

## Heritage.co.za

### About Heritage.co.za

On 23 June 1975 a group of Cape Town businessmen sat around a table and put their signatures to a document founding South African Historical Mint (Pty) Ltd Among them was Barry Lloyd, today Chairman of the same company and the chap whose vision had led the company through twenty years of vicissitudes and triumphs He has used financial acumen, a knowledge of direct marketing and creative imagination to keep the company growing The idea of a private mint selling expensive objects by mail order was highly original.

Not many companies were able to penetrate these new niches - or even recognise them "We've covered a lot of ground in twenty years," Barry Lloyd admits modestly "We've produced some 1000 mailings and have build up a mailing lists that now tops more than 400 000 customers While we started with two employees- me and a secretary - we now have some 150, working both day and evening shifts! That's a lot of activity!" The first project was humble - a commemorative badge for schools.

It was beautifully produced, crafted in metal by one of South Africa's leading die-sinkers and produced on deadline It was so well-received that the directors vowed to repeat their success In 1975 they had been commissioned by a group of people keen on promoting the Afrikaans language to publicise the Centenary of Afrikaans language - the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners An oval medallion struck in silver and gold was produced and it was a sell-out, with much favourable publicity emanating from this project.

"This was all due to direct mail being utilised," says Barry "It's one of the most powerful media you can use - and we understand it well!" Changing Times Political times were changing in South Africa and history was made in 1976 when the Transkei became South Africa's first independent 'homeland' The leading designer Ernst de Jong of Pretoria was commissioned to create a modern design for this medallion Philip Bateman came in at this stage as a freelancer and put together a mailing package for this exciting project.

By this time the directors still retained their normal jobs and again this medallion was a huge success "We opened the post box and saw that it had overflowed on to the ground Soon sacks were arriving filled with applications - some 5000 for the limited number of 1000 gold medallions struck It was phenomenal - naturally we had to return the money which was heartbreaking!" Such activities, while perfectly legal and moral, attracted the wrath of the jealous.

The South African Mint whose medallions were rated at a far lower level of quality than the South African Historical Mint's, complained about the name being so similar "Again this was water under the bridge", recalls Barry "They didn't have a leg to stand on - and our name precisely described our activities So too the Premier of the Transkei - sent an angry letter, perhaps peeved by the fact that they hadn't thought of the idea!" In 1977, the company decided upon their most ambitious project so far - a collection of 12 medallions honouring the generals of the Anglo-Boer War.

There were beautifully struck in gold and silver and were of considerable historical interest Not only was the brochure superbly printed, on elegant paper but it also contained extensive historical details As part of the collection, the Creative Director Philip Bateman wrote a hard-cover book - in just a few weeks - to accompany the collection The book went in to the bookshops as well and was sold out in three weeks - the Mint's first best-seller! The press loved this effort and hundreds of favourable press cuttings were received - as well as some criticism over the unwitting political stance we were perceived to have adopted.

**Pioneers Remembered:** The company followed this success with Pioneers of Southern Africa - a collection of no less than 24 medallions featuring such notable historical characters as Sir Harry Smith, Lady Anne Barnard and Jan van Riebeeck It was extremely well-received and has passed into the annals of South African history, with the accompanying hard-cover book also written by Philip Bateman, being requested by numerous museums and libraries It was the first book of this kind to have been published in this country In 1979 the company produced a set of medallions commemorating the Zulu War.

They were beautiful and medallion collectors loved them All, except, that is, the famous author Alan Paton - a fundamentalist Christian and converted right-winger One day Barry answered the phone and it was Alan Paton who had read a newspaper cutting about it In the brochure the company had reproduced a Victorian engraving of a British officer leaning down from his horse to 'slay a Zulu with aplomb.

' "This statement is unacceptable and racist," growled Paton at Barry who - amazingly - apologised on our behalf! To cap it all, a printer's error (what an excuse!) had resulted in 'aplomb' being spelled incorrectly! This was around the time that Philip Bateman joined the organisation, having worked freelance for it for some two years "This period was enormous fun at that time for we were truly into a prestigious market with lots of opportunities for using editorial, historical and direct mail skills, says Philip Bateman "We also started a wonderful magazine at this time - Connoisseur It was a full-colour - very elegant - publication, with articles written by myself on collecting, medallions, antiques and history associated with our products.

The layout was superb and it attracted enormous interest Just for fun we entered it into the annual national magazine awards and it romped away with all the main awards - winning three certificates for layout, production and writing - plus the overall trophy in the country for the best-produced house magazine!" Adds Barry Lloyd: "The early eighties were the heady days of the credit card spending boom and the burgeoning gold and silver price so we did well "People had more discretionary income - that is, spare money - and they invested heavily in precious metals whose price was soaring So our medallions were in huge demand, as were the collectables.

