

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 LJEditor@aol.com or dmpowell@waitrose.com

Letter from the Netherlands

At first I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Alex Kussendrager, I live in the Netherlands. Over the years I have bought some leads ("loodjes" in Dutch). I don't have a metal detector so I acquire them by buying from searchers or in auctions. When I was looking for some background information there was not much to find in the books. In 1992 there was an exhibition of some leads that were found in shipwrecks. From then on I started to collect information. When I asked museums and other institutes for more information, they mostly couldn't help me out. However they were very enthusiastic and liked to receive new found information. So I decided to publish my information on the web, instead of keeping it all for myself in a notebook. In this way it reaches everyone who is interested in this kind of material.

The site is an amateur one and it is still under construction. I'll have to do a lot of work and research to make it more complete. You can find it at: www.loodjes.tk or home.hetnet.nl/~loodjes
Here are some examples of common types:



1. Bakenloodjes = beaconleads. Used for tax for shipping. Fig.1 comes from Harlingen, Friesland.
2. Armenloodjes / kerkloodjes = poormans money / church money. Armenloodjes is a common name. It's better to speak of lead tokens. Fig.2 is a kerkloodje from Nijmegen.
3. Lakenloodjes = "sheet leads" used for the sheet or cloth industry. Fig.3 is from Haarlem.
4. Verzegelloodjes = seal leads, to seal goods such as flour, meat and so on {Fig.4}.

Figs 1,2 are leads from a single piece of metal; Figs.3,4 have to be folded around goods and pressed together. I've started collecting "bakenloodjes", but because the mode of usage is not always clear {for example, the difference between beaconleads and poorman's money is not always obvious}, I've tried to distinguish between them.



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Bakenloodjes is a common name of all the leads used by shipping. They can be split up into three subtypes:

Bakenloodjes: a kind of tax (yes we're in The Netherlands ☺) for the maintenance of the beacons in the waters. Most of them have been used by the ships in de Zuiderzee (now IJsselmeer) in the center of Holland. Fig.5 shows the arms of Enkhuizen plus a "zeeton" = beacon of wood and iron.

Vuurloodjes: have been used for contribution for the costs of the lighthouses near the coasts. Fig.6 relates to the SVYDER ZEESE VUUR BAKENS by Enkhuizen, Marken and Durgerdam (near Amsterdam).

Havenloodjes: tax for the harbor lights, was used at the entrance of an harbour. Around 1900 ships had to pay one Guilder a year for the entrance of the harbour of Enkhuizen {Fig.7}.

Because my site www.loodjes.tk is in Dutch I will explain how to use it:

AFBEELDINGEN	Clicking on "afbeeldingen" you see pictures of all kinds of leads.
CATALOGUS	"Catalogus" is a selection of pieces by name, place, description etc.
VRAAGTEKENS!	"Vraagtekens" are lead pieces which cannot yet be interpreted.
TEKST	"Tekst" means text, background information. Unfortunately in Dutch.
LINKS	"Links" goes to other interesting websites concerning leads and coins.
EMAIL	"Email": self-explanatory, please contact me at loodjes@hetnet.nl .

If there's anything you would like to ask, either about the content or because you need help with the Dutch language, please don't hesitate to contact me for an explanation. Also, if you possess any Dutch lead, I would be particularly pleased to hear from you.

Note from the editor:

Don't be afraid to explore overseas websites; there are some good ones out there, and not being unable to understand the language perfectly {or at all!} does not necessarily stop you enjoying them. After a while you get used to their style and can often pick up the meanings of a few words as you go along; added to which, if a lot of the content is visual or numeric, it sometimes doesn't matter anyway.

One recently discovered is <http://huguenots.picards.free.fr/nk/index.php>, which is currently offering a free copy of a document entitled "L'Usage des Mereaux dans Les Eglises Réformées" {i.e. French Protestant Communion Tokens}; take the "Téléchargements" option, and you will find it amongst several subjects listed. Apart from a good historical section it includes a list of about 20 lead or white metal pieces, illustrated by line drawings.

Foreign eBay sites are also quite fun to use. Once you have exhausted the displays given by putting "lead*" into English eBay, try typing "plomb*" into the French one. All the sites have a roughly similar format; it is an interesting experience, sometimes exposing you to types of lead material which you haven't seen before. Not to mention a little linguistic education in the process! If you get into difficulties over a word or phrase, there are always free translators around, like Babelfish.

Correspondence:

My thanks to John Jacobs, who lives in Germany, for pictures of several lead seals unusually showing both month and day, which must indicate usage in connection with some perishable product. The other sides are uninspiring and appear to be reasonably modern, perhaps late 19th cent; these three come from Cologne, Unna and Gelsenkirchen respectively, whilst other examples come from Bremen, Ehrenfeld and the Rhineland.



Reader Stanley Clute writes from Canada:

In the course of my historical reading I have found that in medieval times when most people could not read signs it was customary to stick a sprig of gorse or some other bush above the door of a tavern to indicate that ale was sold there. I have wondered for some time if what is represented on these tokens is a sprig of a bush, thus possibly indicating that they are tavern tokens.

