

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 [dmpowell@waitrose.com](mailto:dmpowell@waitrose.com) or [david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk](mailto:david@powell8041.freewe.co.uk). Please note that w.e.f. 19 April 2008 the old [LTJeditor@aol.com](mailto:LTJeditor@aol.com) address is no longer active.

## Picture Gallery



1 My thanks to Mark Stonard for showing me the attractive and supposedly 17th cent piece on the left {Fig.1}, found at the Clandon Park Estate, the family seat of Lord Onslow, just north of Guildford. Gentry origins might explain the unlikely choice of subject matter, an elephant, if, for example, the issuer had connections with British India; however, at this early date? It is 15mm; however, there is nothing on the reverse, like the initial triad which one would expect, so perhaps it is just a small piece of later date which bucks the trend of increasing size. If a pass rather than a token, which is likely, it would be less prone to conform to the rule that tokens approximate to the size of the coin of equal value. I must admit to thinking that the animal was a dog or cow originally, and that the supposed trunk on the left was a blob due to slight defect of manufacture; however, on blowing the picture up, I can see that Mark is right. With this series, photographic magnification is a valuable tool.

Three large provincial pieces next, all 31-32mm, comfortably larger than a halfpenny, which might just hint that they are from the later years of the lead period, after the regal penny was introduced in 1797; however, don't bank on it. The first two are decidedly chunky, 24.84gm and 21.69gm respectively, and uniface. Fig.2, showing the crescent moon and eight stars instead of the usual seven {perhaps the sun and the Pleiades}, comes from the Bucks/Oxon/W.Herts area, whilst the robust shield-like Fig.3 with its slightly concave reverse is from Kent. Magnify it, and one could imagine a warrior carrying it into battle.



Fig.4, from Cambridgeshire, is of different texture; thinner, and roughly only half the weight of the other two. A stunning and superbly unusual obverse depicts two flags waving from a castle parapet, with the date 1708 in the exergue below. The reverse is more normal, an anchor, but at least it has initials, IH, flanking.



Fig.5 shows "R2" retrograde; previously we have only seen this type of one-initial, one-number combination with an H, so what does it mean? Two something, obviously, but what? It has a very strong rim, which makes me suspect that it may be East Anglian; as also do Figs.6-7. The former's obverse is a variant on the usual petal theme, but it is thicker than one would expect and on the reverse, apart from one dent, mirror smooth. I suspect that it may be a weight, if anyone can think of a unit around 7.96gm. Fig.7 is an off-centre cross; again uniface, and more normally smooth. We have seen these before, and I am inclined to think that the eccentricity of the design is deliberate, rather than an imperfect attempt to execute a cross. Nevertheless, it remains type 14.



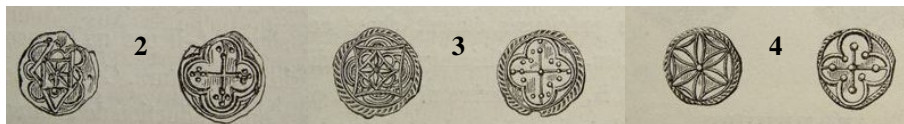
Fig.8, with its inset cross and one radial dash per quarter, is smaller but again very smooth on the reverse; inset pieces are not over-common, and it would be interesting to consider what proportion of them are weights. Fig.9 is one of those irregular geometrics whose seemingly random arrangement of lines might actually turn out to be something, in this case a small sailing vessel. The other side is similarly enigmatic; a cross, enhanced by an elongated ellipse and the odd afterthought of a line, also looks like a boat; or, some might think, a face!





## Forgeais' Guild Pieces, part 3

The Faculté de Décret {law?} seems an odd organisation with which to start this latest article on guilds, and unusually Forgeais does not seem to know which saint had charge of it; however, the solitary piece recorded {Fig.1} is very 15th cent in style. With the *fondeurs*, i.e. founders or blacksmiths {Figs.2-6}, we are back in familiar territory, although they are a conservative lot with preferences for smaller pieces and stock designs. The obverse of Figs.2-3, perhaps, feature some of their lattice work.



The *fourbisseurs*, or equipment makers, are somewhat likeminded; a preference again for small pieces, even more so than usual {only 10mm in one case} but at least figs.7-8 show a dagger and cuirass respectively. One imagines that the *fourbisseurs* and *fondeurs* might have had close links.



The *fruitiers*, near enough to its English equivalent not to have to translate, have the opposite preference for large, highly decorative pieces {Figs.9-14}. They have two saints, Christopher and Leonard, who demand a side apiece and whose initials, SX and SL, are usually flanking; in consequence of which, there is not room for much fruit, although a certain amount of planting and pruning of saplings is in evidence. Note "X" as the shorthand abbreviation for "Christ"; it occurs in England as well, where "Xofer" is often the rendering of Christopher in parish registers and other documents. This phenomenon was discussed in LTT\_43 {page 2} last month.



The *gantiers*, or glovers, naturally depict hands {Figs.15-16}; it is difficult to see, on small pieces, whether the latter are gloved or not. Fig.16 depicts a coin in the hand; a design which we occasionally see in England, and have wondered before now whether it relates to almsgiving or crucifixion. My personal guess would have been in favour of almsgiving, i.e. that it is some type of poor law piece; interesting to note that Forgeais favours the latter interpretation.

