

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

## This Month's Gallery



A selection of pieces this month, mainly earlier ones, from types which we have already visited. Both sides of most of them are shown, hence "a" or "b" subscripts to the fig. numbers.

The "A" of Fig.1a is Lombardic, giving it a latest date c.1550; it may be earlier; the "S" on the reverse, Fig.1b, is mildly ornate. The "EW" of Fig.2 is slightly more modern and, whilst larger than the 11mm diam of its predecessor, its 14mm still falls slightly light of the 15-17mm range normal to the early part of the main 17th cent series farthing tokens in the 1650s. Fig.11, diam 15mm, is one which does conform to that series, both in size and style, and it may comfortably be dated to that period; readers may indeed have noted the design on the larger {21-23mm} copper tokens of the 1660s, where it is not uncommon.

I will conjecture without certainty that Fig.2 might be c.1600-50, and noting the dog in Fig.1b wonder whether certain other type 19s in similar style, which we have seen before, might be similarly dated.

Fig.3 is a clear type 25 on both sides, and the size of a late mediaeval piece; a Lancastrian, Yorkist or Elizabethan rose? Put this one down for 15th cent, possibly 16th, although 13mm feels too small for Elizabeth. Figs 4,5,6,10 are all type 20 merchant marks, which we know to peak in the 15th and 16th cents, and all are 12-13mm. Note the variety of reverses, of which Fig.5b, showing clasped, ruffed hands, has to be the star piece. This design was used by the ancients of Rome to signify concord, i.e. a stable political and social environment, and has been used elsewhere since; in the tokens of the post-Cromwellian period, on those of the 18th cent around the Napoleonic area, and those of the American Civil War, just to name a few. How delightful to see it here. Does its appearance denote that a disturbance had recently occurred, or was feared? and if so, which one?

Fig.7a, 14mm, suggests the late-mediaeval period yet again, and someone nautically inclined may feel that the piece is dateable from what looks like the washing hung out to dry and the beam which secures the underside of the sail; if so, please say. Ditto anybody who is familiar with the gold nobles, ryals etc of the period, many of which depict shipping of various sorts on one side.

Fig.8 feels very much contemporary with the lion/portcullis piece shown as Figs.8,14 on page 3 of the July issue, when we were discussing type 25, and is also of almost identical {20mm} diameter. E-R on that piece dated it c.1570-1600. B-I has got to be the lord of a manor somewhere or another, at a similar date. Finally Fig.9; a nice ewer, or jug, just hinting at the shape of a cock, and at 15mm large enough to be mid-17th cent. Feels a touch earlier; is that a suggestion of episcopal origin {Fig.9b} on the reverse?



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# David Powell On His Classification System

## Type 29: Full Words or Significant Abbreviations

Full words are a rare luxury on crude leads, albeit a feature which the enthusiasts even of some paranumismatic series take for granted and insist on; I know of one major collector of communion tokens, for example, who whose interest diminishes rapidly if he comes across a piece deemed unattributable. No such comforts for us; we count ourselves fortunate if one face in



a hundred has a full word on it, especially in the English series. You will not be finding many crude lead issuers in our parish registers, even though the latter in theory should go back to 1538, when an Act of Parliament decreed their keeping. A handful of parishes had been doing so for some years previously, the oldest register known being one of Tipton, Staffs, which commenced on 20 December 1513. The years, not to mention fire, weather, rats and human negligence amongst other things, have taken their toll, leaving only about 900 parishes out of the 11,000 or so in England and Wales whose registers go back to that inaugural year. Many others survive from not long after, and the pursuit of numismatic personalities in registers and other early records is a fascinating and rewarding one which I gladly commend to you, but you will be fortunate indeed to get a lead piece to offer you enough clues.

Tesserae are a little more forgiving about declaring the names of their issuers, but then you might be hard put to find the original record in which the names of such people as Romula {Fig.5} were recorded! The Romans commonly abbreviated many of their more common personal names, so you might need a little help to translate VEPICET surrounding a central S {Fig.6}. Or is it a central VS?

Figs.1,2 feel as if they might be by the same maker, except that one of them was found on Romney Marsh and the other on the Durham coast a few miles south of the Tyne. The latter piece {Fig.2} has a date on the back, 1845, which places it as a very late design; perhaps therefore Fig.1 is also. It has the initials J-B on the back, flanking an anchor; perhaps, given the heart, was he a seaman with a girl-friend called Fanny? Imagination working overtime again, as these pieces tend to make it do.

