

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/026
COMPLAINANT	T McManus
ADVERTISER	The Bradford Exchange
ADVERTISEMENT	Unaddressed Mail
DATE OF MEETING	10 February 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The unaddressed mail advertisement for The Bradford Exchange Titanic Gold Crown showed images of both sides of the Titanic Gold Crown. With the text “Layered in Pure Gold” and “Yours for just \$39.99”. The website address www.bradford.net.nz/coins was listed, along with a phone number 09-8290475.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, T McManus, said: This brochure came in the Sunday January 19th 2020 edition of the Sunday Star Times and promotes a "Titanic Gold Crown" from Tristan da Cunha. Throughout the commercial it talks up and flashes the Gold content of this coin and uses gold frames and bubbles with "Pure Gold" and makes this item look like an expensive gold coin.

In reality it is a gold plated Cupronickel coin. Gold plating can be done very cheaply and in a commercial context. The actual value of the gold in this coin is probably under \$1 and much less - it will be 0.001 of a millimetre thick.

Calling this a gold coin is extremely misleading and you only see the words "Layered" and "Plated" in small lettering. All the big lettering is clearly stating the "Gold" content of this coin. In reality it is Cupro Nickel (75% Copper and 25% Nickel). The coin weighs 26grams (Numista coin website) and that much copper would be worth around 12 cents and the nickel 15 cents more.

The actual metal worth of the coin is around \$1 including the gold plate. The Face value of 1 crown equates to 25 pence or about 50 cents.

Yet they think it is a bargain at \$40 plus \$10 postage and handling. Yet if you read further you will see this is a one off price and at least 5 more coins are issued and will cost \$100 each (90 =10 postage and handling per coin).

This advertising is misleading and deceptive and can easily fool the type of customer it is aimed for. In many countries this is called Granny bait as it is mainly elderly people who buy this stuff along with many less educated people who think because it is gold it must be really valuable.

It fails the standard for truthful advertising and the presentation of this advert is designed to mislead people into buying something that is valuable - when it is not (Worth less than \$1 in face value and metal content). In reality it is muck metal and celebrates a cliched topic that had nothing to do with Tristan da Cunha - it is tacky collectable aimed to cash in on collectors of Titanic tatt.

It is not even an official issue, as Tristan da Cunha an Atlantic Island controlled by the UK, uses the British currency and there is no evidence these coins have circulated amongst the 250 Islanders. This coin is issued solely for collectors and not proper currency. This is common in for many 3rd world nations, Caribbean and Pacific Islands and includes all sorts of gimmicky rubbish (Niue issues heaps of it).

Selling this coin is fine, but the ad should say "Gold plated cupronickel" and/or be at a much

cheaper price. Allowing people to pay a special price of \$40 for a piece of worthless junk is not an opportunity - it is a scam pure and simple. This type of bait ad should be banned.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(b)

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

Rule 2 (b) Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust or exploit their lack of knowledge. This includes by implication, inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, unrealistic claim, omission, false representation or otherwise. Obvious hyperbole identifiable as such is not considered to be misleading.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concerns the advertisement was misleading.

The Chair said the advertisement portrayed the product for sale in a favourable light, but it was not misleading. The text "Layered in Pure Gold", which was displayed across the top of the advertisement, indicated that the coins were not solid gold but "layered" in gold. The sale price of \$39.99 was also an indication of quality. The reference to the Bradford Exchange website and a phone number meant a potential consumer could request further information about the product before purchasing, if they wished.

The Chair said the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility and was not in breach of Principle 2 or Rule 2(b) of the Advertising Standards Code.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.