"Another project at this time was the Ten Commandments - a set of rectangular medallions with designs by the famous artist Vladimir Tretchikoff This was advertised in The Reader's Digest and achieved widespread publicity The Company Splits Up Shortly after this came the 'split' - where, to cut a long story short, Barry Lloyd acquired all the equity from his partners, buying them out after a long struggle about finances "We went through a bad patch after this but soon recovered and became far larger and

more direct mail-oriented, even eventually introducing the powerful direct mail technique of sweepstakes.

" At this time a talented English sculptor who was working in the then collapsing Rhodesia, wrote and offered the company his services His name was Trevor Wood and we, of course, snapped him up Trevor, a quiet, philosophical man, with a feeling for history, would sit in his warehouse studio and turn out the most marvellous portraits for medallions - completing some 500 in all before leaving for England This would have made him probably the most prolific medallion sculptor in the world! Many of the company's medallions were struck by Mauro Pagliari, the distinguished Italian die-sinker and engraver.

He had been commissioned to create the parliamentary mace plus numerous official and semi-official medallions Not only that, but he had been honoured by the Italian government with a 'Commendatore' for his contribution to the art of metalwork Strangely, he had learnt his craft as a prisoner-of-war of the British in WW11 He subsequently, like so many of his compatriots, decided to live in South Africa.

In 1980 the company was proud to associate itself with the Queen Mother's Eightieth Birthday, producing a medallion and plate to commemorate this great event Philip Bateman telephoned her Majesty's Equerry - a military man called Anstruther - and immediately struck up a common chord as he was familiar with Anstruther's ancestor's fame in the First Anglo-Boer War As a result of this, arrangements were made for the then directors of the company, Barry Lloyd and Rick Garratt, to have an audience with Her Majesty They took her proteas which they forgot! - would you believe it? But as usual the royal household, was gracious about this! At around this time the company was lucky to tie up a relationship with National Geographic Society, securing the rights to sell their overprinted books in this country.

As a result we offered wonderful colourful travel books to our customers A British Acquisition: A lucky break came in the 1980s when we bought another mail order company - The Heritage Collection which had run into financial difficulties after some ten years of operation They were selling marvellous imported collectables including porcelain, reproduction antique clocks, silverware by Stuart Devlin and Christopher Lawrence - two of the world's top silversmiths "It was a very prestigious operation and we were pleased to pick up their best parts, so to speak," says Barry Lloyd.

"So we made an offer to the liquidators and were fortunate to acquire the entire operation, stock and all This included several mail order companies, a list and even a fertiliser company called Easi-Gro" One of the many acquisitions added to the Mint portfolio at this time was the English operation of The Heritage Collection - a mail order company in Devon On their mailing lists were Prince Charles and the Duke of Edinburgh! It was probably the acquisition of The Heritage Collection that helped the company venture into catalogues and everyday items.

For they had several divisions including SA Home and Leisure that offered kitchen and gardening items "This was the start of an adventure into the wider world of direct marketing," says Barry "We found this

a far more vibrant market obviously and were able to produce catalogues and tie in with overseas suppliers of such mail order items" New Buildings The company had moved several times since its inception - simply because it has grown so much.

From a small building in Bree Street, we moved to a historical building in Keerom Street and then rented an entire floor of a building which became called Heritage House in Dreyer Street, Claremont, before settling into Barry's building in 11 Grove Avenue This was a clever conversion of a Baptist church "I joked with the priest that we were going to turn the total immersion baptismal font into a jacuzzi," says Barry While the building was twice too large when we moved in, suddenly - as tends to happen - the business expanded to not only fill the premises but to actually overflow from it as well! At the same time, the directors bought a plot of land near the Goodwood showgrounds - a visionary move, it appears, because the area is today in great demand and was chosen by the Post Office for their main distribution centre.

Today a large and magnificently-designed double warehouse - owned by the company -graces the land The company has spawned numerous imitators Other mailing companies scan the company's literature with a toothcomb to glean ideas Even large retail stores have clearly imitated our product range too.

"This does not concern us because we know that our techniques are superb and the mailing list loyal," adds Barry Lloyd Public Involvement While the company has been rather inward-looking, it has been seen acting in the community Individuals in the company support a child-feeding scheme and we regularly receive touching letters from 'our' adopted ...

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<http://www.jayde.com/d14204-equipment-and-materials.html>