

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 [LTTeditor@aol.com](mailto:LTTeditor@aol.com). See page 4 for information on back issues, etc.

## This Month's Gallery

We hope most months to show a few examples of what people either have in their collections or have recently discovered; this month's group are courtesy of Buckinghamshire reader Dave Rayment, and are among examples of about hundred which he has dug up over the years.

The group contained no less than seven of the pieces with the bust {top right}, and five of the horses, {top centre} if indeed that is what they are. One of these was smaller, suggesting a half size denomination. These animals hints at certain ancient Indian coppers, or the one top left at the mythological half-man, half-animal creatures of the Celts, Romans and other ancients.

Petal pieces are common enough, but this is the first I have seen with seven; usually the range is 3-6.

Interesting to see the two quite deliberately cut pieces; this was the standard way of converting pennies into halfpence in mediaeval times, and obviously the practice was extended to lead tokens as well. Obviously it



was tolerated, but to what degree it had official sanction would be interesting to know. What are the characters in the angles? Possibly a lombardic C in the top case, which might be the initial of the issuer. The second one is even more interesting; its pronged stars hint at one of the issues of Alexander III of Scotland, where the number of points on the each star may be 5,6 or 7. The overall sum of the points on the four stars may thus be anywhere between 20 and 28, i.e. nine different values, and thus were the products of the country's nine mints distinguished. Not that mediaeval Scotland is exactly renowned as lead token country, but one wonders whether that is where the designer got his idea.



What is that bottom left? Shield, bucket, coffin, water carrier? You have to be imaginative with this fascinating series, and the piece on its right will tax your powers of identification even more. I'm going to call it a squirrel until someone suggests otherwise.

My thanks to Dave for sharing these attractive pieces with us. Several more of you have mailed pictures in, and we hope to show some of them in the next month or two; meanwhile keep the material flowing, because it is only via your contributions that we can learn more about the wide range and variety of these interesting pieces.

In case you are wondering what's happened to Ted, he has asked me to take over the editorship of LTT in order to free him up for another new venture which will be of interest to many readers: a book entitled "*Cleaning And Preserving Coins And Metal Artefacts*". More on this next month!

# David Powell On His Classification System

## Type 12: Quartered Geometrics

My original formal definition of type 12 was as follows:

*Any quartered design where the number of segments is necessarily four, except:*

*a. Simple cartwheels - type 3 as previously discussed.*

*b. Potential mill sails - type 22.*

*Pieces with four quarters containing alternate horizontal and vertical lines will remain here for the moment, notwithstanding that they may depict millstones and should correctly reside in type 22.....*

to which I was later forced to append the following, although I will say that halved geometrics which do not show their quarters distinctly are very rare:

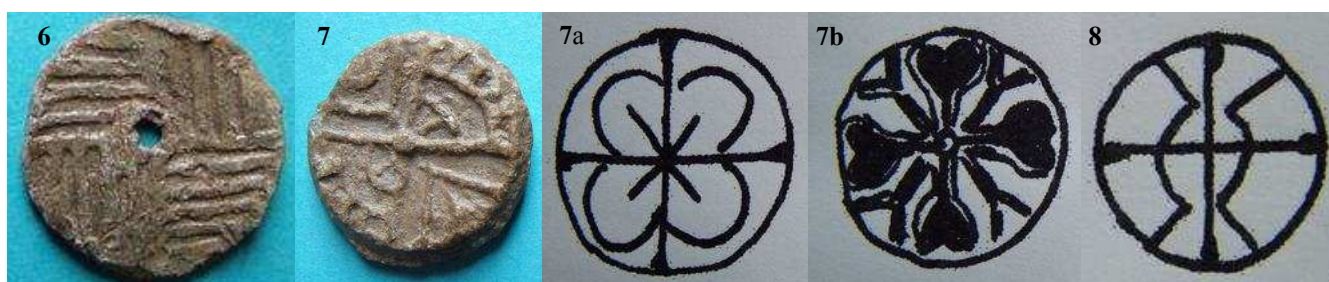
*Where the number of segments is necessarily two, i.e. halved geometric, these should go in type 12 if the halves contain mirror-imaged quarters, and otherwise in type 9.*



