

Editor: David Powell

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## Picture Gallery

A nice group of seven birds and animals to start with, all from Oxfordshire; a very productive county for lead, which frequently features in these pages. Of the animals, Fig.2, tantalisingly pointing its head away from us, has notably pointed ears and may be a fox; if so, it is almost certainly associated either with the vermin laws or the hunt. Fig.6 is less enigmatic, being fairly plainly a sheep.



Figs 5 and 7 are fairly well drawn ducks, the last-mentioned being the only chunky piece of the group and the only one manufactured in seal style with the two halves clamped together; note the fold of the join at 10 o'clock. Fig.1 suggests specifically a small bird; which one is uncertain, but its sheer amateurishness is a delight. Fig.3 is somewhat obscure, but appears to be rather slender with some lengthy rear plumage; even more so, almost to the point of being abstract, is Fig.4. The suggestion is that it may be a bird facing, flapping its wings.

Four of the reverses of the above pieces are shown below; of the others Fig.3 has plain initials IL, Fig.6 hints at initials and date but may not have, whilst Fig.7 is uniface. There feels to be a theme running through them, and all are probably of the period indicated by the two which have dates.



Next, a couple of Kentish pieces; Figs.8-9 have all the appearance of pre-Henderson hop tokens, 18th cent or early 19th. "6" is a very common value, but "11"? It is known for one or two of the series described by Alan in his book, but is decidedly scarce.

IHS, retrograde on Fig.10, is almost invariably indicative of ecclesiastical use, although the piece is fairly devoid of the ornamentation usually associated with such sources. Three initials of the same size and in a row would be very unusual on a civil piece of this date, which I will guess might be c.17th cent. Fig .11, reverse below, is neatly struck; clearly dated 1716, the crown probably represents the sign of the owner's pub or other business. Fig.12 depicts a delicate anchor; reasonably but not exceptionally dark, it is probably of London origin. The protruding sprue, reminding of its manufacture, is a particularly pleasing feature.



Finally, Fig.13 depicts a fine sun in splendour, with just a hint of a face which may or may not have originally existed. The other side shows just simple initials, HS.

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## The Human Head on Tokens, as observed by Forgeais

Some more here of Arthur Forgeais' 19th century discoveries from the Seine; although nothing all that much to say about them, other than to enjoy the depictions and observe that some of those 15th century engravers certainly had a sense of humour!

The reverses are all fairly typical of their period, i.e. crosses, lis, petals and the like; indeed, there is nothing remarkable about them at all, apart from the usual and rather pleasing variety in the range of ornamentation of the crosses. However, the obverses more than make up for this; in an age where the official coinage was often characterised by a monarch's portrait which was stylised to the extreme, so much so that childhood could not be distinguished from extreme longevity. Most of these heads by contrast are, to our modern eyes, amusing if not bizarre.



A number of the heads are certainly crowned, so royalty is intended; although whether the king himself, is open to debate. What the future of one's career would have been, or one's head, had a royal artist tendered some of the pictures shown as proposed designs for a regal coinage, I do not know; perhaps, in an age where artwork on coins was still in a relatively early stage of evolution, it was best to stick to the tried, tested and boring heads of the early Edwards and their contemporaries.



Some of the heads look rather youthful and rakish, suggestive of the heir to the throne coming home from the pub rather the worse for wear on a bad night; Figs.5,9 being the prime candidates in this category, although none of Figs.1 or 10-14 show the subject in significantly better light. Figs.6-7 show him looking comparatively sober but rather argumentative, whilst the invalidation mark on Fig.8 is superbly placed to double up as an eye-patch, possibly to hide an injury to the royal visage in a bar brawl.



A few of the heads are visibly not royal. One piece alone {Fig.2} shows a portrait which is dignified and kingly, but the figure on the other side could be a knight in armour or a peasant lady in a headscarf. Place it in modern times and it could also be a lunar explorer; as also could Fig.4, assuming it is not the man in the moon. The subject of Fig.3, also, might not appreciate being depicted with long floppy ears like a lop-eared rabbit; or is that hair? Finally, one or two pieces show the face only {Fig.16-17}, with the surround not in evidence, thereby giving us even less chance of working out who they are meant to be.

It will be noticed that some heads are frontal and other in profile. The mintage period is at about the time when the regal coins of several countries were evolving to greater realism and to the use of different angles; therefore, this may be of some possible use in dating pieces. I said possible...!



## Did Ladies issue Tokens?

The above is one of those questions which we could easily ignore, or make assumptions on; has anybody ever seen a lead token with a female forename on? No? well, perhaps they didn't issue them. On the other hand, I have only seen half a dozen with male forenames on, so perhaps they didn't issue them much either. So, who issued the rest? Must have been the fairies.

On a more serious note, we know that many pieces in both the lead and copper/brass series of the 17th century depicted triads of initials, and that one initial represents the forename of the wife of the issuer. The assumption is sometimes made that she is a minor partner, or that she is included only out of courtesy. Is that safe? In just a couple of cases in the whole of Williamson is there a piece where the wife's forename initial has been proved to precede the husband's; was that a typo by the engraver, or was the wife genuinely the senior partner? But then to the two-initial pieces, which predominate in the 18th century after the triad goes out of fashion. Can you be sure that the I of IR stands for John, James or Joseph, rather than Jane? One Jane issued the lead piece on the right, which is thought to have come from Glasgow; even if it is only a counterstruck disk, without any cast or struck design on it.



