the Committee was not asked to investigate whether decimalisation would be worth the cost. The measurable costs alone were estimated as over £100,000,000.

No similar government Committee of Inquiry was even appointed, for the metric system, and no official estimate of the cost of metricisation has been published. No scientific investigation of the advantages and disadvantages took place. As with currency decimalisation, the decision was based on prejudice, not science.

The decimal system has obvious attractions, but in many ways it is less practical and convenient than British currency, weights and measures. Our foot, gallon, shilling and pound weight are superior to metric units in their greater divisibility into sub-units. Thus a quarter of a shilling is exactly 3d, and a third is exactly 4d.

The practical consequences of divisibility are important. For example, packaging is more compact and flexible by the dozen, and consequently cheaper, than packaging by tens. Decimal division of the hour and day was tried in France but soon abandoned, and decimal division of the circle (or quadrant) is hardly known. Where it is used, the decimal system restricts divisibility to halves, fifths and tenths. Many practical applications require thirds, quarters and eighths, for which the decimal system is ill adapted.

It is stated by its promoters that 80 per cent of the world uses the metric system, but this is a superficial and misleading statement. British units are used far more widely than is generally supposed. For example, over half of the world's engineering production is based on the inch.

TO: The Anti-Decimal Association, 21 Harford Drive, Watford, Herts.

I enclose as my subscription. Minimum: 5 shillings.

NAME: Mr/Mrs/Miss

ADDRESS:

.....

**KEEP £.s.d.
and SAVE MONEY**

Support the campaign organised by:

THE ANTI-DECIMAL ASSOCIATION,
66 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W.1.

THE ANTI-DECIMAL GROUP,
13 Kings Road, Richmond, Surrey.

A MEETING OF THE
ANTI-DECIMAL ASSOCIATION

SPEAKER: ROBERT W. PARRY, F.C.A.
from Victoria, Australia.

Mr Parry, who is an accountant, has been perhaps the leading critic of decimalisation in Australia. We are glad to have this opportunity of hearing him while he is visiting Britain.

DATE: Monday, 4 May, 1970.

TIME: 7.10 p.m.

PLACE: Caxton Hall (room 16), Caxton Street, Westminster,
London, S.W.1.

Nearest underground station - St. James's Park.
Buses along Victoria Street.

* * * *

'STOP DECIMAL CURRENCY!' A meeting for Mr Parry and another speaker, Dr Stanley Rundle, has been arranged by the Anti-Decimal Group. Date: Friday, 1 May. Time: 8 p.m. Place: Old Council Chamber, Town Hall, Richmond, Surrey.

PLEASE COME IF YOU CAN TO ONE OR OTHER OF THESE TWO MEETINGS.

(The Anti-Decimal Association, 66 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W.1.)

LORD KAHN, Professor of Economics, Cambridge University.

"The decimalisation of our currency is just one more of those monstrous irrelevancies of which the Government seem so fond in the economic field.

"The British currency system presents an invigorating challenge to our school children. They meet the challenge and they are all the better for it. My submission is that this measure is a distraction from what is important."

LORD SOMERS.

"When we are finding it difficult to bridge our balance of payments I do not feel that a totally unnecessary change like this is justified."

ANTHONY ROYLE, M.P.

"I share your concern regarding the introduction of decimal coinage and agree that it may lead to a rise in prices."

ANNE KERR, M.P.

"I shall be pleased to support your Group."

BRIAN PARKYN, M.P.

"The whole point as you are no doubt fully aware is that at no time has Parliament given authority for the country to adopt a decimal coinage. The Halsbury Committee was not asked whether we should adopt a decimal coinage, but it was asked how, if we should have a decimal coinage the coins should be subdivided. In other words, it was assumed that Parliament would give authority for the decimal coinage, the only question was what kind of coinage we should adopt.

"As you so rightly say, with a very small adjustment we could have a system of measurement which would be the envy of the world and in time the rest of the world would be following us and not vice versa."