Two variations of type 12 are particularly common. The first of these is one in which a series of right angles radiate outward from the centre into each quarter equally {Figs 1,2}, nested within each other, and getting smaller as they reach the edge; two or three are typical, although the exact number varies according to the size of the piece and the fineness of the engraving. Slightly less frequent, and more attractive, are the pieces where the numbers of right angles decreases, typically to one, and pellets start appearing in the space made available. Fig.3 shows a cruder example, albeit with a nice patina, whilst Fig.4 shows how the type can evolve almost into a cross. The boundary between types 12 and 14 is tenuous, and is discussed further below.

The other exceptionally common type 12 is the piece discussed in December {LTT issue 9}, as being debatably assignable to type 22 because of its similarity to a millstone design. These are rotationally symmetric {Figs 5,6}, with each quarter containing several parallel lines, usually very finely drawn.

Between the two common designs, and never two far from the mediaeval cross of Edward penny fame, are variations on a theme. Fig.7 is one such, depicting an anvil-like object in opposite quarters, and an alternative design in the other. Fig.7a shows the popular mediaeval quatrefoil, whilst Fig.7b illustrates a more exotic floral quartering.





Pieces in which there is a mirror image symmetry of pairs of quarters lose their immediate likeness to the rest of the class, nevertheless this is where they naturally reside; I have not yet seen one, but they exist; my thanks to the correspondent who sent in Fig.8. I have also seen a piece depicting a square and nothing else; these go in type 30 {simple geometrical shapes}, and will be discussed later.

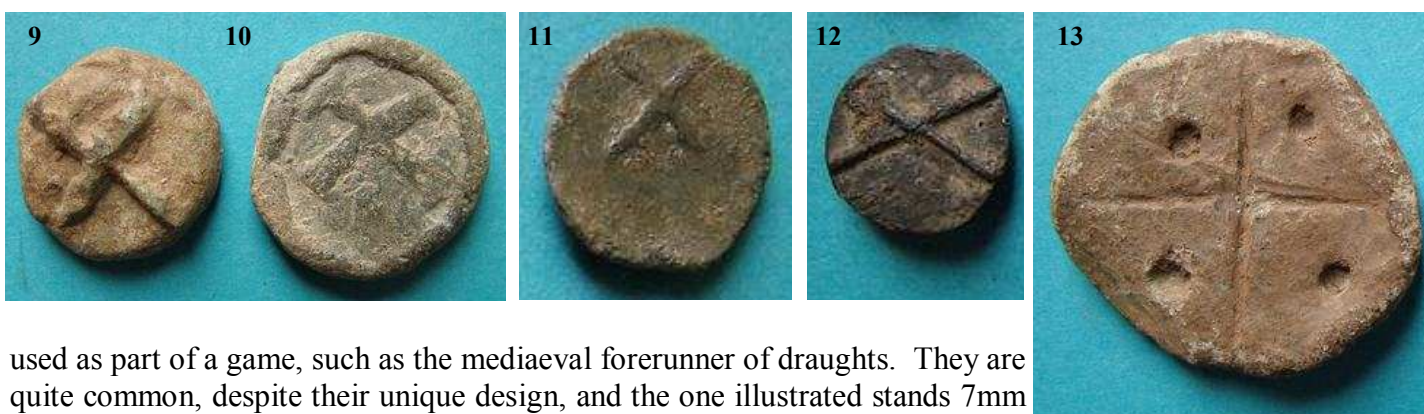
### *Type 14: Crosses*

Formal definition of type 14:

*Not necessarily religious, although it may be. The cross should not obviously be the single letter X; if it does, the piece belongs in type 2; otherwise, any design, abstract or real, which:*

- a. depicts two crossed lines or objects only as the major device, or*
- b. indicates by the central positioning of any pellets within the quarters of a cross that it is meant to simulate the mediaeval penny.*

This type was originally designed for pieces of utter simplicity, such as Figs 9-11. The last two are ordinary enough tokens, although the serif on one arm of Fig 10 hints that it might just be a tool, such as a hammer. Fig 9, however, is totally different; the picture may not show its third dimension to advantage, but it is decidedly dumpy to the point of being conical; one wonders, albeit without any proof, whether it might have been



used as part of a game, such as the mediaeval forerunner of draughts. They are quite common, despite their unique design, and the one illustrated stands 7mm tall.

