

Editor: David Powell

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 LTJEditor@aol.com. See page 4 for information on back issues, etc.

Foreign Pieces commonly found in England.....

Two types of 18th century foreign piece are commonly found in England, alongside lead tokens, and frequently sold on eBay without their owners having much idea what they are. These are the Baltic lead seal {Fig 1} and the Netherlands duit {Figs 2,3}.

The seals display text in Cyrillic script on both sides, and are almost discovered near East Coast ports; the two illustrated were found near Gainsborough, Lincs, whilst another has recently been reported from near the Thames crossing at Dartford. They relate to the North Sea cloth trade, are always fairly light in colour, and usually have dates in the mid-late 18th cent. The text on one side tends to finish with the date, and the other with a numeral which presumably describes the length, weight or quality of the cloth.



...or: Dealing with the Shortage of Small Change: Another Way to Duit

The duits are actually copper rather than lead, but seem to have been used extensively in East Anglia to remedy the 18th cent dearth of small change, in the same way that some crude lead is assumed to as well. They were the normal coinage of the Low Countries, now the Netherlands, which was at that time broken up into provinces. Duits have the name of the province and the date on one side, sometimes with a little ornamentation, and the

provincial coat of arms {shield} on the other. There are thus several different designs to look out for, as follows:



Friesland	{FRISIA}
Gelderland	{D.GELRIAE}
Holland	{HOLLANDIA}
Overijssel	{OVERYSSEL}
Utrecht	{UTRECHT}
West Friesland	{WEST FRISIAE}
Zeeland	{ZEELANDIA}



The series as a whole was established in the 17th century and continues in some provinces until about 1795, although those found in England tend to be mid-late 18th century, probably reflecting to some extent the date at which the supply of regal halfpennies started to become inadequate.

Further feedback from detectorists on the date ranges and approx findspots of these pieces would be welcome, so that we can learn more about their distribution and use.

Type 28 with Boy Bishop links



The piece shown comes from Cambridgeshire and was recovered from extremely boggy ground. The rev {right} is the typical mediaeval pseudo-groat Boy Bishop reverse, but the obv {left} is a type 28 with an unusual five-pointed star. The piece is 28-30mm diameter and rather darkly patinated. Has anybody else out there discovered Boy Bishop obverses or reverses which cross-relate to non-Boy Bishop designs?



David Powell On His Classification System

Type 16: Shields

Shields, or coats of arms, typically show symbols of authority; these operate at national, communal or family levels. No monarchy would demean itself to strike or cast in lead, and such lead tokens as exist are probably trade, town or family pieces. This is one of two types, the other being type 20 {merchant marks}, where I will draw extensively on other series to illustrate the context, so please forgive a predominance of photographs which depict copper or brass pieces!

The main 17th century series depicts each of these types of arms in profusion, with guild arms outnumbering the rest by a large number; not all did it, but many token-issuing merchants advertised their professions, and in turn their wares, by displaying the arms of their professional guild. These were probably better known in those days than they are now, and hence more easily interpreted. John Stow's recently reprinted "Survey of London Written in the Year 1598" lists the sixty most prominent companies or guilds in 1532 as being, in approximate order of strength and importance: Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Skinners, Merchant Tailors, Vintners, Ironmongers, Haberdashers, Salters, Dyers, Leathersellers, Pewterers, Cutlers, Armourers, Wax-chandlers, Tallowchandlers, Shiremen, Fullers, Saddlers, Brewers, Scriveners, Butchers, Bakers, Poulterers, Stationers, Innholders, Girdlers, Brassfounders, Barbers, Barbers, Upholders, Broiderers, Fletchers, Turners, Turners, Cordwainers, Masons, Painters, Plumbers, Woodmongers, Pouch-makers, Joiners, Coopers, Glaziers, Linen-drapers, Carpenters, Curriers, Foysters, Grey-tanners, Tilers, Weavers, Blacksmiths, Spurriers, Wiresellers, Fruiterers, Farriers and Bladesmiths. To this Williamson, writing of the 1648-1672 token coinage on which the arms of so many guilds appear, adds the following to those above: Apothecaries, Clothworkers, Bricklayers, Watermen, Cooks, Joiners, Merchant Adventurers, Upholsterers, Distillers, Feltmakers, Pinner, Plasterers, Fellmongers, Glovers, Gunmakers, Horners, Needlemakers, Patternmakers, Shipwrights, Staple Merchants and Woolmongers. Between the dates of the two lists, some have come, some gone, some merged, some split; there are some names which are strange to our ears and have almost left our language, and there are others, like cordwainer and woodmonger, which have been replaced by more familiar terms such as shoemaker and carpenter. However, many of these terms are still familiar to us, and ones to which we can relate today.



Fig.1: Examples of main 17th century tokens series illustrating trade arms.

1. Mercers {Herts, W.158} - W references are to Williamson.
2. Brewers {Unknown, W.69}
3. Staple merchants {Unknown, W.92}
4. Fishmongers {Linc, W.158}
5. Ironmongers {Warwicks, W.23} - note the female issuer.....
6. Chandlers {Wilts, W.72}
7. Salters' {Dorset, W.82}

The percentage of lead pieces bearing arms is considerably smaller than for their copper and brass 17th cent counterparts; the detail is also less well marked, and even more rarely traceable. Lead does not lend itself to the reproduction of the fine lines and intricate detail which feature so often in heraldry, and hence those wanting to issue tokens more probably went for initials, or some simpler device, instead. When the shield does occur, it is often too large for the flan; i.e. some of the design goes off the edge.