Dr. STANLEY RUNDLE, Vice-President of the Liberal Party.

"As a scientist myself I use the

metric system everyday and when I lived in Europe I did the same. Despite that I wholeheartedly endorse your opposition to its introduction--which is nothing more than a gimmick and a costly one at that."

ANTHONY BURGESS.

"This government is quite as authoritarian as Ulbricht's; will not listen; will not permit a referendum. None of my writings has met a single adverse response, nor a single letter from a decimal proponent. Others abide our question; they are free. Please know that I'm with you all the way."

JOHN WAIN.

"I continue to wish well to your struggle against this piece of bureaucratic nonsense."

DOUGLAS M. C. MACEWAN, Phd, F.Inst.P., F.R.S.E., Co-founder of the Conservation Society.

"No real attempt has been made to inform the public of the issues involved--yet they penetrate deeply into the way of life of everyone. Whenever the ordinary man or woman orders petrol, bakes a cake, buys some clothing or discusses the progress of the baby, well-tried and efficient methods are to be changed for doctrinaire reasons and temporary political advantage.

"Such arbitrary changes are disturbing and demoralising and can do great harm to Britain. I believe there is substantial and justifiable resentment of this situation, though much of it is at present inarticulate through lack of informed discussion."

BRUCE MOON, Director of Computer Laboratory, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

"What makes decimal currency such a wasteful and unnecessary distraction at this stage is the rapidly increasing role of the computer. A change to decimals at this stage could hardly be more untimely."

R2/70

COMMENT 3 (Revised Edition) Published by THE ANTI-DECIMAL GROUP, 13 KINGS ROAD, RICHMOND, SURREY.

Lord Somers, speaking in the House of Lords, 26 June 1969: "It is rather significant that there should be an Anti-Decimal Group, because if metrication were such a desirable step, I should hardly think there would be a group organised to oppose it. However, the Anti-Decimal Group give a rather interesting supposition. They say milk costs 10½d per pint - that was in November, 1968. The halfpenny is being de-monetised in 1969; therefore, the price will be 11d per pint. As from February 15, 1971, 11d is converted to 4½p; but as 11d is in fact 4.583 recurring new pence, the price will be 5p - that is to say, in today's currency, one shilling per pint. The pint will be replaced by the half-litre, which is 90 cubic centimetres less than one pint. Therefore the housewife will pay the equivalent of one shilling for less than a pint of milk".

THE ANTI-DECIMAL ASSOCIATION

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, April 1970.

When was the Anti-Decimal Association formed?
In 1967.

What is the aim of the Association?
To oppose decimalisation and metrication of currency, weights and measures.

Don't you think that the decimal metric system is superior to our own?
No, although it has some obvious and superficial advantages. In many ways decimal measures are inefficient and inconvenient, whereas British measures have evolved (admittedly rather haphazardly) out of practical experience and with practical considerations in mind. Any reform should be based on conserving and extending the advantages of our system, such as the divisibility of the foot and the pound, not on throwing these away in pursuit of a largely illusory decimal simplicity. Another consideration is the enormous cost of changing the currency and particularly weights and measures.

Why are there two anti-decimal organisations? Why not merge?
Shortly after the Association had been formed, the Anti-Decimal Group was started independently, and we discovered each other only subsequently. Although our aims are the same, our methods differ somewhat. For example, the Group has supporters but one cannot join as a member. However, we can and do co-operate from time to time, and members are urged to support the Group as well whenever appropriate.

How many members has the Association at present?
Sixty-four.

Who are the members of the Committee of the Association?
D.S. Blacklock, C.A. (Chairman), R.B. Carnaghan (Secretary), B.R. Bishop.

What is the membership subscription?
A minimum of five shillings. Annual renewal has not been requested because of the unproductive administrative work it would involve. Until further notice no subscription renewals are required, but donations are therefore all the more necessary.

What is the position of the Association's finances?
A statement will be prepared and circulated to members only.