*Marchands de gibiers* are merchants dealing in game, rather than common meat. Fig.17 gives a fine pictorial description of their range of interest, although it should be noted that, despite fish being represented, there are separate *Marchands de Poissons* {sic}; see part 5, to follow. DG retrograde on the reverse; Forgeais suggests "Gibiers Divers", various game, which seems reasonable, although he does not guess a date. My own estimate would be a little later than the 15th cent norm.







The vendeurs de grains {Fig.18}, chandlers in English parlance, use the “tradesmen of Paris” formula seen several times already; although on this occasion in post-Lombardic lettering for the first time, indicating that it is somewhat later than the others, which I believe were all 15th cent. This is mid-16th cent; very mid-16th, in fact!. St.Nicolas presides; he appears to be laying down the law about something.

Hoteliers {Figs.19-21}; meaning as in English. They appear variously dressed, according to which time of day the mounted St.Martin has caught them. In Fig.19 mine host is definitely not at his best; bedraggled and freshly woken from his sleep, at a time of night when he has already long locked up. The other two occasions, however, catch him fine and dandy with refreshments at the ready.



Imprimeur-libraire {Figs.22-24}; that translates as bookwriter, or possibly printer. The evidence suggests perhaps the transcriber, in days before printing was the invariable norm; in each case St.Jean is walking to his work carrying a day's supply of quills in an inkstand, whilst on the reverse two books flank a large quill. Caxton may have invented printing in 1477, but I guess a lot of reproduction was still done individually and by hand in the mid-late 16th cent dates stated.

Jardiniers; gardeners {Fig.25}. A couple of spades and in between, a sun as reminder of decent weather! On the back a



couple of what? tomatoes? probably not in those days. Simple and effective. Forgeais remarks in passing that gardeners did four years' apprenticeship then.

Now for a piece which we have seen a variant of in England {Fig.26}; the latter occurring in Mitchiner, and generally thought to have been related to the provision of hospitality to pilgrims. I refer to the pieces depicting either a male or female figure, who appears to be carrying a swagbag on a stick, and is seen either eating an apple or drinking. Forgeais says that the gentleman in front of us here in Fig.26 is a jaugeur, or gauger; in other words, a quality control inspector. His sampling is pensive; the stick probably not for carrying luggage but for dipping into barrels, either to measure content level or assess firmness. On the reverse, the object which reminds me of a picture of the appendix or inner ear from my schoolboy biology textbook, is probably the then equivalent of a yard of ale. Perhaps I should say a metre of ale, given where it comes from. Our gauger will be using it either for sampling, or to assess quantity. Forgeais thinks the piece is 15th cent.

Definitely more modern is the solitary piece of the lanterniers, or lightkeepers {Fig.27}; at 1630, this is not far off being the latest piece in the series. SM probably stands for St. Maur, one of two patron saints. Whether a lanternier walked round all night or whether he was just charged with switching on and off, I do not know; or if the former, whether he was in public service or employed by a private individual, again I am uncertain.

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## *In the News*

Herewith a lead-relevant extract of an interesting article from Wayne Homren's weekly E-Sylum newsletter, originally derived from one in the Jerusalem Post, about an excavation of the synagogue in Vienna which was destroyed in 1421:

“The earliest synagogue was a simple rectangular room and can be dated to around 1236, by the find of a coin, an Austrian penny of that date, on the surface of the plaster floor.

Nine lead tokens, the size of large coins, were also found. They were embossed with formal designs, such as an eagle, a rosette and one with two kings holding a crown, and they are unique in Austria. Though not definitely of Jewish origin, it is tempting to see them as associated with the money-lending trade, and they may have counted as ersatz money for use among the Jewish merchants.”

E-Sylum is free, comes out weekly and, like this newsletter, welcomes people's comments and contributions. Its specific field of interest is numismatic literature and, whilst US-based and without a great deal on lead, occasionally throws up little gems like this. Further details are available on Wayne's website at <http://www.coinbooks.org/>; those of you who register get a copy of the newsletter emailed to you every week.

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## *From Datestones to Tombstones*

After last month's datestones, and in particular that fine 1676 one from Skipton {LTT\_43}, herewith some tombstones in similar vein, all displaying trade-related objects which might be found on 17th cent tokens. Admittedly these examples all come from Muthill, Perthshire, which is well outside both the lead and 17th cent tokens areas, but the theme is most interesting. I presume that the phenomenon is probably of predominantly Scottish origin, but I do not know how far south it extends. Certainly the skull and bones {sometimes crossbones} of the middle stone is common in Northumbria in the 18th cent, although I have not seen the trademarks there.



The middle stone, undated, is the oldest, and depicts besides the stated emblems of death several craftsman's tools: hammer, compass & set-square amongst others, so the deceased was almost certainly a carpenter, joiner or the like. The other two stones are dated, just a few years post-1800, which makes the appearance of a merchant-mark the more surprising, although admittedly they do also appear on certain British colonial coinage in India at the same date. So, stone 1 belongs to a trader. Stone 3 would appear from its air balloon to belong to an aviator but no, that is a wheat sheaf above the plough, which must label the deceased as a farmer. Useful aids to the genealogist or token researcher! I guess that such depictions do not run far into the 19th cent; Scotland has a very individual style of gravestone engraving in the 18th cent, but seems to merge with the English style in the early 19th.

One feature of the older Scottish stones, incidentally, is their tendency to run text onto a second line, or round the side, with complete disregard for the splitting of a word or surname. “Lord, she was Thine”, for example, has been seen thus split; the cutter left no space for the last letter, which he folded round on to the edge rather than waste a whole new line on the face of the stone. A slight change of emphasis and meaning!

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