Fig 12 follows on from Fig 10, and shows two crossed somethings one of which is clearly an implement. Crossed keys occur in the main 17th century series, but this tool with the ringed is not a key, nor a sword; something more like a poker, perhaps? Suggestions welcome. It is dark, and therefore probably a London piece.

Among the least attractive pieces I have found, although I will show you one to rival it in the next month or two, is Fig 13; stark simplicity, but with very well-drilled incuse pellets, from Montgomeryshire. This is well off the beaten track for lead tokens, which tend to lessen in number as you go further west, and we would welcome any further observations from Wales or the west of England. I would guess that these simple pieces are early, although it could merely hint at an absence of manufacturing aptitude. The weight is just over 25 gm and the diameter 30-33mm.



Wide crosses, in which the arms are bands capable of displaying other design {e.g. Fig 4 on the previous page} are type 12; unless they look like being mill sails, in which case they are type 22.



Next come the pseudo-Edwardian pennies, with {Fig 14} or without {Figs 15,16} an inner rim; I will guess that they probably date from a fairly early period, within memory of that time, although it is worth noting that they do not feature much in Mitchiner and Skinner’s articles in Vol 53-54 of the British Numismatic Journal, which together almost certainly form the best published reference work on early British lead tokens. Once again, please voice your ideas.

There are a large number of different types of ornamental cross which feature throughout European numismatic history; they all have names, which I do not intend to go into here. A few do occur in the crude lead series {Figs 17,19-22}, but they are non over-common, and it is probably that some of them are innovative rather than according to any recognised heraldic standard. Fig.19 looks as if it might have some initials on. Fig.18 is very much homegrown, with its two superimposed parallel bars, and is halfway to classifying as a type 9 irregular geometric.

Fig.23 is one of an occasionally seen type which features a large number of radial dashes all round its rim. I saw one of these recently in which amidst these markings there appeared to be characters which appeared to be the numerals “14”, with two less certain blobs suggesting possibly “69” following; however, I find it difficult to seriously believe that an English token that early could be dated, and feel that any resemblance to a date must be coincidental. There is one very nice lead piece in the BM dated 1512, but beyond that I have not heard of many dated much before 1600.

Finally Fig.24; an attractive and slightly larger piece included in type 14 because the cross is too upright to qualify for type 12 as being truly quartered; dark, and almost certainly London.

The use of religious symbolism and texts on coinage during the mediaeval period was widely believed to be a deliberate policy to discourage the superstitious from mutilating the coin of the realm by clipping, filing, sweating and the like, at a time when the accumulation of silver by such means was fairly common and lucrative practice; in these days when our coins have a nominal value in excess of their metallic content such things do not matter, but in those days when coins were thought of in terms of bullion value they did. Quite apart from which, the cross provides easy demarcation lines for those wishing to produce halves and quarters!

-----

## READERS’ FEEDBACK

### Type 11, picture no.3 {LTT 10, Jan 2006}:

Phil Mernick kindly informs me that wine bottles were frequently mallet-shaped in the 18th century, so that is almost certainly what this is.

### WANT BACK ISSUES ?

You can view ALL back issues at [www.leadtokens.org.uk](http://www.leadtokens.org.uk)

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](mailto:phil@mernicks.com)  
Phone:020-8980-5672

### WANT TO READ MORE ABOUT LEADEN TOKENS AND TALLIES?

**Buy Treasure Hunting Magazine**  
where you’ll find articles on LT&T topics occasionally published.