Stuart Adams, speaking to the Token Corresponding Society {TCS} at its 2007 Congress, examined a number of series, admittedly mostly more modern than we are concerned with here, e.g. 19th century, and concluded that the number of ladies issuing tokens in their own right was about 4% or a trifle under, albeit varying slightly from series to series. How relevant is that to our leads? Were things any different in their day? Well, one well-documented series is very definitely contemporary with our crude leads; so let us see what Williamson has to say about 17th century tokens.

### Williamson's breakdown of female forenames

Elizabeth	82	Judith	6	Christine	1
Mary(ie)	67	Martha	6	Constance	1
Ann	53	(H)esther	5	Cordelia	1
Margaret	23	Margery	4	Deborah	1
Sarah	20	Isabel	4	Dixy	1
Alice	18	Hannah	3	Lydia	1
Jane	15	Thomasine	3	Millecent	1
Joan(e)	10	Bridget	2	Miriam	1
Dorothy	9	Edith	2	Phillipa	1
Ellen(or)	9	Florence	2	Phoebe	1
Grace	9	Sybil	2	Priscilla	1
Frances	9	Abigail	1	Rachel	1
Susan(na)	9	Barbara	1	Ruth	1
Katherine	8	Blanch	1	Ursula	1
Rebecca	8				

Williamson is very good about indexing all sorts of things at the back of his final

volume, and included in these is a complete list of issuers by both surname and forename. He lists about 12,700 pieces in all, of which some 390-odd turn out to derive from lady issuers; not too far off from Stuart's overall figure. Many of them ran pubs or small shops, no doubt quite a percentage of them being pressed into it necessarily by the early loss of their spouse. Let's introduce you to a few of them:

1. Frances Smith, Bury St.Edmunds {Suff.76}
2. Rebecca Boldero, Ixworth {Suff.200}
3. Frances Seele, Redrif = Rotherhithe {Surr.278}
4. Mary Brine, Barford {Warw.23}
5. We Three Sisters, Needham Market {Suff.264}
6. Charles & Margery Seale, Croydon; i.e. a couple {Surr.45}
7. Ann Nickolls, Hackney {Middx.60}
8. Elizabeth Amus, Epsom {Surr.67}
9. Jane Palmer, Leicester {Leics.47}

Some of these warrant further comment. Rebecca Boldero's token {Fig.2} depicts a pickerel, or small pike, and her 15th cent inn bears





that name to this day. Frances Seele's token {Fig.3} depicts three sugar loaves, so she may well have been a grocer. Mary Brine's {Fig.4} bears guild arms, in her case those of an ironmonger; the right of use inherited from her husband, surely? The enigmatic Fig.5 is, although not rare, unique in its conception; who were the anonymous "We Three Sisters", S, M and H? probably they ran a local business between them. The parish register might reveal.



Rebecca Boldero's pickerel was still there outside her pub a third of a millennium later, in 2002.

Only a very few 17th cent tokens bear two or more full names, and then usually two people in partnership; two males on occasion or, as in Fig.6, a couple who are presumably husband and wife. Ann Nickolls {Fig.7} avails herself of the fact that her initials spell her forename, then frees up further space by depicting the latter part of her sign name "White Stag" pictorially, thus enabling her to squeeze in the full address of the premises on the second side. Excellent use of space on her part. Elizabeth Amus {Fig.8} uses her obverse similarly, describing herself as "at the" and then depicting a picture of the king's head; like Ann, she was probably a publican. Had there been no "at the", the same picture might have been advocating Royalist sympathies. Of the eight ladies so far, only Frances Smith {Fig.1} has declined to hint at the nature of her business.

Finally Jane Palmer {Fig.9}; is that a lady knitting? One or two TCS members expressed their doubts, and I welcome your opinion; but if so, we have an pictorial example of what is generally regarded as a specifically feminine occupation in action. Which reminds me, TCS. There are actually a whole hundred or so of us out there who research crazy token-related things, and who get together every year to share their ideas. Leads and 17th cent is just a small part of it; look up the whole range of the sort of things we get into on our website, <http://www.tokensociety.org.uk/> Newcomers always welcome!

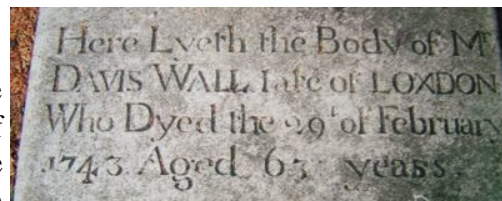
I digress. I've spent a page and a half discussing, mostly, 17th cent main series in a publication devoted to crude lead. Why? Because if that series can produce 3-4% of female issuers, quite likely contemporary crude leads will as well, and hopefully the above shows how they might fit in. Keep looking!

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### *Strange Calendar Phenomena*

In addition to lead tokens, I am also interested in calendars and their evolution in various cultures over time {see my article on the Token Corresponding Society website} One interesting feature in our own calendar is the gradual transition from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, with their respective New Year's Days of 25 March and 1 January; officially the new system came in in Britain in 1752, but unofficially some people were using the Gregorian system years earlier whilst a few others were unwilling after 1752 to let the Julian system go.

This can give rise to various curious phenomena on both stone work and documents, such as dual dating and the appearance of apparently nonsensical dates. The example shown is of the date which we would now call 29 Feb 1744, but because it fell before 25 Mar it actually classified as 1743 Old Style {Julian}. A transitional engraver would have rendered it 29 Feb 1743-4, to distinguish that particular February from its neighbours in adjacent years.



I would welcome knowing of observations, with location, of any interesting examples encountered in the course of your travels; please mail in to the usual LTT address. There are examples on coins; for example, William III fourpences exist for 1702, despite the fact that the King died before 25 March.