

Report of Edith Cavell Lower School Council, on the visit of Mr Fergus Feeney from The Royal Mint 10th March 2015

Mr Feeney visited our school to present a commemorative plaque to celebrate the release of a new five pound coin, depicting Nurse Edith Cavell after whom our school is named. The Council had been asked to work with Mrs Shatford to produce some questions to ask Mr Feeney during an interview.

Questions for Mr Fergus Feeney:

How did you get your job at the Royal Mint?

"I was working on The Ryder Cup, a big golf tournament, when I received a phone call from The Royal Mint, asking me to be the Project Manager to produce all of the medals for the 2012 London Olympic and Para Olympic Games. Basically, this means that all the medals you saw around peoples necks were made by my team."

What do you do have to do?

"Organise people to make coins. I put them into teams of people who I think will work well together and can problem solve. We make coins for 84 countries around the world, including Zimbabwe. Most countries would find it too expensive to have their own Mint, so we do the work for them."

Do you know how many people work at the Royal Mint?

"1200."

How does the Royal mint decide who goes on a coin?

"Every six months or so, we get together and look at any special anniversaries or occasions which are coming up in the next five year period. We decide what would be sensible to celebrate and then prepare a list for the Queen to approve."

How and why was Edith Cavell chosen?

"This year is the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 1 which is an important event. Edith Cavell is a strong story. She was kind and caring, helping soldiers to escape."

How is the coin made?

Mr Feeney explained how coins used to be made by hammering discs of metal together by hand. He also informed us that the obverse (front) of the coin always has the Monarch's head on and the reverse, the person or theme of the coin. Now a striking press machine is used which can apply the weight or pressure of 40 tonnes or 15 male elephants.

What metal is used to make the coin?

"Gold and Silver is used for the £5 coins."

How many coins are going to be made?

"There will be 25 gold coins and 2500 silver coins produced."

When is it going to be released?

"Release date is 1st June 2015. They are being made this week."

What will be on the coin, words and a picture?

"I checked with Dave Cornell who designed the coin and this is what he told me:" This is a brave, devoted woman, who chose to sacrifice herself to help the injured and the dying. My design shows Edith caring for an injured soldier but also looking over her shoulder to make sure the coast is clear to help the wounded soldier escape. I captured a little sadness in her expression, as I am sure seeing so many young men suffering must have been an awful experience for her."

"The words on the coin are inspired by the poem Edith Cavell by Laurence Binyon- 'She faced them gentle and bold'."

Are there any other new £5 coins being issued?

"There are 15 other £5 coins being released this year, five of which have a World War 1 theme."

Who gets the first coin and where will it be kept?

"The first coin goes to the Royal Mint Museum and is kept as a physical, historical record. After that they are bought by Mint Marque who are a special group of collectors who have vast or huge collections of coins."

Is the coin going to be a limited edition, or will it go into banks, shops and our money boxes?

"Unfortunately, the coins are going to be special edition only in a 2015 First World War set of six coins, so they will not get into your piggy banks."