About 90-100 town authorities issued struck tokens for their inhabitants' communal use during the 1648-1672 period, and it is certainly possible that other issues were contemplated at different, probably earlier, periods in lead. The manufacturers would, however, have the same problem as with the guild pieces. Town arms do not always appear in shield form, although many of them do.



Fig.2: Examples of town arms.

1. Guildford
2. Dover
3. Bath
4. Ipswich
5. Winchester
6. Stamford
7. Evesham
8. Tetbury
9. Great Yarmouth
10. Lowestoft

Family arms are only distinguishable from other arms by those in the heraldic know, which for practical purposes in a village probably comes down to recognising the devices of one or two local squires and not a lot else. I favour most of the type 16 leads being local pieces pertaining to individual estates, either passes or local money, with relatively few being traders' or town issues; most of the village would work for one aristocratic employer, or large farmer, and the village would be the range of validity of that employer's pieces. Fig.3 shows some examples from the main 17th century series, followed by several lead pieces which may or may not fall in the same category. Fig.4 is deceptive; let me inform you that it says "Sgezy 1643" on the other side! No doubt from Hungary, or that way of the world, and a reminder that other countries had similar pieces, however little known. Figs 5,6 are British, and have the dates 1750 and 1790 respectively on the back. I will guess that Fig.7, with a cross and nothing else, derives from an ecclesiastical establishment. It comes from the Oxon/Bucks/Herts area.

Fig.3: Examples of personal arms:



Figs 8,9 look rather cruder, and one wonders whether they are just imitative designs, not seriously attempting to copy any known designs registered with the heralds; I colloquially call the latter "the cricket stumps" Fig.10 looks more realistic, but its heavy rim suggests a mode of manufacture which does easily convey fine detail, least of all on a piece of 14-15mm diameter. Fig.11, from the same Cambridgeshire bog as the piece on the bottom of Page 1, and identically patinated, is of the same ilk as Fig.8; it has an anchor on the reverse and, rather untypically for either types 5 or 16, some hint of radial hatching around both rims. Fig.12 is an unusual piece, for in addition to its central shield it also has a readable word round its edge: "Kiderminster" {sic}. It is not in fact a token, although it could pass for one, but a seal; it equates to piece no.106 in Geoff Egan's book, "Lead Cloth Seals and Related Items in the British Museum" {British Museum Occasional Papers no.93}, which is recommended reading for those interested in this scantily documented field.



Both town and guild arms appear frequently on seals, and not all seals are readily distinguishable from tokens. Therefore, a few pieces may be seals in disguise, especially if they depict numbers which, being too large or unusual for normal monetary values, are likely to indicate



the quality, length or weight of the cloth to which they were fixed. I shall discuss the seal-token relationship in a forthcoming article, and may illustrate a further shield or two then.

Canterbury Tales....

Whilst on the subject of type 16 my thanks to Duncan Pennock for sharing with us this interesting series of pieces, possibly manorial and possibly hop {or possibly both}, which come from the Canterbury area; two of them were dug up in the immediate vicinity of the M2, where it goes round that city. It is most unusual to have a whole succession of lead pieces from the same issuer with a sequence of different dates. The numbers "12" and "24" suggest either pence or bushels, so the issuer was probably a landed proprietor, perhaps minor gentry, who farmed hops on his estate. However, the initials change between 1800 and 1819. Anyone who finds any more of these, or has any theories, please let us know.



Any Ornithologists out there, please?

Type 18: Birds

Type 18 covers all birds other than those which are obviously recognised national symbols, e.g. most eagles, which come under type 25. It is mainly a “look and enjoy” type, concerning not which all that much can be said, except perhaps to observe that there appears to be a higher degree of realism in their depiction than that of the series’ plants {type 17} or animals {type 19}. Why should that be? Were birds that much nearer the hearts and minds of the predominantly humble folk who struck lead tokens? Perhaps animals were associated with work, and birds with leisure and freedom. Not that all bird pieces were rustic; some are quite dark, and might have been associated with such pursuits as pigeon racing or cock fighting; however, all this is but conjecture. Once again, ideas please and, should there be an ornithologist or two out there amongst our number, we would very much appreciate your identification skills. Treat the pictures below as a quiz {ideas on the bird pieces at the bottom of page 2 of the March issue also welcome} ; answers, if I get any, will be published in a later edition. There is one slight problem you may encounter, in that birds like anything else evolve over a couple of thousand years, so that those encountered on tesserae or mediaeval pewter may not be species with which we are familiar today. All the pieces shown are believed to be English, however; presuming, that is, that the supposed Roman pieces {Figs 4,5} were manufactured near their Colchester findspot and not imported from the continent.



Amongst the most interesting of those illustrated is Fig.1, which appears to ape the standard Roman coin reverse c.300 AD of two people standing sharing something between them; an example of the emperor Maximianus is illustrated for comparison. Fig.6 depicts the head alone, rather than the whole bird; not many of these seen yet. Fig 11 is divided into quarters with a different bird in each segment, along the lines of the lettered piece which appeared on page 4 of LTT_8 {Nov 2005}; it is 23½mm diameter and dated “IP 1783” on the back, but regrettably is not in sufficiently good condition for all the depictions to be readily appreciated.

The other thing worth mentioning about British type 18s is that the tail of the bird is sometimes made to coincide with the duct whereby the lead pours into the mould; look for this, whenever the tail goes right to the edge.

Birds are common on Roman tesserae and also appear on mediaeval pewter of the London and Dublin Winetavern series {c.1250-1307}, Figs 12,13 below {fighting cocks and pelican respectively} being examples. Figs 14,15 are more modern; they just flew in in time to make this page!



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