Fig.3 is particularly down to earth. The name "Iohn"; hence the far side of whatever date "I" gave way to "J" as expression of the latter initial in print. A third of the piece has fallen victim to an agricultural implement, possibly wielded by John himself; there is not, from the size of the existing lettering, any room for a surname, and the piece is uniface. Why would John want a token with his name on? if he was a landowner, presumably he would have chosen something a little less informal, so let us presume that he was of humble origin. He wouldn't be issuing money. Perhaps it was a pass, and if you went back to the same field there might be Fred, Tom and Bill all lying in the muck waiting to be found.

Finally, in Fig.4, a piece at long last which has both forename and surname. It is of Scottish provenance, and depicts on the other side a type 11 wine bottle and drinking glass with the words "Peace and Plenty", which you have already seen {LTT\_10, Jan 2006}. One can imagine Thomas Small presiding as mine host over a congenial public house on a street corner in Glasgow or Edinburgh, but probably the reality was somewhat removed from that. There are dozens of Thomas Smalls on the International Genealogical Index {IGI}, before you rate your chances of finding him too highly. Another place to look for this type of piece is Dalton & Hamer's "Provincial Token Coinage of the Eighteenth Century" which, whilst it may not locate Mr.Small in person, will at least give you some idea of the lead which Scotland's major cities were issuing at this period. D and H records over 200 for the Edinburgh/Leith area alone, 144 of them collected by a single visitor in a period of 7-8 months during 1781-82. And he won't have had the advantage of a modern metal detector!

## Introducing: CT {Communion Token} Corner

Do communion tokens belong in a lead token newsletter or don't they? OK, the service which they entitle the bearer to is a very different one from other pieces, but a service {forgive the pun} it is, nevertheless. One piece of lead entitles you to a drink in a church, another to a drink in a public house; the one accompanied by a lot of reverence, the other by probably not very much. One token entitles you to a morsel of bread, another to a whole loaf. One implies that the building which you are entitled to enter is a church, the other that its bearer may attend a playhouse, or perhaps just go on the lord of the manor's land. Passes are for a thousand reasons; what if the purpose is associated with the spiritual, rather than the secular, is that a cause for exclusion? No, Communion Tokens {CTs} are very much within the scope of lead tokens, and should be welcomed gladly for their extra contribution to the diversity and interest of the lead token community.

Where they do differ from local commercial lead is that (i) they are not usually just chucked in the ground waiting for a detectorist to find, and (ii) are rather better documented in the 18th century than most of their crude lead counterparts. By which I mean that cataloguers like Les Burzinski, O.D.Cresswell and their predecessors took rather more trouble than others to record for posterity who dug up what where. There could be a lesson here, folks!



They are also strongly regional; primarily a Scottish phenomenon, struck in other countries, but mainly those to which Scotsmen went. There are 901 ancient parishes in Scotland, some of them since subdivided to cope with the expansion of population, and pieces can be expected for virtually all of them; some of them multiply, because of the profusion of denominations caused by various theological splits and mergers. Many of the parishes of Northumberland and northern Durham are represented, due to those parts having sometimes come under Scottish control and the influence of Scottish habits during the various turbulences which caused the precise position of the border to fluctuate. Elsewhere in England communion tokens are usually only found in coastal ports, plus Manchester on account of its access by canal to Liverpool.

Communion tokens made of pure lead ended at about the same time as their crude lead equivalent. Their purpose was to control access to the sacrament, which was regarded with a rather greater reverence than is often the case today, and was held only two or three times a year rather than daily or weekly. Disposal of replaced tokens was formal, and usually within the church precincts; but there was nothing to stop folk losing them, for which reason Scottish detectorists should consider them when attempting to identify stray lead finds.

It is possible, despite their relative separateness, that communion tokens also have something to say to us about other contemporary lead. Many of them were, in the early days, made locally by village craftsmen; but unlike crude lead, there was a need linking parish with parish, which might in some cases have involved cooperation and/or the use of larger, if often still quite local, manufacturers. Perhaps the same happened in the small-scale commercial and agricultural world? There are 901+ groups of people out there, all looking for minting facilities in an era when the local medium for such things was lead. That has got to be interesting....