Why has the Association been inactive for a long time?
Because the honorary Secretary is busy in other fields and has failed to devote time to the Association. With very few exceptions members appear to expect the Committee to do all the work. We will all have to "wake up".

Is there any hope of stopping decimalisation; isn't it too late to oppose it now?
Even if our protests cannot stop decimal currency now (without the help of a major, unexpected new factor in the situation), they are still worthwhile. The inconvenience and cost of decimals will be felt increasingly over the next year. We who realise the folly of decimalisation must make ourselves heard, both so as not to let it proceed without the condemnation it deserves, and so as to establish ourselves in such a way that we will be listened to when we condemn metrication which would be far more costly and which it is not too late to halt.

What can members do to help?
Get new members. Circulate our leaflets (ask for supplies). Write to newspapers and magazines and to your M.P. (the more letters they receive the better). If you can write articles. Keep the secretary informed, especially of anything of general interest.

What is the Association's address?
The official address (until further notice) is 66 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W.1. Members are asked to write direct to the secretary at 21 Harford Drive, Watford, Herts.

**WOMAN'S EYE
ON THE NEWS**



BY
SUE BAKER

**The oddity
fighting
Monday's
decimals**

MONDAY IS D-DAY. For Britain it brings decimalisation. To Mr. Douglas Blacklock, it spells defeat.

His three-year battle against the inevitable should be over, but it isn't. The cause was lost before it was launched, but Douglas Blacklock does not care.

He is chairman of a small, gradually depleted group of D-Day militants, the Anti Decimal Association. They are waging a campaign they cannot now win, but that does not matter. For them voicing the protest is enough.

Talking to this loquacious 70-year-old is like unleashing a volcano of thoughts, words and ideas. They flow in an unceasing and remarkably candid stream.

ODDITY

"I know I am a bit of an oddity, or so some people may think. But at least I feel I am an honest oddity.

"We are a group of people totally opposed to decimalisation. Admittedly our numbers have been flagging because what we oppose is inevitable.

"I am well aware that those of us who are left may seem to be making fools of ourselves. We can't win, but we are carrying on as a protest against that very fact. We are still fighting."

Mr Blacklock is a man of many and varied interests. But he is no fool, and when it comes to mathematical matters, the theories blossom on a basis of expertise.

He has a Cambridge honours degree in economics has Scottish chartered accountancy and cost and works accountancy qualifications. He is a life fellow of the Royal Statistical Society. He has written a book on "Accounting for Economic Management."

REBEL

He is also an inventor of sorts—has patented an electronic sorting device, and was involved in the development of the hydrofin technique—"which does for sea-going what cats-eyes do for driving."

REBEL

"I like to think of myself as a visualiser, a perceptive and receptive person. I am not the modern kind of rebel. I am a rebel of the 1930s vintage.

"Decimalisation may be a totally irrevocable fact now, but I think the fight is still worth carrying on.

"If Rolls-Royce can go bust other howling things can also go wrong in this country, and the decimal change-over could lead to some of them."

Such is the strength of Mr. Blacklock's antipathy to decimalisation that he has filed an affidavit opposing it at the Crown Office, with copies to the Bank of England and the Decimal Currency Board.

He is a married man, and lives in a Sussex country house with his wife and younger daughter, aged six. His elder daughter, 19, is at Edinburgh University studying linguistics. His 21-year-old son is studying humanity and science subjects at Surrey University.

"My family are anti-decimal, too. I must admit I have caused my wife a lot of anguish at times, particularly when I wanted to put a lot of money we could not spare into hydrofins. But she understands how I feel about decimals."

WON'T WORK

The Anti Decimal Association was formed in 1967. Membership has fluctuated, resources have been small, publicity scant. Numbers now stand at "about six or seven dozens." The three stalwarts are Douglas Blacklock and his two fellow founders.

