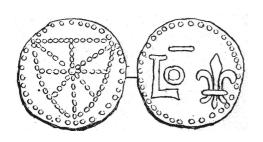
A free newsletter to all who share our interest in these fascinating and often enigmatic pieces. Please send the editor at least one 300 dpi JPEG scan, or a sharply focused photo print, of any interesting leaden token or tally in your collection. Send images as email attachments to LTT editor@aol.com. See page 4 for information on back issues, etc.

Foreign Delights







These line drawings of various leaden pieces came to light during recent research into the use of lead as a material for making tokens, tallies, pilgrims' badges across Europe. I was especially pleased to stumble upon the illustration at top right which depicts St Honore holding his crosier and what looks like a large bagel, but was probably a popular shape for loaves in late medieval France. The other face of this piece has a busy baker removing loaves from his oven with the aid of a peel, or oven shovel. By coincidence David Powell recently added a token depicting an English version of a peel to his collection. You'll probably see it when he reaches Secular Objects in his Types series. (A bumper issue on Types is scheduled for December.)



The other three pieces are French ecclesiastical mereaux, perhaps communion tokens, once again confirming that our Continental cousins outdo us time and again when it comes to pictorial elements in the designs on leaden pieces. I do hope readers heed the advice in an up-coming TH article and make every effort to get across to France to search the gardens of friends and relations who have bought themselves slices of French real estate. No matter how small the patch of ground surrounding any old house in that country, it's garden will hold interesting losses.

Continuing the communion tokens theme, I learned recently that Americans often refer to them as Presbyterian checks and that when Scottish emigrants took the practice to the New World they opted for plain and simple styles similar to those they had used in the Old Country. In the township of Pelham, Massachusetts many years ago substantial numbers of pewter tokens bearing only the letters P.P. turned up. Investigations revealed that a newly appointed minister had found a hoard of forgotten communion tokens in the church and distributed many of them to friends, neighbours and local school kids who probably lost quite a few.

My sister lives in Augusta, Maine, an ex-pat Brit who re-exported the detecting hobby to the USA when she went to live there with her husband. Recently she found what seems to be a communion token while heeding my advice about garden searches. It's pewter and has a simple heart design, which she has traced to an old Presbyterian church in Philadelphia.

Lest Brit readers are feeling a little left out, I've just heard that a nice medieval pewter piece has recently come to light in Lancashire. There's hope for you northerners yet!

David Powell On His Classification System Type 5 & 6: Anchors and Ships

Type 5: Anchors

Again the old dilemma; are we talking of the spiritual anchor of life, or a symbol of the nautical community, or the name of the dockside pub in which they drank? Possibly all three, at different times.

There are different styles of anchor both in real life and on the tokens, but whether the differences in one are reflected on the other is uncertain; those nautically-minded may care to trawl the web and enlighten us. A few features to look out for on this plentiful type:

Most of the token anchors have pointed ends, some distinctly over-emphasised, as in fig 1; others have no











points at all, as in Fig 2. Most anchor blades are curved, but some are straight, set almost at 45 degrees. (see figs 3, 4, 5)

The handle may be a flat crossbar, or have a ring on it. From the ring, if present, a rope is sometimes attached. (figs 6,7) Some anchors are slender, others are short and stubby. (figs 8,9,10)

Fig.4 has a crown on it, which presumably has a special symbolic meaning, perhaps that it refers to a ship of the realm rather than a merchant vessel. I endeavoured to analyse a piece of engraved 18th century copper with such a crown which appeared on eBay recently, and via the Public Record Office wills indices managed to get it down with reasonable probability to a naval carpenter working on one of His Majesty's ships. It is just possible, but unlikely, that a supposed anchor with plain crossbar, rounded blade and no points could be confused with a cheese cutter, which appears on several tokens of the main 17th cent. series.











The anchor is also seen on a number of other paranumismatic series, which readers may care to look out for. Williamson mentions over a hundred in the 17th cent, and others occur in the 18th and 19th cents series, both official and unofficial. I have even seen one recently on a Co-op token!