Don't know if anyone else has heard this, but that implies that a number of our type 17s, I know not what proportion, are early pub checks. Comments welcome.

Hop Tokens: An Introduction {Part 1}

The standard work on hop tokens, which I commend to you, is Alan Henderson's "Hop Tokens of Kent and East Sussex" {Spink, 1990}, recently supplemented by a series entitled "Hop Token Issuers and Their Tokens" which, taking small groups of villages at a time, delves further into the people behind the pieces. The first three volumes of the latter A4 paperback series have appeared during 2004-06, and I understand that a couple more are expected; anyone interested, please mail in for contact details. I believe that there is scope for further research of a similar nature, using the various genealogical tools available on the Internet for starters.

Kent and East Sussex is England's primary hop-farming area, although not the only one, and has a well-defined and widely recognised series of tokens. From the style, and the limited number of pieces which are dated, it may be conjectured that most of the material in Alan's book is concerned with the period from mid-18th century to early 20th; but before that, what? our crude leads, I will suggest; and similarly, in the lesser hop fields for which few structured token issues are defined. My thanks to Chris Lacey for this interesting selection of pieces below which derive from the three villages of Flexford, Clandon and Puttenham, part of the lesser known hop-farming region, about 15 miles across, on the Surrey/Hants border; they are for the most part typical type 9s, i.e. irregular geometrics.



The web article "Some former Hopgrowing Centres", which I mentioned at the top of page 4 in February's LTT, also suggests that besides Kent/Sussex and Surrey/Hants there were at one time also three further hop fields in the West Midlands {Worcs?}, Notts and Essex/Suffolk. Those familiar with those areas may like to consider the number and type of lead tokens which occur in them, and the relative probability of them relating to hops as opposed to any other activity. Are any of those type 17 bushes and trees meant to be hop plants, for example?



Between the pure crude lead and the well disciplined if somewhat crudely executed design of the earlier Kentish hop leads, there are a few pieces which hover on the border, and which feel as if they belong to both series. Hop tokens typically come in sets with series of numbers on, such as:

- 1, 3, 6, 12, 30, 60, 120 indicating pence or bushels
- 1, 3, 6, 1/-, 2/6, 5/-, 10/-; as above, but monetary values rendered in terms of shillings.
- 1, 3, 6, 12, 24, 48, 72, 96; a variant on the above.
- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8...n, indicating some cruder volume of measurement, e.g. the number of marks on the side of a container covered when loading one's pickings into it.



On the right are several pieces which comply with this pattern and, whilst not actually being in Henderson, feel as if they ought to be. Such link pieces, which sit on the edge, are amongst my favourites.



The use of one series or the other {not necessarily in the above order} was determined by the practice of the local area, of which there were four, each with their own ways of doing things: West Kent, East Kent, Bastard East Kent and East Sussex. Yes, you did read that correctly, and I tell you honestly that I have seen the name that you are querying printed on a map. Bastard East Kent is a wedge of land south of what is now the A20 and extending to the coast, containing such places as Romney and Dymchurch, and once known thus in the hop community because its geological and agricultural qualities differed significantly from the other parts of East Kent lying further north. If anyone wants a more precise description I will point you to a man who lives in Bastard East Kent and who, on being asked if I could use the term when addressing an envelope to him, asked me to be careful where I put the comma.

..... {to be continued}

Picture Gallery

A couple of nicely patinated leads to start with, hinting of London. Fig.1 poses questions; are those four dots above the initials a value, whilst surely on the other side those are batons rather than a cartwheel? They seem to be laid neatly across each other; you can tell what is laid on top of what. A well-formed if fairly typical lis in Fig.2, but what is that curious device on the reverse? It has to go down as a type 24, but could be a monogram or even a merchant's mark; the latter not with enough certainty to be a type 20. Figs.3,4 fit very nicely with our hop token article above; a reminder

that many pieces had retrograde initials, even when well formed. These could easily be small value hop tokens, on which the issuer had often for reasons of space to confine himself to a single initial; whereas on the middle and larger values, he could afford the letters of both forename and surname.



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Fig.5 reminds us that occasionally an issuer dispensed with design and just counterstruck a blank; in which case, the type is determined by the design of the counterstrike. This approach to life was quite commonly taken in the hop token community, and also on the older Irish, as opposed to Scottish, communion tokens. On Scottish CTs the table number was often counterstruck, but hardly ever the parish or minister's name. Back to Fig.6, one of the widest jawed anchors you are likely to see; each arm goes round 90 degrees, if not a little more. Fig.7, a cross with wedges, rather than a cartwheel, although the former are so deep that the latter is hinted at. Fig.8; is that a bush {possibly upside down}, an insect, or a many-armed fictional man with legs spread wide? A most interesting design, which its issuer probably thought was obvious. Fig.9 is a mediaeval pewter, showing the usual form mediaeval form of the type 1 petal design: eight-lobed, without any gaps between. Finally, on the left, another group of Chris Lacey's Surrey/Hants hop tokens which didn't quite fit the page layout in the article above!



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