Mr. Brian Bishop is 36, 6ft. 4in. tall, works in the civil service, is married with one young son. The family home is at Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

"I am opposed to decimals, but I don't see this as the end of the story. The present monetary system should have been rationalised on a completely 12 base system.

"I feel the decimal basis is the worst possible one for a system of currency or measurement. It just does not work well enough.

FOLLY

"I feel strongly that Britain has been misled on estimates of cost of the change-over and in the forecasts that prices should not be affected. Make no mistake, prices **WILL** rise, and decimalisation will be very expensive for Britain."

Robert Carnaghan is a 30-year-old bachelor. His work is in market research with an engineering firm. He lives at Watford.

"I favour the Duo-decimal system with base 12. We, and most of the world, have 12 months to the year, we have a 12 hour clock, 12 inches to the foot, and at the moment 12 pennies to the shilling.

"Decimalisation is folly. We can't stop it, but we will not accept it without a murmur.

It is a quiet war. The first campaign was an inevitable victory for the enemy. But the D-Day militants are still determined at least that decimal Britain will never be metric Britain.

Times, 12.2.71

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Home news

Group's last-ditch campaign for a decimal boycott

By Christopher Warman
Staff Reporter

While the nation waits for the start of decimalized life on Monday one section of the community, the Anti-Decimal Group, is still trying to push back the monetary tide.

This group, founded more than three years ago, will be handing out thousands of leaflets from today until D Day urging a boycott on decimal currency in central London.

Mr. Antony Insoll, secretary of the group, which now claims 400 active members apart from many thousands of supporters, said yesterday: "We honestly believe we have got to go on with this campaign, because decimalization is a lasting injury to our society.

"After decimalization, metrication comes next, far more costly. We cannot admit decimal currency, and we believe it still could be reversed."

Mr. Insoll, an accountant and dealer in old engravings, continued: "We think it is a hell of a waste of time, and it is inflationary. There was never any argument about whether we should go decimal, only whether we should adopt the pound or the 10-shilling system. The people were not consulted."

While Mr. Insoll's group was putting the final touches to its anti-decimal campaign, the banks were processing the last 4,500,000 items in £.s.d. Security Express, transporting them from the branches to the London clearing centres and back again in a day, reported very satisfactory results. Fog overnight had meant that the inward operation to London ended 58 minutes

late, but in spite of more fog yesterday they were certain to complete the operation nearly, if not exactly, on schedule.

Their work will enable the banks to close all their £.s.d. transactions, and convert fully to decimals by Monday.

A survey for *The Grocer* magazine suggests that few shoppers will have the chance of comparing the decimal prices with the £.s.d. system from D-Day onwards.

According to Retail Audits, who made a survey of family grocers and supermarkets, eight shops out of ten intend to go fully decimal from February 15, but only two out of ten will run a dual pricing system.

It also appears that all retail outlets had arranged to get their decimal money from the banks.

The change has claimed a victim. Mrs. Alice Robinson, aged 87, has decided to close her general store in Elm Road, Portslade, Sussex, tomorrow after 50 years.

"I know that five new pennies make a shilling, but I cannot be bothered to convert figures like 1s. 3d. and 1s. 5d. into the new money. Decimalization will only cause me extra expense for nothing", she said.

8—EVENING STANDARD, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1971

METRIC—IT'S A FIGHTING WORD

IT IS Black Monday today for the Anti Decimal Association, which for three years has been a small voice endeavouring to awaken Britain to the folly of changing its currency.

But for association chairman, 60-year-old Mr. Douglas Blacklock the real issue is not decimalisation but metrication.

At his home in the Sussex village of West Chiltington, Mr.

Blacklock, former chief accountant of a big public company, with a Cambridge Honours degree in Economics, said: "The main fight is still to come. Metrication is much more important than decimalisation."

His objection to metrication? It requires mental gymnastics. "It implies jumping ahead in thousands and the gap of a thousand is just too big. The natural gap for Britons is four—quartering, doubling and halving."