Anchors exist both in the dark-metal London series (**figs 3, 6**) and the lighter provincial ones; amongst those which I find particularly interesting are those of Co. Durham, typically along the coast south of Shields, about which I would welcome knowing more. Amongst these are two dated 1845 and 1848 (**figs 7, 11**), by three or four decades the latest dated pieces of crude lead that I have seen (outside hops and communion tokens); they are also the only two anchor pieces on which I have seen any date. From the same area, too, comes the vastly over-stylized. (**fig 5**)

Not a lot to say here beyond what you can see, although if anyone can bring any nautical knowledge to bear it will be very welcome; the style of the ship might just help dating. The very dark London piece (**fig 1**) has a 1760-odd date on the reverse. No provenance for any of the others. **Figs 1,2** seem to be the largest vessels; **fig 3** looks a bit more yacht like, smaller and built for a speed, whilst **fig 4** hits at the old fashioned galleys. **Fig 5** might be a sail, which is why it is illustrated here, but equally it might be an arrowhead or a merchant mark; the countersunk design, which one tends to think of in connection with early Greek coins, is unusual. Type 6 is very much a look and enjoy type, so please send us some more so we can do so!











Celtic Good Luck Tokens?

Most Brit detectorists would assume they had found a lead spindle whorl if one these items came out of the ground. Closer inspection soon reveals that the central holes are much larger than we see on similar finds in this country. Also note that the piece at



bottom right is made from pewter or potin. In fact they were all found in France on a Celtic votive site where priests may have sold them to worshippers who then threw them into a boggy shrine as votive good luck charms.

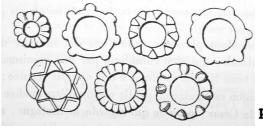
Numerous examples have come to light - even a few silver and gold pieces, though the majority seem to have been made from lead and bronze. The average diameter was 5 cm, and researchers have confirmed that each Celtic tribal territory had its own favoured decorative style for its votive offerings. French collectors refer to the pieces as *rouelles*.





Rouelle styles









... with Celtic potin pieces from similar sites.

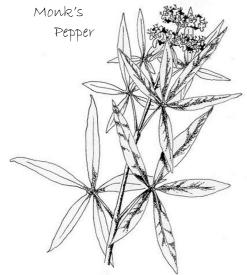
The Birds

Two readers have recently sent me images of lead pieces depicting birds. Nothing surprising in

that, since bird motifs are highly prized by most leaden enthusiasts. But neither of the illustrations submitted were of tokens; they showed lead *money* which was used until quite recent times in one or two regions of South East Asia, including Burma. David Powell has examples in his collection (see photo right)

This unusual coinage attracts interest from collectors from many parts of the world, and the Burmese series is thoroughly dealt with in a book titled *The Lead Coins of Pegu and Tenasserim* by M Robinson. Like the coins it is rather pricey - £45 for 88 pages, though it is said to be lavishly illustrated.

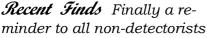




The Petals Puzzle: Other Contenders

We have so far failed to come up with a fully satisfactory answer to the question: is there a deep symbolic meaning behind the petals depicted on so many leaden tokens found across England and parts of France? But readers have highlighted some very interesting possibilities, so I blush not when thrusting the following Google-captured gem into the suggestions box.

Throughout medieval Europe a medicinal herb - agnus castus - also had the common names monk's pepper and lilac chaste herb. It was believed to posses anaphrodisiac properties powerful enough to eliminate male sexual desire, and it was widely used by monks for that very purpose. Did they remind themselves of their chastity vows by depicting on their tokens and tallies leaves similar to those on agnus castus?



that it is almost entirely thanks to the dedication of metal detectorists that we continue to see leaden delights simi-

e dedication of metal

lar to those shown here. ASK SANTA FOR A DETECTOR THIS CHRISTMAS. Half the season still remains!

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AT THREE CRANES

If you have any lead tokens with part of their legend reading AT THREE CRANES

please contact
Phil Mernick

who is researching them. Email: phil@mernicks.com

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